

**Keynote Speech
Hon. Loke Siew Fook
Minister of Transport Malaysia
Zhengzhou-Kuala Lumpur "Air Silk Road" Forum for
International Cooperation – Leadership Speech**

SALUTATION

Honourable Mr. Wang Kai
Governor of Henan Provincial Government

Honourable Mr. Zheng Xuefang
Minister and Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic
of China in Malaysia

Honourable Dato' Seri Jana Santhiran Muniayan
Secretary General of the Ministry of Transport Malaysia

Honourable Dato' Mohd Izani Ghani
Managing Director of Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Firstly, let me begin by welcoming everyone - “Selamat Datang” and Welcome. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, it is both an honour and a pleasure to co-host this Zhengzhou-Kuala Lumpur "Air Silk Road" Forum for

International Cooperation with the People's Government of Henan Province, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of China-Malaysia diplomatic relations back in 1974 and a significant outcome from the recent State visit by H.E. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China to Malaysia from 15 to 17 April 2025.

2. We are truly grateful for your presence here today, which reflects the enduring partnerships and mutual aspirations we share across geographical distances and historical ties between both countries.

3. In this context, China and Malaysia share a rich history of mutual interest and collaboration, and as we reach the 50-year mark of our relations, I am hopeful and confident in the promising future and numerous opportunities for both countries to further develop and enhance mutual economic advantages and cooperation.

4. Indeed, Malaysia and China have strengthened air cargo cooperation through a "twin hub" model between Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and Zhengzhou Xingzheng International Airport (Zhengzhou Airport), driven by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in June 2024 between Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB) and China Henan Aviation Group Co. (CHAGC). This collaboration aims to

expand air cargo routes, enhance logistics networks, and boost economic ties under the Air Silk Road framework, facilitating trade and e-commerce between the two nations.

5. Today's event, the Zhengzhou-Kuala Lumpur "Air Silk Road" Forum for International Cooperation marks further opportunistic milestone, where both airports adopt a twin hub model, facilitating growth of air cargo between both countries and derive mutual economic benefits.

6. In this regard, this forum could not be more opportune as we stand at a pivotal juncture in the trajectory of the global aviation industry. Together, we would navigate a landscape reshaped by the profound shifts in attitudes toward technology, the environment, and sustainability, catalysed by the unprecedented challenges wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. Malaysia remains China's second-largest trading partner within ASEAN and its top source of imports. Strategically located at the heart of a high-growth, high-traffic region in ASEAN, Malaysia boasts a well-established air route network covering major global markets and the Regional Comprehensive

Economic Partnership (RCEP) area, offering favourable conditions for developing air cargo services.

8. Leveraging these opportunities, Malaysia is ramping up efforts to strengthen our air cargo sector. This is by positioning KLIA and other international airports such as Penang International Airport, Kota Kinabalu International Airport and Senai International Airport as regional cargo hubs.

9. This is already rooted in actual performance as the KLIA - Zhengzhou Airport route air cargo volume has seen strong growth, from 437 tonnes in 2023 to 1,812 tonnes in 2024. And it has further spiked to 11,635 tonnes as of September 2025. Not only has the cargo volumes increased, the weekly air cargo routes between both airports have also increased from 3 times weekly to 10 times weekly in 2025.

10. Notably, the cargo from Zhengzhou Airport to KLIA include cross-border e-commerce shipments, whilst exports from KLIA to Zhengzhou Airport are dominated by fresh fruits, including durian and other tropical varieties that have steadily gained popularity in the Chinese market. This positions KLIA as a regional air cargo hub that the Chinese ecommerce players can leverage as a transshipment hub.

11. Along with its strategic position, cargo facilities at KLIA support businesses by offering state-of-the-art logistics infrastructure, seamless air, sea, and land networks, and a Free Commercial Zone (FCZ) that promotes international trade, e-commerce, and goods distribution throughout the ASEAN region and farther. These facilities facilitate the effective, safe, and prompt management of different cargo types, such as heavy and temperature-sensitive items, aiding in the preservation of seamless supply chains and bolstering economic expansion.

12. I was in China recently accompanying our Prime Minister and we had the privilege to meet with JD.com, an ecommerce giant where I invited JD.com to establish its regional distribution centre at KLIA, specifically at the Selangor Aero Park @ KLIA Aeropolis, which was launched in June this year.

13. With the launch of the Selangor Aero Park at KLIA Aeropolis, we are not just unveiling a new development. We are launching a bold vision — one that speaks to Malaysia's future as a regional powerhouse premised on regional supply chain of high value activities.

14. As global trade routes evolve and regional economic integration deepens, we know that logistics is no longer just a support system. It is a strategic asset. And the Selangor Aero

Park @ KLIA Aeropolis will be the heartbeat of that asset — where air, land, and sea move in concert to power industrial growth and economic resilience.

15. Every valuable shipment departing from this Aero Park embodies the potential for skills transfer, research and development, innovation, and with Malaysian talent leading the way.

16. These are industries that create meaningful work, attract global capital, and — most importantly — offer our youth a future grounded in skills.

17. The Selangor Aero Park is designed with that future as a priority. Intelligent infrastructure, digital connectivity, and trade facilitation— all backed by federal and state cooperation— this is how we distinguish ourselves. By clustering these industries in a purpose-built ecosystem, supported by smart infrastructure and trade facilitation, we send a strong message to the world: Malaysia is open for business. For this reason, I strongly promote KLIA - Zhengzhou Airport cooperation to expand for more progress — through partnership, vision, and execution. And I invite our Chinese partners to also consider establishing their regional footprint here. I am certain it will also be the heartbeat of the Air Silk Route initiative.

18. The facilities, infrastructures, route expansion and strategic partnership between Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB) and China Henan Aviation Group strongly support the Air Silk Route initiative. In addition, this cooperation aligns with the shared interests of both nations and has received strong support from our leaders who view the initiative as crucial for strengthening economic ties.

19. On this note, I want to convey my appreciation to the Governor and the Henan Provincial Government, as well as officials from the Ministry of Transport Malaysia and the MAHB management for their significant dedication to making this forum a reality.

20. I wish all of you a fruitful and meaningful forum session. And do take some time to experience the beauty of our country, the variety of delicacies we offer, and the wealth of diverse culture and heritage all bound and found within this nation.

Thank you.