

VIEWS

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Work Actively to Implement the Global Civilization Initiative and Jointly Advance Human Civilizations

As countries around the world face common challenges in the course of seeking peace and development and making explorations towards modernization, the call for solidarity, collaboration and dialogue is growing stronger than ever. However, the deep-seated problems of suspicion, division and confrontation are still blocking international cooperation. Therefore, it is essential to step up inter-civilization exchanges for closer people-to-people connectivity. The Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), proposed by General Secretary Xi Jinping in his keynote address entitled *Join Hands on the Path Towards Modernization* at the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-level Meeting on March 15 2023, is a sincere call to the world for in-depth inter-civilization exchanges and dialogue to advance human civilizations through inclusiveness and mutual learning. This is yet another effort to contribute China's wisdom and solutions to promoting international cooperation at a higher level.

I. The GCI epitomizes General Secretary Xi Jinping's profound strategic vision, broad historical perspective, strong sense of responsibility for the times and deep care for humanity.

The GCI is a timely response to the urgent call of peoples around the world for stronger solidarity and collaboration to jointly deal with common challenges. In today's world, multiple challenges and crises are intertwined. The global economic recovery remains sluggish, the development gap is widening, ecological environment is deteriorating, and the Cold War mentality is lingering. Humanity's modernization process has once again reached a crossroads of history. To meet our common challenges, we need material means to conquer difficulties, and cultural and ethical resources to garner strength. General Secretary Xi Jinping noted that as the future of all countries are closely connected, tolerance, coexistence, exchanges and mutual learning among different civilizations play an irreplaceable role in advancing humanity's modernization process and making the garden of world civilizations flourish. Proposing the GCI at the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-level Meeting conveys China's sincere desire to work with all countries in pursuing modernization with distinctive features of each country, and promoting global inter-civilization exchanges and mutual learning for the advancement of human civilizations.

The GCI is an earnest response to the common aspirations of countries for upholding equality, inclusiveness and diversity of world civilizations. Just as no country is superior to others, there is no such thing as inferior or superior civilization. Since ancient times, people of different regions have developed a myriad of great civilizations in the course of production and in exploiting and changing nature. They have pursued the common human values and goals of peace, development, equity, justice, democracy, and freedom and promoted progress of human society. No value should be above other values. Modernization and civilization can be realized and advanced through more than one model. The illusion of self-important "universal civilization" will easily fall through. Drawing lines along ideology and values and creating divisions and confrontations will only bring disastrous results upon the world and blemish the civilizations. General Secretary Xi Jinping has elaborated on the significance of diversity for human civilizations on various occasions. He stressed that the GCI advocates, first and foremost, the respect for the diversity of civilizations and that countries need to keep an open mind in appreciating the perceptions of values by different civilizations, and refrain from imposing their own values or models on others and from stoking ideological confrontation. This demonstrates China's inclusive vision of jointly promoting inter-civilization cooperation with all countries so as to prosper respectively and together.

The GCI is a natural response to the common call of the international community for closer inter-civilization dialogue and exchanges and more vibrant cultural development. Over the course of several thousand years, the Chinese civilization has preserved its roots and constantly broke new ground by drawing inspiration and wisdom from exchanges and mutual learning with other civilizations. In turn, it has also advanced the progress of human civilization with its own development. As economic globalization unfolds, there is a growing need to modernize traditional cultures through mutual



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learning. In response, General Secretary Xi Jinping advocates cultural exchanges over estrangement, mutual learning over clashes and coexistence over feelings of superiority, and pushing for creative transformation and innovative development of fine traditional cultures through exchanges and mutual learning. China has all along been a firm advocate and an active practitioner of inter-civilization exchanges and cooperation. The GCI is yet another living proof of our unceasing efforts to this end.

The GCI is a sincere response to the call of the times for countries around the world to advance progress of civilizations and build a human community with a shared future. As General Secretary Xi Jinping rightly pointed out, in promoting the development of human society and the building of a human community with a shared future, we need a keen understanding and grasp of the origins and the substance of different civilizations so that humanity can benefit from the cream of all civilizations. The Global Development Initiative and Global Security Initiative put forward by China in recent years open up new possibilities for international cooperation in the field of development and security, while the GCI injects new dynamism into and builds new safeguards for global development cooperation and global security cooperation.

The three initiatives provide a powerful underpinning for the building of a human community with a shared future and embody China's holistic thinking on fostering a world of lasting peace and prosperity.

II. The GCI is clear in logic and rich in content with the "four advocatings" making up a well-structured system for inter-civilization exchanges and sustained development of civilizations.

The GCI centers on the core tenets of "four advocatings" as follows:

— advocating the respect for the diversity of civilizations. Countries need to uphold the principles of equality, mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness among civilizations, and let cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning transcend clashes, and coexistence transcend feelings of superiority.

— advocating the common values of humanity. Peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom are the common aspirations of all peoples. Countries need to keep an open mind in appreciating the perceptions of values by different civilizations, and refrain from imposing their own values or models on others and from stoking ideological confrontation.

— advocating the importance of inheri-

ance and innovation of civilizations. Countries need to fully harness the relevance of their histories and cultures to the present times, and push for creative transformation and innovative development of their fine traditional cultures.

— advocating robust international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. Countries need to explore the building of a global network for inter-civilizational dialogue and cooperation, enrich the content of exchanges and expand avenues of cooperation to promote mutual understanding and friendship among people of all countries and jointly advance the progress of human civilizations.

The "four advocatings", with each focusing on a particular aspect, are mutually reinforcing and make up a coherent organic unity. They reveal the basic laws that underlie the exchanges among and development of civilizations and open up new prospects for cooperation of human society.

The respect for the diversity of civilizations is the prerequisite for their exchanges and development. All civilizations are rooted in their unique cultures. Each embodies the wisdom and spiritual pursuit of a country or a nation, and each has its unique value of existence. Such diversity, being an objective reality, is also an invaluable asset shared by the entire humanity. Differences among civilizations should not be viewed as a threat to one's own civilization. Civilizations are not isolated either. It is exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations that drives their progress. Thanks to economic globalization, interactions among civilizations and cultures have become more frequent and in-depth. During his historic visit to the headquarters of UNESCO in 2014, General Secretary Xi Jinping expounded in a keynote address there his vision on civilization featuring diversity, equality and inclusiveness. As time passes by with more inter-civilization exchanges, General Secretary Xi has enriched the vision to encompass equality, mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness. He advocates promoting dialogues among different civilizations as long as its diversity is respected and protected, removing estrangement, bias, fear and conflicts through mutual learning for mutual understanding, and building a new pattern of world civilizations where they learn from each other and coexist in harmony.

The common values of humanity are the fundamental guidance for the exchanges and development of civilizations. Human civilizations progress in differen-

tiated ways but they produce the same set of core values, which is not only the spiritual bond that connects different civilizations, countries and nations, but also the underlying force driving human progress. General Secretary Xi Jinping advocates peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom as the common values of humanity, which are also universally recognized by peoples around the world. It is an important step towards building common understanding among different civilizations on the perception of values, and will garner stronger willpower for the building of a human community with a shared future. While championing the common values of humanity, we also need to appreciate the perceptions of values by different civilizations and respect the efforts of other countries and peoples to turn their values into reality. We should seek common ground while reserving differences and stand opposed to the practice of uniting with the like-minded and alienating those with different views. We should refrain from imposing our own values and models on others and from stoking ideological confrontation. These are also what common values of humanity mean and require.

Only by upholding openness, inclusiveness and mutual respect, can the common values of humanity be truly carried forward and an even closer human community with a shared future be built.

Inheritance and innovation of civilizations are the mighty driving force for their exchanges and development. All civilizations that are still in existence have stood the test of time in their long histories. They have carried forward from generation to generation the cultural gene of a country or a nation and have become a mighty cohesive force to hold that country or nation together. For any civilization to remain its vigor and vitality, it must advance with the times, make progress while preserving its heritage, and be adept at creative transformation and innovative development. Its progress is sure to be impeded by attempts to hold fast to the established ways or follow the beaten track. Countries and nations should undertake the responsibility of sustaining and developing human civilizations, and draw on the merits and wisdom of other civilizations through exchanges, dialogues and mutual learning. Efforts should also be made to enrich the content and diversify the form of civilizations in light of the features and requirements of modernization. Only in this way can fine traditional cultures demonstrate immense charm and vitality that transcend time and space, and truly benefit the whole of human

society. For any civilization to be inherited and innovated, people's creativity must be unleashed, the outcomes of cultural inheritance and innovation must be shared by all, and people's aspiration for coordinated material and cultural-ethical advancement, harmony between humanity and nature, and all-round development must be satisfied.

Robust international people-to-people interactions and cooperation are important means to advance the exchanges among and development of civilizations. People are the best vehicles for exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. Friendship between the peoples holds the key to sound state-to-state relations, and heart-to-heart communication contributes to deeper friendship. Therefore, people-to-people exchanges always serve as bridges connecting countries and nations for better mutual understanding and stronger friendly bonds, yet some interest groups, out of their selfish interests, attempt to provoke conflicts between civilizations and stoke bloc confrontations, which has seriously eroded the foundation of understanding and trust among civilizations and undermined international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. We should, once again, galvanize the mighty force of people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. By expanding the flow of personnel and strengthening bilateral and multilateral people-to-people cooperation, we can enrich the content of exchanges, expand avenues of cooperation, and explore the building of a global network for inter-civilization dialogue and cooperation. By doing so, we will enhance mutual trust among countries and nations and promote mutual understanding and friendship among different peoples, and build a world more culturally-advanced that enjoys greater prosperity and security.

III. The GCI has received extensive attention and positive response worldwide, and its implementation requires joint efforts of all parties to create the maximum synergy.

Since its launch, the GCI has won warm response and overwhelming support from leaders of many countries and people from various sectors. They believe that the Initiative reflects the vision and sense of responsibility of General Secretary Xi Jinping as the leader of a major country. Contributing Chinese wisdom to solving the most acute and pressing problems facing the world, the GCI brings hope for reducing conflicts and confrontations and promoting world prosperity, and pictures a beautiful world aspired by all. Therefore, they stand ready to deepen inter-civilization exchanges and cooperation with China for the implementation of the Initiative.

Looking back in history, we would find that inter-civilization exchanges have had both good times and bad times. The good times would see civilizations flourish and the society develop rapidly. While in the bad times, civilizations declined and the society regressed. By proposing the GCI, General Secretary Xi Jinping hopes to draw wider attention to the value of inter-civilization exchanges and restore confidence in exchanges and cooperation among civilizations. The Chinese side stands ready to work with the international community to ensure that the GCI will take root and come into fruition for the benefit of human society.

We need to keep to the approach of extensive consultation and joint contribution to cultivate an inclusive and equal-footed atmosphere for inter-civilization exchanges. Guided by the global governance principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, we need to enrich the content and improve the forms of inter-civilization exchanges on the basis of extensive discussions and joint efforts. We need to regard the development and rejuvenation of other civilizations as our own opportunities, and strengthen political communication, economic cooperation and mutual security trust, so as to facilitate exchanges and development of various civilizations through sustainable development and sustained security. We should advocate equality, inclusiveness, and mutual respect, abandon arrogance and prejudice, and jointly oppose treating one or certain civilizations as adversaries. Instead of believing that civilizations are destined to clash, we should pay more attention to the impact of history, culture and values on conflicts between countries and groups, and encourage inter-civilization dialogue to strike a common chord among peoples and eliminate misunderstanding and estrangement, so as to lay a foundation for peace talks.

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