China's initiative a commitment to multilateralism

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By HONG XIAO |   
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President of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly Miroslav Lajcak has praised China's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs, and multilateralism through the Belt and Road Initiative.  
"It (the initiative) is not just about financing projects in developing countries, providing improved transport routes and south-south cooperation," said Lajcak.  
"More than this, it represents a commitment to the SDGs, to climate action and to multilateralism."  
He made the comments at a high-level symposium on the Belt and Road Initiative and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the United Nations headquarters in New York on Wednesday.  
Lajcak said the SDGs called for the establishment of partnerships. "China is playing its part by taking this much-needed initiative," he said.  
Ma Zhaoxu, permanent representative of China to the UN, said that over the past five years, more than 80 countries and international organizations have signed more than 100 cooperation documents with China.  
A large number of projects have been implemented. Trade volume between China and the countries involved has exceeded $4 trillion, and total investment exceeded $60 billion.  
China has opened direct flights with 43 countries who support the plan. Cargo trains between China and Europe have completed 7,500 trips. Seventy-five economic and trade cooperation zones have been set up, creating more than 200,000 jobs for local people.  
Lajcak highlighted the example of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which provides funding through its loans program－which is critical for achieving SDGs.  
"In just its first year, it lent $1.73 billion to support sustainable infrastructure and other projects. It will no doubt help to close the $5 to $7 trillion gap we face in financing the SDGs," he said.  
"This is not only China's development strategy, rather, it is globally rooted in cooperation, trade and geography."  
Lajcak reiterated that the world is in an era of super-connectivity and globalization: "We are in need of a multilateral renaissance."  
"And multilateralism is the cornerstone of the initiative. It shows China's commitment to its neighbors and to the principles of the United Nations," he said.

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