**Welcome Remarks by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi at the B2B Matchmaking Sessions on Animal Fodder and Fruits and Vegetable**

(Beijing: 26 November 2024)

**Honorable Mayor Liu Jianjun of Weifang,**

**Deputy Director-General Wang Qihai,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good Morning and Dajia Hao,**

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this important forum. Today’s meeting is made possible through collaborative efforts of the Embassy, BOI in Islamabad and all the participants from Pakistan and China. Today, we continue the momentum of our B2B matchmaking series, moving beyond conversation into the realm of action, partnership, and joint ventures.

We are honoured by the presence of Mayor Liu Jianjun, who has traveled all the way from Weifang. His presence reminds me of my first visit to Weifang earlier this year, which had left a lasting impression of friendship and mutual collaboration on me.

We are also grateful for the support extended by MOFCOM, with numerous brainstorming sessions between our two sides on how to enhance export-oriented investment from China.

The Pakistan-China relationship stands as a model of mutual trust, mutual support, and shared partnership. It has been said that “***Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”*** This perfectly captures the essence of our collaboration. We are partners in transforming opportunities into realities. Today’s discussions on animal fodder and fruits and vegetables processing are not just about trade and investment -- they are also about driving innovation, creating livelihoods and a win-win fusion for everyone.

Let me start with the animal fodder sector, a space where Pakistan offers immense promise. Blessed with abundant agricultural resources and an enabling investment environment, this sector has grown rapidly in recent years. Between 2017 and 2022, maize production in Pakistan has surged by 12%, and in 2022 alone, we produced 480,000 tons of rapeseed and 256,000 tons of millet. Coupled with significant capacities in wheat, sugarcane, rice, and poultry meal, the local poultry feed market has expanded to nearly USD 2 billion, creating ripe opportunities for value addition and joint investments.

Equally promising is the fruits and vegetables processing sector, a pillar of Pakistan’s agricultural economy. With over 35 types of vegetables and 30 varieties of fruits cultivated across nearly 1 million hectares, Pakistan produces an annual vegetable yield of 15 million tons, supported by over 700 cold storage units. This sector already exports fruit juices, processed vegetables, pickled foods, jams, and nuts, contributing 27% to value-added manufacturing.

Despite these strengths, processed food represents just 6% of Pakistan’s total food exports, highlighting immense untapped potential for value addition. The government has created an investor-friendly environment with 100% foreign equity ownership, zero tariffs on plant and machinery imports, and seamless profit repatriation. For Chinese companies, entering into joint ventures in this sector offers profit margins of up to 4.6% leveraging Pakistan’s labour cost advantages and growing demand in domestic and export markets.

Together, these sectors exemplify Pakistan’s broader investment ecosystem. With its strategic location as a gateway to South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, Pakistan offers unparalleled connectivity to regional markets. The government’s unwavering support for investors, through tax incentives, streamlined processes, and operational efficiencies, ensures that opportunities are not just identified but realized.

Ladies and gentlemen, our discussions today are a testament to the strength and depth of the Pakistan-China partnership. As the Chinese saying goes, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” This forum reflects our shared resolve to go far--together.

Finally, I invite all participants to seize this opportunity with determination and vision. The Pakistan-China relationship is built on trust and shared aspirations, and this forum is yet another step forward in our journey of shared progress. Let us ensure that today’s discussions pave the way for enduring partnerships and tangible results that reflect the true strength of our friendship.

Thank you.