

Beijing enters Belt and Road time



Photo taken on May 13, 2017 shows the National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China. The Belt and Road Forum (BRF) for International Cooperation will be held in Beijing from May 14 to 15. (Xinhua/Jin Liangkuai)

The Chinese capital is in Belt and Road time with high hopes that the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation means a new dawn for globalization.

A total of 29 heads of state and government leaders are scheduled to be in Beijing for the forum which opens on Sunday. Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend the opening ceremony and deliver a keynote speech. On Monday, he will host a leaders' round table summit.

The forum is by far the most important meeting on the Belt and Road Initiative since Xi first raised the concept in 2013. It is also the largest-scale and highest-level international meeting initiated by China.

Participants will also include more than 1,500 delegates from over 130 nations; more than 70 international organizations including the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; representatives of the European Union, France, Germany, Britain, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States.

The forum comes at a time when the world is waiting to see a new chapter of globalization which features more inclusive and inter-connected development.

Jose Vinals, chairman of Standard Chartered PLC, praised the "very good

timing” of the forum, saying it will do much for communication between governments, business communities and other stakeholders as they develop new strategic cooperation mechanisms.

In an email to Xinhua, Vinals writes of a globalization “under attack and suffering setbacks.” The Belt and Road Initiative, he believes, is the strong support which globalization needs today.

Roads, railways, pipelines and ports will give developing nations and landlocked regions easier access to capital, goods and talent, creating growth opportunities for those who benefited little from the last round of globalization.

The initiative is essentially about balancing the global economy, said Zhang Yansheng of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges.

“While globally we see an overall excess of industrial capacity, liquidity and welfare, many Belt and Road countries face a shortage of those very things,” Zhang told Xinhua in an interview. “Left unsolved, this problem will lead to a widening gap between developed and developing economies.”

The Belt and Road puts priority on infrastructure and connectivity. It means better linking countries to the global trade network and enabling them to bring their comparative advantages to the market.

Improved infrastructure will particularly benefit those economically least developed regions, including Central and South Asia with large infrastructure gaps and difficulties in financing new projects, according to Tianjie He and Louis Kuijs, economists at the Britain-based advisory firm Oxford Economics.

They estimate that Belt and Road countries will contribute 80 percent of global GDP growth by 2050, up from 68 percent last year, with China’s share remaining broadly stable at around 40 percent and that of the rest of Asia doubling to over 30 percent.

Differing from previous models, the globalization actuated by the Belt and Road will be more inclusive. Cooperation will not be subject to restrictive rules nor high thresholds, said Wang Yiwei of the Renmin University of China.

“The Belt and Road Initiative does not force other countries to accept China’s plans and rules, but calls for alignment of development strategies,” he told Xinhua.

Many countries and regions along the Belt and Road have dovetailed the initiative with their own programs, including Mongolia’s Prairie Road, Kazakhstan’s Nurly Zhol (Bright Path), the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union and the EU’s Juncker Investment Plan.

Without predefined rules, the Belt and Road is about learning from doing, about seeking consensus project by project, said Zha Daojiong of Peking University.

Expectations are high: no one will be left behind in the new era of

globalization. However, there might be lingering risks of protectionism, financial constraints and regional insecurity.

Zha believes a vibrant economy, blossoming trade, investment, jobs and profits can keep the lid on security risks.

"The Belt and Road Initiative helps people get busy with business, rather than busy with terrorism," he said.

[Under Theresa May and the Tories we've seen seven years of failure on housing- Healey](#)

John

Healey, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, responding to Theresa May's

announcement that the Conservatives will build more affordable homes, said:

"This is political spin, with no substance. There's no commitment on the number of new affordable homes or on new funding.

"Under Theresa May and the Tories we've seen seven years of failure on housing, with the level of new affordable housebuilding now at a 24-year low.

"The number of government funded social rented homes being built has fallen to fewer than 1,000 last year from almost 40,000 under Labour in 2009-10.

"Theresa May has been at every cabinet since 2010 and can't sidestep her share of the blame for the Tory housing crisis. The number of home-owners has fallen by 200,000, homelessness has more than doubled and new affordable housebuilding is at a near-record low.

"After seven years of failure, the Conservatives have no plan to fix the housing crisis. A Labour government will back first-time buyers and build the homes we need, including 100,000 genuinely affordable homes to rent and buy a year by the end of the next Parliament."

ENDS

Notes to editors

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Affordable housebuilding has fallen to a 24 year low:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/595369/Live_Table_1000.xlsx

The number of government funded social rented homes started each year has fallen from almost 40,000 to fewer than 1,000:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/572767/Live_Table_1012.xlsx

Home-ownership has fallen by 200,000 since 2010 after rising by a million under Labour:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/595786/2015-16_Section_1_Households_Annex_Tables.xlsx

10 times the SNP protected Scotland from Tory policies

Now more than ever, it is vital to have strong SNP voices standing up for Scotland.

Only then can we protect Scotland from the dangers of an unopposed Tory government at Westminster and continue to make Scotland the best country it can be.

Here are ten ways we've done just that.

Labour will protect state pension as Tories fail to commit to Triple Lock

A Labour

Government will protect the incomes of twelve million pensioners by legislating

to keep the 'triple lock', Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, will say today.

Under the

Conservatives' watch 300,000 more pensioners are in poverty, yet the

Conservative

Party has failed to commit to the 'triple lock' on state pensions; a policy which protects pensioners' standard of living by guaranteeing that their incomes rise to meet the cost of living.

A Labour

Government will protect pensioners by legislating to guarantee the triple lock, and committing to keep the Winter Fuel Allowance and free bus passes.

Meeting

pensioners in Norwich on Saturday, Jeremy Corbyn will say:

"The

Conservative's failure to guarantee a decent standard of living for older people, Tory cuts to social care and their failure to protect the NHS are proof that the Tories' are abandoning older people.

"With more

pensioners in poverty under the Conservatives, it is clear that a Labour Government is necessary to provide a secure and dignified retirement for the many who have contributed all their lives.

"Labour will

legislate to guarantee the triple lock on state pensions over the next parliament, and we'll protect the Winter Fuel Allowance and free bus passes."

[Green Party pledges to end immigration detention at women's manifesto launch at Yarl's Wood](#)



13 May 2017

***Greens launch manifesto for gender equality at Yarl's Wood detention centre ahead of major demonstration [1]**

***Pledges to shut down detention centres, protect sex workers through decriminalisation, and save women's healthcare**

***Deputy leader Amelia Womack: "The detention of asylum seekers in centres such as Yarl's Wood is inhumane, costly and totally unnecessary"**

The Green Party will launch its women's manifesto at 11am today (May 13) outside Yarl's Wood detention centre in Bedfordshire. The manifesto's three

key policies all relate to providing safety for all, regardless of gender.

The party is calling for an end to immigration detention, leading to the closing of Yarl's Wood where the majority of female asylum seekers are held while their claims are being processed. In the short term, the Green Party are calling for the release of women who have experienced sexual violence so that their claim can be processed in the community, and would ban male staff from coming into contact with female detainees, who currently supervise detainees while showering, dressing and using the toilet. Hundreds of complaints about sexual abuse and mistreatment have been raised by Yarl's Wood detainees over the last decade [2].

The Greens are also promising to provide safety for sex workers through decriminalisation of both the sale and purchase of sex. This comes after UN [3] and Amnesty International [4] recommendations over the last year, showing that making sex work illegal only reduces safety.

The Green Party has also pledged to reverse the cuts to health care that have disproportionately affected women and other marginalised groups [5] [6].

The full pledges are to:

End immigration detention

- Immediately act to protect the most vulnerable asylum seekers who have experienced rape, sexual abuse or torture, by allowing their claims to be processed in the community
- Implement a three month maximum processing time for asylum applications
- Funding for integrated support for asylum seekers
- In the long term work to abolish immigration detention centres to enable all claims to be processed in the community

Keep sex workers safe

- Decriminalise sex work, in line with research from Amnesty International and the UN
- Amend existing criminal records held by sex workers
- Zero tolerance of coercion, violence or sexual abuse

Save women's healthcare

- End pay freezes for public sector workers
- Introduce safe levels of staffing across the NHS
- Reinstate sexual health services

The Green Party's other pledges to stand up for safety also include the role roll out a UK-wide strategy to tackle domestic violence, scrapping the "rape clause" for those wishing to claim child benefit, and restoring legal aid to prevent victims being forced to represent themselves against their abusers in court.

The women's manifesto goes on to announce measures to improve mental health services, close the gender pay gap and support unpaid carers, those who are

disabled and older women, and policies to increase gender parity in government.

Amelia Womack, Green Party deputy leader, said:

“Detaining asylum seekers is inhumane, costly and totally unnecessary. Women who are coming to the UK seeking refuge are being detained in appalling conditions in centres like Yarl’s Wood, often for years with no end to their incarceration in sight. We can be so much better than this, a confident and caring country that welcomes people in need instead of closing our borders, building walls and locking up vulnerable people who need help. The bold policies we’re announcing today show that the Green Party is committed to standing up for everyone, and we are not afraid to speak out about issues other parties would rather shy away from. From asylum seekers to sex workers, as well as all of us who use the NHS, these policies set us on the path to building a tolerant, inclusive society.”

Notes:

1. Amelia Womack, Green Party deputy leader, will launch the women’s manifesto at 11am on May 13 at the entrance of Twinwoods Business Park, Thurleigh Rd, Milton Ernest MK44 1FD. Movement for Justice is organising a demonstration at Yarl’s Wood on the same day from 1pm to 4pm. More information is available here:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1397760473581688/>
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jun/15/yarls-wood-report-calling-for-closure-decade-abuse-complaints>
3. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hiv-aids/sex-work-and-the-law-in-asia-and-the-pacific.html>
4. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/05/amnesty-international-publishes-policy-and-research-on-protection-of-sex-workers-rights/>
5. <https://www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/women/key-issues/women-and-public-spending-cuts/>
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/nov/19/austerity-women-men-low-income>
7. Green Party Women is a subgroup of the Green Party of England and Wales and welcomes both women, including trans women, as well as gender variant members.
8. The full women’s manifesto will be available after the launch.

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