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CHINA-RUSSIA EXPO SEES BIG ENTHUSIASM FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

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Xinhuanet (13 July 2018)
Interaction between regions of China and Russia has contributed to bilateral ties and all-around inter-regional cooperation is promising, Chinese and Russian officials said Tuesday.

A number of central and regional government officials from China and Russia made the remarks at the first China-Russia Inter-regional Cooperation Forum under the framework of the fifth China-Russia Expo that started earlier in the day.

"China and Russia have entered an important period for their national development and rejuvenation. With highly compatible development programs, regional cooperation is very promising," Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce Gao Yan said.

As bilateral trade continues to grow rapidly, mutual investment is expanding, and large-scale strategic projects in the fields of energy, nuclear power, aerospace and infrastructure are being steadily advanced, she said.

China has been Russia's largest trade partner for eight consecutive years, with bilateral trade increasing by one third to 87 billion U.S. dollars last year. As the trade volume reached 32 billion dollars in January-April 2018, it is expected to exceed 100 billion dollars for the whole year.

In order to step up inter-regional cooperation, Gao said China and Russia need to strengthen the collaboration of their policies, deepen industrial cooperation, promote trade growth and enhance cultural exchanges.

"Inter-regional delegations from 23 Russian constituent entities are participating ... Such a representative composition is another proof of Russia's high interest in developing mutually beneficial cooperation with China," Russian Deputy Minister of Economic Development Azer Talybov said.

According to Talybov, more than 40 agreements, memorandums and protocols of intentions have been concluded by Russian and Chinese regions in the past two years, including the establishment of an intergovernmental commission for cooperation and development of Russia's Far East and Baikal region and the northeastern provinces of China.

He said Russia would continue to be dedicated to exploring the full potential of Russian-Chinese inter-regional and cross-border cooperation.

Echoing the Russian official's remarks, Chinese regional representatives, including governor of Heilongjiang Province Wang Wentao, mayor of Chongqing Municipality Tang Liangzhi and deputy

secretary-general of Guangdong provincial government Lin Ji, expressed their readiness to promote inter-regional cooperation in various areas with the Russian side.

"We are happy to see that more and more Chinese and Russian government bodies, provinces, cities and counties are widely involved in promoting China-Russia regional cooperation. Taking this event as an opportunity, we are willing to further strengthen comprehensive exchanges and cooperation with Russian regions," Wang said.

Following the speeches, a number of documents were signed at the end of the forum, including a document on the establishment of a China-Russia science and technology cooperation alliance and a cooperation agreement between Chinese and Russian engineering colleges.

As the highest-level and largest comprehensive exhibition held by the two countries, the China-Russia Expo has played an important role in enhancing trade and economic ties as well as exploring regional and business cooperation.

Having built its reputation over the past four years, the annual event has attracted more than 200 Russian and Chinese companies this year, with the theme of "new beginning, new opportunities and new future."

In addition to a showcase of products of the two countries, 27 business events are scheduled to be held throughout the entire expo, concerning the fields of finance, electricity, technology, logistics and manufacturing, among which 14 key events will be held at the state level.

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