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## **Silk Spice Road Dialogues: China-India Cooperation for a shared future in the Himalayan Region**

5 December, 2018 | Beijing, China

On December 5, 2018, the first round of the Silk Spice Road Dialogues convened in Beijing at the UNDP China office with the UNDP, Center for China and Globalization (CCG) and Himalayan Consensus as the co-hosts.

The Silk Spice Road Dialogues were established as a UNDP- Himalayan Consensus initiative to promote policy dialogue among nations of the Belt and Road (BNR) in the interest of enhancing collaborative synergies.

The concept of Silk Spice Road Dialogues was first initiated during the Himalayan Consensus Summit 2017 by Ambassador Sun Yuxi of China; and Professor Mahendra Lama, Member of Eminent Persons Group from India on Nepal-India relations. They articulated the need for a BNR platform seeking commonalities on shared interests and preventive measures for potential stresses.

At the Himalayan Consensus Summit (HCS) 2018, the idea further evolved to include a consortium of regional think tanks that could engage in open discourse on issues through policy dialogues making recommendations to respective governments. The decision at HCS 2018 was to focus on China-India relationship with emphasis on shared environmental concerns and furtherment of technology collaboration.

The dialogue convened in Beijing had representatives discussing issues concerning the Himalayan region-shared water resources and environmental concerns; disaster management; community empowerment through innovative technologies and financial solutions; along with highlighting the need for greater coexistence and confidence building.

With the opening by Nicholas Rosellini, Resident Coordinator at UN China; Wang Huiyao, President of CCG and keynote address by Nirupama Rao, former Indian Foreign Secretary and Ambassador, the dialogue had two round table discussions which were respectively chaired by Wang Huiyao of CCG; and Sujeev Shakya, Founder and Chairperson of Nepal Economic Forum and Secretary General at Himalayan Consensus and Laurence Brahm, Founding Director of Himalayan Consensus.

The key outcomes of the dialogue included a proposal by Nirupama Rao calling for work to immediately begin on the drafting of a Himalayan Consensus Charter consisting of shared principles for environment and technology collaboration; an invitation from Toby Simon, Founder and President of Synergia Foundation in India, to host the next round of SSRD- 'Cyber Network and Regional Development' focusing on technology collaboration to support the SDGs in Bangalore, India around the first week of March this year; and an outcome

policy recommendation document reflecting the views of all the participating think tanks to be shared with respective governments.

### **Quotations from the event**

“While current climate change trends do seem bleak, there are opportunities to enhance cooperation, develop common approaches and joint initiatives, and reduce the threats posed by climate change in the Himalayan Region.”- *Nicholas Rosellini, Resident Coordinator at UN China*

“We have had a very fruitful discussion during which we have identified a number of areas in which we can develop better multi-sectoral cooperation and coordination between India and China.”- *Nirupama Rao, Former Indian Foreign Secretary and Ambassador*

“As China’s leading think tank, CCG is pleased to join forces with UNDP and Himalayan Consensus on fostering positive dialogue between China and its Himalayan partners along the Belt and Road. The symposium is an effort by think tanks, civil society groups, and community-minded businesses to facilitate communication and trust-building in the region. It is a welcome first step toward promoting regional cooperation and governance for a shared future.”- *Wang Huiyao, President of Center for China and Globalization*

“Crisis and conflict in our region must be prevented by addressing the root causes not reacting to the latter effects. Platforms such as the Silk Spice Road Dialogues allow for a frank and open integration of ideas for practical solutions that can be offered as policy recommendations to governments through the think tanks assembled here.”- *Laurence Brahm, Founding Director of Himalayan Consensus*

“The core word that emerged from the dialogue is management across varied platforms and areas- from disaster management, e-commerce, finance to relations, perceptions, community and wider governance.”- *Sujeev Shakya, Secretary General at Himalayan Consensus*