**Pakistan-China Friendship Farm**

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January 7, 2022

In a bid to ramp up efforts for enhanced agricultural cooperation between Pakistan and China under Phase-II of the golden CPEC project, another milestone progress has finally taken shape in the conceptual launch of Pakistan China Friendship Farm.

After coming into existence, Pakistan China Friendship Farm has set the tone and fervency in Pakistan-China Agriculture cooperation. For the intangible birth, formalization and materialization of the Farm, Okara (a city in Punjab), known as the land of agriculture, has been chosen as a pioneer. Without any doubt, credit for this exercise goes to Chinese Consulate Lahore, under the leadership of acting Consul General of the People’s Republic of China, Peng Zhengwu, and Okara Farmers leader and provincial lawmaker, Muneeb ul Haq.

The Farm is designed to play a pivotal role in integrating Chinese agro-based companies with Pakistan farmers, agriculturists, exporters and businessmen to help tap all avenues in the domain of digital and corporate agriculture that are still unexplored

Given the scenario, Pakistan farmers are going to be the main beneficiary of Chinese innovative agriculture advancements, digitalization, intercropping, seed technology, state of art agro-industrial machines, laser land levelling techniques, Hybrid crops mechanism. Chinese Modern livestock and Dairy developments are the others benefits to be availed by Pakistan traders.

The average yield of wheat is only three tons per hectare in Pakistan, but it can be improved substantially through the high-yield, anti-drought variety.

In terms of the conceptual launch of Pakistan China Friendship Farm, acting Consul General of People’s Republic of China Lahore Peng Zhengwu visited Okara on the special invitation of MPA Muneeb ul Haq and MNA Fiaz Zafar. Mr Peng was accompanied by a Chinese delegation.

The delegation was welcomed with traditional zeal and pump shown by local people, political leaders, farmers, businessmen, and traders. Petals of flowers were showered as a token of love with China. People also chanted slogans “Pakistan is proud of friendship with China,” and “Pak-China Friendship, Live Long”.

Later, Mr Peng Zhengwu inaugurated a state-of-the-art digital X-Ray machine donated by China to the OPWA foundation. He was given a briefing of the machine’s operations by the staff.

He also inaugurated “Shanghai Under Pass” in downtown Okara. Afterwards, the Chinese delegation visited the Municipal Corporations office where he was presented the “Key of City.” Guests also made him wear a traditional turban and Dhooti (traditional Punjabi costume worn around the abdomen that cover complete legs till ankle and it is not stitched from centre).

After the Chinese delegation was seated on a grand stage, a charged crowd interacted with it.

Addressing the gathering, Acting Consul General of the People’s Republic of China Lahore Peng Zhengwu said that relevant theoretical framework for the further materialization of Pakistan China Friendship Farm is to be designed in consultation with agro-based Chinese companies and Pakistan farmers and traders in the coming days.

He said that currently, Pakistan China Friendship Farm will only be having its symbolic presence. “After some time progresses, both Chinese enterprises and Okara agriculturists will conceptualize the Farm into a platform for the groundbreaking of their agriculture joint ventures,” he added. He said that it is an initiative to provide a chance to let Pakistan and China traders and farmers put their act together for laying the foundation of modern agriculture in Pakistan. He remarked that CPEC, which was the signature project of BRI initiated by Chinese President Xi Jinping, was a combined project of both Pakistan and China that would greatly benefit the region.

MPA Ch Muneeb ul Haq and senior member Ch Fiaz Zafar while addressing the gathering requested China to invest in Okara terming city land of corn, land of potato, land of rice and other essential crops in Pakistan

They demanded that Okara be made a twin city with a Chinese city and set up an industrial park. They requested that Okara be turned into a solar city and for the formation of an Agricultural forum here. At the end to commemorate the occasion, the Acting Consul General and his delegates were presented with shields.

Under CPEC phase-II, Pakistan and China have already signed MoU to enhance cooperation in the agriculture sector. The agreed areas of joint working under the MoU include technology transfer and collaboration in R&D, enhancing agriculture trade, cooperation in agro-industry, livestock and dairy.

The facts are that the average yield of wheat is only three tons per hectare in Pakistan, which can be improved substantially by taking the high-yield, anti-drought variety with resistance to insects and pests through Chinese cooperation. As for rice cultivation, China’s hybrid rice technology is recommended. For sugarcane and potato, the virus-free tissue culture sapling is a good choice.

China has many technologies suitable for crops in Pakistan, including compound planting, smart agriculture, water-saving irrigation and greenhouse. Recently, two Pakistani students from China’s Sichuan Agricultural University used the maize-soybean strip intercropping technology in Punjab, which has achieved satisfactory results by now. The greenhouse planting can also promote the development of vegetables, edible fungus and flowers in Pakistan. Taking advantage of agricultural machinery and agricultural materials, China’s fertilizer and pesticides, Pakistan should go for green pesticides and organic fertilizers to reduce pollution from the agricultural non-point source.

It is also encouraging that China and Pakistan are closely working together to promote agriculture products trade. To date, China and Pakistan have signed quarantine risk protocols for rice, citrus and mango. The two sides need to accelerate the signing of protocols for onions, potatoes and cherries.

The last one is for Pakistan to make good use of e-commerce, and strengthen commercial promotions and marketing to make more Chinese know more about its high-quality agriculture products.

It is hoped that with agriculture cooperation, the Pakistan-China trade imbalance might be improved and the bilateral trade could soon reach more than $30 billion. If it reaches $100 billion with several years of effort, Pakistan will become China’s largest trading partner in the South Asian subcontinent. The Pakistani government and enterprises should strengthen promotion in the Chinese market by participating in exhibitions and holding exhibitions so that Chinese importers and consumers can better understand the superior Pakistani products. Lastly, while actively exploring the Chinese market, Pakistan needs to take further measures to improve transportation, product packaging, inspection and quarantine.

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