

CHINA INITIATIVES BOOST COMMON DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL SOUTH

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As the profound changes unseen in a century accelerate, human development undergoes a new inflection point. Continuously intensifying deficits of peace, development, security and governance make it imperative for mankind to have systematic, yet feasible international public goods, to integrate forces in the international community in jointly promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. At the same time, as development levels of all countries in the world are uneven, the priority area of building such a community lies in common development of the Global South. It is against this background that China has put forward major initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI), and the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), covering key areas in building a community with a shared future for mankind. Together they provide systematic Chinese concepts and Chinese approaches for human development at the crossroads to further improve global governance mechanisms, tackle common challenges facing human society, and especially promote unity and cooperation of the Global South with Chinese wisdom.

CONNOTATION AND FEATURES OF CHINA INITIATIVES

Since 2013, China has produced a series of initiatives dedicated to promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind in different domains,

particularly providing an important impetus for common development of the Global South. Compared with the previously existing initiatives in the international community, China Initiatives have unique connotation and features.

First and fundamentally, China Initiatives have built domain modules to the promotion of building a community with a shared future for mankind. In fact, the practical path of building a community with a shared future for mankind is simultaneously developed in two directions: geographical region and topic domain, namely geographical modules and domain modules. At the beginning, the domain module initiatives China proposed were relatively focused, such as the Cooperation Initiative on Global Food Security, the Initiative of International Cooperation on Resilient and Stable Industrial and Supply Chains, and the Global Data Security Initiative. As China deepened its understanding of the profound changes rarely seen in a century and of their accelerating evolution, it came up with the BRI and the G3 initiatives (GDI, GSI and GCI) successively, proposing solutions to issues in core domains of economic growth, social development, peace and security, and progress of civilization, and providing an integrative framework for all kind of previous initiatives. Thereby, China Initiatives have moved on from the ones that promote a community with a shared future for mankind with domain modules towards an increasingly systematic and all embracing whole, laying a solid foundation for building a community with a



Chinese President Xi Jinping poses for a group photo with distinguished guests attending the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, October 18, 2023. (Photo / Xinhua)

shared future for mankind to enter the stage of “filling in the details”.

Second, China Initiatives enable the organic integration of geographical modules and domain modules for building a community with a shared future for mankind. The geographical modules of building such a community cover country, sub-regional and regional levels, and then cover the whole world. At the country level, China has reached a strategic consensus on building a community with a shared future mainly for neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. At the sub-regional level, it has mainly included a community with a shared future for the Lancang-Mekong countries, that for China-ASEAN, that for China-Central Asia, that for China-Arab, and that for Shanghai Cooperation Organization. At the regional level, China has reached strategic consensus with African, Latin American and the Caribbean,

and Pacific island countries on building a community with a shared future. It means that China has reached a strategic consensus with relevant countries in the overwhelming majority of the geographical modules in the world on jointly building a community with a shared future for mankind, and has thus put in place creative practices.

When domain modules and geographical modules are organically combined, building a community with a shared future for humankind becomes concrete and operable. This combination of domain modules and geographical modules works two-way. On the one hand, domain connotation is added to the geographical modules, making the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind geographically specific. On the other hand, the domain modules can be implemented in different geographical regions. To realize the organic combination and mutual embedding of

geographical modules and domain modules is the basis for “filling in the details” in building a community with a shared future for mankind, and also the fundamental requirement of China Initiatives.

Third, China Initiatives are important public products China has contributed to the international community in the new era. This attribute is most evident in the important contributions to easing the global governance deficit. After the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2008, the international community failed to find an effective recovery plan over a long period of time. In 2012, the G20 Summit in Los Cabos, Mexico proposed that the top priority of the international community remained to seek strong, sustainable and balanced economic growth. It was against this backdrop that President Xi Jinping put forward the BRI in 2013, aiming to provide strong dynamics for world economic recovery and the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. From 2016 on, there were frequent black swan and gray rhino incidents represented by the Brexit, the rise of populism in the United States (US), and the outbreak of COVID-19, while deficits of peace, development, security and governance continued to increase. The making of the GDI, the GSI and the GCI in fact became the “timely rain” to alleviate the above deficits.

Fourth, China Initiatives provide an important impetus for enhancing international unity and cooperation. The fundamental cause for current global governance deficit to aggravate is the fact that the Western countries are building “small yard, high fence” to keep their hegemony. On the one hand, the Western countries attempt to replace the universal international unity with a club-style multilateral unity, which is clearly opposed by the international community represented by the United Nations (UN). On the other hand, the Western countries view the supply of international public goods in perspective of geopolitical purposes, not only markedly reducing their willingness to provide international public goods, but also comprehensively obstructing emerging markets from participating in supplying international public goods. Therefore, the systematic China initiatives will not only help alleviate the global governance deficit, but also promote unity and cooperation of the international community to jointly provide international public goods, which coincides with the UN calling for the spirit of international unity.

CHINA INITIATIVES STRENGTHEN DRIVE FOR COOPERATION IN GLOBAL SOUTH

Fundamentally, the systematic proposal of China Initiatives is a giveback product of the country for the international community after achieving initial results of its national rejuvenation. As international public goods, China Initiatives are also unique, in the sense of injecting new impetus for cooperation into the Global South, promoting common development of the Global South, and building a community with a shared future for the Global South.

First, China Initiatives actively echo the UN spirit of international unity, serving as a glue for unity and cooperation of the Global South. In recent years, the strategic competition agenda pursued by the US, Europe and other Western countries has produced a negative impact on the internal unity of the Global South, whereas China vigorously practices the spirit of international unity advocated by the UN and plays a positive role in promoting unity and cooperation of the Global South. On the one hand, China has joined hands with other Global South countries in resisting attempts by the US and Europe to split the Global South. Although not invited to attend the Voice of Global Southern Summit held online in January 2023, China continued to attach great importance to unity, cooperation and common development of all developing countries. During preparations for and actual meeting of the 18th G20 Summit in September 2023, China played a constructive role and as always supported the summit in setting great store by the concerns

On March 18, 2021, the 2021 “Silk Road E-commerce” International Cooperation Forum was held in Fuzhou, Fujian, China.



of developing countries and achieving quite a few outcomes in support of common global development.

On the other hand, China has always adhered to the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits in promoting unity and cooperation of the Global South. The principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits stands for an important guideline for the Belt and Road cooperation, being fully absorbed in the GDI, the GSI and the GCI. For example, In January 2022, China launched in the UN headquarters the Group of Friends of the GDI, and established in November 2022 the Global Development Promotion Center, both being important platforms for cooperation featuring extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, an important step towards building cooperation mechanism called for by China Initiatives. They provide important drivers to deepen pragmatic cooperation, speed up the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promote mechanisms building, and strengthen integrative cooperation docking with UN development system.

Second, China Initiatives comprehensively promote quality and efficiency of international public goods, being an enabling platform for unity and cooperation of the Global South. The collective rise of emerging markets results in increasing participation of the Global South in the global governance and also its capacity to supply international public goods. In this context, advancement of China Initiatives is conducive to the construction of a division of labor and cooperation system for supplying international public goods, thus enhancing the Global South's capacity to participate in global governance. As China's national strength grows, China initiatives first appear in the domain of economic development, and then gradually expand to multiple key domains, which means that China's ability to supply international public goods continues to improve while it reflects China's innovative practice in making arrangements for the supply system of international public goods, i.e. reshaping a division of labor and cooperation system of supplying international public goods on the basis of comparative advantage of countries involved. A division of labor and cooperation in supply based on comparative advantage not only means that it may be more convenient for emerging markets or those countries with comparative advantage in specific areas to supply international public goods, more important because

of multi-party cooperation being hopeful to improve the quality and stability of supplying international public goods, but also can give more choice to consumption side of public products, averting the dilemma of picking side, thereby truly promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Third, China Initiatives offer free ride opportunities, standing for an underpinning support for unity and cooperation of the Global South. When providing international public goods, the Western countries tend to emphasize that it is precisely because of free ride that it is increasingly difficult to control cost of supplying international public goods, eventually leading to supply deficit. This proposition is rather hypercritical. The fundamental issue is that the supply of international public goods must precede the consumption, so the logic of the supply side cannot be inferred by the logic of the consumption side. The US-led Western countries are not only the largest consumption side, they enjoy the privilege of leading the making of relevant international norms and rules. Therefore, the real logic of the West emphasizing the free ride issue is to require the consumption side to share the cost of supply.

Different from the Western countries, China takes a responsible attitude towards the supply cost of international public goods, and insists that although China Initiatives are initiated by China but are to be shared by the world. For example, to implement the GDI, China has set up cooperative funding platforms such as the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, making important contributions to easing the financing deficit in international development. In August 2023, President Xi remarked at the the BRICS-Africa Outreach and BRICS Plus Dialogue that China has set up a Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund with a total funding of US\$4 billion, and Chinese financial institutions will soon set up a special fund of US\$10 billion dedicated to the implementation of the GDI. For another example, at the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2023, President Xi announced that the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China will each set up a 350 billion yuan (US\$48.75 billion) financing window, and that an additional 80 billion yuan will be injected into the Silk Road Fund, to support the joint Belt and Road projects in a market-oriented and commercial way. By taking up the main cost of China Initiatives as an international public

good, China not only provides an underpinning support for unity and cooperation of the Global South, it has also played a catalyst role in promoting the development of the Global South.

CHINA INITIATIVES PROMOTE COMMON DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL SOUTH COUNTRIES

China Initiatives are meant for the entire international community while focusing on the Global South countries. The key meaning of promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for the Global South through China Initiatives is to achieve common development of China and other Global South countries for a community of shared interests, to take common responsibility for a community with shared responsibilities, and to share dignity for a community with a shared future.

I. China Initiatives Promote Building a Community with Shared Interests for the Global South

Promoting the construction of a community with shared interests of the Global South is of fundamental significance to building a community with a shared future for the Global South. In recent years, China Initiatives have made important progress in building a community of shared interests for the Global South. Taking

A Kenyan journalist poses for a photo with train drivers at the Mombasa West Station of the Mombasa Railway, which was built by a Chinese company, on May 31, 2017 in Mombasa, Kenya.



(Photo/Xinhua)

the BRI as an example, over the past decade, China has signed Belt and Road cooperation documents with more than 150 countries and more than 30 international organizations, hosted three Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, and established more than 20 multilateral cooperation platforms in professional fields. From 2013 to 2022, the cumulative volume of imports and exports between China and BRI partner countries totaled US\$19.1 trillion, with an average annual growth of 6.4%; the total two-way investment between both sides exceeded US\$380 billion, of which China's outward direct investment surpassed US\$240 billion; China's total value of overseas contractual projects in BRI partner countries over the same period of time and the turnover reached US\$2 trillion and US\$1.3 trillion respectively.

As China Initiatives become more systematic, a virtuous circle of coordinated progress among various initiatives has taken shape, mainly reflected in two aspects. From the perspective of coordinated domain functional synergy, the BRI focuses on infrastructure construction to promote economic growth, being big and excellent market project; the GDI focuses on developing people's livelihood, being a small but beautiful heart-winning project; the GSI is devoted to the dual protection of national security of individual countries and common security, being a stable and safe safeguard project; and the

On June 15, 2023, the SCO Industry Chain Supply Chain Forum and SCO International Investment and Trade Expo opened in Qingdao. The photo shows performers from Belarus posing with volunteers after the show.



(Photo/Xinhua)

GCI advocates mutual learning between civilizations, helping enhance mutual understanding and reduce misunderstanding and misjudgment, being a harmony in difference communication project. From the perspective of fiscal synergy, the BRI belongs to market cooperation and can achieve financial sustainability through for-profit cooperation. The GDI, the GSI and the GCI are more of public welfare and universality, which calls for coordinated improvement of efficiency through fiscal and financial policies, so as to promote building a community of shared interests for the Global South.

II. China Initiatives Promote Building a Community with Shared Responsibilities for the Global South

At present, the international community's willingness to unite and cooperate faces many challenges, and the US-led West have been on a second period of responsibility shirking after the end of the Cold War. The first period of responsibility shirking was the aid fatigue in the West after the Cold War ended, aiming to reduce foreign assistance and require the recipients to solve their own problems independently. The second period of responsibility shirking emphasizes the shared responsibilities rather than common but differentiated responsibilities, its core being to require the emerging markets to bear more of the supply cost of international public goods. To promote building a community with shared responsibilities for the Global South with China Initiatives helps alleviate the strategic competition between major countries promoted by the US-led West, and in turn promotes building a global community with shared responsibilities.

On the one hand, world peace and common development are to be promoted through partnership building. As early as 2015, President Xi pointed out the important role of partnership building at the 7th BRICS Summit. At present, China's partnership networking diplomacy is on the increase, having established partnerships with more than 90 countries, and regional and international organizations. It is a network that covers nearly all major countries and important regions in the world, and provides an important support for enhancing the international status of developing countries and ensuring a balance between justice and benefit for China and other developing countries.

Furthermore, strategic assurances for the Global South can be provided by regional overall diplomacy

mechanisms. The overall diplomacy mechanisms between China and the Global South roughly started from the ASEAN + China mechanism in 1991, and since then the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, and the China-Latin America Forum have gradually advanced systematization and institutionalization of China's overall cooperation mechanisms with the Global South. The institutionalized development of China's cooperation with the Global South further makes clear the country's strategic determination and strong sense of mission to always remain a reliable friend and sincere partner of the developing countries.

III. China Initiatives Promote Building a Community with a Shared Future for the Global South

Generally speaking, China's diplomatic experience with the Global South has undergone three stages of standing up together, growing rich together and then of becoming strong together. Be it in Africa, the Asia-Pacific, or the Middle East, China emphasizes the concept of community with a shared future, and its willingness to continue to pursue a win-win strategy of opening up, share its own development opportunities with other countries, and welcome all countries to take the free ride of China's development. Therefore, China Initiatives are to promote social and economic development of developing countries, so that countries and their people can share the development dividends. The focus of China Initiatives tilts toward the Global South, providing major help for the latter to alleviate peace, development, security and governance deficits, which is the key to promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for the Global South. China Initiatives demonstrate to the Global South and the international community at large China's historic innovation in its national rejuvenation: to take a new path of peaceful development rather than follow the beaten track of big powers in seeking hegemony, and to make other countries, especially the Global South countries beneficiaries of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation rather than victims of the rise of big powers in history. In this sense, China Initiatives are not only a concrete manifestation of China's adherence to the path of innovative development, but also the country's concrete practice in promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for the Global South. ■