

## PRESS RELEASE

### PECC urges to find synergy among connectivity initiatives

**28 September 2016 (Yangzhou, China)** – Some 150 thought leaders from the Asia-Pacific region’s research and policy communities gathered in Yangzhou, China yesterday for an international symposium with the objective of discussing how the regional integration efforts must go on by converging the physical, institutional, and people-to-people connectivities. In order for the three main pillars of connectivity to work “seamlessly” and efficiently, transparent and inclusive information-sharing is also key, helped by digital technologies and online platforms.

“By means of connectivity, people pursue better market access, facilitation of business transaction, more convenient logistics, lower transaction costs, freer human mobility, and greater ease in doing business,” said Mr. Huang Mengfu, Vice chair, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and Honorary Chair of China committee for PECC, in his keynote speech. “Therefore, the connectivity agenda is in essence the agenda for structural adjustment, reform and opening up.” Noting that the Asia-Pacific region is not short of connectivity projects, he said that without a platform or “a connecting mechanism, the potential of the individual connectivity projects is limited and the whole region can hardly promote connectivity building with concerted efforts.”

“Connectivity is about the future of APEC,” said Mr. Tan Jian, the Senior Official of China for APEC. As the target date of Bogor Goals draws near, “committing to the overarching goal of achieving a seamless integrated system becomes all the more important, taking into consideration the cross-cutting nature of the regional connectivity agenda,” he added.

“The main core of connectivity development in the Asia-Pacific is based on the sub-regional and national initiatives. The main task for working under the umbrella of the Blueprint for the next 10 years is to create the links that may join these initiatives. To undertake this endeavor, it is also very important to give priority to the “seamless” aspect of the connectivity: the compatibility between the different initiatives,” said Mr. Gonzalo Gutierrez, former Foreign Minister of Peru. He continued, “An initiative that could help the freer and faster flow of information may be the establishment of a real time platform where economies and users may have direct access to consult the information on the most recent decisions taken by different countries or groups of countries regarding physical, and especially, institutional and people-to-people connectivity.”

APEC Economic Leaders approved the “APEC Connectivity Framework” in Bali in 2013, pledging to “reach a seamlessly and comprehensively connected and integrated Asia-Pacific through the pillars of physical connectivity, institutional connectivity and people-to-people connectivity.” The 2014 Beijing APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting endorsed the “APEC Connectivity Blueprint for 2015-2025,” which called on the APEC economies to take agreed actions and meet agreed targets to strengthen the tri-pillar connectivity by 2025. Similarly, ASEAN formulated its Master Plan on Connectivity 2025, which sets out five main dimensions of connectivity: sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, seamless logistics, regulatory excellence, and people mobility. Pacific Alliance has also undertaken a number of connectivity-related initiatives within its member economies.

“Connectivity for the Asia-Pacific region is crucial not only for realizing the regional economic integration, but indispensable to revitalizing the economy and promoting long-term inclusive

growth and sustainable development,” said Ambassador Tang Guoqiang, Co-chair of PECC and Chair of China National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (CNCPEC). “Connectivity should be one of the pillars for regional economic cooperation beyond 2020,” he added. With this in mind, the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) held an international symposium, ‘Connecting the Connectivities in the Asia-Pacific’ on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016, organized by the CNCPEC, with the support of Yangzhou local government, APEC Study Center of Nankai University and World Canal Cities Organization (WCCO).

Ambassador Don Campbell, Co-chair of PECC, remarked in closing, “the three connectivity pillars cannot be kept in silos; we need to look at their convergence with a holistic view.” “One of the ways in which PECC could add value to this collective regional effort is perhaps by coming up with a mechanism to measure and evaluate how we are making progress in the key areas of connectivity such as finance, infrastructure, institutions and regulations, human mobility - education and skilled labor – among others,” he added.



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**About the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council**

The Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) is a non-profit international organization committed to the promotion of cooperation and dialogue in the Asia Pacific. Founded in 1980, PECC is a tripartite network of 26 member committees comprising individuals and institutions dedicated to this shared mission. Of the 26 member committees, 23 represent the economies of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands Forum, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, the United States of America, and Vietnam. The PECC also has one associate member, France (Pacific Territories), and two institutional members, the Pacific Trade and Development Conference and the Pacific Basin Economic Council. As the only non-governmental official observer of APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), PECC provides independent business and research input for the regional policy-making process. [www.pecc.org](http://www.pecc.org)