Ambassador Khalil Hashmi’s remarks at Seminar on Employment and Social Security in Xinjiang

(Urumqi: 16 December 2024)

Honorable Mr. Erkin Tuniyaaz, Chairman of People’s Government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region,

Excellences,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very Good morning.

It is a privilege to be here – once again – in Urumqi, a region that stands at the crossroads of history and modernity, playing a pivotal role in China’s inspiring march towards Chinese modernization and the Great Rejuvenation of Chinese Nation.

Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the government of Xinjiang for the exceptional hospitality extended to me. Your warmth is a testament to the spirit of this land, which has long been a bridge between cultures and civilizations.

Earlier this year, I paid my first visit to Xinjiang as Ambassador, and I had a number of important engagements, including a very fruitful meeting with His Excellency Erkin Tuniyaz and interactions with the Party Leadership. I was of course deeply impressed by Xinjiang’s remarkable transformation – for which my reference point was my tenure in China as Counselor at Pakistan Embassy Beijing 15 years ago.

This region’s journey of inclusive growth is a powerful reminder that prosperity must be shared to be meaningful. It reflects a vision that aligns with one of Pakistan’s most profound philosophical voices, the Allama Iqbal, who urged individuals to harness their inner strength and take charge of their destiny. As Iqbal eloquently said, “Apne mann mein doob kar pa ja suragh-e-zindagi” (Dive into your inner self to discover the essence of life).

In Xinjiang, I see an embodiment this philosophy. It has taken control of its destiny through sustained efforts in employment generation, social security, and inclusive development. These efforts not only uplift its people but also contribute to the prosperity of the entire region, making Xinjiang a model for others to emulate.

Pakistan and China share an iron-clad friendship—one that is not merely a partnership but a bond of brotherhood. Over seven decades, this relationship has grown stronger through mutual trust and a shared vision for peace, development, and prosperity. We have also always supported each other. In Pakistan, China can always find a vehement and reliable advocate of China’s core interests, including Xinjiang.

Xinjiang’s role in our bilateral relationship is pivotal. As a neighboring region, it has always been a gateway for trade, culture, and cooperation between our peoples. Today, Xinjiang stands as a vital node of President Xi’s Belt and Road Initiative, of which China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the pioneering project.

The recent conversion of the Khunjerab Pass into an all-weather route is a testament to the strength of our partnership and a cornerstone of our connectivity endeavors. This milestone is more than an infrastructure achievement—it is an enabler of opportunities. It will connect markets, create jobs, and foster deeper cultural exchanges, paving the way for a brighter future.

Xinjiang’s success in employment and social security is not only a reflection of visionary leadership but also a lesson in the power of focused, inclusive policies. Pakistan sees immense potential for collaboration with Xinjiang in areas that can directly impact the lives of our people. I propose the following concrete steps to deepen this cooperation:

First, through development of skills development program, we can equip our youth with skills in emerging sectors such as technology, renewable energy, and advanced manufacturing. Xinjiang’s expertise can complement Pakistan’s vast human resource potential to create a skilled workforce ready to meet the demands of the modern economy.

Secondly, we can leverage Xinjiang’s advancements in agricultural technology and Pakistan’s fertile lands to modernize farming practices, increase productivity, and enhance food security. This collaboration can generate employment in rural areas and address critical challenges like water management and climate resilience.

Thirdly, Joint ventures in textile and light manufacturing industries can harness Xinjiang’s industrial strengths and Pakistan’s raw materials, creating jobs and driving economic growth in both regions.

Fourthly, our two countries should now aim to build dedicated trade and logistics hubs to capitalize on the enhanced connectivity brought by the all-weather route. These hubs can serve as engines of regional commerce, unlocking opportunities for businesses and communities alike.

Pakistan has always believed that development is meaningful only when it uplifts people and empowers them to shape their destinies. Xinjiang’s story is one of resilience, determination, and progress—values that Pakistan shares deeply. As Iqbal envisioned, the path to greatness lies in self-discovery and self-reliance, both as individuals and as nations.

Looking ahead, Pakistan sees Xinjiang as a key partner in building a future defined by connectivity, inclusivity, and opportunity.

Let us continue to work together, inspired by our shared values and driven by the vision of a prosperous and harmonious future.

Thank you.