

1. Q: As a popular candidate for the post of the UN Secretary - General, what do you think of China's role in maintaining international order and safeguarding global security?

A: The role of China is growing, in particular in the United Nations, and this is a very welcome development. At present China is the largest troop contributor among the permanent members of the UN Security Council and second largest financial contributor to the UN peacekeeping. China is also supporting the evolution of UN peacekeeping, including by the expected joining the UN peacekeeping Capability Readiness System that - a beginning of the UN stand-by force. These are concrete examples. In addition China is working constructively in the UN and in other contexts, helping to find political solutions to the security challenges of our era.

2. Q: China has insisted on direct dialogue and negotiation with relevant countries in dealing with maritime disputes How do you think of China's such stance?

A: Every dispute settlement process includes the element of negotiation. It is fundamental that parties to a dispute retain communication throughout the dispute settlement process. In addition, China has declared commitment to seeking win-win outcomes as its basic principle in handling international relations. This is wise and should help in finding solutions to the actual disputes.

3. Q: The Philippines unilaterally initiated an arbitration case against China over the South China Sea at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague in 2013. China insists that the court has no jurisdiction over the issue. How do you think of China's stance on this issue?

A: China's position is internationally well known. You will understand that I cannot comment on the specific claims in the dispute. However, in general, I believe that the parties should use the whole range of peaceful means, including bilateral means as well as regional arrangements, such as ASEAN, and settle their disputes in accordance with international law.

4. Q: As former President of Slovenia, what do you think China can learn from Slovenia in deepening reform and open-up?

A: The basic lesson is that structural reforms take time and require a great deal of patience and persistence by all actors involved in designing and carrying out the necessary reforms. Slovenia has experienced difficulties in dealing with health and pension reforms. I can only imagine the magnitude of the reform tasks in China - for example in the context of urbanization and changes of hukou system. Reforms may take longer than one would wish. Therefore a steady course and careful management are the basic requirements.

On the question of opening - it is important to build a good balance. For example in trade, imports and exports need to be balanced over longer periods of time. Moreover trade balance does not include only trading in goods but also in services, in investments and in human connectivity more generally.

5. Q: Could you please share some interesting details of your work with the think tank of the Renmin University of China?

A: Gladly. The first experience with Chongyang Institute has been the vigor and imagination of the young researchers and academics. That included very lively discussions and openness to the media. I found this openness and media savvy approach very exciting. The second experience was in Yiwu where I was invited by the Chongyang Institute of the Renmin University for a

conference on One Belt One Road policy initiative. The opportunities for export from Europe to China are much larger than generally believed - I was shown examples of export of porcelain from Europe to China. Can you imagine European "exporting chinaware to China"?

6. Q: President Xi Jinping is advocating the Belt and Road Initiatives to boost interconnection with other countries. How do you think of the initiatives?

A: I believe that this is a very welcome initiative and a symbol of a new phase of globalization. The world has to understand that globalization will require new levels of cooperation. The emphasis on connectivity in all its forms - transportation, energy and digital connectivity - as well as on infrastructural projects is fundamental. We need to understand that this will open new horizons to cooperation - including the involvement of small and medium enterprises in areas of manufacturing and technology, in services and in tourism. Governments have to think how to use this initiative to our common advantage. In this context, Slovenia as one of the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEEC) welcomes the 16 plus 1 initiative and actively participates in it.