

A Win–Win Situation for Northeast Asian Regional Economic Cooperation from Suifenhe Port of Entry

WANG Xingzhu

Standing Committee Member,

Mudanjiang City Committee of the Communist Party of China, and Party Secretary,

Suifenhe City Committee of the Communist Party of China

Suifenhe City is located in southeastern Heilongjiang Province, adjoins Russia's Primorsky Krai, has a national first-class port of entry for road and rail (customs point), and is the third ranked rail port of entry nationally. After the opening of the China Eastern Railway in 1903, merchants from many countries, including Russia, Japan, and Britain gathered, and in those times it was called a "border trade city". In 1992, it was approved by the state in the first group of "open border cities", and in 2016 the State Council approved the establishment of the "Suifenhe–Dongning National Key Experimental Zone for Development and Opening-Up". Successively, it earned the honored designations of "National Civilized City", "Outstanding Tourist City of China", and "China's Wood Industry Capital". Currently, the implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative has been promoted, the speedy construction of the China–Mongolia–Russia economic corridor has been moved forward, the advantages and potential of Suifenhe have been fully demonstrated, and the future prospects of its development have been further opened up.

1) Further Clarity of Geographical Advantage Via the Seas

Suifenhe is located at the heart of the Northeast Asian economic subregion, and with Harbin 460 km to the west, Vladivostok, the largest port of the Russian Far East, 190 km and Nakhodka 270 km to the east, is a bridge and important connection for northeastern China to participate in the international division of labor, and the prestige of the "Golden Passage" to the Asia-Pacific Region connecting to Northeast Asia is high. We rapidly furthered the construction of the large sea–land multimodal transportation route, and opened the "Ha–Sui–E–Ya" [Harbin–Suifenhe–Russia–Asia] multimodal transportation train from Harbin via Suifenhe and from the Far East ports reaching Japan and the ROK. In 2017, we set off 64 trains, with 7,250 containers and 110,000 tonnes of cargo, and the monetary base rose to 650 million yuan.

2) Tamping the Foundations, and Making the Basic Conditions More Solid

A new round of port-of-entry construction has been basically completed, the annual passenger traffic for the road port of entry has increased from one million to six million, and the cargo throughput has been raised to 5.5 million tonnes. The capacity for the transportation of passengers internationally and domestically of the railway port of entry has reached 20 million, and the transshipment capacity has risen to 33 million tonnes. A hub airport is scheduled for completion in 2019, and it is planned to open routes to Russia, Japan, the ROK, and domestically to Beijing and Dalian.

3) Compiling Policy, and Speedily Unleashing the Vitality of the Port of Entry

Suifenhe is the first place nationally to be approved as a designated port of entry for the import of foodstuffs, and has also been approved as a designated port of entry for the export of pork, for the import of completed automobiles, and for the import of refrigerated and frozen seafood and marine animals for consumption. It has become a city for the experimental use of the ruble, and a model tourist zone designated in the second group, and such national and provincial-level preferential policies as visa-free entry for Russians and tax rebates to foreign tourists on departure have been adopted.

4) Integrating Resources, and Making Two-Way Cooperation More Effective

The imported and exported commodities in Suifenhe's trade with Russia has reached a large number

of 171 categories, and 1,400-plus items, and in the past decade the cumulative external trade value reached US\$58.01 billion, and that with Russia US\$29.42 billion, and the freight passing through the port of entry makes up 80% of the freight for the entire province. In the past decade the cumulative amount of imported timber was 59 million cubic meters, and it became China's largest distribution center for imported Russian timber. In the tourism industry, Suifenhe City has the distinctive character of "border-crossing, ecology, and culture", and it has greatly developed such things as cross-border tourist trips, overseas hunting trips, Communist revolution sites travel, and winter ice and snow travel, and in 2017 the number of tourists arriving and departing broke through a total of one million.

5) Constructing a Base and Attracting Investment, and Further Expanding the Industrial Platform

Suifenhe has a large number of national-level functional parks (industrial parks), such as a Cross-Border Economic Cooperation Zone, an Integrated Free Trade Zone, and a Mutual Trade Zone (commodity trading by individuals in the border region), and in line with the development framework of "industry concentrated in parks, and trading and service industries concentrated in parks", we further clarify the parks' industrial orientation, greatly develop the real economy, and pour effort into the promotion of cooperation and collaboration among parks and development where they influence one another.

For some time to come, Suifenhe City will make efforts to create eight industrial clusters and economic growth spots, including cross-border logistics, timber processing, green foods, Russian grain processing trade, marine produce processing, mutual trade, cross-border tourism, and import of completed vehicles.

[Translated by ERINA]