

INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

国际交流

4

Vol. 4, 2023

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LETTING THE WORLD UNDERSTAND CHINA
AND LETTING CHINA UNDERSTAND THE WORLD



中国国际交流协会

CHINESE ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

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International Standard Serial
Number:

ISSN1002-8285

China Standard Serial Number:
CN11-2491/D

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The Third Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network Forum Was Held

The Third Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network Forum was held in Zhengzhou, Henan Province from October 19 to 21 with the theme of Building on a Decade of Glory and Forging Ahead towards a Brighter Future. This Forum saw the presence of Ji Bingxuan, Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress of China and President of the Chinese Association for International Understanding, Wang Kai, Deputy Secretary of CPC Henan Provincial Committee and Governor of Henan Province, Guo Yezhou, Vice-Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, Wang Zhanying, Member of the Standing Committee and Director of the

Publicity Department of CPC Henan Provincial Committee, Wang Gang, Member of the Standing Committee and Director of the Organisation Department of CPC Henan Provincial Committee, Li Ya, Secretary of the Leading Party Members' Group and Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Henan Provincial People's Congress, Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Former President of Chile, Essam Sharaf, Former Prime Minister of Egypt and Sujata Koirala, Former Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal. Around 400 representatives of Chinese CSOs, enterprises, think tanks and universities attended the Forum either online or offline.



The attendees highly applauded the keynote speech of President Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony of the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation and praised the great achievements of the Belt and Road Initiative in the past decade, which, in their eyes, have brought strong stability and positive energy to this turbulent world. They agreed on the significance of people-to-people connectivity and expressed their readiness to continuously support and participate in building the Silk Road NGO Cooperation

Network, deepening people's friendship and enhancing people's amity, so as to jointly strive for new achievements of the Belt and Road Initiative. This Forum was hosted by China NGO Network for International Exchanges. A number of parallel events including the Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network International Steering Committee Meeting, International NGOs Network for Poverty Reduction Cooperation Seminar and the Civilisation Lecture Series were also held during the Forum.

Opening Ceremony

**Address by Ji Bingxuan, Vice-Chairperson of the
Standing Committee of the 13th National People's
Congress of China and President of the Chinese
Association for International Understanding (CAFIU)**



Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen, friends,

I feel so delighted to meet with all of you on this beautiful autumn day in the central plain of China while attending the Third Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network Forum and jointly contributing to people-to-people exchanges and cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative. First of all, I'd like to extend my warmest welcome to all

our distinguished guests from China and abroad!

10 years ago, President Xi Jinping, with an in-depth insight into the general trend of world development, put forward the Belt and Road Initiative that suits the requirement of the times and aims at promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. In the past decade, the Belt and Road Initiative has been translated from a concept into actions, from

a vision into realities, from "sketching the outline" to "filling in the details". It has delivered fruitful and tangible achievements and has become a popular international public good as well as a platform for international cooperation. Two days ago, the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation was successfully held in Beijing, at which President Xi Jinping pointed out that our achievements in the past decade are truly remarkable, and there is so much we can draw from them. The speech of President Xi comprehensively summarised the remarkable achievements in the past 10 years of the Belt and Road cooperation. It points the direction for all parties to promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation at a higher historical level. It also provides fundamental principles for us to bring Belt and Road cooperation towards in-depth and practical development and boost people-to-people amity.

Proposed by President Xi Jinping in May 2017 when he was delivering the keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, the Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network (SIRONET) was established by China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE) in cooperation with NGOs of other Belt and Road partner countries in November 2017. President Xi sent a letter of congratulations to the First Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network Forum. In the following 6 years, under the guidance of the Silk Road Spirit and the international steering committee and with the concerted efforts of all member organisations, SIRONET has been expanding in scale and its cooperation results benefiting people of the Belt and Road partner countries. SIRONET has become an outstanding symbol in Belt and Road people-to-people connectivity, and has been playing an

important role in enhancing people-to-people amity, deepening people's friendship, cementing the public support for Belt and Road cooperation.

As we speak, changes unseen in a century is involving in a faster pace. A new round of technological reform and industrial transformation is getting increasingly influential. International strengths are more balanced. International system and international order are going through intensive adjustment. The general trend of peace and development remains irreversible. Meanwhile, bullying, plundering, zero-sum game and hegemonic behaviours are causing severe damages. The world enters into a new period of turbulence and the mankind is confronted with unprecedented challenges. Against such a backdrop, it's even more important for us to unite and pool the strength and wisdom of people from different countries, in a bid to clear up misunderstanding and divergence, deepen cooperation and friendship, and jointly pave the path to happiness for people around the world. Herein, I wish to put forward the following proposals to enhance people-to-people exchanges and cooperation as well as promote people-to-people connectivity among Belt and Road partner countries.

First, we should put people at the centre and make concerted efforts to improve their livelihood. President Xi Jinping pointed out that our goal is to meet people's aspiration for a better life. Civil society organisations are born and deeply rooted among people, so improving people's life and ensuring their wellbeing should be the purpose and goal for which civil society organisations strive. We should adhere to the people-centred development philosophy, put people's difficulties and needs on priority, earnestly grasp and analyse

the problems that concern people of the Belt and Road partner countries. We should fully mobilise human resources, materials and finance to carry out more “small yet smart” livelihood programmes in fields including poverty reduction, employment promotion, livelihood improvement and environment protection, so as to help more and more people in the Belt and Road partner countries live a better life.

Second, we should enhance sense of responsibility and join our hands to pave the path towards happiness. As President Xi Jinping said, every happiness is created through diligent work. We should stay active on practical actions and focused on solving problems, optimise top-level design and guarantee implementation. The international steering committee is expected to give good guidance, consultancy and advices in order to provide more intelligence support to the implementation of programmes and the development of SIRONET. The member organisations are expected to tap potentials and highlights of cooperation in their specialised fields, assure sound completion of cooperation and transform cooperation plans into more and better practical results of people-to-people connectivity, thus making the Belt and Road a tangible path to happiness.

Third, we should strengthen exchanges and mutual learning and work together to tell wonderful stories of the Silk Road. President Xi Jinping emphasised that equal exchanges and mutual learning among different civilisations will provide strong moral guidance to tackle difficulties of the times and achieve common development. The Belt and Road cooperation sticks to the civilisation view featuring equality, mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness and champions the shared values of

mankind featuring peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom. It allows cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning transcend clashes, and coexistence transcend feelings of superiority. We should make proper use of this platform, enhance cooperation among Belt and Road partner countries and promote the mutual learning and harmonious coexistence of different civilisations. We should actively advance the building of multi-level people-to-people and cultural exchange mechanisms, fully leverage the strength of diversified entities of the civil society including CSOs, think tanks, media and enterprises, and share the Silk Road spirit among the Belt and Road partner countries.

Fourth, we should stay on the right course while pursuing innovation and join hands to build a better world. President Xi Jinping pointed out that only by staying on the right course can we ensure that we don't get lost or make disastrous mistakes. Only by pursuing innovation can we grasp the essence of the times and take a lead. The great achievements and precious experience of the Belt and Road cooperation in the past decade, especially our remarkable progress in people-to-people connectivity that the 3rd BRF presented, have consolidated our confidence and reassured direction for us. We should sum up outstanding cases, moving stories, successful experience and existing shortages of people-to-people connectivity, constantly enrich the content of cooperation, create new ways of cooperation, expand channels of cooperation and improve efficiency of cooperation, thus playing an inevitable role as civil society in making our world an even better one and contributing to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends!

In the course of the Belt and Road cooperation, each and every country is participating, contributing and benefiting on an equal footing. Upholding the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits we will continuously push forward the Belt and Road cooperation, further enhance people-to-people

connectivity, deepen peoples' friendship, and support the high-quality development of Belt and Road cooperation, so as to make new and greater contributions to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Thank you all!

Work Report of the Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network Delivered by Guo Yezhou, Vice-Minister of IDCPC



Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen, friends!

According to the agenda and entrusted by the Secretariat of China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE), I now deliver a brief work report of the Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network, also known as SIRONET.

In the past 4 plus years since the Second Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network Forum in April 2019, under the guidance of the international steering committee and with the concerted efforts of all members, the building of SIRONET has delivered

new important results. So far, it has nearly 400 members that cover over 70 countries and regions.

With the common efforts of NGOs in Belt and Road cooperation countries, SIRONET has been developed into an important platform for these NGOs to carry out exchanges and cooperation. It has also been playing a vital role in promoting the high-quality development of Belt and Road cooperation and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. In over 4 years, SIRONET has carried out the following work:

First, we have widely pooled the strength of

the civil society and provided strong support to the high-quality development of Belt and Road cooperation. With people-to-people exchanges and cooperation on livelihood programmes as an important instrument, we aimed at deepening communication and cooperation of NGOs, enhancing people-to-people connectivity and promoting common development among Belt and Road cooperation countries. Through these efforts, we continued to deepen understanding and recognition of Belt and Road cooperation in the international community. With seminars and workshops held, exchanges of visits, fruitful results delivered, we effectively converged the consensus and strengths of the international community and cemented the public support to the Belt and Road cooperation.

Second, we have carried out in-depth and practical cooperation in a bit to improve people's livelihood. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, SIRONET launched an initiative of action. Under the initiative, we sent anti-pandemic knowledge packages to people in Belt and Road cooperation countries and donated anti-pandemic materials to our member organisations. The SIRONET members and partners worked together to carry out nearly 200 online events to share experience. We signed agreements with NGOs from over 20 countries and donated more than 50,000 health kits. We actively participated in the Silk Road Community Building Initiative launched by CNIE, encouraged NGOs in Belt and Road cooperation countries to establish partnership and undertook a large number of projects in fields of education, health care and humanitarian assistance, which notably improved the living standard of local people and won wide recognition of them and the local governments.

Third, we have earnestly promoted exchanges and

mutual learning among civilisations and continued to enhance people-to-people connectivity. In over 4 years, the SIRONET members, inheriting and championing the Silk Road spirit, have constantly deepened exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations, built up bridges connecting different civilisations, effectively promoting the mutual inspiration and common progress of civilisations in Belt and Road cooperation countries. We have earnestly took part in the implementation of the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Civilisation Initiative, widely participated in events including the Dialogue on Exchanges and Mutual Learning among Civilisations and International Civil Society Solidarity Conference on the Global Development Initiative and facilitated mutual understanding, respect and appreciation among people in Belt and Road cooperation countries, contributing positive energy to the progress of human civilisation.

Fourth, we have strengthened mechanism building and strived to establish a high-end platform for people-to-people connectivity. Focused on optimizing operation mechanism, expanding work fields, leveling up execution capacity and enhancing influence, SIRONET has strengthened capacity building and continued to establish a platform of exchanges and cooperation for Belt and Road cooperation countries. By publicising information, holding events, channeling resources for projects, the Secretariat of SIRONET has built close ties with member organisations who also work closely, contact constantly, share information and resources and forge great synergy. The role of SIRONET as an international multi-lateral platform for NGO exchanges and cooperation has been strengthened, stimulating the exchanges and cooperation among people in Belt and Road

cooperation countries.

The day before yesterday, General Secretary Xi Jinping, in his speech at the opening ceremony of the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (the 3rd BRF), pointed out that the past decade proves that Belt and Road cooperation stands on the right side of the history, suits the requirement for the progress of the times and walks on the right path. We should remain unwavering in this turbulent world, shoulder responsibility for the history, people and the world, join hands to face global risks and challenges and create a beautiful future featuring peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefits for future generations. We should fully translate the spirit of the important speech of General Secretary Xi Jinping, the 3rd BRF and the Thematic Session on People-to-people Connectivity into actions. We should further enhance the role of SIRONET and leverage the unique advantages of NGOs in Belt and Road cooperation countries, so as to bring more tangible benefits to people in these countries.

First, we should enhance solidarity and cooperation to jointly expand the scale and enhance the strength of SIRONET. We will further consolidate work foundation, improve work mechanisms, give a better play to the meeting mechanisms such as the International Steering Committee Conference, SIRONET Plenary Session and thematic meetings, further strengthen information sharing, reinforce communication and coordination to foster the greatest synergy, so as to build up a cooperation framework with mutual support and common development.

Second, we should actively participate in the Action on Silk Road People-to-people Connectivity to build a Silk Road to happiness together. On the Thematic

Session on People-to-people Connectivity, CNIE released the Joint Statement of Proposals on Strengthening People-to-people Connectivity and launched the Action on Silk Road People-to-people Connectivity. We should take this Action as an opportunity to carry out more projects that are rooted in the people and bring benefits and mutual understanding to the people, thus truly enhance their sense of fulfillment and happiness.

Third, we should deepen exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations and actively take part in establishing the global network for inter-civilisation dialogue and cooperation. We should uphold the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, strongly advocate the Silk Road spirit, put ourselves under the guidance of the Global Civilisation Initiative and actively participate in establishing the global network for inter-civilisation dialogue and cooperation, making due contribution to the flourish of the garden of human civilisation.

Fourth, we should vigorously champion the shared values of humanity and proactively promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. We should insist on cooperation, openness and mutual benefits, firmly oppose confrontation, isolation and zero-sum games. Taking the great harmony for mankind as our responsibility, we should break all barriers that hinder the exchanges and cooperation among people around the world and build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world with lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity.

The above is the work report of SIRONET. Please discuss on its approval.

Thank you!

Address by Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Former President of Chile



Good morning, distinguished guests! I'd like to take this opportunity to express my most sincere appreciation to the Communist Party of China, the Chinese government and the CPC Provincial Committee and the Provincial People's Government of Henan. I'm very glad to visit such a beautiful place as Henan Province. During our visit here, we received warm hospitality and friendship of local people, which instantly made us feel at home.

In the past decade since General Secretary Xi Jinping put forward the Belt and Road Initiative, we have constructed infrastructure, established networks for exchanges and cooperation and

translated the Belt and Road Initiative into reality. Therefore, just as President Xi Jinping pointed out at the opening ceremony of the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, we should turn the Belt and Road Initiative into a reality instead of remaining as an initiative.

Why is a concept like the Belt and Road cooperation important? That's because only through the Belt and Road cooperation can our people feel that the governments leading our countries can grasp the general trend of international development and achieve national economic development. Maybe I am the only representative from Latin America today, but what

I want to tell you is that our former development mode was not able to bring real development to the country. For that, we lost opportunities to develop. We got worse economy, education and public services. Instead of becoming a developed country, we stay as a developing one. But the Belt and Road cooperation changed it. Sometimes we may have forgotten to mention the problem of climate change. This is a problem we should pay attention to because it has changed the situation of the whole world. This year, Chile suffered from severe flood. Many houses and factories were destroyed. Climate change is a problem that needs us to deal with together. And now it is the time for us to join hands. Then what can we do exactly? I'd like to provide a perspective from Latin America.

There is no doubt that the Belt and Road cooperation has achieved great success in 10 years. But there is still a lot to talk about for us as Latin American. Such as the connectivity in terms of marine, land and air transportation, it takes 30 to 40 hours to fly to China. It's too long, so I think we should improve connectivity capacity. We have mentioned this many times before that we must build an undersea cable that connects Latin America and Asia that will allow us to achieve connectivity of information and get connected with important Asian countries like China and Japan. Why is that very important? Because Latin America has been forgotten. For example, if we want to connect with the world Internet, we must connect with the United States first. But that's not enough. We must connect with Asian countries, too.

Chile is a small country with a population of 20 million. In the meantime, Chile is also one of the most important country of astronomy in the world. 50% of deep space observatories are in Chile, and these observatories need around-the-

clock connectivity service. But we didn't have enough network connection to share these information with other countries. This is also something we need to change. Meanwhile, we also need to develop digital economy, which provides all citizens with equal opportunities of development. Take 5G as an example. We built a communication network that goes through Chile for 3000 kilometres, because only through this communication technology can we get access to education, information and development. About this problem, we must make digital economy a reality. We can see there are significant progress of AI, but Latin America is very much lagged behind now. Latin American countries need to be more engaged, increase more investment at educational and national level. There are many projects we can cooperate on. When the Belt and Road cooperation was launched at first, Latin America thought this had nothing to do with us, because the ancient Silk Road didn't connect Latin America 2000 years ago. But then we realised that the Belt and Road is a cooperation network suitable for the development of current world. Then we should be included. We should make efforts to change people's traditional idea about the Belt and Road cooperation, allowing them look at the Belt and Road Initiative from a modern and developing perspective, and realise that the Belt and Road Initiative is an initiative put forward for the development of countries, for better education and culture and for more interactions.

This is what I want to share with you. I hope these changes have changed our life. 30 to 40 years ago when cellphones and computers just appeared, many countries had nothing. Maybe there were no cellphone in Chile, only computer. But now? Everyone has a cellphone. In the 1960s when I

visited Italy, I saw a computer for the first time in my life. The computing capacity of that computer may be just equal to a cellphone today. Now, we are standing in front of the door towards a new world. The new world we are facing is one to be built through the Belt and Road cooperation. Only through the Belt and Road cooperation, can we know the new world and build the new world,

so that we can enjoy new life and our people can enjoy more benefits and prosperity.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I extend the highest gratitude to all of you. Chile is an old friend and good friend to China. I hope to see connectivity also between our two peoples. Thank you!

Address by Sujata Koirala, Former Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal



It is a great pleasure and privilege to be here among the distinguished delegates to the Conference on the Sironet Forum for International Cooperation. I sincerely thank the people and the Government of the People's Republic of China, BRI forum organiser team, and Sironet Forum for their warm and generous hospitality and for the excellent arrangements made for the conference.

We are assembled here to share experiences and practices related to the Belt and Road Initiative. Ten years on since its evolution as "One Belt, One Road" initiative announced by His Excellency the President of the People's Republic of China, BRI has become synonymous with massive infrastructure

project encompassing the Overland Belt and Maritime Silk Road forging vital connections within and among countries and continents.

As stated in the White Paper recently released by the Chinese Government, "BRI is a long-term, transnational and systematic global project of the 21st century." It has shown China's commitment to global economic integration and cooperation - focusing on strengthening development policy synergy, boosting infrastructure connectivity and promoting sustainable development with low carbon emission, strengthening practical cooperation and advancing people-to-people exchanges in various fields. BRI has sought to

uncover fresh avenues for growth by creating economic corridors, economic and trade cooperation zones, industrial parks along the Road, and fostering opportunities for both economic and social development, aligning with the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The BRI has identified that transport infrastructure as the bedrock of this interconnectedness. Transport infrastructures including digital connectivity are proposed to pass through the ancient Silk routes utilising networks of existing roads, railways, ports and pipelines, and communication infrastructures to foster greater global connectivity spanning the Eurasian continents. This is expected to unleash enormous potentials for growth fostering greater openness and inclusivity in pursuit of a united global community of shared future.

Increasing and widening people-to-people interactions through diverse means will help forge stronger bonds among countries, societies, think tanks, and professionals among others. This will also help understand each other better, and collaborate for the betterment of humanity at large. This network is also anticipated to rejuvenate the essence of history and past civilisations, infusing the ancient spirit with the vitality of the modern era. The presence of leaders from diverse continents here serves as a vivid testament to the global representation.

BRI is to strengthen regional economic cooperation as reflected in a unanimously adopted UN Resolution 2,344 in 2017 in consistent with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, treating all states as equal partners for cooperation. It is encouraging to note such cooperation to be based on extensive consultation, joint efforts and shared mutual benefits

emphasising on the importance of rule of law and equal opportunities for all.

Infrastructure development is key to progress and prosperity. Nepal has immense deficit in infrastructures. As China proposes to engage in improving connectivity in the neighbourhood, there is a considerable interest and great optimism about BRI in Nepal. Early on in 2015, Nepal expressed its desire "to work in close cooperation with China towards enhancing more connectivity and integration between nations and boost their infrastructure, trade, energy sector and tourism, which would ultimately contribute to regional harmony, peace and development."

In view of the desperate needs to build and expand infrastructures across the country, Nepal looks to benefit from the BRI by harnessing its huge potential sources —hydropower, tourism and agriculture. Nepal signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the framework agreement on BRI, which contains setting up border economic zones and its expansion, and to expand and improve China-Nepal transit road network agreements. MoU's major thrust is on promoting cooperation on connectivity, "to strengthen cooperation in connectivity sectors including transit transport, logistic systems, transport network and related infrastructure development such as railway, road, civil aviation, power grid, information and communication." Through massive infrastructure networks, Nepal hopes to develop local industries and improve the living standards of its people.

Good networks, good connectivity through developing the Nepal-China Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network, including Nepal-China cross-border railways and highways, transmission lines and internet connectivity

are expected to help reap benefits of getting connected to global value chain. This, we believe, will lead to transformative changes. Nepal needs maximum investment to build its productivity and foster economic growth and boost trade promotion.

As a close, friendly and supportive neighbour, we are happy to witness China's growing role in international relations, contributing significantly to global peace and harmony. We believe China's

pivotal position stands as a major factor of global stability and growth. Nepal wishes China continued peace, progress and prosperity in days and years to come.

I believe SIRONET could strongly involve to implement successively the activities among the BRI partners in coming days as well.

I thank you all and wish a meaningful and productive session.

Address by Vito Rosario Petrocelli, President of the Istituto Italia-BRICS and Former Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate of Italy



I thank the organisers of this important Forum for giving me the opportunity to bring greetings during the Opening Ceremony.

The Forum is being held on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative, during which 352 organisations from 72 countries are working together in the Network announced by President Xi Jinping in May 2017 at the Opening Ceremony of the First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

We are here to discuss the recent past, the present and the near future of the Network. We

will discuss the progress the Network has made in the past four years. We will discuss what is the state of collaboration among more than 400 representatives of governments, political parties, think tanks, civil society organisations and media. We will set the work for the future development of the Network and how best to address the challenges that lie ahead in the coming years. We want to work to improve the platform for exchanges, connectivity and cooperation among people, with the goal of growing global wellbeing and building a human community with a shared future.

Italy and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the Silk Road on March

2019, the most important document for relations between the two countries in recent years.

At that time I was chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Italian Senate and I shared and supported the qualitative leap that the signing of the MoU represented for Italy's multipolar foreign policy.

The MoU improved trade relations between Italy and China, above all but not only that. The two sides worked to expand people-to-people exchanges, developed their sister cities network, fully utilised the platform of Italy-China Culture Cooperation Mechanism to cooperate for the finalisation of the twinning among Italian and Chinese UNESCO world heritage sites.

They also worked to foster forms of collaboration, between their respective administrations, on the issues of education, culture, science, innovation, health, tourism and public welfare, through exchanges and collaborations between their respective Local authorities, media, think tanks, universities and youth.

The Chinese people's interest in Italy has grown a lot since 2019. Italy has become the favourite European destination for Chinese tourists. There are more and more exhibitions on Italian art and culture in China. There are thirty thousand Chinese students coming to Italy for study. These results are certainly connected to the enthusiasm and expectations on cooperation that was born from the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Times and the Italian Government have changed since 2019, and it is uncertain that MoU will be renewed at the end of 2023. The friendly relationship between Italy and China will not change; our peoples have a millennial tradition and we are connected in a thousand ways.

The Istituto Italia BRICS, which I have the honour of representing at this Forum, is here to confirm the continuity of people-to-people cooperation between Italian and Chinese organisations in the multipolar context.

Towards a human community with a shared future.

Thank you Ladies and Gentlemen for your attention and have a good work.

The Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) Held the Opening Ceremony and the First Lecture of the Civilisation Lecture Series

On October 20, 2023, the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) held the opening ceremony and the first lecture of the Civilisation Lecture Series in Henan Museum. Ji Bingxuan, Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress and President of CAFIU, attended the opening ceremony and delivered a speech. Wang Zhanying, Member of the Standing Committee of CPC Henan Provincial Committee and Head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Henan Provincial Committee, and Essam Sharaf, Former Egyptian

Prime Minister, delivered speeches respectively. After the opening ceremony, Ma Xiaolin, Director of Henan Museum, gave a presentation on the topic of "Inheriting Chinese Civilisation and Promoting the Development of World Civilisation" as the first lecture. Nearly 200 people attended the lecture, including former foreign leaders, government ministers, heads of international and non-governmental organisations, experts and scholars, as well as celebrities from Chinese and foreign cultural circles.

Address by Ji Bingxuan, Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress of China and President of the Chinese Association for International Understanding



Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen, friends:

Good morning! It is a great pleasure to join all of you in my hometown, Henan Province, to attend the opening ceremony of the Civilisation Lecture. As the cradle of the Chinese civilisation, Henan was endowed with numerous historic treasures. As the birthplace of the Chinese nation and the Chinese

civilisation, Henan Province boasts time-honoured history and splendid culture. Henan Museum has a rich collection of cultural relics, which serves as the epitome of the history of Chinese civilisation. It is of special significance to hold the opening ceremony and the first lecture of the Civilisation Lecture Series here to conduct in-depth discussions on the 5,000-year uninterrupted Chinese civilisation and promote exchanges and mutual understanding

among different civilisations in the world. On behalf of the sponsor, the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU), I wish to extend my warm welcome and sincere greetings to all the guests from home and abroad joining us today.

Today's world witnesses accelerating momentous changes unseen in a century. The challenges faced by the human being continue unabated. Addressing common challenges and moving towards a better future require not only the power of economy and technology, but also the power of culture and civilisation. President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Civilisation Initiative in March this year, which is rich in content and logically comprises a coherent whole. The "Four Advocacies" not only elucidate the law of development of human civilisation, but also clearly put forward the means and paths to deal with the relationship among different civilisations. The Initiative focusing on keeping our own civilisation vibrant while creating a favourable condition for the development of others' civilisations is an important guideline for the harmonious coexistence of different civilisations in a spirit of harmony and mutual respect and understanding. The Global Civilisation Initiative is in line with the laws governing the development of human civilisation, responds to the aspirations of the people, and will surely make an important contribution to solving the common challenges of all human beings and accelerating the modernisation of mankind.

The Global Civilisation Initiative shows the wisdom of "harmony" and demonstrates the profound heritage of the Chinese traditional culture. Chinese civilisation is extensive and profound, and has a long history stretching back to antiquity, among which the essence of "harmony" culture lies.

The spirit and characteristics of "harmony" are harmony but not uniformity, mutual respect, seeking common ground while shelving differences, and growing together. The way of achieving "harmony" is to seek understanding through dialogue and coexist harmoniously, seek unity through consensus and work together, seek harmony with inclusiveness and develop harmoniously. In the process of advancing modernisation, China has always adhered to the concept of "harmony but not uniformity" and promote the evolution and growth of fine traditional Chinese culture in new and creative ways. We will never seek cultural hegemony or impose our own values or political system on others. We will always strive to build a community with a shared future for mankind. While developing ourselves, we will actively contribute to safeguarding world peace and promoting common development.

I am glad to see that the Global Civilisation Initiative has received broad support and positive response from the international community. A series of major events, such as the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-level Meeting, the Dialogue on Exchanges and Mutual Learning among Civilisations, the World Conference of Sinologists, the Dialogue of Asian Civilisations, the Ancient Civilisations Forum, have set up new platforms and reached more consensus for enhancing exchanges among and development of civilisations. It has also made an important contribution to the implementation of the Global Civilisation Initiative. A single flower does not make spring, while one hundred flowers in full blossom bring spring to the garden. The sustainable development of human civilisation and the harmonious progress of human society can only be

achieved through exchanges and mutual learning.

CAFIU is dedicated to promoting exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations, actively contributing to inter-civilisation dialogue, and explores ways for harmonious coexistence and mutual learning among different civilisations. CAFIU successfully held the third Dialogue on Exchanges and Mutual Learning among Civilisations and the first World Conference of Sinologists on July, 2023. Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter, which has inspired the confidence of the international community to strengthen dialogue and exchanges among civilisations and enhance mutual learning and respect. The Civilisation Lecture is another platform for dialogue among civilisations built by CAFIU after the Dialogue on Exchanges and Mutual Learning among Civilisations. Current and former political leaders, heads of non-governmental organisations, scholars and celebrities from cultural circle around the world, including our distinguished guests here today, are invited to share their understanding and interpretation of Eastern and Western civilisations, their understanding of exchanges

among civilisations, and their expectations for the development of human civilisation from different perspectives. It aims to enhance mutual understanding and respect among countries and people with different cultural backgrounds, share ideas, draw wisdom and build consensus through exchanges, jointly promote the development of world civilisations, and contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

At the opening ceremony of the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, President Xi Jinping noted that the Belt and Road cooperation is based on the principle of "planning together, building together, and benefiting together". It transcends differences between civilisations, cultures, social systems and stages of development, opens up a new path for exchanges among countries, and establishes a new framework for international cooperation. Indeed, the BRI represents humanity's joint pursuit of development for all.

I wish the Civilisation Lecture a complete success!

Thank you!

Speech by Essam Sharaf, Former Prime Minister of Egypt and President of the Sharaf Foundation for Sustainable Development



First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the invitation to speak to this esteemed audience. I also want to thank the host, China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE), for the outstanding event planning, welcoming atmosphere, and gracious hospitality.

Our world is at a crossroads. We must make a choice whether to maintain the status quo and face potential self-destruction or to chart a new course toward global unity by making significant changes to save our civilisation. I believe that achieving global prosperity is an aspiration that

we all share in our hearts, and to achieve that aspiration, civilisation is important. When it comes to prosperity, I think we all agree that it is a good word, but there is no prosperity without development, no development without peace, no peace without trust and no trust without connectivity, especially people-to-people connectivity.

China has put forward a number of global initiatives, so as I said before, we don't need to reinvent the wheel, we have some good options right now. China first proposed the Belt and Road Initiative, and later the Global Development

Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilisation Initiative. I know there are some differences in their timelines and their goals. But in my opinion, they can actually be viewed as a package and the Global Civilisation Initiative is of great importance. I think the Belt and Road Initiative aims to improve global connectivity through physical infrastructure and people-to-people connectivity. The Global Civilisation Initiative aims to foster trust and respect among individuals across cultures and civilisations globally. The Global Security Initiative aims to resolve the conflicts through dialogue and consultation for peaceful resolution and to prevent from returning to the Cold War era. The Global Development Initiative aims to provide an articulated roadmap for development through a unique set of core concepts and priorities. So in my view, these four global initiatives can actually be seen as a package.

If we look at it from a global perspective, we can also see the influence of the Chinese dream, which is to achieve common prosperity for all the people and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. If we look carefully, we will find that the realisation of Chinese modernisation also contains many values put forward by the Chinese people themselves, and these values can also be found in the four global initiatives put forward by China in the past few years. Whether it is the four global initiatives or the Chinese dream, I think the ultimate purpose is to build a community with a shared future for mankind. I would also like to highlight the Global Civilisation Initiative and the Silk Road

Cooperation Network.

Chinese President Xi Jinping on October 18th announced eight major steps China will take to support high-quality Belt and Road cooperation among which the sixth step is about people-to-people exchanges. In general, his internal logic is that we first have the Chinese dream, and then based on our Chinese dream, we need to promote Chinese modernisation. Based on the understanding of Chinese modernisation, China has put forward four global initiatives, and by realising these four global initiatives, we can achieve global changes. That is why I believe that these four initiatives should be seen as a whole. When these initiatives are embraced by those who advocate for peace and development, they create a path toward a world where everyone shares a common prosperous future and enjoys a new world order characterised by dialogue-based international relations, rule-based global governance, and true multilateralism.

Finally, I want to say that our choices are our future, and we must think about our children and grandchildren and create a better world for them. So we should make our choice. Whether we would choose cooperation or domination, coexistence or superiority, mutual understanding or arrogance, openness or seclusion, dialogue or confrontation, negotiation or bullying, and civilisations embracement or civilisations clash, our choices determine the future of our children and grandchildren. Thank you very much!

Summary of Keynote Speech by Ma Xiaolin, Director of Henan Museum

President Xi Jinping has visited many places in recent years, and in each place he often goes to a museum. He made important speeches in each museum he visited, be it a historical or a modern one. He pointed out that China has firm confidence in its path, theory and system, which is essentially a confidence in its culture based on more than 5,000 years of civilisation.

Let's first look at the definition and criteria of civilisation. The word “civilisation” has been mentioned many times in Chinese classical literature, the meanings of which remain same as the current ones—brightness, wisdom, morality, and normative ideology and practices. Engels once made a very generative definition of “civilisation” by pointing out that a civilisation as a stage of social development is a special historical stage linked with the state, private ownership and family. Western archaeologists have proposed three criteria for civilisation: metallurgy, writing, and cities. However, these standards are not fully applicable to all civilisations, such as the Chinese and Inca civilisations. Chinese archaeology began in Yangshao Village, Mianchi, Henan Province in 1921 with a history of more than 100 years.

Let's take a look at China's national-level project to trace the origins of Chinese civilisation. The project aims to address five core questions about Chinese

civilisation: When did the Chinese civilisation take its shape? How did the diversified civilisations converge into Chinese civilisation from its birth to prosperity? What is the development path of Chinese civilisation? What are the characteristics of the development path and mechanism of the Chinese civilisation? What important contribution the Chinese civilisation has made to the world civilisation? Archaeological findings confirm that Chinese civilisation originated more than 5,000 years ago and its development has been continuous, and various roots of our civilisation were linked together and frequently exchanged with one another. They gradually formed a shared community. We have put forward standards suitable for Chinese civilisation. Tracing the origins of Chinese civilisation not only provides evidence for the origin and development of Chinese civilisation, but also plays an important role in enhancing the nation's cultural confidence and understanding the continuity and innovation of Chinese civilisation. It helps us better understand the history of the Chinese civilisation, connects ancient civilisation with the up-to-date one, and provides a historical basis and cultural support for the contemporary Chinese civilisation.

Let's look at the development of archaeology and how the archaeological findings provide

evidence for the origin and development of Chinese civilisation. The development of archaeology confirms the records of ancient Chinese documents. The discovery of oracle bone inscriptions proves the accuracy of the ranking of the Shang Dynasty royal family in *Shi Ji* (the Records of the Grand Historian). The excavations of the relics of the late Shang Dynasty in Anyang proves the existence of oracle bones and Shang culture. The discovery of Shangcheng Ruins proves the existence of the capital city in the early Shang Dynasty. The Yanshi Erlitou site existed 3800-3500 years ago in the middle and late Xia Dynasty, proving the existence of the Xia Dynasty capital.

Now let me focus on the characteristics of Chinese civilisation. The origin, formation and development of a civilisation is a complex process. It is the result of many factors including nature, agriculture, handicraft industry, social organisation and cultural exchanges. Archaeological evidence shows that the Chinese civilisation is continuous, innovative, unified, inclusive and peaceful. These characteristics are not only reflected in the material culture, but also in the ethic culture and social system.

The continuity of the Chinese civilisation can be seen in the fact that it has never been interrupted during the past 5,000 years. From a million years of human history to 10,000 years of cultural history and more than 5,000 years of civilisation, the development of the Chinese civilisation is clearly visible. Thanks to China's unique natural environment, vast room for strategic maneuver and the stability of cultural institutions, Chinese civilization can never be interrupted. In addition, the cultural characteristics of inclusiveness also enable the Chinese civilisation to absorb and integrate foreign cultures in the long history, so as to maintain its vitality and continuity.

Innovation is an important feature of the Chinese civilisation, which is reflected in agricultural technology, the four great inventions (paper, printing, gunpowder, and compass), lacquer, silk, porcelain, imperial examination system, county system and other important contributions. These innovations have not only promoted China's own development, but also had a profound impact on world civilisation. The innovation of the Chinese civilisation in agriculture, handicraft industry, science and technology demonstrates the wisdom and creativity of the Chinese nation.

Unity can be seen in the preservation and inheritance of common cultural tradition in the Chinese civilisation. For example, the belief in dragons, the concept of beauty in jade, the worship of ancestors, etc., are all cultural consensus across time and space. These unified cultural elements have not only strengthened the cohesion of the nation, but also provided moral support for the sustainable development of the Chinese civilisation.

Inclusiveness is a distinctive feature of the Chinese civilisation, which is reflected in the acceptance and integration of foreign cultures. In history, the Chinese civilisation has been extensively exchanged with the outside world through the Silk Road and other channels, absorbing foreign cultural elements in fields including religion, art, science and technology, and integrating them into the local culture. This open attitude and inclusive spirit has enabled the Chinese civilisation to continuously enrich and develop itself in the integration of diverse cultures.

Peace is one of the core values of the Chinese civilisation. In Chinese ancient literature, such as the Book of History, there is the idea of "harmony among all nations", emphasising fairness and

harmonious coexistence; Confucius put forward the idea of Harmony without Uniformity, emphasising seeking common grounds while reserving differences. This cultural concept of peace can be seen not only in domestic governance, but also in international relations. The Chinese civilisation advocates peaceful coexistence and opposes war and conflict. The peaceful nature is an important contribution of the Chinese civilisation to the world.

These five major characteristics together constitute the unique features of the Chinese civilisation. They are not only a summary of the past, but also a guide for future development. In the new era, inheriting and developing these characteristics is of great significance for enhancing cultural self-confidence and developing modern civilisation.

Finally, let's talk about how to inherit and develop the Chinese civilisation. In order to deeply understand and learn from the origin and

development of the Chinese civilisation, we must combine the history of the 5000-year Chinese civilisation with China's modern history, the 100-year history since the founding of the Communist Party of China, and the history of the development of New China over the past 70 years, establish a grand view of history, and understand the inevitable trend of historical development. Only through in-depth study of history can we better observe the world, understand history, face reality, and lay a solid foundation for building a better future. At the same time, we should have a deeper understanding of the glorious achievements of the Chinese civilisation and its great contribution to the mankind, so as to remain confident in our history and enhance our historical mission. Let us work together, with greater awareness and conviction, to contribute to the development of the Chinese civilisation as well as the development and progress of world civilisation. Thank you!

The Chinese Association for International Understanding Holds Lecture II of the Civilisation Lecture Series

On December 6th, 2023, the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) held Lecture II of the Civilisation Lecture Series in Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname. Ai Ping, Vice-President of CAFIU, delivered a keynote speech. Han Jing, the Chinese Ambassador to Suriname, delivered a speech. Wei Nanguang, renowned art scholar from Suriname, Narinder, professor from Anton de Kom University of Suriname, and Rita, Director of the National Archives of Suriname gave

speeches on the inheritance and development of Chinese civilisation, Indian civilisation, and Javanese civilisation in Suriname, and answered questions from the audience. More than 50 people attended this event, including diplomats from the Chinese Embassy in Suriname, Indonesian Ambassador to Suriname, Chargé d'affaires of the Indian Embassy in Suriname, teachers and students from Anton de Kom University of Suriname, and representatives of local overseas Chinese groups.



Speech at the Civilisation Lecture Series by Ai Ping, Vice-President of the Chinese Association for International Understanding

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

I am very delighted to be in the beautiful Suriname and to meet and exchange ideas with you on the occasion of the Civilisation Lecture Series. Firstly, on behalf of the Chinese Association for International Understanding, I would like to express sincere greetings and good wishes to all the friends present here. The friendship between China and Suriname has a long history. As early as 170 years ago, the first group of Chinese people came here across vast oceans, which marked the beginning of the history of friendly exchanges between China and Suriname. Suriname is one of the earliest countries in the Caribbean region to recognize the One China Principle and to establish diplomatic relations with China. China-Suriname relations have long been at the forefront of the relations between China and Caribbean countries, and can be regarded as a model of friendly coexistence and equal treatment among countries. Under the strategic guidance of President Xi Jinping and President Santokhi, the two countries have continuously strengthened political mutual trust, expanded mutually beneficial cooperation, and deepened cultural exchanges. The healthy and stable development of China-Suriname relations has brought benefits to the people of both countries. We believe that

Suriname will achieve greater success in the pursuit of national prosperity and people's welfare. We are willing to further deepen exchanges and cooperation with Suriname in various fields under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilisation Initiative, to promote the bilateral relations to a new level and jointly achieve modernisation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

We live in a world of different cultures, races, colours of skin, religions, and social systems. Diversity and differences are the realities of this world. It is precisely because of the differences and the colourful civilisations created by people of various countries that we have today's abundant, diverse, vibrant and wonderful human society. Diversity spurs interaction among civilisations, which in turn promotes mutual learning and their further development. We must respect the diversity of civilisations, actively promote exchanges and mutual learning among cultures, and let cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning transcend clashes, and cultural coexistence transcend feelings of superiority so that human civilisation will be further enriched,

allowing people of all countries to enjoy a richer spiritual life through mutual learning and create a future with more options.

Our world today is living through accelerating changes unseen in a century and has entered a new phase of turbulence and transformation. Human history has long proven that the obstacles to development and progress of humanity have never been the mountains, rivers, deserts or gobi, but rather the narrow-mindedness and prejudice deeply ingrained in our hearts. We must uphold equality and respect, abandon arrogance and prejudice, break the ice of cultural barriers, deepen our understanding of the differences between our own civilisation and other civilisations, promote exchanges, dialogue, and harmonious coexistence among civilisations, and jointly enhance the development and progress of different civilisations. We are hosting the Lecture II of Civilisation Lecture Series here today to draw wisdom from exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations, and contribute to solving issues of common concern to the international community.

China has always treated civilisations around the world with an open and inclusive attitude, advocated harmony in diversity and advancing with the times, adhered to inclusiveness, and pursued universal harmony. President Xi Jinping pointed out that Chinese civilisation has five defining characteristics, namely continuity, innovation, unity, inclusiveness and peace. These five defining characteristics are a key to understanding Chinese civilisation, contemporary domestic and foreign policies. The Chinese civilisation has inherited the concept of peace, amity and harmony. President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Civilization Initiative to encourage the international community to

solve the problem of imbalance between material and spiritual aspects, and jointly promote the continuous progress of human civilisation.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Dear Friends!

In recent years, Chinese NGOs, together with NGOs from different countries, have carried out various exchanges in the fields of education, culture, sports, health, etc., which have actively promoted exchanges and mutual learning among cultures, effectively enhanced mutual understanding among people from different countries, and promoted people-to-people connectivity of all countries. The Chinese Association for International Understanding, where I serve as the Vice President, has accumulated certain features and advantages in carrying out exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations. Recently, the Chinese Association for International Understanding has created a series of platforms for cultural exchanges and mutual learning, such as the Dialogue on Exchanges among Civilisations, and the Civilisation Lecture Series, which have actively promoted cultural exchanges and cooperation projects on people's livelihood among countries. We are willing to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with NGOs, think tanks and media in Suriname, further expand cooperation areas, innovate cooperation methods, promote the implementation of exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations, enhance mutual understanding and trust between peoples of our two countries and of all countries in the world, and consolidate the humanistic foundation for building a community with a shared future for mankind.

Thank You!

Summary of the Speeches

Delivered by Foreign Guests at Lecture II of the Civilisation Lecture Series

Wei Nanguang, a renowned art scholar in Suriname (Chinese Descent): Suriname can be regarded as a melting pot of ethnic groups, where different ethnic groups can coexist harmoniously. Exchanges and the blend of different civilisations promote its economic and social development and prosperity. 170 years ago, the first group of Chinese people travelled across the ocean to Suriname, rooted themselves in this land, formed deep friendship with the people of Suriname, and made arduous efforts to build their homeland. The Chinese people in Suriname have brought a complete set of mature Chinese culture to this country, who inherited fine traditions, adhered to cultural essence, and made positive contribution to the local development. Most of the Chinese who migrated to Suriname in the early years were Hakka people, so Hakka language was widely used in Suriname, further enhancing the cohesion of the Chinese community in Suriname.

Narinder Mohkamsing, Professor of Anton de Kom University of Surinam (Indian Descent): Most of the immigrants who settled in Surinam are definitely proud to be linked to their own great civilisations. An anthropologist once said, “if you

want to study India one or two centuries ago, you must go to Suriname”. The Indian residents of Suriname have fully preserved and taken great pride in the traditional Indian language, culture, music, cuisine, and fashion. With the popularity of Bollywood movies and the influence of modern media, the Indian residents of Suriname are also rapidly accepting modern culture and achieving the integration of tradition and modernity. Indian, Chinese, and other ethnic residents of Suriname live in harmony, and most Indian residents enjoy Chinese food. Politically, Indians are one of the ethnic groups with the highest degree of integration with the local community, and they are scattered across various parties instead of staying in a single political party .

Rita Tjien Foooh, Director of the National Archives of Suriname (Indonesian Descent): Indonesian residents initially came to Suriname as indentured labourers. Although it poses considerable challenges to live in a new environment and culture , over time, they had established a strong connection with Suriname and become an integral part of the Suriname society. They are active in various industries and sectors in Suriname and have

made positive contribution to economic and social development. Education has also played a crucial role in promoting the integration of Indonesians into Suriname society. In recent years, more and more Indonesians have been able to receive higher education, thereby improving their living standards and creating development opportunities

for themselves and their families. The protection and celebration of one's own culture and traditions is a source of joy for Indonesian residents. The Indonesian generation born in Suriname grew up in a multi-ethnic and multilingual environment, with Dutch being the first language and Suriname being the second language.

CAFIU Hosted Lecture III of the Civilisation Lecture Series

CAFIU and the Ministry of Culture Affairs of Tunisia jointly hosted the Lecture III of the Civilisation Lecture Series at the Centre for Arts, Culture and Letters on the afternoon of December 25. Ji Bingxuan, Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress and President of CAFIU, and Baccouche, Director of the National Heritage Institute of Tunisia addressed

the lecture respectively. UNESCO expert of the Arab States Region Fahit, and historian Hussein made keynote speeches under the theme of exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations. Around 100 guests including diplomats from the Chinese Embassy in Tunisia, experts, scholars and representatives from the cultural circle of Tunisia participated in the event.



Speech by Ji Bingxuan, Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress and President of the Chinese Association for International Understanding

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to gather with you in Tunisia, the Pearl of the Mediterranean Sea, to launch the dialogues on exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations, boost mutual learning and enhance the deep friendship between China and Tunisia. During my two-day visit, I was deeply impressed by the profound and glorious Tunisian civilisation that incorporated the Carthaginian, ancient Roman and Islamic civilisations. Over 2000 years ago, with a simple wish, our ancestors trekked across vast steppes and deserts, opened the transcontinental passage connecting Asian, European and African continents, known today as the Silk Road, and ushered in an era of extensive exchanges in the history of human civilisation. About 1000 years ago, our ancestors navigated rough seas and created routes linking the East with the West, namely, the Maritime Silk Road, inaugurating a new stage of interactions between civilisations. Stepping into the new stage, China and Tunisia conducted win-win cooperation in the wave of economic globalisation and witnessed

the joint pursuit of development and national rejuvenation. As two ancient civilisations in the two sides of the East and the West, the two civilisations share similarities with their own distinctive features. Therefore, it is ever more important to launch exchanges and dialogues between civilisations through mutual learning, in a bid to boost common development and prosperity.

Changes of the world, of our times, and of historical significance are unfolding like never before. The mankind faces unprecedented challenges. We cannot address common challenges and strive towards a brighter future without the power of economy and science, nor that of culture. Chinese President Xi Jinping put forth the Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI) in March this year, advocating respecting the diversity of civilisation, the shared values of humanity, the importance of inheritance and innovation of civilisations and robust international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. It calls on the entire world to further promote exchanges and dialogues among civilisations, so as to advance human civilisation in promoting mutual learning and inclusiveness. As the future of all countries is closely connected, by advocating tolerance, coexistence, exchanges and

mutual learning among different civilisations, GCI plays an irreplaceable role in advancing humanity's modernisation process and making the garden of world civilisation flourish.

In today's world, multiple challenges and crisis are intertwined. The cold-war mentality is still haunting our world. Various cultural trends of thought emerge and such rhetoric as the clash of civilisations or the superiority of one civilisation over another are resurgent. All these have intensified estrangement among different civilisations and severely hindered the exchanges and cooperation of the international community. GCI actively responds to the appeal of the international community for exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations, and promotes cultural inclusiveness and coexistence. Exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations allow different countries and nations to enhance mutual trust and understanding, foster closer bonds and strengthen cooperation, thus jointly advancing the development of human civilisation. Each and every nation in the world has its own cultural blood and origin. Because of this, the magnificent human civilisation was created and its garden is flourishing with vigour and vitality.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Friends,

Civilisations are enriched by exchanges and mutual learning. In July this year, CAFIU held the Third Dialogue on Exchanges and Mutual Learning among Civilisations and the First World Conference of Sinologists. President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to the Dialogue and advocated that we shall implement the GCI, let cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning transcend clashes, inclusiveness

transcend feelings of superiority, and jointly advance the progress of human civilisations. CAFIU actively implements the guiding principle of the congratulatory letter by promoting transcultural dialogues and exploring the path to coexistence, exchanges and mutual learning among different civilisations. The Civilisation Lecture Series (CLS) is another platform for dialogues after the Dialogue on Exchanges and Mutual Learning among Civilisations. With the aim of enhancing mutual understanding and mutual respect among people from different countries with different cultural backgrounds, drawing wisdom in dialogues and pooling consensus through communication, the CLS is dedicated to advancing the development of civilisation and contributing to the building of a human community with a shared future. We are ready to enhance dialogue and communication with Tunisia and be the strong advocate and active facilitator of exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations. To this end, I wish to put forth three proposals.

First, we shall address the challenges of civilisation with equality and respect. Different civilisations have their own strength and weakness with distinctive features, but they are equal in term of their value. There is no best civilisation nor worst one. No civilisation is superior to others. The problem of some civilisations does not lie in the lack of distinctive features, but in their arrogance and prejudice that their civilisation is superior over others, which comes from their ruthless ambition of replacing various civilisations with one single civilisation. We shall stay committed to equality and respect while reject arrogance and prejudice to solve this problem. We shall deepen our understanding of the connotations of different civilisations and facilitate exchanges and dialogues,

mutual learning, coexistence and common development of different civilisations. China stays committed to enhancing exchanges and dialogue between different civilisations, peoples and religions, opposes the rhetoric of the clashes of civilisations or the superiority of one civilisation over another, and opposes to any attempt to link terrorism with any nation, religion, country or civilisation. We are ready to advocate the common values of humanity featuring peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom with Tunisia and other Arab countries, in order to let cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning transcend clashes, coexistence transcend superiority. Let us work together to promote people-to-people connectivity and advance the progress of human civilisation.

Second, we shall carry forward the road that brings together different civilisations with openness and inclusiveness. Civilisation is inclusive in its nature. Thanks to such nature, the human civilisation is enriched and has gained the impetus for exchanges and mutual learning. Just as everything on earth can grow with vigour by metabolism, human civilisation needs exchanges and mutual learning, coexistence and solidarity to maintain its vitality and long-term prosperity. Any civilisation that is conceited, arrogant or isolated, will decline till extinction. China and Tunisia are both ancient civilisations with time-honoured history and diverse culture. Strengthening dialogues, exchanges and mutual learning between the two civilisations will contribute to the common development and prosperity of the two civilisations. The Confucius Institute at the University of Carthage has launched rich language teaching programmes and cultural events, with over 2000 talents studying Chinese there. At

present, the joint archaeology programme is being carried out in an orderly manner, marking a new breakthrough of cooperation in the cultural field. Not long ago, the Tunisian government adopted the visa-exemption policy to Chinese tourists. We will encourage more Chinese tourists to visit Tunisia and explore the Carthaginian civilisation. We will promote interactions in all areas so as to enhance the people-to-people connectivity and extensively boost economic exchanges and trade between China and Tunisia.

Third, we shall illuminate the light of civilisation with innovation. For a civilisation to endure, efforts must be made to keep it alive and build on its heritage from one generation to the next. More importantly, a civilisation needs to adapt itself to the changing times and break new ground. The history of world civilisations tells us that every civilisation needs to advance with the times and takes in the best of its age in order to develop itself. The development of civilisation shall not remain at its past glories, but embrace the present and future. As President Xi Jinping pointed out that Chinese modernisation naturally calls for building modern Chinese civilisation and Chinese modernisation invigorates Chinese civilisation with modern power. We will strive to advance the development of modern civilisation by consistently exploring new fields and breaking new grounds for cooperation. In recent years, a China-funded hospital in Sfax Province has brought about new benefits to the Tunisian people. The International Diplomatic Academy of Tunis has become a new landmark in Tunisia. The Ben Arous Sports and Cultural Centre has become a new destination for the young people. Looking to the future, we are ready to work with Tunisia to boost new impetus and tap the potential of bilateral cooperation by

expanding cooperation in such new areas as green economy, aerospace, electric vehicles and artificial intelligence, thus elevating the development of modernisation to a new height.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Friends,

The next year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Tunisia. We wish to take this opportunity

to inherit the fine traditional culture and jointly promote the innovation and development of our contemporary civilisation with Tunisia, thus pooling strength and making contribution to the building of a community with a shared future.

To conclude, I wish this Lecture a full success.

Thank you.

Summary of the Keynote Speech at the Civilisation Lecture Series By Houssein, Tunisian Historian

Good afternoon!

It's a great pleasure to share my views on Carthaginian civilisation with friends from both Tunisia and China. The Carthaginian civilisation is a compound of the Phoenician civilisation and ancient Tunisian civilisation, and its interaction with the contemporaneous Roman civilisation gave birth to the splendid Mediterranean civilisation.

In as early as the 9th century BC, the Phoenicians came to the coastal area of Bizerte and Utica from the coast of Lebanon and Syria, and established the early Carthaginian city-state. Carthage gradually became the business hub of the Mediterranean region. In the 7th century BC, Carthage became the most powerful country with the prevalence of slavery. In its heyday, the territory of Carthage covered the coastal areas of North Africa, central and southern Spain, Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily and Malta Islands. This region was a must pass for many routes in the east and west Mediterranean. Its unique geographical position contributed to the prosperity of its economy and business. Carthage had a monopoly of trade in the Mediterranean for quite a long time. In addition, it enjoyed a leading position in shipbuilding, agriculture and handcraft industries in the region.

Since the 6th century BC, the expansion of ancient Rome made it the strongest rival against

Carthage. The two powers began competing fiercely over the hegemony of the Mediterranean. The famous Punic War broke out afterwards and ended with the collapse of Carthage. In 147 BC, the Carthaginian city was ruined by the Roman army. Throughout the years of war, commanders with outstanding military and political talents like Hannibal emerged. Till now, many people in the academic community are still studying the strategies of Hannibal during the fight against Rome.

As a representative of the Phoenician civilisation, Carthage was not only influential in politics and military, but also left far-reaching legacies in economy, culture, art and other fields. It shaped the historical process of the Mediterranean world and provided valuable inspiration to later civilisations.

Carthage was one of the first countries to adopt Republicanism with a relatively complete political system, bearing the light of early democracy of human being. The Carthaginian government was led by two magistrates known as suffetes, a Council of Elders, an assembly of citizens and The Hundred and Four (or Council of 104). The Council of Elders held the power of legislation and decision making. The assembly of citizens was the gathering of the Carthaginian citizens to vote. In special

period such as the war, the assembly of citizens had higher power than the Council of Elders, and were entitled to discuss and vote for truce, treaties as well as amending treaties. The Hundred and Four was in charge of inspection and trials, which possessed the same function as today's court.

The Carthaginians were smart businessmen as well as great navigators. With leading shipbuilding technology and huge fleets, they sailed from the Mediterranean Sea to the choppy Atlantic. The most famous Carthaginian navigator Hanno used to lead a fleet of 60 ships exploring and colonising the Northwest coast of Africa. He headed west and crossed the Strait of Gibraltar from the Mediterranean Sea, sailed southward along the Atlantic and even reached the mountainous region of Cameroon to the southernmost point.

The city planning and architecture of Carthage offered inspirations to later civilisations. Cities such as Cartagena are well-known for their splendid

palace, grand wall and astonishing harbours. The unique architecture provided template for city planning and palace building of Rome afterwards.

Finally, I would like to discuss with you on a relatively abstract topic: Why do we study history? I've been studying history my whole life and spent painstaking efforts on the research of Carthaginian and Tunisian civilisations. Many people once asked me, "Why do you study history and why do human beings study history?" What I would like to say is that, it is not the present and future that decides who we are, but the past. To some extent, our past decisions led to the way we think and act, thus forming the foundation for the future. The great significance lies in our research on the Carthaginian history and civilisation, because reading and studying history helps us figure out the important question of where human being come from and where they are heading for.

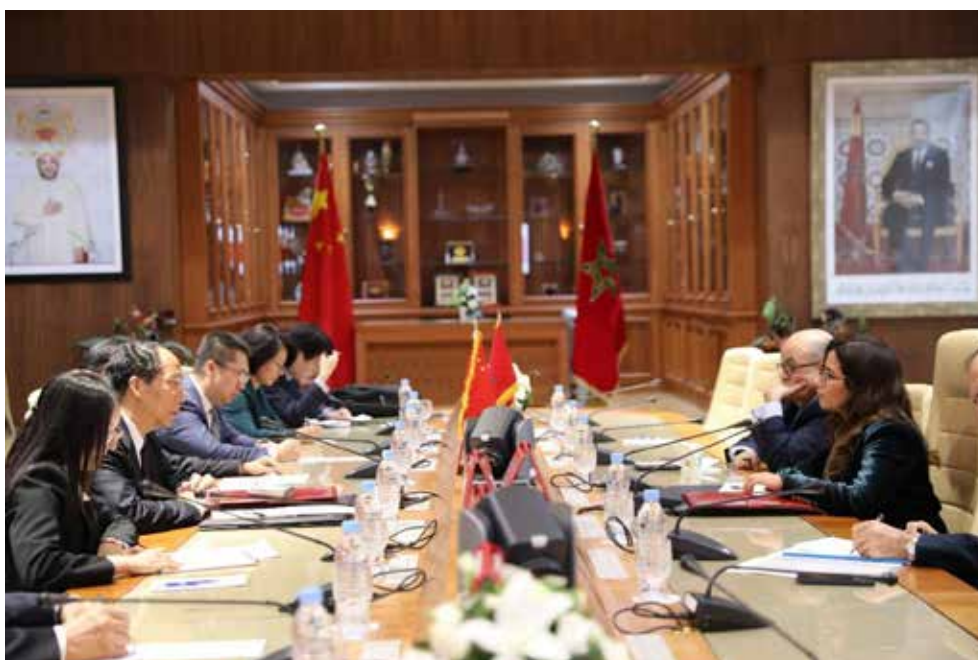
Jointly Building the Bridge of Friendship to Boost Exchanges and Mutual Learning among Civilisations

----Side Notes of the Visit to Morocco and Tunisia by Ji Bingxuan, Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress and President of the Chinese Association for International Understanding

At the invitation of Morocco-China Friendship Exchange Association (MCFEA) and Tunisia-China Friendship Association (TCFA), a CAFIU delegation led by Ji Bingxuan, Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress and President of CAFIU visited Morocco

and Tunisia from 20 to 27 December 2023.

During the visit, the delegation met with Mme. Zaina Idhali, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Morocco, and exchanged ideas on such topics as strengthening the strategic partnership, enhancing exchanges and mutual





learning between the two civilisations of China and Morocco, as well as facilitating legislative exchanges and cooperation. The delegation also had discussions with Mohamed Khalil, President of MCFEA, Nasser Bouchiba, President of the Africa-China Cooperation Association for Development (ACCAD), and Kassou Osmail, Vice-President of Mohammed V University, and jointly explored the approach to facilitating the Belt and Road cooperation, boosting people-to-people exchanges and cooperation and thus deepening people-to-people connectivity.

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Morocco. The Moroccan side made positive remarks on the fruitful achievements of the bilateral relations. They hoped to take the opportunity of the anniversary to step up exchanges and cooperation in various fields and further advance the strategic partnership between the two countries. Deputy Speaker Mme. Idhali put much emphasis on enhancing exchanges and

mutual learning between Chinese and Moroccan civilisations. She said that, as the Arabian prophet Mohamed once said, “Never stop exploring knowledge even if it is found as far as in China.” The Chinese tea and tea culture were brought to Morocco through the ancient Silk Road and integrated with the culture and environment of Morocco, and finally formed the Moroccan tradition of tea drinking. That was a good example. Both Morocco and China have time-honoured civilisation and similar values. Therefore, enhancing cultural exchanges and cooperation is integral to the sustainable development of the bilateral relations.

Mohamed Khalil, President of MCFEA and Nasser Bouchiba, President of ACCAD both have studied in China for years. Mr. Khalil is the first Moroccan student to study in China. During the meeting with the delegation, he reviewed with deep affection the memories in China in the 1970s. He was very excited to share his experience of meeting President Xi Jinping and receiving the Chinese

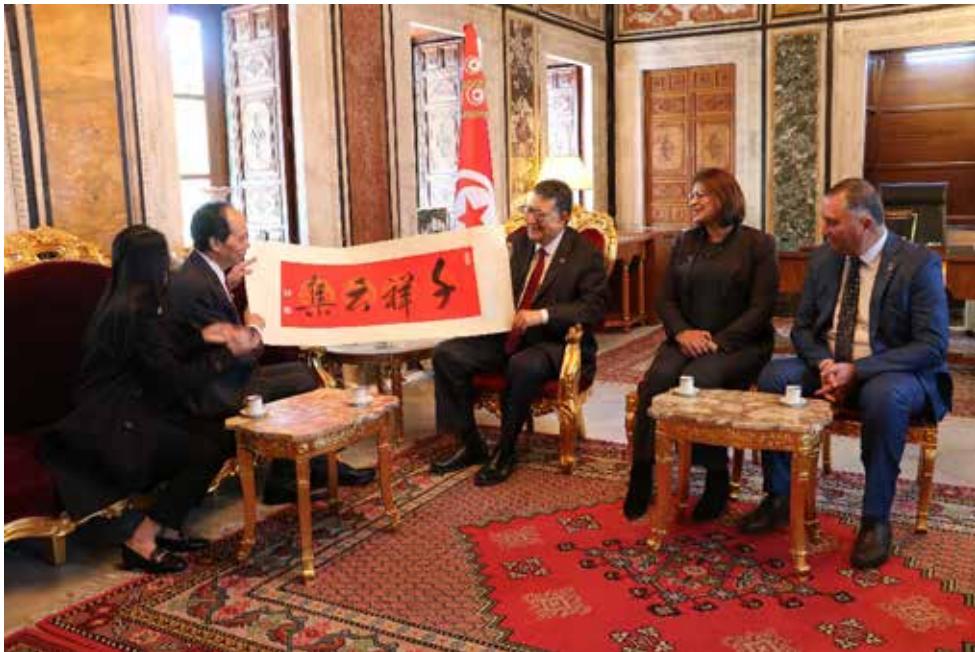
Arab Friendship Outstanding Contribution Award. He said with great excitement, “I would never forget that moment. This special honour has inspired me to dedicate my whole life to Morocco-China friendship.” Nasser invited the delegation to his home and treated them with mint tea and desserts. It was the first time to meet each other but they talked like old friends in a very cosy atmosphere. Nasser said with great sincerity that, “We have long realised that China is a reliable friend, and the Belt and Road is the right path for developing countries. We are ready to enhance people-to-people friendship and facilitate pragmatic cooperation between Morocco and China. With the joint efforts of ACCAD and our Chinese friends, small and beautiful projects such as China-Africa Salt Water Farm has made great achievements. That remains a great inspiration to us.”

The delegation also attended World Conference of Sinologist in North Africa jointly held by CAFIU

and Beijing Language and Culture University. In his speech at the Conference, President Ji Bingxuan elaborated on the essential features of the Global Civilisation Initiative, and called on continued efforts of sinologists in North Africa to work as envoys of people-to-people connectivity so as to build up the bridge for exchanges and mutual learning among the Chinese, African and Arabian civilisations.

Abdul-Aziz Hamdy, an Egyptian Sinologist and translator of over 20 classic Chinese works such as Tao Te Ching and Teahouse , quoted President Xi Jinping's speech, saying that “Literature and art facilitate communication and connect souls.” With his passion for the Chinese literature, he will continue to translate great Chinese works and spread the Chinese culture all over the world. By the end of the meeting, he made a gift of his translation to the delegation. He told the delegation with a glow of pride, “Chinese literature are very popular among Arabian readers.





Almost all my translations were best-sellers upon publication.”

During the visit in Tunisia, the delegation met with Ibrahim Bouderbala, Speaker of the National Constituent Assembly, Khemaies Jhinaoui, former Foreign Minister and Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations, and exchanged views on advancing traditional friendship between the two countries, promoting greater achievements in bilateral pragmatic cooperation as well as facilitating exchanges and mutual learning between the two civilisations. The delegation also had extensive discussions with Dr. Ezzeddine Jebali, Chairman of Tunisia-China Friendship Association, Tarek Baccouche, Director of the National Heritage Institute of Tunisia and other representatives on such topics as deepening people-to-people and cultural exchanges and cooperation, enhancing the friendship between the two peoples and promoting people-to-people connectivity.

“Look to the east is our firm choice.” This is the

most frequent expression heard by the delegation during its visit. Speaker Bouderbala introduced to President Ji the series of projects in Tunisia with the aid of China and repeatedly expressed how much they value their relationship with China. He spoke highly of the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind and the major initiatives proposed by China, and saluted the efforts contributed by China to safeguard international fairness and justice. They were all much immersed in the conversation. After the meeting, Speaker Bouderbala saw the delegation off at the front door of the Assembly and proposed to take a photo with President Ji. The staff of the Assembly told the delegation that despite the busy agenda, the Speaker insisted that the two deputy speakers participate in the meeting with the delegation to show their respect.

Upon the arrival of the delegation, Dr. Ezzeddine Jebali had already been waiting at the airport. He studied in China for years and has long been



dedicated to the promotion of the friendship between Tunisia and China. He shook hands with and hugged the members of the delegation. In the meeting with the delegation, he quoted in fluent Chinese the old Chinese saying, “The peach and plum do not speak, yet a path is born beneath them.” He said that the Tunisian people will never forget generous help of China. He would pass on this spirit and contribute his efforts to enhancing people-to-people connectivity between the two peoples, especially in facilitating exchanges and cooperation between the young people. His association is now working on the promotion of study tours and vocational trainings between Tunisia and China, in a bid to cementing the foundation of the traditional friendship between the two countries for the young generation.

The delegation also attended the Civilisation Lecture Series co-held by CAFIU and the Ministry of Culture of Tunisia. President Ji Bingxuan addressed the event. He elaborated on the significance of

exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and Tunisian civilisations and made three proposals on jointly implementing the Global Civilisation Initiative, which had received positive responses from the participants. At the discussion session, the participants spoke up and set forth many suggestions on deepening people-to-people and cultural exchanges from such perspectives as valuing the exchanges of young people, enhancing exchanges of film and television works, as well as establishing more Confucius Institutes. The keynote speaker of the lecture was the renowned Tunisian historian Houssein. Although in his eighties with grey hair, he is very vigorous. In a separate meeting with President Ji, he expressed with great sincerity that because of the combination of Carthaginian, ancient Roman and Islamic civilisations, Tunisian civilisation became an outstanding manifestation of the Mediterranean civilisation. Chinese civilisation is a significant demonstration of the eastern civilisation. The interaction between Tunisian and Chinese civilisations has a long history

and continues today. Both have contributed to the development of human civilisation and will become an exemplar of exchanges and mutual learning of world civilisations.

Despite the short stay, this visit deepens the

friendship that features exchanges, mutual learning and win-win cooperation. It consolidates the foundation of the bilateral relations between China and Morocco as well as Tunisia for a brighter future and brings more vigour into it.



Side Notes of the Visit to Jamaica, Barbados and Suriname by Ai Ping, Vice-President of CAFIU

At the invitation of the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI), Association for Barbados-China Friendship (ABCF), Suriname China Friendship Association (SCVV), Ai Ping, Vice- President of the Chinese Association for International Exchanges (CAFIU for short) and former Vice-Minister of IDCPC, together with 5 delegates from CAFIU paid a visit to the above three countries from November 29 to December 9, 2023. During the visit, Vice-President Ai had extensive interactions

with politicians, representatives from civil society organisations, think tanks and overseas Chinese groups, and had in-depth exchanges of views on such topics as bilateral relations and people-to-people exchanges. The visit has extended the communication and cooperation between CAFIU and CSOs in the Caribbean region and contributed to cementing the public opinion for bilateral relations between China and the three countries.

Jamaica: a bright future for deepening people-to-people exchanges

The delegation met with Mme. Brown Burke, Chairperson of the People's National Party, member of the parliament and former Mayor of Kinston, and had discussions with representatives from the Caribbean Policy Research Institute, Jamaica China Friendship Association and other CSOs. Apart from that, the delegation also had meetings with representatives from the Confucius Institute at the University of the West



Indies (Mona Campus) and the Fujian Association of Jamaica, gaining a general understanding of their operation and development in Jamaica.

People across different sectors who exchanged views with the delegation all spoke positively of the bilateral relations between Jamaica and China. They believed that the cultural and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries had been deepening with fruitful achievements in various areas. Last year, the two countries celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties. Jamaica is willing to take this opportunity to further exchanges and cooperation with China in various areas. The pillar projects such as Jamaican North-South Highway and the Western Children's Hospital effectively improved people's wellbeing and boosted the economic development of Jamaica. With loud applause from people of different sectors, such projects bore witness to the development of friendship between the two countries.

The delegation was deeply impressed by Jamaican CSOs and think tanks and their reflection on the future of their country and the Caribbean region. They are eager to explore the right path to development and overcome the obstacles that hinder the socio-economic development. Despite of being a newly founded organisation with many young researchers, CAPRI has already published quite a few reports on social issues of

Jamaica. The mission of CAPRI is to seek solutions to social problems such as violence and crimes, so as to boost the development and improve the wellbeing of its people. They said that despite the fact that western colonisation is a major cause of the unsatisfying development of the Caribbean region, countries have all gained independence for decades, and blaming the colonisation will do little to solve the problems. They are glad to have more exchanges with Chinese CSOs such as CAFIU and share experience on governance.

The 86-year-old Mrs. Cousins, President of Jamaica China Friendship Association (JCFA) has devoted her whole life in promoting people-to-people connectivity between Jamaica and China. She and her husband invited the delegation to their home and arranged a meeting between the delegation and several members of JCFA. Even though she has visited China several times, she is planning to visit China in the coming year to see the latest development of China. The JCFA members who attended the meeting are all young people in their twenties or thirties, some of whom have Chinese blood and some once studied in China. The delegation was impressed by their dedication to the cause of people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and was convinced that China-Jamaica people-to-people connectivity bore a promising future.

Barbados: ready to make contribution to people-to-people connectivity along the Belt and Road

While in Barbados, the delegation met with Mr. Comissiong, Barbados's Ambassador to the Caribbean Community, and had meetings with representatives from the Association for Barbados-China Friendship (ABCF), the Ashley Lashley Foundation, and the Confucius Institute at the University of West Indies (Cave Hill Campus). They attended China-Barbados Seminar on Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity jointly held by CAFIU and the University of West Indies (Cave Hill Campus), and had discussions with experts and scholars from the university. They also visited Garfield Sobers Gymnasium which was built with the aid of China.

Representatives and scholars from CSOs and think tanks said that Barbados attaches great importance to drawing upon China's experience and strengthening communication and cooperation with China in all sectors. In recent years, the two sides have enjoyed fruitful achievement in such areas as agriculture, education and new energy. Projects like the food security centre, gymnasiums and road rehabilitation, tourism facility



construction projects, which were built with the aid of China, have all made significant contribution to the socio-economic development of Barbados and effectively improved people's livelihood. While visiting Garfield Sobers Gymnasium, the delegation was told by a government officer that the Gymnasium brought great convenience to local people's life. It not only serves as the venue for major games, but also an important place for people to have exercises, and has even been used as the examination field for university entrance exams. It enjoys high recognition and publicity in Barbados.

The China-Barbados Seminar on Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity is the first of its kind since the launch of the Action for Silk Road People-to-



People Connectivity. Many scholars from different schools of the University of West Indies said that the Belt and Road cooperation enhanced the wellbeing of the people in Caribbean and added new dimensions to South-South Cooperation. They were willing to make positive contribution to enhancing people-to-people connectivity along the Belt and Road by launching exchanges and collaborations with Chinese universities and research institutions, thus building an academic system featuring on Latin America and the Caribbean region. The delegation was also impressed by the vigour of CSOs in Barbados, in

which the younger generation plays a significant role. The Ashley Lashley Foundation is dedicated to addressing the climate change and launches international exchanges and cooperation focusing on this mission. The two representatives from the foundation are both in their twenties. They said that due to the efforts of their foundation, an increasing number of young people become aware of their responsibility. They are willing to enhance communication with young people from China and the rest of the world, and work together to face the challenge of the climate change.

Suriname: jointly launching dialogues on exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations

During its stay in Suriname, the delegation met with Mr. Sharman, Acting Chairman of the National Assembly of Suriname and member of the National Assembly for the Progressive Reform Party. They attended the Second Lecture of the Civilisation Lecture Series and had meetings with representatives from Suriname China Friendship Association, Council of Anton de Kom University, and the Confucius Institute at Anton de Kom University. They also visited Chung Fa Foei Kon and Kong Ngie Tong Sang and had exchanges with representatives of overseas Chinese.

The National Assembly (DNA) attached great importance to this visit and acting Chairman Sharman led several members of the DNA from

different parties to join the meeting with the delegation. Sharman said that Suriname and China enjoy friendly relations with expanding cooperation in different areas and deepening people-to-people and cultural exchanges. Overseas Chinese have made significant contribution to the development of Suriname and they are the envoys of Suriname-China friendship. Suriname is ready to encourage overseas Chinese to play their active role as bridges and further deepen pragmatic cooperation in various sectors, so as to elevate the bilateral relations to a new level.

The Second Lecture of the Civilisation Lecture Series is the highlight of the visit. It's the first time that the Civilisation Lecture Series was held out of



China since its launching in October 2023. Ai Ping, Vice-President of CAFIU delivered a keynote speech during the lecture, and Chinese Ambassador to Suriname Mr. Han Jing addressed the lecture. In the speech, Vice-President Ai Ping said that it is a long-term task to strengthen exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations, deliver on the Global Civilisation Initiative and promote understanding and affinity between our peoples, which calls on joint efforts of people from both countries. CAFIU is ready to step up exchanges and cooperation with CSOs, think tanks and media of Suriname, further expand cooperation areas with an innovative approach. We hope to enhance mutual understanding and trust between our peoples and that of the world, in a bid to consolidate the popular support to building a community with a shared future for mankind. Mr. Wei Nanguang, renowned artist and scholar of Suriname, Mr. Narinde, Professor of Anton de Kom University and

Mme. Rita, Director of National Archives Suriname delivered speeches respectively under the theme of the Inheritance and Development of Chinese, Indian and Javanese Civilisations in Suriname. They introduced the immigration history of Chinese, Indians and Javanese and how they joined the mainstream society. They also explained how these civilisations interacted and coexisted with other civilisations in Suriname and took questions from the audience. The lecture was permeated with a lively atmosphere and active interactions.

During the 11-day visit, the delegation gained a lot through communication and discussions with people from different social fields. The delegation believed that there was much to achieve in enhancing people-to-people connectivity and exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations in the Caribbean region.

The Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) Sponsored the North African Sinologists Conference

On the morning of December 22, 2023, the Mutual Learning among Civilisations and Regional Development- North African Sinologists Conference co-sponsored by the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) and Beijing Language and Culture University, and hosted by the World Sinology Centre and the Rabat China Cultural Centre, was successfully held in Morocco. Ji Bingxuan, Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress of China and President of CAFIU, Dou

Enyong, Vice-President of China NGO Network for International Exchanges and former Assistant Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, Zhou Zhicheng, Chargé d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Morocco, Khalid Hammes, Vice-President of Mohammed V University and other Chinese and foreign guests, as well as nearly 30 sinologists and translators from Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan and other North African countries attended the conference.



CAFIU Vice-President Xu Li's Art Works Collection Exhibition “Shining Hong Kong” Held in Hong Kong

On December 19, 2023, Exhibition “Shining Hong Kong - Xu Li's Art Works Collection” was grandly opened at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

This exhibition displays more than 80 oil paintings and Chinese paintings by Mr. Xu Li. Those artworks

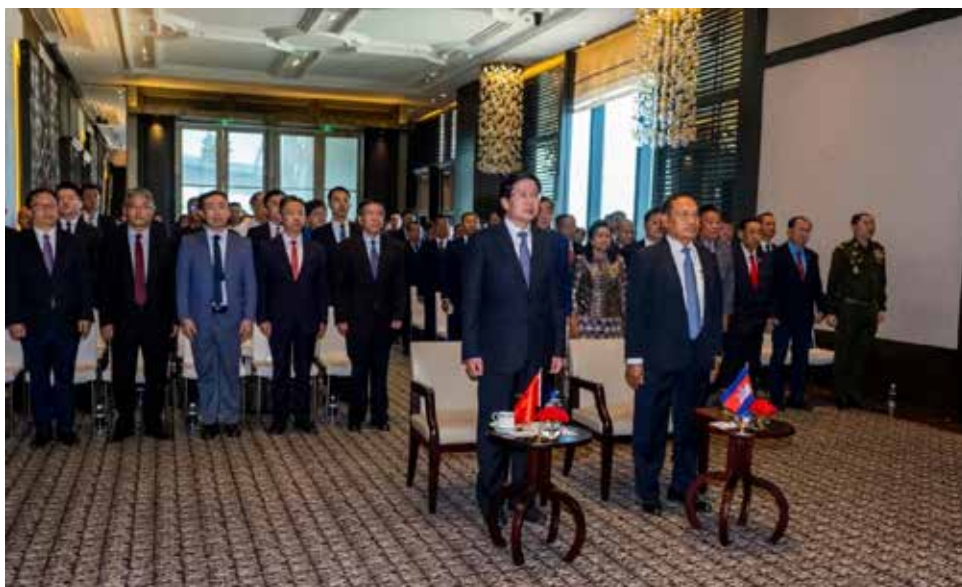
are fairly attractive and expressive both in logic and forms. By integrating Eastern and Western cultures, those artworks, regarded as valuable treasures of human civilisation, can inspire people's souls and cultural confidence and create imagination and empathy.



The “Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity” Series Activity Successfully Launched in Cambodia

On December 19, 2023, China NGO Network for International Exchanges, the China Foundation for Peace and Development, and the Cambodia Civil Society Alliance Forum jointly held the groundbreaking ceremony of the “Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity” Series Activity of China-Cambodia livelihood projects in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Mr. Gao Yunlong, Vice-Chairperson of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and Chairman of China Foundation for Peace and Development, attended the ceremony and delivered a speech. Liu Hongcai, Vice- President of the Chinese

Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) and former Vice-Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, Chang Jian, Charge d 'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Cambodia and other officials attended the ceremony. Tep Ngorn, Second Vice-Chairman of the Senate of Cambodia, and Pay Sambo, Secretary General of Cambodia Civil Society Alliance Forum, delivered speeches respectively. At the event, Vice-Chairperson Gao Yunlong and Vice-Chairman Tep Ngorn jointly witnessed the signing of agreements on livelihood donation and cooperation between China and Cambodia. More than 100 Chinese and



Playing and singing the national anthems of China and Cambodia

Cambodian government officials, representatives from non-governmental organisations and business sector attended the event.

In the future, Chinese and Cambodian non-governmental organisations and business representatives will carry out close cooperation on upgrading education level, improving medical and health conditions, carrying out drone assistance for

agriculture, and contributing to poverty alleviation and reduction. The project, with a total funding of about 15 million yuan (RMB), is expected to benefit tens of thousands of people at grassroots level in Sihanoukville, Siem Reap, Cha Chau, Battambang, Kampong Spu, Kampong Thanh Yang and Pang Cham Provinces.

China-New Zealand Friendly Exchanges for Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity Successfully Held in New Zealand

On December 15, 2023, China NGO Network for International Exchanges, China Foundation for Peace and Development and New Zealand-China Friendship Society co-hosted China-New Zealand Friendly Exchanges for Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity in Auckland, New Zealand. Gao Yunlong, Vice-Chairperson of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and Chairman of the Board of Directors of China Foundation for Peace and Development attended the event and delivered remarks. Liu Hongcai, Vice-President

of the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) and former Vice-Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, Wang Xiaolong, Chinese Ambassador to New Zealand, Chen Shijie, Consul General of the Chinese Consulate General in Auckland as well as more than 80 Chinese and New Zealand government officials, representatives from NGOs and business sector attended the event.

Mr. Wayne Brown, Mayor of Auckland, Mr. Wang Xiaolong, Chinese Ambassador to New Zealand, Mr. Chris Lipscombe, National President of New



Zealand-China Friendship Society, Mr. Simon Bridges, CEO of Auckland Business Chamber, Ms. Qiu Lili, Chairperson of Beijing Peaceland Foundation, Sir Bob Harvey, President of One Belt One Road New Zealand Council, Mr. Yang Jian, Chairman of New Zealand Chinese Business Club, Mr. Chiu Yung, Chairman of the Fuwah International Group, Mr. Qi Jun, President of

China Chamber of Commerce in New Zealand, Mr. Lou Wei, Executive Deputy Director of the Palace Museum delivered speeches. Maori ceremonial welcome dance and Chinese folk music performance were presented during the event and "Panda Meets Kiwi Bird" China-New Zealand Youth Charity Art Exhibition was held.

International Volunteer Service Seminar on Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity Held in Nanjing

On December 19, 2023, under the guidance of China Volunteer Service Federation and China NGO Network for International Exchanges, sponsored by the International Volunteer Service Working Committee (IVSW) and magazine China Volunteer, and co-organised by the secretariat of IVSW and Nanjing Cultural and Ethical Progress Office, the International Volunteer Service Seminar on Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity was

held in the World Literature Saloon in Nanjing. Experts and volunteer representatives from international institutions, research institutes, public welfare organisations and other service fields gathered together to discuss and share the experience and achievements of volunteer work in promoting sustainable development. *A Collection of Generation Z in International Volunteering Practices* was released at the event.

China Communications Construction Company Limited Holds the 10th Anniversary Event of Joint Construction of the Belt and Road Initiative, an Activity of Action on the Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity



On December 15th, 2023, under the guidance of China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE), the China Public Diplomacy Association, and the SASAC News Centre, China Communications Construction Company Limited (CCCC) successfully held the 10th Anniversary Event of Joint Construction of the Belt and Road Initiative in Beijing with the theme of “In the Prosperous Silk Road’s Glow, Together We Construct a Brighter Tomorrow”. This event was

one of the supporting activities of the Action on “Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity” initiated by CNIE. Wang Haihuai, General Manager of CCCC, Peng Huagang, former Secretary General of SASAC, and Liu Biwei, Vice-President of the China Public Diplomacy Association, attended this event and delivered speeches respectively. 15 foreign envoys from 10 countries, including Hashmi, Pakistan’s Ambassador to China, Monday Semaya K. Kumba, South Sudan’s Ambassador to

China, Oliver Wonekha, Uganda's Ambassador to China, and Leonardo Kam, Panama's Ambassador to China, as well as Liu Xiang, Director of CCCC, Sun Liqiang, Vice-President of CCCC, Ma Zheming, Deputy Director of the SASAC News Centre, and Fan Jianlin, Vice-Chairman and Secretary General of the Central Enterprise ESG Alliance, attended this event.

CCCC reviewed its 10-year development related to the Belt and Road, released and commended the 10 Major Projects of Jointly Construction of the Belt and Road, the 10 Most Beautiful Chinese Constructors, the 10 Most Beautiful Foreign Constructors, and the 10 Best Cases of the Belt and Road CCCC's Dream and Image Building. With the

unique ESG report matrix system, the CCCC has collectively released the Belt and Road ESG report and 15 ESG reports of its listed companies, brand enterprises, key countries and projects. The 10th Anniversary Achievement Exhibition of CCCC's Joint Construction of the Belt and Road was also held on the site, which demonstrated the company's active implementation of its vision of "making the cities better places for living, countries better interconnected and life even more beautiful" through images, videos, sand tables, models and in other forms, and fruitful results and vivid practices of its comprehensive implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The 3rd Policy Dialogue on China-US Relations Held in Beijing

From October 31st to November 1st, 2023, the China Friendship Promotion Association held the 3rd Policy Dialogue on China-US Relations in Beijing with the theme of “Moving Beyond Differences: Crisis Management and Pragmatic Cooperation”. The participants conducted pragmatic, efficient and fruitful communication and dialogues on

the current situation, existing problems, and cooperation channels of China-US relations. They candidly exchanged their understanding and respective policy positions on major core issues related to both sides, and actively discussed promoting cooperation between the two countries in unconventional security fields.



The 14th East Asia Civil Society Forum Held in ROK

On November 9th, 2023, the Korea Forum of Volunteerism, China Association for NGO Cooperation and the Japan Association of Charitable Organisations jointly held the 14th East Asia Civil Society Forum on Jeju Island, the Republic of Korea. More than 130 representatives of NGOs,

experts, scholars, and social workers from China, Japan, and ROK gathered offline to conduct in-depth discussions and exchanges on the theme of “Civil Society Supporting the Growth and Development of Disabled Groups”.



The 2nd China-Africa Friendship Organisation Leaders Meeting Held in Jinan

On November 9th, 2023, the 2nd China-Africa Friendship Organisation Leaders Meeting, jointly hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the China-Africa People's Friendship Association and Shandong Provincial People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, was held in Jinan. The theme of the meeting was "Jointly Building a Community with a Shared Future for China and Africa in the New Era". Li Bin, Vice-Chairperson of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's

Political Consultative Conference, attended the opening ceremony and delivered a keynote speech. The participants had in-depth exchanges on three topics: win-win cooperation between China and Africa, mutual learning between Chinese and African civilisations, and the inheritance of friendship between China and Africa. The *Jinan Declaration on the 2nd China-Africa Friendship Organisation Leaders Meeting* was adopted at the meeting.



Beijing Peaceland Foundation Holds Technical Exchanges and Training Programme of Rescue and Disaster Relief in Tanzania

From November 4th to 12th, 2023, the Beijing Peaceland Foundation organised a technical exchanges and training Programme of rescue and disaster relief in Tanzania. The training included first aid, fire prevention, rescues in water areas and mountainous regions, drone application, etc. The trainees came from the police departments, fire-fighting departments and the Kilimanjaro National

Park, among others. During the programme, the Foundation also worked together with the Sukos Kova Foundation to hold events at the Oyster Bay Police Station in Dar es Salaam and the largest police academy in Tanzania, which provided a series of training for the Tanzanian police on first aid, water rescue, and fire prevention.



The “Silk Road on Fingertips -- 2023 Silk Road Women’s Forum” Held in Xi’an

On November 16th, 2023, the All-China Women’s Federation and the People’s Government of Shaanxi Province co-hosted the “Silk Road on Fingertips-- 2023 Silk Road Women’s Forum” in Xi’an as an important side event of the 7th Silk Road International Exposition and the Investment and Trade Forum for Cooperation between East and West China. More than 150 participants from

22 countries had friendly and candid exchanges on their stories of the Belt and Road Initiative, contributing women’s wisdom and strength to advancing high-quality development of the Belt and Road cooperation and building together a community with a shared future for mankind. The 2023 Silk Road Women’s Forum Initiative was adopted at the Forum.



China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products Holds China-Saudi Investment Conference

On December 12th, 2023, the China-Saudi Investment Conference, co-sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Investment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and organised by the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products, was

held in Beijing. During the Conference, three high-level dialogues were held respectively on themes of "Clean Energy and Downstream Industries: The Road to Net Zero Transformation", "Investment and Finance: Jointly Promoting the Vision 2030 and the Belt and Road Initiative", and "Mining and Minerals: Important Industries with Prospects".



Nasim Mahmmud's View on the Belt and Road Initiative

The historic Third Belt and Road Forum (BRF-2023) for International Cooperation was held in Beijing on October 17-18, 2023 which has opened the gate to a new opportunity for global development and potential peace. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which was launched and backed by China in the past ten years, now belongs to the whole world. This esteemed event marked the grand celebration of the 10th anniversary of the initiation of this prestigious and monumental connectivity initiative. That dignitaries and representatives from more than 140 countries and 30 international organisations attended the BRF-2023 in Beijing. Hence, the forum has become a large diplomatic stage for China to demonstrate its might and international influence.

I want to express my sincere gratitude and honour to the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) and the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) for nominating me as delegate from Bangladesh to participate in the prestigious Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. It was an amazing, heart-touching, and memorable experience for me. The interactive and engaging sessions, as well as luxurious Chinese cuisine, visits to various ancient sites, exhibition centres and Hohai University campus in Nanjing, Jiangsu



Province, made the entire tour unforgettable.

This high voltage event was the beauty of associating with China. Always meet new friends and exchange new ideas. Share and learn from each other. I think the BRF's various sub-forums and President Xi Jinping's speech gave us good insights and formulated for each one of us a list of tasks for the period to come and this would certainly be a chance to cross paths again. I think it's very clear that the world is opening their doors to the Initiative, and I see that there is a shift in the direction of world policy. It's very positive for global development.

While the news in the world has been dominated by the wars and incredible sufferings in Gaza and Ukraine, here in Beijing the discussion was dominated by peace-making and achieving prosperity for all nations. It has become clear from

all the speeches of the world leaders attending the BRF including UN Secretary General António Guterres that the BRI represents a visionary and successful platform of bilateral and multilateral cooperation to achieve the development goals of all nations in a win-win fashion. Furthermore, President Xi Jinping said that the BRI will be based on the principle of "Planning together, building together, and benefiting together". He also said, "Belt and Road cooperation robust and fruitful in its first decade, is now full of dynamism and vitality. We must embark with drive and enthusiasm on the new journey toward another golden decade".

The initial BRI has been a platform. In addition to extending the willingness to work with the rest of the developing countries to bring advancement, the Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Security Initiative (GSI), and Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI) are continued moderation of the initial idea and develop different and more substantial ways of making the success of global development and BRI cooperation.

The BRI has become a game changer on many levels globally. It has provided a model for transboundary economic cooperation. And the fact that it respects the sovereignty and dignity of the countries involved in the BRI is an important addition to international relations and global governance. It is estimated that in the next ten years, BRI countries will increase trade volume by 2.5 trillion US Dollars, boosting economic globalisation and reducing global inequalities. It would also facilitate geostrategic re-alignment, and reforming the international order.

I think BRI should offer two significant things in the second decade. The first one is China's experience in eradicating poverty, and the second is successful intervention in project development to the benefit of a large section of the society.

We look forward to continuing to track the BRI for another 10 years.

(Nasim Mahmud, Chief Editor, The Belt and Road, Bangladesh, Dhaka)

