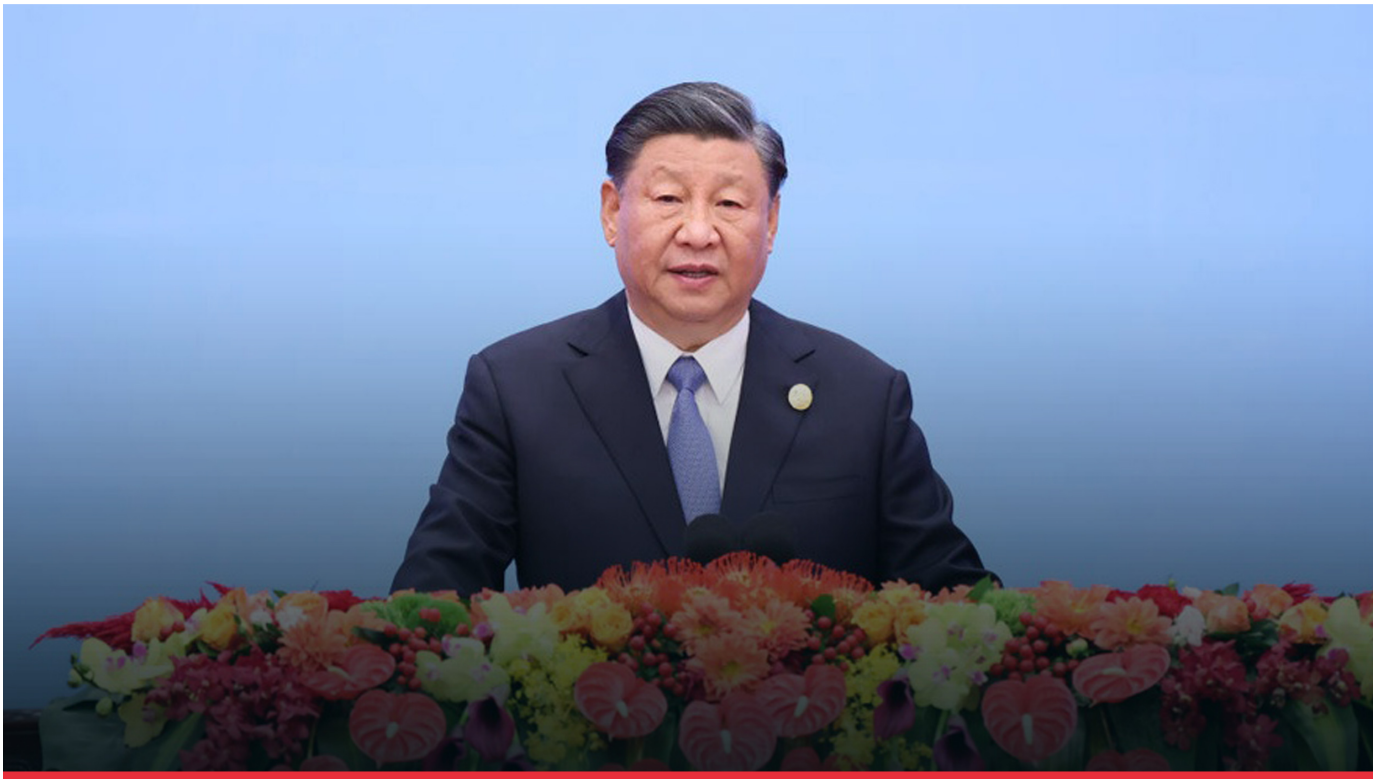


# Understanding China's Global Vision through the Four Global Initiatives (4GI's).





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# Understanding China's Global Vision through the Four Global Initiatives (4GI's).



**WRITTEN BY:**

Dr. Hagan Sibiri  
Senior Research Fellow, ACCPA

[www.africachinacentre.org](http://www.africachinacentre.org)

Over the past decade, President Xi Jinping of China has consistently used the catchphrase “building a community with a shared future for mankind” in his domestic and international speeches. Although gaining traction within China, this concept has received less attention globally despite being [cited in a UN Security Council resolution](#) in 2017. The phrase again took center stage at the [2023 BRICS Business Forum](#) in Johannesburg. In [his closing speech](#), Xi urged concrete actions to turn his vision of building a global community with a shared future for mankind into reality. Following this call, China [unveiled a policy paper](#) in September 2023 outlining its proposals and actions for building a globally shared future in detail. This raises crucial questions: What does this concept entail, and how does Xi envision its realization?

## The Vision of Building a Globally Shared Future

Xi [first introduced the vision](#) of building a global community with a shared future in 2013 while addressing the Moscow State Institute of International Relations on China’s views on international affairs. The idea was subsequently elaborated in [his inaugural address to the UN General Assembly in 2015](#). In this speech, Xi advocated for establishing a new form of international relations characterized by win-win cooperation and creating a community with a shared future for mankind—through the following efforts:

1. Building equal partnerships among nations based on extensive consultation and mutual understanding.
2. Creating a security environment characterized by fairness, justice, joint efforts, and shared interests.
3. Promoting open, innovative, and inclusive development for the benefit of all.
4. Increasing inter-civilization exchanges to foster harmony, inclusiveness, and respect for differences.
5. Building an ecosystem that prioritizes ‘mother nature’ and green development.

Xi views the creation of a globally shared future as [China’s solution](#) to the many challenges the world faces today. This entails building an open and inclusive world that enjoys enduring peace, universal security, and common prosperity. [Xi succinctly captured this vision](#) during the China-Africa Leaders’ Dialogue in Johannesburg on August 24, 2023, as follows:

*The world today is undergoing transformation and turmoil, and changes unseen in a century are unfolding at a faster pace. At this point of history, we all face the tasks of how to address the deficit in development, overcome security challenges and enhance mutual learning between civilizations. In view of this, I have put forward the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilisation Initiative, called for peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit, and advocated building a community with a shared future for mankind.*

The vision has been [incorporated into the constitution](#) of China and the Communist Party, serving as the overarching theme and guiding framework for China’s foreign policy agenda. To commemorate a decade since its vision was expounded by Xi, China unveiled a White Paper on September 24, 2023, titled “[A Global](#)

[Community of Shared Future: China's Proposals and Actions](#),” which explains the practical applications of the vision. According to the paper, building a global community with a shared future is a grand vision that serves as a blueprint for a better world. The document clarifies that the objective is to pursue openness, inclusiveness, mutual benefit, equity, and justice. Rather than replacing existing systems or civilizations, the focus is on fostering collaboration among countries with diverse social systems, ideologies, histories, and shared rights and responsibilities in global affairs.

## The Four Global Initiatives (4GI's) for Building a Globally Shared Future

Xi envisions building a globally shared future through four key global initiatives (4GI's): The [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#), the [Global Development Initiative \(GDI\)](#), the [Global Security Initiative \(GSI\)](#), and the [Global Civilisation Initiative \(GCI\)](#). These initiatives collectively serve as the vehicles for Xi's efforts to solve global security and development challenges, thus transforming the concept of creating a globally shared future into reality.

### ◆ *The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)*

The BRI is the foremost and perhaps the most well-known pillar of China's grand vision of building a global community with a shared future. [Proposed by Xi in 2013](#), the BRI is a China-led global cooperative infrastructure development initiative that envisions an interconnected network of land and maritime trade routes connecting Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America. As of October 2023, 150+ countries and 30 global organizations had [signed cooperation agreements](#) with the BRI. The BRI strategically aligns with and supports regional and multilateral development initiatives, such as the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the European Union's Strategy on Connecting Europe and Asia.

In October 2023, [the third BRI Forum](#) was held in Beijing with [representatives from 130+ countries](#), celebrating [a decade of the BRI](#). In its decade of implementation, the [BRI has produced significant outcomes](#), delivering noteworthy infrastructure projects globally. Between 2013 and 2022, the cumulative two-way investment between China and BRI participating countries amounted to US\$380 billion, with China contributing US\$240 billion. The value of newly signed construction contracts with BRI countries reached US\$2 trillion. Within the BRI framework, investment and financing platforms have also expanded by establishing the Silk Road Fund (SRF) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). As of June 2023, the SRF had signed agreements for 75 projects with a committed investment of approximately US\$22 billion, while AIIB members had approved 227 projects with a total investment of US\$43.6 billion.

In the coming decade, China is indicating a shift in the direction of the BRI, moving away from a primary emphasis on hard infrastructure investment towards greener and more digital investments. On November 24, 2023, China [released a policy document](#) outlining the vision and action plan of the BRI for the next decade. The [plan](#) concentrates on green and digital development, with six key directions: policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, people-to-people ties, and cooperation in new fields.

### ◆ **The Global Development Initiative (GDI)**

[Proposed by Xi](#) at the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly on September 21, 2021, the Global Development Initiative (GDI) represents the second pillar of China's vision of creating a globally shared future. In principle, the GDI's core aim is to expedite the implementation of the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (2030 Agenda) and foster a more robust, greener, coordinated, and balanced global development.

Staying committed to a people-centered approach, innovation-driven development, and results-oriented actions, the GDI, [according to Xi](#), will place much "emphasis on addressing unbalanced and inadequate development among and within countries." To accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and build a globally shared future, GDI focuses on eight (8) priority areas of cooperation: poverty alleviation, food security, COVID-19 response and vaccines, development financing, climate change, and green development, industrialization, digital economy, and connectivity. Given that these challenges are prevalent in the developing world, GDI aims to consolidate China's development cooperation agenda and strengthen its role as a development partner in the Global South.

In a demonstration of commitment, Xi, in announcing the GDI, [pledged US\\$3 billion](#) in international assistance to support developing countries over the next three years to help promote economic and social recovery. Within the GDI framework, [China hosted the High-level Dialogue on Global Development in June 2022](#) and presented measures for implementing the GDI. These [measures comprise](#) the establishment of the US\$4 billion Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, the initiation of Phase III of the China-FAO South-South Cooperation Trust Fund, and the enhancement of support for the China-UN Peace and Development Fund. Presently, the GDI has [garnered support](#) from over 100 countries and international organizations, with more than 70 countries actively participating in the Group of Friends of the GDI established at the UN.

### ◆ **The Global Security Initiative (GSI)**

[Xi introduced the idea](#) of the Global Security Initiative (GSI) at the Boao Forum for Asia in April 2022. GSI aims to address global security challenges and promote peace and stability by emphasizing international partnership, cooperation, and dialogue. [According to Xi](#), "security is a prerequisite for development." Accordingly, the world must uphold a common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security vision. This entails working together to preserve global peace and security, respecting the sovereignty of all nations, adhering to UN Charter principles, rejecting Cold War thinking, opposing unilateralism, avoiding group politics and bloc confrontation, and addressing the legitimate security concerns of all while rejecting the pursuit of one's security at the expense of others.

In elaborating on the concept of GSI, [the GSI Concept Paper](#) was published by the Chinese foreign ministry in February 2023. The paper outlines six core principles and 20 priority areas for cooperation within the GSI framework, emphasizing common security, openness, inclusiveness, and practical cooperation. The six principles entail a commitment to: (1) common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security; (2) respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity; (3) adhering to the UN Charter's purposes and principles; (4) addressing legitimate security concerns; (5) peacefully resolving differences through dialogue; and (6) maintaining security in traditional and non-traditional domains. The 20 cooperation priorities span traditional security issues like political settlements,

peacekeeping, nuclear proliferation, terrorism, transnational crime, drug trafficking, and arms control. It also addresses non-traditional security concerns such as climate change, cybersecurity, biosecurity, outer space, artificial intelligence, natural disasters, and public health.

Although in its early days, the GSI has achieved some success. Its framework has been effectively utilized in the Middle East to [facilitate an agreement](#) between historic adversaries Iran and Saudi Arabia, [restoring diplomatic relations](#) in March 2023. On other lingering global crises, China has proposed the GSI framework for a political settlement in the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine crises, [outlining its position on Ukraine](#) and [urging practical steps for a two-state solution](#) to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### ◆ **The Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI)**

On March 15, 2023, [Xi proposed the Global Civilisation Initiative \(GCI\)](#) during the Chinese Communist Party's dialogue at the World Political Parties High-Level Meeting. As the latest initiative, GCI advocates for respect for the diversity of civilizations, the common values of humanity, the importance of inheritance and innovation of civilizations, and cultural exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. The overarching goal of GCI is to inspire the creation of a global community with a shared future.

In contrast to the other global initiatives, GCI has yet to be extensively expounded upon. Nevertheless, as outlined to Xi, GCI stands as a key pillar in the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind. Leveraging China's extensive [history of a civilization spanning over 5,000 years](#), GCI seeks to promote tolerance, coexistence, cooperation, cultural exchange, and mutual learning among diverse civilizations. [Aligned with other global initiatives](#), GCI aims to foster the interconnectedness of nations, facilitating greater cooperation in tackling shared challenges and promoting human development.

Prior to the official introduction of GCI, dialogue among civilizations and cultural exchanges has consistently been part of China's foreign policy agenda. This commitment was manifested through various initiatives, including the [Confucius Institute programs](#), [conferences on the Dialogue of Asian Civilisations](#), the [China-Africa Civilisation Dialogue Conference](#), and the [Center of Chinese and Greek Ancient Civilisations](#).

## **Building a Globally Shared Future: A Lofty Aspiration or Feasible Strategy?**

In essence, the overarching theme and framework of China's new foreign policy agenda revolves around the vision of building a global community with a shared future. The concept articulates Xi's perspective on enhancing global governance, addressing global security and development challenges, and promoting global peace and development. Ambitious efforts are imperative to tackle these global issues. In alignment with this overarching vision, China has spearheaded the 4GI's as a comprehensive approach to shaping a future characterized by shared prosperity, security, and cultural understanding. In summary, the 4GI's, working in concert, aim to offer Chinese-led solutions to significant global challenges.



After gaining a deeper insight into China's global vision and what it entails, another critical question arises: Is the idea of building a Chinese-led globally shared future a lofty aspiration or a viable global strategy? While many observers see China's 4GI's as a potential game-changer, offering hope for developing nations to leverage the opportunities presented for their developmental needs, others, including skeptics, regard the 4GI's as nothing more than China's attempt to extend its global influence and challenge the Western-led global governance system by promoting a vision of a Chinese alternative.

Notwithstanding the contested viewpoints, we firmly submit that the ultimate responsibility for determining the answer to the above crucial question rests with the involved countries. For China, the fundamental challenge in realizing its vision lies in garnering global support and participation. This entails addressing critical concerns over its intentions, assuaging lingering distrust with transparency, and minimizing the negative externalities stemming from its global engagement.



## Author:

**Dr. Hagan Sibiri**

Senior Research Fellow

[Africa-China Centre for Policy & Advisory](#)

E: [hagansibiri@gmail.com](mailto:hagansibiri@gmail.com)



## CONTACT

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Building No. 49-01, North Legon,  
Accra, Ghana

+233 303 965259

info@africachinacentre.org

[www.africachinacentre.org](http://www.africachinacentre.org)