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**President Mukherjee Outlines Eight Steps for a People Centric Partnership Between India and China**

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee delivered a lecture at Peking University today (May 26, 2016) on the topic “India-China Relations: 8 steps to a people-centric partnership”.

Addressing the gathering, the President said at a time of global economic uncertainty, India and China, despite the pressure of having 40 per cent of the world’s human population, have managed to maintain unity and growth. The joint contribution of the two countries to world economy as well as regional and global stability, cannot be underestimated. India and China are poised to join the ranks of leading global powers. It is incumbent on the two countries, as emerging economic powers to remain equally focused on nurturing regional and global prosperity.

The President said both countries are at the threshold of an opportunity to join hands and create a resurgence, a positive energy, an “Asian Century”. This will not be an easy task. Obstacles need to be resolved with fortitude. The two countries must persevere to realise this dream. They must join hands in a durable friendship.

The President said political understanding between India and China is vital for a Closer Developmental Partnership. One of the ways it could be developed is through enhanced political communication. To build a people-centric partnership, there must be mutual trust predicated on mutual respect and a better appreciation of respective political and social systems. This can be achieved by closer contacts at all levels. There is need to enhance and strengthen co-operation to the mutual benefit of both peoples. The President quoted Gandhiji and said "I look forward to the day when a free India and a free China will cooperate together in friendship and brotherhood for their own good and for the good of Asia and the world." He called on the peoples of India and China to tirelessly strive for that objective - despite current challenges.

Underling the steps for people-centric India-China relations, the President said both India and China are ‘young’ societies. Our youth share common aspirations and perceptions. Their annual exchanges have been fruitful but both sides need to synergize their potential. He stated that in a digital age, joint film productions could be useful instruments for creating positive perceptions among our peoples. Greater exchanges between institutions of higher learning, more cultural festivals and joint research and scholarship programmes can help dispel the notion that we need to look to the West and not to each other to make progress in education, science & technology. Travel can also be a very important binding factor between the two countries. Indians would like to have more opportunities to travel to their holy sites in China and, in turn, welcome more Chinese visits to Buddhist pilgrimage centres in India. By pursuing sustainable solutions and sharing experiences, civil societies on both sides can collaborate – duly respecting the parameters in which they are required to operate in our respective countries. We can use multilateral fora including the G-20, BRICS, EAS, AIIB, SCO and the United Nations to enhance public awareness of the desire of both our countries for a shared future shaped by us together. Trade and commerce can also be the most powerful agents in reinforcing our complementarities. He called upon India-

China entrepreneurs to jointly innovate to create a new model for business.

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