International symposiums on urbanization and planning in China and India, organized by the delegation of the Geographical Society of China

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Since the late 20th century, China and India have experienced rapid growth. Their large-scale urbanization and industrialization have had an important impact on the global economy. China and India are Asian countries with long histories and large populations, and both have experienced similar development processes in modern times. During the process of urbanization, both countries have faced issues commonly associated with the transformation of underdeveloped agricultural countries into developed industrial countries. Meanwhile, they have also faced other issues related to their political and economic systems, development environments and religious cultures. To enhance communication between China and India on the subject of urbanization, the Geographical Society of China and the Regional Science Association of India co-hosted a series of international symposiums on urbanization and planning in China and India. The first seminar was hosted by the University of Calcutta, India, and was successfully held in Calcutta, India in January 2017. Hundreds of experts and scholars from the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research (Chinese Academy of Sciences, China), the Research Center for Eco-Environmental Sciences (Chinese Academy of Sciences, China), Peking University (China), the University of Calcutta (India), the State University of New York (USA), the Center for Policy Research (New Delhi, India), Jawaharlal Nehru University (India), Jadavpur University (India), the Indian Institute of Technology (India) and Preston University (Pakistan) discussed the issues and solutions related to urbanization in the two countries.

Academician Bojie Fu, President of the Geographical Society of China, gave a speech on the eco-environmental effect of urbanization in China in which he highlighted a series of issues which have emerged since urbanization entered a phase of rapid development in China. These issues include environmental deterioration, air pollution, water shortage, increasing employment pressures and traffic congestion. Academician Bojie Fu emphasized that during the urbanization process, we should fully consider the capacity of natural resources and the eco-environment, maintain a balance between environmental protection and economic development, and promote the healthy development of urbanization. Professor Jie Fan, Professor Kaizhong Yang, Professor Guoping Li, Professor Fengjun Jin, Professor Ling Xue and Professor Shenghe Liu subsequently gave detailed presentations on the main functional zoning in China, changes in city sizes across China, urbanization problems and policies in China, development of high-speed trains in China, dynamic simulation of spatial

structure in urbanization, and socioeconomic features of the transient population in China, respectively. The Chinese scholars also engaged in extensive and in-depth discussions with 30 Indian scholars, including Amitabh Kundu, Shravan Acharya and Mahalaya Chatterjee.

After the seminar, Academician Bojie Fu and his colleagues visited regions facing challenges associated with the Indian urbanization process, such as slums in Calcutta and Mumbai, folk art production blocks in Calcutta and manual laundry sites in Mumbai. They also noted that traditional handicrafts are rapidly disappearing and gained an overview of current trends, and explored the existing issues and the measures taken by the government for urbanization development in India. Through this successful seminar, Chinese and Indian scholars have gained deep insights into issues and challenges inherent to urbanization processes in both countries. This is of great significance to the sustainable development of urbanization in China and India. Academician Bojie Fu earnestly invited the Indian scholars to visit Beijing on behalf of the Geographical Society and exchanged ideas about establishing a system of long-term cooperation. Both parties agreed that the Second International Symposium on Urbanization and Planning in China and India would be held in Beijing from July to August 2017.

In recent years, the Chinese geographic delegation led by Academician Bojie Fu has jointly held international symposiums with major developing countries to exchange ideas on urbanization issues and countermeasures. They have conducted field surveys and deepened their knowledge of urbanization in developing countries. For instance, they have successfully held the Sino-Mexican and Sino-Indian symposiums on urbanization and planning in Mexico City and Calcutta, respectively. Led by Chinese scholars, the international symposiums on urbanization have improved the perception of Chinese geographers internationally, and these symposiums have also demonstrated the responsibility of our geographers to proactively introduce geographical achievements in China to their international colleagues.