Fifty Years of Internet Development
in the World

The Internet is one of the greatest inventions of mankind in the 20th century. Like fire in the primitive age, ironware in the agricultural age and steam and electricity in the industrial age, the Internet has brought about unprecedented changes to human society since its birth in 1969, steering mankind into an information age. In the 50 years since then, the Internet has penetrated into the political, economic, social, cultural and military fields, accelerated the flow and sharing of production factors such as labor, capital and energy, promoted a new qualitative leap in social productive forces, changed the ways of production and life of mankind, exerted a major impact on the political and economic patterns of the world and enhanced mankind's ability to understand and transform the world. The Internet is leading and opening a new era in human history, no other piece of technology matching it in speed, scope and depth of growth and influence.

With the rapid development of information technology (IT) and increasingly extensive uses of network applications, the significance of the Internet to economic and social progress has become increasingly prominent and mankind's exploration and understanding of the Internet has also deepened. In the 1960s, the United States increased investments in basic research and created ARPANET, an embryonic form of the Internet. In the 1970s, the Internet, as a major scientific and technological innovation and new information exchange tool, was spread to institutions of higher learning and government agencies in America and then in Europe. In the late 1980s, Internet uses expanded from the scientific and technological field to more sectors of economic and social life. The birth of the World Wide Web and the establishment of global connections in the early 1990s, in particular, promoted the widespread and commercial uses of the Internet, leading to rapid rise of network applications and economy. From the end of the 1990s to early 21st century, the world saw the Internet rapidly becoming a commonplace throughout the world, with representative Internet

companies emerging and coming to the fore. In the past decade, mobile Internet access on the move has been developing fast, with more and more intelligent functions. The new-generation IT, such as big data, Internet of things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI), changes for the better day by day and has been combined with biology, energy, materials and neuroscience, leading to clusters of technological changes that are green, intelligent and ubiquitous. With new technologies, industries, models, applications and business formats springing up, Internet development is featuring intergenerational transition, full penetration, accelerated innovation and Internet of everything (IoE). With multi-polarization, economic globalization, cultural diversity and social informatization, the Internet has increasingly become a new domain of state sovereignty, a new space for production and life, a new channel of information dissemination, a new platform for cultural prosperity, a new engine for economic development, a new carrier of social governance and a new link for international cooperation, fully integrated into the development process of human society and changing the latter.

After 50 years of magnificent development, the Internet now stands at a new starting point of both opportunities and challenges, with the former greater than the latter. The information age has just begun. The train of Internet development is heading for the future, with a full load of people's beautiful longings for a better life. The international community should join hands and strengthen communication, broaden consensus and deepen cooperation on the basis of mutual respect and trust to pursue development and tackle risks and challenges together. The world should commit itself to building peaceful, secure, open, cooperative and orderly cyberspace and a community with a shared future in cyberspace so that the opportunities and achievements of a prosperous Internet will bring greater benefits to the world!

(from the Blue Book for World Internet Conference 2019)