

Honorary **Ms. Wang Min, Chargé d'affaires, Embassy of The People's Republic of China in Bulgaria,**

Honorary **Prof. Yang Zhenbin, Chairperson of the University Council of the Shanghai Jiao Tong University,**

Honorary **Momchil Stanishev from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food**

Distinguished guests and participants in the Forum,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Agricultural Academy - Sofia, I am honored to welcome all the guests and participants in the **2025 China-Bulgaria Climate Change and Rural Revitalization Forum, and "Belt and Road" Joint Laboratory Annual Symposium**, hosted by the Institute of Agricultural Economics at the Agricultural Academy, and co-organized with the partners' organizations – Shanghai Jiao Tong University, University of National and World Economy, and Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

The symposium is the fifth forum organized by the leading academic institutions of China and Bulgaria, and the "Belt and Road" Joint Laboratory. It addresses major challenges for our two countries associated with climate change and rural revitalization and adaptation. I would like to congratulate the partners for their consistent efforts to promote and extend international multidisciplinary cooperation in that important area.

The Sino-Bulgarian Joint Lab on Climate Change Adaptive Governance for Rural Ecosystem is a successful outcome from the long-term collaboration of the Institute of Agricultural Economics with the Shanghai Jiao Tong University and leading Bulgarian academic institutions such as Agricultural University - Plovdiv and the University of National and World Economy. The aim of the Laboratory is to promote international cooperation in research, technological development and training in the field of risk management and adaptive management of rural ecosystems, in the context of global climate change. Recently published monographic book “Adapting to the Future. Climate Risks and Resilience in Rural Bulgaria” is just a new example of productive, collaborative, and interdisciplinary work of leading Chinese and Bulgarian scholars.

The Agricultural Academy has strong programs in all areas related to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable agricultural and rural development. The institutes of the Academy have intensive cooperation with many academic institutions around the globe in this topical area. Considering a previous period of 10-15 years, we could mention numerous bilateral projects, conferences, visits and mobilities realized as a result of the fruitful cooperation between Agricultural Academy and Chinese scientific institutions. The Institute of Agricultural Economics achieved dozens cooperated activities with: Shanghai Jiao Tong University (from 2017 up to now); Strategic Development Office of the Li River Scenic Area in Guilin (China-Bulgarian Research Center for Sustainable Development in Ecotourism and Climate Change, 2024-2027); Communication University of China, Beijing (2014-2018). Other Institutes of Agricultural Academy have also elaborated bilateral Sino-Bulgarian projects in this period - the Institute of Agriculture, Kyustendil; the Institute of plant genetic resources, Sadovo. The Institute of mountain livestock-breeding and agriculture, Troyan has a bilateral cooperation more than 20 years with Chinese fruit growing scientists from the Agricultural Academy of China, Heilongjiang Province.

I would like to welcome the distinguished speakers of this forum joining us today. We appreciate your willingness to share your knowledge and expertise, and I am confident that everyone will gain something from your presentations. I want to express my confidence that this Forum will be a valuable experience for all of us and I hope that the discussions would lead to suggesting solutions to most urgent issues related to climate change mitigation and adaptation of agriculture and rural sector. Thanks again to all participants and guests for making this Forum possible.

In conclusion, I would like to confirm that you have the full support of the Agricultural Academy for extending your cooperation in that and other important areas. I wish all participants in the symposium a success, and for our guests and friends from Shanghai Jiao Thong University a productive and wonderful time in Bulgaria.

Prof. Dr. Violeta Bozhanova

President of Agricultural Academy