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An exhibitor's representative tries a bicycle featuring virtual reality technology at the sixth China International Import Expo in Shanghai on Nov 5. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

Expo's key global role hailed

President Xi calls for international solidarity; dividends to be huge, Premier Li says.

Xu Wei, Liu Zihua and Cheng Yu report

China will always provide important opportunities for global development, and it will remain committed to high-level opening-up and driving economic globalization in a more open, inclusive, balanced and win-win direction, President Xi Jinping said on Nov 5.

In a letter to the sixth China International Import Expo in Shanghai, held from Nov 5 to 10, Xi emphasized the need for countries to stand in solidarity and jointly seek development amid the sluggish global economic recovery.

The expo, first held in 2018, has drawn on the strengths of China's huge market and serves as a platform for international procurement, investment promotion, people-to-people exchanges and open collaboration, which has contributed to fostering a new development pattern and global economic growth, Xi said.

He said he hoped the annual expo could elevate its function as a gateway to the new development pattern and present new opportunities to the world with China's fresh development.

The expo should fully amplify its role as a platform for facilitating high-level opening-up, make the Chinese market a major one shared by the world, further provide shared international public goods and services, and facilitate the building of an open global economy, so that the whole world could benefit, Xi said.

Premier Li Qiang, in a keynote speech at the expo's opening, reiterated Beijing's commitment to advancing opening-up with greater market opportunities, expanding imports and further creating immense dividends for the world

by putting in place negative lists for cross-border trade in services.

China's imports of goods and services are expected to reach a cumulative \$17 trillion in the next five years, he said.

The country will move forward with opening-up with better alignment in rules, and will develop more high-level opening-up platforms such as pilot free trade zones and the Hainan Free Trade Port, he said.

He reiterated China's readiness to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement as part of broader efforts to widen market access and protect the legitimate interests of foreign investors.

Li pledged to advance opening-up with greater impetus for innovation, including steps to bolster collaboration in innovation, share the outcomes of innovation and break the barriers that constrain the flow of innovation elements.

He highlighted the need to deepen reform in the digital economy sector and enable the free flow of data in a lawful and orderly manner.

China will firmly uphold the authority and effectiveness of the multilateral trading system, fully take part in the reform of the World Trade Organization, and firmly promote the stability of global industrial and supply chains, he said.

The expo's opening ceremony brought together about 1,500 representatives from 154 countries, regions and international organizations.

In Shanghai Li met separately Cuba's Prime Minister Manuel Marrero Cruz, Serbia's Prime Minister Ana Brnabic and

Kazakhstan's Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov, who were among leaders at the ceremony.

The leaders visited expo booths after the opening ceremony.

Global trade experts and business leaders at the ceremony hailed China's firm determination to expand opening-up, which they said will inject positive energy into the world economy and the development of companies worldwide.

Rebecca Grynspan, secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, said: "As President Xi has said, development is not a zero-sum game. One nation's success does not mean another's downfall. In a multipolar world healthy competition, trade based on internationally agreed rules and greater cooperation must be the way forward."

The expo is a powerful and well-established platform and a symbol of China's commitment to balanced trade relations with the rest of the world, especially with developing countries and small and medium-sized enterprises, she said.

Wang Lei, global executive vice-president of the British company AstraZeneca and president of its China branch, said the company is impressed by Chinese authorities' strong signals to uphold globalization and expand opening-up.

"We will always increase investment in the country on research and development, innovation and production capacity."

The Chinese economy is stable, and AstraZeneca is determined to deepen its roots in China, he said. The company announced the latest investment progress in China during the CIIE.

Toshinobu Umetsu, president and

chief executive of the China branch of the Japanese company Shiseido, said that amid the global economic downturn China's determination to build an open economy has injected much certainty and vitality into the world economy.

"China's huge market potential and leading economic growth have benefited the sustainable growth of Shiseido and many other multinationals. Shiseido's confidence and determination to invest in China have never been weakened."

US multinational companies, in particular, have expressed optimism about their business prospects in China.

Jin Fangqian, vice-president of Gilead Sciences and general manager of its China operations, said that China, with its ever-improving business environment, is set to provide more growth opportunities for multinational companies as the country expands opening-up.

Will Song, global senior vice-president of Johnson & Johnson, said the company believes that China's growth will give new impetus to the world's development, and China's innovation will play an increasingly important role globally.

"During recent years we have seen an acceleration in the introduction of innovative products and services into China. Equally important, we continue to notice a rise in on-the-ground innovation happening among global collaborations."

"Johnson & Johnson is committed to supporting the Chinese government to build a high-quality healthcare system to serve the Chinese population, as well as making contributions to China's modernization. The next era of innovation is here in China."

Country ready to be the largest spender on R&D

By CHENG YU

China and its major companies are investing big on research and development for breakthroughs in the latest technologies, not only to make innovation integral to economic growth, but gain a global edge. Last year 3.08 trillion yuan (\$421 billion) was allocated for research and development nationally, 10.1 percent more than in 2021, the National Bureau of Statistics said.

In 2022 companies spent 2.39 trillion yuan on R&D, 11 percent more than in 2021, accounting for 84 percent of the country's growth in R&D, and, 4.6 percentage points more than in 2020, the bureau said.

Deng Zigang, a researcher at Southwest Jiaotong University in Chengdu, Sichuan province, epitomizes China's R&D surge. Five years ago Deng wanted to develop a vacuum-tube maglev. In the initial stages of executing his ambitious project, he targeted a 45-meter loop and a top speed of 50 kilometers an hour. However, some experts were skeptical. The outcome of his research would be a toy rather than serious transportation option, he said they told him.

Despite having his confidence dented, he pressed on with his project. Ultimately, his sustained focus on the frontier area paid off when he won the Explorer Prize co-initiated by Ma Huateng, chairman and chief executive of the technology company Tencent and founder of the Tencent Foundation, and a number of renowned scientists.

The prize, established in 2019, encourages talented young scientists to concentrate on basic research and R&D of frontier technologies.

"It really meant a lot to me and our research team as we felt more empowered, more confident, and more motivated," Deng said, adding that it is gratifying to see his area of specialization has now become a key focus of research both in China and abroad.

Over the past five years Deng and his team have developed a high-speed maglev experimental loop in China,

making improvements to the project continuously. There is the world's first high-temperature superconductor test platform vehicle that can travel at up to 620 kilometers an hour, promising a new generation of transportation technology that could benefit not just China, but the entire world. It is an area in which several countries and regions are striving for a breakthrough.

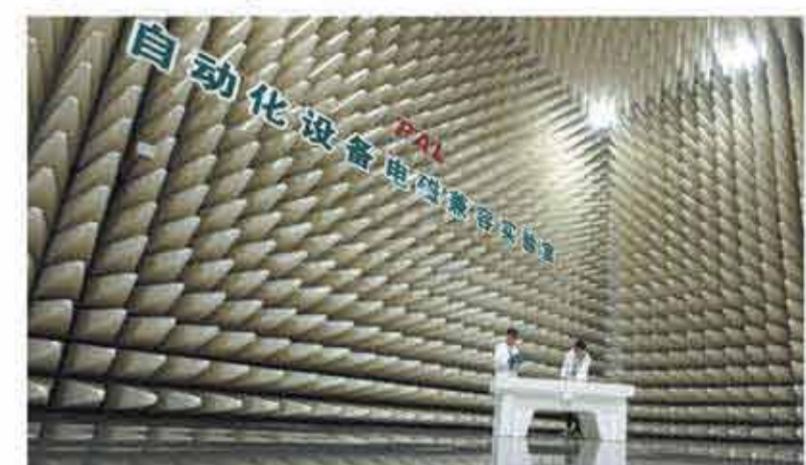
China plans to increase its R&D spending by more than 7 percent a year during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), the National Bureau of Statistics said. The consultancy McKinsey & Co said in a report that such a growth target will make China the world's largest spender on R&D.

This year the country's top leadership said in Qiushi, the flagship magazine of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, that more should be done to steadily increase financial investment in basic research, encourage companies to increase investment through various means such as tax incentives, and encourage them to establish scientific funds, donations and other diversified investments.

Several major Chinese technology companies are now striving to invest in R&D. The statistics bureau said in September that many companies are expanding their investments in important sectors, laying a solid foundation for breakthroughs in core technologies across key fields.

Huawei Technologies Co, Baidu Inc and iFlytek are among the companies devoting funds for R&D that could help not only themselves, but society at large, by creating social goods.

For instance, in 2018 Alibaba Group initiated the Damo Academy Youth Orange Award to encourage young researchers under 35 to pursue innovations in fields such as theoretical mathematics, quantum physics, medicine and semiconductors. It carries prize money of 1 million yuan for individuals. About 53 young researchers have received the award.



Researchers with an automation equipment company in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, prepare for the radiation emission experiment in an electromagnetic compatibility laboratory on July 7. #CHUNFENG / XINHUA

China injects growth impetus into world openness

By LIU ZHIHUA

An equal, open and collaborative world economic order is crucial to enhancing the resilience and security of industrial and supply chains, and countries should uphold multilateralism and enhance openness to propel globalization, experts say.

They also said that amid weakening globalization China's unwavering commitment to expanding high-level opening-up will continue to benefit it and other countries, injecting significant positive energy into global economic recovery.

They made the remarks at a news conference on the World Openness Report 2023 and International Symposium on World Opening-up, which was part of the Hongqiao International Economic Forum during the China International

Import Expo held in Shanghai from Nov 5 to 10.

The report was jointly published by the Institute of World Economics and Politics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Research Center for the Hongqiao International Economic Forum.

The downward trend in world openness since 2008 continued last year with divergence intensifying among countries and regions, the report said.

The 2022 World Openness Index dropped to 0.7542, compared with 0.7975 recorded in 2008. Last year was also the seventh consecutive year that the index fell between 0.75 and 0.76, and it was the second-lowest level since 2008.

From 2008 to 2022 the openness index for advanced economies fell from 0.8543 to 0.7882, and for emerging economies and developing countries the corresponding figure



Chinese and English versions of the World Openness Report 2023 on display at a news conference in Shanghai. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

rose from 0.6741 to 0.7067.

Zhang Yuyan, director of the CASS' Institute of World Economics and Politics, said: "Openness will

indeed increase a country's risk factors, but trade and information exchange with the outside world will also strengthen its capacity, enhance its ability to maintain security and help it obtain a more stable external environment through enhanced mutual trust and deepened bonds of interest with the outside world."

The fundamental ways to strengthen world security are "to advocate the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security" and "to balance openness and security in an improved manner", he said.

Christopher Pissarides, Regius professor of economics at the London School of Economics, who won the 2010 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, said via video that openness helps a country expand its market, which in turn helps it improve efficiency and use its competitive advantages to attain

growth that is otherwise difficult to achieve.

Albert Muchanga, the African Union's commissioner for economic development, trade, tourism, industry and minerals, said that world openness needs to be enhanced.

Citing examples of China's achievements in opening-up, such as its remarkable progress in developing pilot free trade zones, Zhou Xiaochuan, former governor of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, said via video that China has been injecting new growth impetus into world openness through its unwavering opening-up.

Gu Xueming, president of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said that in the process of opening-up and development China and the world have been bringing mutual benefits to each other.

"China's interactions with the world in opening-up have become a good example of optimal opening-up, reflecting the country's goodwill

to take the initiative to open up and promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind."

Joey Wat, chief executive of Yum China, said that for the past six years the company has been proud to provide catering services at the Shanghai expo, which is a "prestigious global event".

"With a 36-year history in China, ... we are excited about the significant opportunities China presents and remain confident in our ability to seize these growth opportunities."

Anne-Laure Parrical de Chamard, a member of the executive board of Siemens Energy, said dialogue, exchanges and collaboration are more important than ever, considering global challenges such as climate change.

"China is pursuing a 'Chinese path to modernization' through high-quality development and promoting the common development of the world via high-level opening-up, and we strongly endorse that."

Zheng Xin contributed to this story.