

Building the Jiangxi Inland Open Economic Pilot Zone with High Quality and Vigorously Making Jiangxi a Pacesetter for Reform and Opening Up in the Inland Region

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Opening up is a defining feature of contemporary China. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), General Secretary Xi Jinping has inspected Jiangxi for three times, providing guidance and direction for the development of Jiangxi. Thanks to the attention and care of General Secretary Xi Jinping and the CPC Central Committee, the State Council approved the establishment of the Jiangxi Inland Open Economic Pilot Zone in April 2020, which is the third national level inland open economic pilot zone in China and the only one in Central China. Jiangxi Province will keep firmly in mind the fervent hopes of General Secretary Xi Jinping, make the most of the Jiangxi Inland Open Economic Pilot Zone as a “golden brand” of reform and opening up, and strive to make Jiangxi a pacesetter for reform and opening up in the inland region.

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I. Embracing the new demands of the era, making the vision of opening up and development deeply embedded among the people

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that “only an open China can become a modern China” and “promoting reform and development through opening-up is a treasured key for China to achieve new success in its modernization”. The important remarks of General Secretary Xi Jinping on opening up and development profoundly explains the significance of opening up and development for modernization, providing fundamental guidance for our actions in promoting high-level opening up to the world.

Historically, Jiangxi flourished due to its opening up. Jiangxi has a long history and splendid culture, and has always had the geographical advantage of being surrounded by three rivers and five lakes. As a major channel connecting the northern and the southern parts of China, and linking the eastern and western parts, Jiangxi was an important commodity export destination on the ancient Silk Road, and once created a millennium of glory as a trading powerhouse and economically strong province. For example, during the Song Dynasty, the annual tea production in Fuliang County accounted for about one-third of the total tea production in the country; during the Ming and Qing dynasties, there was a saying that “if you don’t see a grain ship from Jiangxi for three days, there will be a shortage of grain in the market”. Especially since the Song Dynasty, the unique Jingdezhen porcelain has created a prosperous scene of “porcelains made by craftsmen from all quarters and then traded all over the world”, becoming a “world commodity” showing ancient China’s participation in the globalization, and also an important medium and cultural

symbol for the world to understand China and for China to engage the world. Since reform and opening up, the people of Jiangxi have been committed to opening up and worked persistently. To accelerate the integration with coastal areas in terms of opening up policies, Jiangxi has continuously opened itself widely and achieved significant economic and social development. From 1978 to 2023, the GDP of Jiangxi increased from 8.7 billion yuan to 3.22 trillion yuan, a growth of 370 times; per capita GDP increased from 276 yuan to 71,200 yuan, a growth of 258 times.

On the new journey of the new era, opening up is the only way for Jiangxi to achieve high quality development. In October, 2023, General Secretary Xi Jinping inspected Jiangxi again, instructing the province to “open up wider both domestically and internationally, boost development through opening up, and develop the inland province into a front-runner in reform and opening up, and contribute to and integrate itself into building of the new development paradigm”. General Secretary Xi’s important requirements have pointed out the direction for Jiangxi’s opening up and development. Jiangxi will fully leverage its own advantages. It now has a broader vision that “the development of Jiangxi should not be confined to itself, but should set sights on a broader global stage”, a deeper grasp and clearer thinking of “promoting great development with greater opening up”, underpinned by more specific measures and more powerful actions. At present, Jiangxi is in a critical period of accumulating strength, overcoming obstacles, and transforming and upgrading. We will stick to the orientation of promoting reform and development through opening up, strive to build the “three pacesetters” and implement the “five strategies”, promote wider, broader, and deeper level of opening up and cooperation, and accelerate the construction of a high-level

new pattern of opening up that features both internal and external development, comprehensive coordination, and advances in both quality and quantity.

II. Seizing new strategic opportunities and continuously optimizing the layout of opening up and development

The advantageous geographic location will be given full play to the major opportunities of the vigorous national implementation of major regional strategies and a more proactive opening-up strategy will be seized to optimize the layout of domestic and external opening-up.

Deepening domestic opening-up with a focus on integrating into major national and regional strategies. Jiangxi has fully participated in the high-quality development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt and developed Jiujiang with high standards as an important hub along the Yangtze River Economic Belt. Actively dovetailing with the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta, Jiangxi shall accelerate the implementation of the list of key cooperation items with the Yangtze River Delta region, and support the construction of a pilot zone for the integrated development with the Yangtze River Delta in Northeast Jiangxi. Deeply connecting with the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Jiangxi has continuously deepened exchanges and cooperation with the Greater Bay Area in various fields such as industry, trade, finance, technology, culture, and talent, supports Ganzhou City in building itself into a gateway for connecting with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and deepened cooperation between Shenzhen and Ganzhou

City, Dongguan City and Ji'an City. From September 1 to 4 this year, Jiangxi held the Jiangxi-Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area economic and trade activities, signing a total of 74 cooperation projects with a contractual amount of 64.13 billion yuan, further expanding the opening up and cooperation.

Deepening external opening up with a focus on participating in the joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Jiangxi is an important connecting passage between the maritime Silk Road and the inland region of China. Jiangxi has actively participated in the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, made the most of regional cooperation mechanisms such as the “Yangtze-Volga” cooperation mechanism, cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries, and continued to deepen practical cooperation in various fields. Jiangxi have promoted the quality and efficiency of China-Europe Railway Express, running more than 2,051 train services in total, reaching more than 26 cities of the 14 BRI countries. In 2023, Jiangxi's total value of imports and exports to BRI' countries was 272.77 billion yuan, accounting for 47.9% of the province's international trade; imports and exports to RCEP member countries amounted to 197.78 billion yuan, an increase of 32.6% compared to 2021 before the agreement came into effect.

III. Building new open channels and consolidating the foundation of opening-up and development

The construction of major channels for opening up to the outside world will be accelerated. Connectivity and efficient and convenient flow of various factors will be further enhanced so as to better promote people-to-people exchanges.

Solidly promoting the “physical connectivity” of infrastructure. Jiangxi has promoted the construction of major channels for “connecting the northern and the southern parts of China, and serving both the eastern and the western parts”, and accelerated the construction of a modern transportation system of connected water, land, and air transportation, multi-modal transportation of expressway, water transportation and railway, and integrated customs clearance and trade. The Ganzhou-Shenzhen High Speed Railway, Anqing-Jiujiang Passenger Line, Xingguo-Quanzhou Railway, Nanchang-Huangshan High Speed Railway and other railways have been completed and opened to traffic. 31 highways have been fully connected to the provincial routes, and the Ganjiang river and Xinjiang river have achieved Class-III waterways. Jiangxi has become the first province in China to have high-speed railways with a speed of 350 kilometers per hour in all prefecture-level cities. As of now, the total length of the comprehensive transportation network in the province is 225,000 kilometers, with a network density of 80.6, ranking the fifth in the country. Efforts on building important regional logistics hubs such as Nanchang International Smart Airport, Ganzhou International Land Port, and Jiujiang River-Sea Direct Shipping Center have been made. The operation of intercontinental all-cargo flights from Nanchang to Belgium has been running steadily, China’s first direct all-cargo airline to Oslo, Norway has been opened, and four daily flights from Nanchang to Ningbo, Shang’rao to Ningbo, Ganzhou to Shenzhen, and Nanchang to Xiamen have been successfully created.

Strengthening the “institutional connectivity” of norms and rules. Jiangxi has fully integrated into the construction of a unified national market, promoted the standardization of institutional

rules in areas such as property rights protection, market access, fair competition, and social credit. The province has vigorously promoted investment and trade liberalization and facilitation, drawn upon and promoted the innovative achievements of the free trade zone system in seven batches, achieved full coverage of the province through the “single window” for international trade. It ranks among the top in the country and the first in the central region in terms of port clearance efficiency. The province has integrated into Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and other bilateral economic and trade agreements, steadily expanded institutional opening up in rules, regulations, management, standards and other areas. The province has launched a new round of improvement actions for the business environment, implemented a first-responder responsibility system for foreign-invested enterprises registration, a one-time notification system, a time-limited completion system, and a major event tracking and assistance system. The one-stop service rate for government affairs has reached 96%.

Deepening cultural exchanges and promoting “heart-to-heart connectivity”. Jiangxi has given full play to the advantages of ceramic culture, traditional Chinese medicine, eco-environment, etc., to tell the stories of Jiangxi and China well so as to make the international community better understand Jiangxi and China. Jiangxi has vigorously promoted the construction of the Jingdezhen National Ceramic Culture Inheritance and Innovation Experimental Zone, Jingdezhen currently has over 60,000 ceramic art learners, including more than 5000 foreign learners. Confucius Institutes have been established in more than 10 countries including France and the Republic of Korea (ROK), and vocational education projects such as Tangying Porcelain Workshop,

“Chinese+Vocational Skills” Chinese Workshop, and Tiangong Workshop have been built in cooperation with countries such as Nigeria, Russia, and Sierra Leone. Traditional Chinese Medicine Centers, Thermal Moxibustion clinics, Qigong Research Centers, etc., have been established in Tunisia, Portugal, the ROK, and the Silk Road Tourism City Alliance has been established in Jiangxi. Major events such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Forum on Traditional Medicine, Arab Arts Festival, and Tang Xianzu International Theatre Festival have been successfully held, and Jiangxi Global Promotion Event for “Open China: a Beautiful Jiangxi Showing Her Charm to the World” has been hosted successfully at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Telling the Story of Chinese Culture and Promoting Civilization Exchange and Mutual Learning - A Case Study of the External Promotion of “Jiangxi Cultural Symbols” has been selected as one of the “Top Ten Excellent Cases of External Communication” in China.

IV. Inspiring new drivers of growth for economy and trade, continuously expanding opening up and development

Acting on its industrial characteristics and comparative advantages, Jiangxi has actively participated in global industrial and supply chain cooperation and division of labor, and further promoted international cooperation in infrastructure, investment, trade, etc.

Leveraging the advantages of opening up platforms. Jiangxi has comprehensively deepened the institutional reform of the development zone, encouraged national level development zones to adopt models such as “enclosure industrial park with industrial

park” and “joint development” to build inland international cooperation industrial parks. Nanchang City has been awarded the national demonstration site for processing trade transfer, and Pingxiang City has been awarded the national key site for processing trade gradient transfer. The development of port economy has been accelerated. Shang’rao Comprehensive Bonded Zone and Jinggangshan Comprehensive Bonded Zone have been approved for establishment, and nine prefecture-level cities have been approved for cross-border e-commerce comprehensive pilot zones. In 2023, the actual utilization of foreign investment in the development zones of Jiangxi accounted for 76.6%; the import and export of the comprehensive bonded zone amounted to 33.975 billion yuan, which is 3.6 times that of 2019; the total import and export volume of cross-border e-commerce reached 46.35 billion yuan, and its ranking in volume climbed from the 25th in 2019 to the 6th nationally. Jiangxi have made good use of exhibitions such as the World Conference on VR Industry, the World Green Development Investment and Trade Expo, with a total signed contract amount of 382.215 billion yuan for the first six World Conferences on VR Industry; the cumulative signed contract amount of the first six World Green Development Investment and Trade Expos was 777.982 billion yuan.

Continuously expanding the “friend circle” of international trade. At present, Jiangxi has trade relations with 228 countries and regions around the world. Efforts have been made to leverage the advantages of Jiangxi’s electronic information, equipment manufacturing, new energy, new materials and other industries, so as to promote the export of advantageous products. The focus has been put on accelerating the transformation of foreign trade development mode, promoting the import and export of

production-oriented enterprises, and vigorously developing new forms and models of trade such as overseas warehouses and market procurement trade. In 2023, the export value of the “new three” of solar cells, electric passenger vehicles, and lithium-ion batteries in Jiangxi increased by 73.5%; 365 new production-oriented enterprises with import and export performance have been added, bringing the total number to 3877. The import and export volume was 393.77 billion yuan, accounting for 69.1% of the province’s total international trade volume, an increase of 14 %. As of now, enterprises of Jiangxi have built and operated 128 overseas warehouses in more than 30 countries and regions.

Committing to strengthening investment cooperation. Jiangxi has focused on the implementation of the “1269” action plan for the modernization of key industrial chains in the manufacturing industry, and cultivated and strengthened the development of six future industries including materials, energy, biology, health, display, and aviation. The province has given full play to the role of provincial-level modern industry guidance fund worth one hundred billion yuan, actively promoted targeted and list-based investment attraction for key industries, and focused on introducing high-quality projects for strengthening, completing and extending industrial chains. Up to now, 212 Fortune Global 500 companies have invested in Jiangxi. The province has encouraged advantageous enterprises to engage the world and continuously sharpened six new sectors in international business cooperation, including Jiangxi construction, Jiangxi manufacturing, Jiangxi agriculture, mining development, production capacity cooperation, and foreign aid training. At present, enterprises of Jiangxi have established overseas enterprises in more than 100 countries and regions, and have ongoing overseas contracted projects in 67

countries; seven enterprises, including China Jiangxi International Economic and Technical Cooperation Corporation, Jiangxi Zhongmei Engineering Group, were selected as “the world’s largest 250 international contractors”, ranking the third in China and the first in Central China. In 2023, the foreign contracted engineering business revenue of Jiangxi reached 3.78 billion US dollars, ranking among the top ten in the country for eight consecutive years.

Next, Jiangxi will thoroughly implement the guiding principles of the 20th National Congress of the CPC and the 2nd and 3rd Plenary Sessions of the 20th CPC Central Committee, act upon the guiding principles embodied in the important speeches of General Secretary Xi Jinping during his inspection in Jiangxi, focus on the goal of striving to “take the lead, forge ahead and make the most of its strength”, take the building of the Jiangxi Inland Open Economic Pilot Zone as the focus to write a new chapter of “two-way opening up and benefiting all parties related”. The province will promote higher-level domestic and external opening up, move faster to make Jiangxi a pacesetter for reform and opening up in the inland region, and make Jiangxi’s contribution to building a community with a shared future for mankind. 