

# China strengthens scientific research cooperation with B&R countries

The press conference on the International Symposium on Funding Science and People Cooperation for a Prosperous Belt and Road is held on July 4. [Photo by Wu Qiongjing/China.org.cn]

The press conference on the International Symposium on Funding Science and People Cooperation for a Prosperous Belt and Road was held on July 4.

A consensus was reached at the symposium held from July 3 to 4 on strengthening the cooperation on scientific research collaboration among Belt and Road countries and regions, and decided to build a framework to fund the cooperation of Belt and Road scientific talents, aiming to solve common challenges and boost the economic and social development of Belt and Road countries and regions.

Yang Wei, director and academician of the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), said international cooperation becomes increasingly important now.

He added that the communication and exchanges, cooperative research, as well as working in different countries will boost the friendship, encourage mutual learning, facilitate the resolution of difficult problems, and will promote scientific innovation and economic growth of Belt and Road countries and regions. The communication among international scientific research personnel has deepened the cultural exchange among Belt and Road countries and regions, which lays a foundation for sustained cooperation.

## **Widespread praise over cooperation funding framework**

Scientific research funding agencies from more than 30 countries and regions reached a joint declaration at the symposium, which demonstrates that they will deepen cooperation further, collaborate more in basic research, promote joint innovation among scientific research talents, so as to complement each other with respective advantages and resolve common problems.

The prospects depicted by the framework of funding the cooperation among Belt and Road scientific talents also received widespread praise from the representatives from different countries.

Professor Bernard Stewart, director of interdisciplinary research and international cooperation of Research Councils UK (RCUK), pointed out that RCUK has cooperated with NSFC for ten years. He said, it is a close and dynamic partnership between us, and the cooperation framework will help to deepen the cooperation between the U.K. and China as well as other Belt and Road countries and regions in agriculture, medicine, water resources, robots, big data and other fields in the future.

Professor Pavel Kabat, President and CEO of International Institute for

Applied Systems Analysis said, Belt and Road countries and regions have crucial significance, and by proposing this framework, China has taken a visionary move.

Sirimali Fernando, chairman of the National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka also regarded this framework as an excellent opportunity for Sri Lanka, a country with relatively weak foundation of scientific research and limited international partners in this field to escalate its capacity of scientific research overall.

### **Great attention to China's leadership in scientific research cooperation**

Representatives at the symposium also attached great significance to China's leadership in scientific research cooperation among Belt and Road countries and regions. In an interview with China.org.cn, Elwyn Grainger-Jones, CEO of Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), said that research in agricultural science is crucial to the achievement of sustainable development goals, and the research of agricultural science among Belt and Road countries and regions has a bright prospect.

Dr. Liu Jian, chief scientist of the United Nations Environment Programme, pointed out that the successful convening of the symposium has testified China's strong leadership in international scientific research cooperation. The framework proposed by NSFC and science foundations of other countries will play a leading role in supporting the joint cultivation of talents.

China plays an irreplaceably leading role in promoting Belt and Road construction with scientific and technological innovation, Liu emphasized.

NSFC funded over 200 million yuan (US\$ 29.4 million) on cooperative projects with Belt and Road countries and regions in 2016, providing support for young scholars in China and abroad to carry out exchange events and cooperation on scientific research.