

Speech at the Sino-German Entrepreneurs' Forum on Smart Agriculture

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Distinguished Academician Zhao Chunjiang, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, friends:

Good afternoon, everyone!

There is a Chinese poem that says: "You don't know how hard it is until you go through it." After more than three years of hard work, China has achieved a major decisive victory in the prevention and control of the COVID-19 epidemic, and the first World Expo on Digital Agriculture (WEDA) has finally become a reality today from the initial planning. First of all, on behalf of the Information Center of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the first WEDA and this forum! In my opinion, at a critical period when all human beings are entering a new era of digital civilization, the digital economy has become a new driving force for economic development and smart agriculture is driving and leading the accelerated development of agricultural modernization, it is of great practical and far-reaching historical significance to hold the Sino-German Entrepreneurs' Forum on Smart Agriculture. The forum can be summarized as three "good": firstly, the location is well chosen, as Shandong is a large agricultural province in China, with the third largest grain production in the country, and Weifang is a large agricultural city in Shandong, and an important vegetable production base in the country, its development of smart agriculture is at the forefront of the country. Secondly, the theme is well set. This forum is oriented to the future of digital agriculture, with the theme of "Smart Agriculture, Digital Countryside", which is in line with the objective law and trend of modernization of agriculture and rural development and will certainly inject new momentum to promote the comprehensive revitalization of the countryside and accelerate the construction of a strong agricultural country. Thirdly, the participants are good. The forum invites three experts, including academician Zhao Chunjiang of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, to deliver keynote speeches and arranges dialogues between seven Chinese and foreign enterprises in charge of smart agriculture, fully reflecting that science and technology is the first productive force and that enterprises are the most important innovation body, which will ignite the fire of digital revolution in agriculture and rural areas in Weifang and will promote Sino-German cooperation in smart agriculture to a new level. I would like to take this opportunity to discuss three points of understanding and experience.

First, smart agriculture is the main direction of agricultural modernization. Since the 1760s, the scientific and technological revolution and industrial change have gone through the "steam age", "electrical age" and "information age", the scientific and technological revolution and industrial change, and from the beginning of the 21st century the "intelligent age". In today's era, data has become a key factor of production, digital technology innovation is active and the digital economy is booming. Agricultural data resources are the richest, farmers' demand for digital technology is the most urgent, and the development potential of the rural digital economy is the greatest. Data, digital technology and the digital economy will definitely become the three new driving forces to promote the modernization of agriculture and rural areas and will certainly promote smart agriculture as an advanced form of agricultural modernization. All countries in the world should firmly aim at the strategic goal of smart agriculture, coordinately promote the industrialization of agricultural data and digitalization of agricultural industry, and continuously release the value of the digital economy in agriculture and rural areas, so as to truly make agriculture a promising industry, farmers an attractive occupation, and the countryside a beautiful and desirable home.

Secondly, China's smart agriculture development has achieved phased results. In the past decade or so, the Chinese government has attached great importance to the development of agricultural and rural informatization, insisting on the inclusion of digital countryside and smart agriculture into the development of a cyberpower, digital China and a smart society, making major deployments such as implementing the digital countryside development strategy and building smart agriculture, driving relevant departments and various localities to focus closely on the question of "who should farm the land and how?" to vigorously promote the development of a digital countryside and intelligent agriculture, and important progress has been made in the initial stage. According to the monitoring of the Information Center of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the development level of the national digital countryside reached 39.1% in 2021, of which the national level of informatization of agricultural production was raised to 25.4%, and the proportion of national online sales of agricultural products in the total sales of agricultural products reached 14.8%. In particular, smart farms have succeeded in some places. For example, the smart rice production base of Zoomlion has expanded from 2,043 mu in 2020 to 150,000 mu in Wuhu, Anhui Province, achieving a 14.3% increase in yields and saving an average of 108 yuan in input costs of chemical fertilizers and pesticides; for example, "blockchain + vegetables" has been rapidly applied in Weifang, Shandong Province, has been rapidly promoted and applied, and has now expanded to 6 farmers' cooperatives in 6 districts and counties with 8 vegetable varieties, which won the silver medal in the UN

FAO Agricultural Creators Competition. In the next step, China will focus closely on the comprehensive revitalization of the countryside, the development of a strong agricultural country, the consolidation of the foundation of food security, focus on achieving the basic modern living conditions in rural areas, focus on overcoming the blockage points, and promote the healthy and rapid development of digital countryside and smart agriculture.

Thirdly, the Sino-German cooperation in smart agriculture has broad prospects. Although there are differences between China and Germany in terms of national and agricultural conditions, both countries are facing the difficult task of accelerating agricultural modernization. They have respective advantages in agricultural data resources development, intelligent agricultural equipment manufacturing, core and key technology research and development, digital technology application scenarios, agricultural products e-commerce development, farmers digital literacy and skills training. Strengthening cooperation between the two countries in smart agriculture does not only rest on a strong alliance but also on complementary advantages and will surely promote the two countries to accelerate the completion of the industry chain in smart agriculture and quickly enhance the resilience and safety of smart agriculture technologies and product supply chains. To this end, it is recommended that, first, institutional arrangements be made for the Sino-German Entrepreneurs' Forum on Smart Agriculture and to be held continuously; second, smart agriculture be made an important part of agricultural cooperation between the two countries and study groups be sent to each other for on-site learning and exchange; third, a number of priority topics be established in the fields of sensors, intelligent agricultural machinery, agricultural robots, model algorithms, etc., and joint research be organized between research and teaching institutions and enterprises of the two countries; fourth, the establishment of smart agriculture demonstration farms by Chinese and German entrepreneurs be promoted and a smart farm benchmark in the "Belt and Road Initiative" be created. I fully believe that the cooperation between China and Germany in smart agriculture can make a positive exploration and important contribution to narrowing the digital divide between urban and rural areas, driving and leading the modernization of agriculture and rural areas, developing the digital economy in agriculture and rural areas, and promoting the common prosperity of farmers.

Finally, I wish WEDA and the forum a great success!

Thank you all!