

19th CPC NATIONAL CONGRESS

Summing up China in three words

Global elite from business and academia share their thoughts on the nation's progress and prospects

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China is “committed”, “ambitious” and “vital”, according to Microsoft founder Bill Gates.

The billionaire philanthropist was among leading business figures, academics and opinion leaders from around the world who were asked to sum up China in just three words.

Apart from the somewhat obvious “big”, words which regularly came up from respondents were “innovative”, “dynamic” and “transforming”, reflecting some of the spirit of the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era outlined in the general secretary's report to the 19th CPC National Congress.

Gates said he wanted his selection of words to reflect the fact that China was now “very important to the future of the entire world”.

“Committed, because — as much as any other country over the past few years — China has shown a commitment to health and development both at home and abroad. Ambitious, because of the targets it has set for itself, including wiping out extreme poverty by 2020. And vital, because we need an engaged and responsible China if we are to rid the world of what we call ‘solvable human misery.’”

Gary Locke, the former US ambassador to China, said it was important to reflect that China was building a

new modernity while also not forgetting the foundation of its ancient culture.

“I would say ‘modern’, ‘ancient’ and ‘energetic’. China is on the move,” he said.

This combination of old and new was also reflected in the choices of Marine Jibladze, a Georgian Sinologist and author.

“It is both ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ as well as ‘safe,’” she said.

Kerry Brown, director of the Lau Institute at King's College London and author of a new book, *China's World*, about China's increasing global role, described the country as “dynamic”, “complex” and “aspirational”.

He said he wanted the words to reflect just how important China is to the rest of the world. “China has a new role. Domestic issues are global because of their size and scale.”

Scott Kennedy, deputy director of the Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank based in Washington, said it was difficult to avoid the word “big” when it came to China, although he also went for “competitive” and “offering variety”, the last choice taking into account the diversity of the country.

“China is big,” he said. “It's not just big geographically and in terms of its number of people but also on its effect on the global economy, markets and security issues. Anything you study about China has to start with its size.”

David Lampton, former president of the National Committee on United States-China Relations and now a Sinologist at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, went for “leaders” as well as “complicated” and “expectations”.

“Leaders matter and I think with Xi we are seeing the rise of a leader in China who will make a big difference,” he said.

Gerry Grimstone, chairman of Standard Life, the British insurance company, and former chairman of TheCityUK, a trade body for the United Kingdom's financial services sector, stressed “opportunity” as well as “exciting” and “powerful”, because of the potential for UK-China business following Xi's state visit to the UK in October 2015.

“The visit marked an improvement in the relations between the two countries and the beginning of a new ‘golden era’ of cooperation,” he said.

Steve Mollenkopf, CEO of Qualcomm, the US semiconductor and telecoms giant, chose “green” alongside “innovative” and “collaborative”.

Environmental sustainability and the plan to create a “beautiful China” was one of the messages in Xi's report to the congress in the opening session.

“The Chinese government has attached great importance to ecological protection. During my recent visits to China, I have been impressed by the considerable efforts toward improving the envi-

ronment,” Mollenkopf said.

Jeremy Hunter, CEO of the Chinese branch of Henkel, a German chemical and consumer goods company, had almost identical choices to Mollenkopf, varying only by noting “sustainable” rather than “green”.

“China has prioritized sustainable development as an important part of its national agenda and is making progress toward balancing economic development and sustainability,” Hunter said.

Xi made a defense of globalization in his speech to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January, at a time when protectionist noises were rising elsewhere in the world. So it is not surprising the word was chosen by a number of respondents.

It was one of the selections of Curt Ferguson, president of the Chinese arm of Coca-Cola, one of the world's most global companies.

“China has become a champion of globalization,” he said. “We are very fortunate to have had the opportunity to forge strong local partnerships to serve Chinese consumers and share our experience of managing a truly international business in more countries and regions than there are members of the United Nations.”

Part of China's commitment to globalization has been the Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to revitalize the historical Silk Road trading routes. Lord Sassoon, chairman of the China Britain Business Council, said the initiative has been “trans-

forming” and “influencing”.

“It has China's biggest achievements of the past five years and it provides extensive opportunities for engagement,” he said.

Angel Gurría, the former Mexican foreign affairs and finance minister and now secretary-general of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, emphasized “innovative” as well as “dynamic” and “flexible”.

“One of the most visible changes in China is the abundance of Internet-based services, including mobile payments and shared economy services,” he said. “These innovations have changed Chinese people's lives, well ahead of many other more economically advanced countries.”

“Innovative” also featured in the choices of Alain Crozier, CEO of Microsoft China, alongside “dynamic” and “transforming”.

“China has really turned the corner from being a manufacturer and consumer of technology products and services invented by others to one that is developing real breakthroughs and real value that is relevant to the rest of the world.”

Colin Mackerras, a Sinologist and emeritus professor at Griffith University in Australia, selected “prosperous”, “confident” and “stronger”, since all three, he said, are reflected in Xi's style of leadership.

“He stands out among contemporary world leaders for his rationality and common sense. He is very impressive.”

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Congress in Beijing. Speaking on Oct 19, he said: “Although reaching the poverty-relief target is extremely challenging as a result of the historical, social and environmental factors in the county, there is no excuse for us not achieving the goal along with the rest of the country.”

After undertaking detailed analysis by visiting every impoverished household, the county authorities decided to help local people to raise the quality and output of agricultural produce, such as walnuts and dates, and improve water conservation facilities.

People living in harsh environments are also offered the opportunity to relocate.

“We fully respect their choices and make sure those who are willing to move can find new careers,” said Memet.

He added that more than 57,740 people were lifted out of poverty in Pishan between 2012 and last year.

When he delivered his report to the CPC National Congress on Oct 18, Xi stressed the role education plays in the eradication of poverty.

“We will pay particular attention to helping people gain greater confidence in their ability to lift themselves out of poverty and ensure that they have access to the education they need to do so,” he said.

Back in Horqin Right Wing Middle Banner, Mu has become a trainer at the embroidery workshop, earning an extra 100 yuan a day by teaching other women.

“In addition to making more money, I have become more confident,” she said. “I believe I can tackle more difficult patterns now.”

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Residents with an interest in horses have been encouraged to start equine-related businesses in Horqin Right Wing Middle Banner to boost their income. Most of the banner's population hail from the Mongolian ethnic group.