



Taihu World Cultural Forum attendees head for the annual conference's opening ceremony in Beijing on Oct 18 after taking a group photo. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

# Xi praises forum's role in progress

President writes in letter that international cultural gathering also promotes world peace, development

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President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to the fifth annual conference of the Taihu World Cultural Forum, which opened on Oct 18 in Beijing, saying that cultural exchanges and mutual learning are an important driving force for human progress and world peace and development.

"China advocates a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation and calls on all countries to join hands in building a community with a shared future for mankind.

"As greater exchanges and mutual learning enrich civilizations and make them more colorful, we look forward to working together with the rest of the international community to encourage respect and harmony among civilizations and make inter-civilization exchange a positive force for building the community with a shared future for mankind. By sharing development opportunities and jointly facing up to common challenges, let us make our world a better place," Xi wrote in his message.

Wang Chen, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and vice-chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, read Xi's letter at the opening ceremony of the forum, themed Dialogues of Cultures: Building a Community of Shared Future for Mankind, at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

Wang said the annual forum is aimed at further exploring the theoretical backing and path to building a community of a shared future for mankind, and finding solutions to the problems the world is facing.

He said participants would exchange their ideas in a candid way and provide thoughts and driving forces for the common prosperity of the world.

Ali Ahmedov, deputy prime minister of Azerbaijan, read a congratulatory letter from Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. The letter said that given the circumstances of a volatile world, countries should press for cooperation using the guidance of building the community of a shared future for mankind proposed by Xi.

## Intercultural dialogue

Countries connected by the ancient Silk Road will make their contribution to intercultural dialogue, the letter said.

"In a world where openness is increasingly threatened, we need to keep the door of dialogue among civilizations open," said Romano Prodi, former Italian prime minister and honorary president of the forum.

"I'm concerned that trade and economic disputes may negatively influence cultural and political cooperation," Prodi added. He called the Belt and Road Initiative a positive development with potential for far-reaching effects.

Yan Zhaozhu, chairman of the forum, said uncertainty in the world situation has increased with the growth of unilateralism and protectionism. There should be unwavering confidence in building the com-

munity of a shared future for mankind, Yan said.

The key to the success of such a community is cooperation, he said. "Openness and inclusiveness are the base, mutual respect is the precondition and mutual benefit and win-win results is the impetus."

"Global cooperation is needed to solve problems such as climate change, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, ecological disasters and major contagious diseases," Yan said. "Economic globalization also enhances global cooperation, which surpasses the boundaries of social systems and values."

People's minds should go with the current of the times, and never fall back to the old ideas of zero-sum games and winner takes all, he said. Every country should have the right to choose a development mode and path that suits them the best.

Zhang Meiying, vice-chairwoman of the 11th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and honorary chairwoman of Taihu World Cultural Forum, called the international rescue of the Thai youth soccer team this year an example of the importance of building a community of a shared future for mankind.

"It is a manifestation of such a community," she said. "A mission impossible was completed because the common value of respect for human life brought together the force of people of countries with different social systems and cultures.

"Building the community of a shared future for mankind is the common ideal and exploration of all that is human, and it is the foundation of human love, which can be achieved."

Wu Hailong, president of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, said cultural dialogue is a major way to enhance mutual understanding, especially when the world is faced with a complex situation. We will have a more beautiful, vibrant and lively world through cultural exchanges, Wu said.

"Nowadays, problems such as unilateralism, protectionism, populism and 'me first' are making people worry," he said.

Wu added that only mutual respect, equality, and shared destiny can lead to prosperity for human society and human civilization.

## Humanity's future

Zhou Shuchun, publisher and editor-in-chief of China Daily, said the world is faced with uncertainty and volatility, with unprecedented problems and challenges, and the global community has to make a crucial choice that will have a great impact on world development and humanity's future.

"The media should play a special role in strengthening understanding, friendship and cooperation among peoples, and facilitating exchanges and mutual learning among different cultures and civilizations, for the world to go in the right direction," he said.

Zhou said the media should be the facilitator of civilization communication, builder of world peace and development, and ambassador of Chinese civilization.

Altynai Omurbekova, vice prime minister of Kyrgyzstan, said dialogue among civilizations contributes to strengthening the awareness of the values that people share regardless

of our race, gender, language or religion.

Former Polish president Bronislaw Komorowski said: "Dialogue is the way to protect spiritual and cultural values and to respect the diversity of faith, culture and language."

Essam Sharaf, former prime minister of Egypt, agreed that damage to humanity and nature that the world is experiencing is a legitimate reason for global harmony. "We in the developing countries look to China, with its large and influential international weight, with great hope for supporting our development and in promoting peace and security at the global level," he said.

Sharaf said he believes fulfilling the dream of global harmony is an extremely difficult task, but difficulty is beautiful.

The forum attracted nearly 1,000 politicians, entrepreneurs, scholars and cultural notables from about 40 countries and regions to share ideas and learn from each other, contributing collective wisdom to the development of universal civilization.

Six forums, a cultural dialogue, a movie dialogue and other events, were held during the forum, which opened on Oct 18.

This year's conference was co-hosted by the Taihu World Cultural Forum and China Daily, with support from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Chinese Federation of Literary and Art Circles and the Counselor's Office of the State Council.

Founded in March 2008, the Taihu World Cultural Forum is a high-level, unofficial international cultural forum.