



AFRICA-CHINA
CENTRE FOR POLICY & ADVISORY



Insight



CHINA'S GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE: SHAPING A NEW ERA OF MULTILATERALISM

www.africachinacentre.org

CHINA'S GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE (GGI): SHAPING A NEW ERA OF MULTILATERALISM

Written By:

Paul Frimpong
Executive Director, ACCPA
E: paulf@africachinacentre.org

Introduction

At the “Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus” Summit in Tianjin, President Xi Jinping introduced the **Global Governance Initiative (GGI)**—a framework aimed at reforming international cooperation in a time of turbulence. The initiative calls for a system grounded in sovereign equality, adherence to international law, multilateralism, a people-centered approach, and practical results.

The announcement coincided with the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, as well as the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. Both moments reflect collective efforts to safeguard peace and institutionalize cooperation. As Xi noted, history reminds us that “at difficult times, we must uphold our original commitment to peaceful coexistence, strengthen our confidence in win-win cooperation, advance in line with the trend of history, and thrive in keeping pace with the times.”

Today, geopolitical rivalries, unilateralism, and global crises such as climate change and inequality threaten the multilateral system built after 1945. Against this backdrop, the GGI positions itself as both a response to present challenges and a forward-looking blueprint for a renewed global order.

Historical Anchors and Their Global Relevance

The unveiling of the Global Governance Initiative is closely tied to the historic anniversaries being observed in 2025. The 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War is more than a national commemoration—it is a global reminder of the sacrifices made to defend peace and justice. For China, this anniversary underscores the enduring importance of safeguarding sovereignty, resisting hegemony, and preventing the repetition of historical tragedies.

Equally significant is the **80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations**, born from the ruins of war to institutionalize cooperation, promote peace, and establish international law as the foundation of global order. The UN Charter enshrined principles such as sovereign equality, non-interference, and collective security—values that resonate strongly in the GGI’s five core commitments. The linkage is deliberate: by recalling the lessons of 1945, China is situating its proposal as an extension and renewal of the UN spirit for the 21st century.

In today’s environment, these historical anchors serve as powerful reminders of the need for unity in the face of global challenges. Just as the international community came together eight decades ago to resist aggression and establish the UN, President Xi’s call through the GGI is for nations to once again act collectively—this time to reform institutions, close governance gaps, and deliver peace, security, and prosperity for all.

Understanding the Global Governance Initiative (GGI)

The GGI builds on China’s earlier proposals—the **Global Development Initiative (GDI)**, **Global Security Initiative (GSI)**, and **Global Civilization Initiative (GCI)**—but addresses the larger question of how global governance itself should evolve.

Its five commitments are:

1. **Sovereign equality** – All countries, regardless of size or power, should have equal say in governance.

2. **International rule of law** – Strict observance of the UN Charter and international law, with no double standards.
3. **Multilateralism** – Support for the UN as the core platform for inclusive decision-making.
4. **People-centered approach** – Ensuring governance delivers for ordinary people by tackling inequality and common challenges.
5. **Real results** – Focusing on coordinated, outcome-oriented action in areas such as digital governance, space, and climate.

The initiative seeks not to replace the current system but to reform and revitalize it, making institutions more representative and effective.

Why the Initiative Matters Now

The introduction of the Global Governance Initiative comes at a moment when the international system is under significant strain. The **post-1945 multilateral order**, once anchored in the UN Charter and international law, faces erosion from renewed great power rivalry, rising protectionism, and the resurgence of unilateral measures. At the same time, global challenges—from climate change and pandemics to artificial intelligence and widening inequality—are intensifying, yet collective responses remain fragmented.

China frames the GGI as a corrective to what it describes as the “deficits” of the current system: underrepresentation of the Global South, weakened authority of international law, and a lack of effective solutions to pressing issues. For developing nations in particular, the initiative promises greater voice and participation in shaping global rules. In this sense, GGI resonates strongly with calls for a fairer international financial architecture, equitable climate financing, and inclusive digital governance.

The initiative also matters because it addresses a deeper concern: the **legitimacy of multilateralism itself**. With skepticism growing about the effectiveness of international institutions, the GGI offers a vision for revitalizing cooperation through concrete reforms rather than abandoning the system altogether. It positions the UN as indispensable but in need of renewal, particularly in expanding representation and closing governance gaps in new domains like cyberspace and outer space.

Ultimately, the timing reflects both opportunity and necessity. Just as the founding of the UN in 1945 responded to the crises of its time, the GGI seeks to rally the world to confront today’s turbulence with unity, inclusivity, and

The SCO Summit as a Launch Platform

Introducing the GGI at the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit** was strategic. The SCO—spanning Eurasia and accounting for a rising share of global trade and growth—embodies multipolarity and non-Western multilateralism.

Xi praised the SCO’s “Shanghai Spirit” of trust, equality, and respect for diversity, noting its record in security coordination, economic partnerships, and cultural exchange. By launching the GGI here, China aligned the initiative with an organization already practicing inclusive cooperation and amplifying the Global South’s voice.

The SCO’s scale and influence made it an ideal stage to promote reforms that reflect shifting global dynamics, positioning the GGI not just as a diplomatic idea but as a lived multilateral practice.

China's Commitment to Peace and Development

China's launch of the Global Governance Initiative is rooted in its long-standing identity as both a defender of peace and a champion of development. Drawing from the lessons of World War II and the founding of the UN, Beijing emphasizes that safeguarding sovereignty, opposing hegemonism, and advancing collective security remain vital to global stability. At the same time, China highlights development as the foundation of lasting peace—committing to initiatives in green energy, digital cooperation, poverty reduction, and public health through the SCO and beyond. By linking the anniversaries of 1945 with today's reforms, China positions itself as both custodian of history and architect of a shared, forward-looking future.

Conclusion

The Global Governance Initiative marks a timely and ambitious step toward revitalizing multilateralism. By grounding the proposal in the hard-won lessons of 1945 and aligning it with the anniversaries of both the UN and the global victory over fascism, China underscores that peace, cooperation, and inclusivity remain the cornerstones of international order. The GGI offers a forward-looking vision—one that promises greater representation for the Global South, renewed respect for international law, and tangible solutions to shared challenges. As the world confronts a new era of uncertainty, the initiative invites all nations to work together toward a more just, equitable, and hopeful global future.



CONTACT

PLOT No. 49, Haatso RD, North Legon
Accra, Ghana
+233 303 965259

info@africachinacentre.org

www.africachinacentre.org