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The Africa-China Centre for Policy & Advisory (ACCPA), a Sino-African research and policy think tank and advisory firm, recently held a Public Forum on Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) as a new paradigm for building global peace and prosperity.

The forum's central theme was China's new proposal called the Global Civilization Initiative, which outlines key pillars on how we can build a harmonious and peaceful world without antagonism and confrontations, as we have seen in recent times.

The second-largest economy in the world, China, has stepped up during a time when the entire world is going through challenging times, particularly as economies recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine crisis. China has provided practical, workable entryways that may lead to world peace and stability.

It suffices to state that the world may and does need a new paradigm in contrast to the existing quo of confrontation and needless antagonism, a paradigm shift that China is currently giving. This is evident when you follow some of the new global efforts undertaken by China.

In 2021, China introduced the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and followed it up in 2022 with the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and in March 2023, in a keynote speech at the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting, H.E. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, introduced the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI).

What's the GCI and Why does it matter?

The Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) is a sincere appeal to the entire world for extensive inter-civilizational communication and exchanges to promote human civilizations through inclusivity and mutual learning.

It encompasses four key pillars: respect for the diversity of civilizations, advocating the common values of humanity, highly valuing the inheritance and innovation of civilizations, and jointly advocating robust international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation.

Major country rivalries are intensifying, geopolitical conflicts are worsening, changes not seen in a century are happening quickly, the global security governance system is woefully behind, and new conventional and unconventional security threats are constantly emerging, making our world anything but peaceful.

The GCI includes not only the fundamental ideas and precepts of how various civilizations can live in harmony and learn from one another, but also the source of inspiration and a realistic route to manifestation.

It is a sizable initiative that is extremely beneficial, practical, and long-lasting. It promotes tolerance for diverse civilizations and supports their right to progress, fully satisfying the pressing demands of the global community. Since its inception, it has displayed strong vitality, inspiring positive reactions in the global community.

Diversity of Civilization

Tolerance, peaceful coexistence, exchanges, and mutual learning amongst other civilizations all contribute significantly to the modernization of humanity and the flourishing of the global civilizational garden.

This pillar speaks to the true essence of upholding the principles of equality and mutual respect for different civilizations and ushering in cultural exchanges without any prejudice about the superiority of one civilization over the other.

This fully satisfies the pressing demands of the global community by promoting respect for all civilizations and supporting their rights to development.

Common Values of Humanity

The modernization of humanity has once again come to a turning point in its history. The Cold War mindset is still lingering, the development gap is expanding, the natural environment is worsening, and the global economic recovery is still sluggish.

Reversing these phenomena and creating peace, development, equity, justice, democracy, and freedom are the common aspirations of all peoples.

Countries must maintain an open mind when recognizing how different civilizations interpret values and abstain from imposing their own ideals or models on others or inciting ideological conflict.

Inheritance and Innovation of Civilizations

This pillar advocates for countries to push for the creative transformation and innovative development of their exquisite traditional cultures. They must fully utilize the relevance of their histories and cultures to the present.

Tolerance, coexistence, exchanges, and mutual learning among other civilizations play an indispensable role in promoting humanity's modernization process because the futures of all countries are interconnected.

People-to-People Exchanges

It has become even more essential to step up inter-civilizational exchanges for closer people-to-people connectivity.

In order to foster understanding and friendship between the citizens of all nations and jointly advance the development of human civilizations, countries must investigate the creation of a global network for inter-civilizational dialogue and cooperation, enrich the content of exchanges, and expand avenues of cooperation.

Respect for all civilizations is a peace tool

During the Public Forum on Global Civilization Initiative held in Accra by the Africa-China Centre for Policy & Advisory (ACCPA) Danzhu LOU, the Director of Political Affairs at the Chinese Embassy in Ghana, reminded attendees in her keynote speech why China prioritizes respect for all civilizations as a panacea for building global peace.

“For thousands of years, China has developed a mindset of respecting the diversity of civilizations, and formed a paradigm of “diversity in harmony”.

“For example, Confucianism stressed harmonious coexistence between people, and between people and their surroundings. Zixia, a disciple of Confucius, said, “Within the four seas, all men are brothers.” Confucius said, “a noble person harmonizes but does not seek sameness, whereas the despicable one seeks sameness but does not harmonize”.

“In today’s world, as the future of all countries are closely connected, tolerance, coexistence, exchanges and mutual learning among different civilizations play an irreplaceable role in advancing humanity's modernization process”.

However, as multiple challenges and crisis are intertwined, the Cold War mentality is resurging. The dregs of “theory of civilization superiority” and “theory of clash of civilizations” once again stirred up. Some countries forcefully impose their own values and models on others out of selfish interest under the pretext of “de-risking”.

“Whether countries will go to confrontation or shared prosperity, and whether history will go backward or forward, depend to a large extent on how we view and deal with the differences among different civilizations.”

According to H.E. Anani Demuyakor, Ghana’s former Ambassador to China, “Civilizations are not owned by individuals, societies and nations, but instead, shared across global locations in one of several ways. These are innovations religious conversions, colonization, social assimilation and in recent times, economic trade and commerce.”

The Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) has the potential to serve as a catalyst for advancing civilizational discussion, which will eventually enhance the world's harmonious development and bring about lasting peace and shared prosperity.

About author



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Paul Frimpong is a development economist, top voice on Sino-Africa relations, and an award-winning entrepreneur.

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