

The Historic Step from Peaceful Coexistence to a Shared Future for Humanity

Wang Yi

The year 2024 marks the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. On June 28, General Secretary Xi Jinping attended and delivered an important address at the conference marking the occasion. This is a major home-court diplomatic event held by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, against the backdrop of accelerated global transformation not seen in a century and profound adjustment of the international landscape and with both domestic and international imperatives in mind, to promote international solidarity and cooperation and humanity's cause of peace and development.

General Secretary Xi Jinping's visionary address is profound in thought and rich in connotation. Informed by history and oriented toward the future, it

Wang Yi is Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

fully expounds on the essence and relevance of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Noting the momentous transformation of the world, it points the direction of building a community with a shared future for mankind, and sends a powerful message of the Global South working together with people across all countries working together for a better future. This important address reaffirms China's commitment to the path of peaceful development, elevates the Vision of Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind to a new height, and inspires China and the world to redouble efforts in their joint pursuit of development and prosperity. The address fully demonstrates General Secretary Xi Jinping's deep commitment to the world and strong sense of responsibility for history as the leader of a major party and a major country. It represents the latest development of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, and provides strategic and scientific guidance for us to draw historic wisdom from the Five Principles, and build consensus on tackling the problems and challenges facing the world today.

I. Expounding on the relevance of championing the essence of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence under the new circumstances

General Secretary Xi Jinping gave a comprehensive summary of the indelible historic contributions of the Five Principles, and underlined that being a common asset of the international community, the Five Principles have become more appealing rather than obsolete, and should be valued, inherited and further promoted. Championing the essence of the Five Principles under the new circumstances carries important and far-reaching significance.

From a historical perspective, it is an inevitable development of the trend toward multipolarity and greater democracy in international relations. Born at a time when national independence and liberation movements were sweeping across Asia, Africa and Latin America, the Five Principles embodied the legitimate aspiration of newly independent countries to safeguard their sovereignty and grow their national economy, provided a powerful rallying force behind the efforts of developing countries to pursue cooperation and self-strength through unity, and pushed forward the historic process of reforming and improving the international order. Their initiation marked a groundbreaking achievement in the history of international relations. In the new century, the collective rise of emerging market and developing countries is unstoppable. The Global South stands out with a strong momentum, and groupings such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization have gained notably stronger influence. The trend toward multipolarity and greater democracy in international relations is irreversible. Championing the essence of the Five Principles under the new circumstances is a crucial step to fully capture the political and economic reality of today's world, and move toward a more just and equitable international order.

From a realistic perspective, it is a response to the urgent call for uniting all progressive forces across the world and tackling global challenges together. The Five Principles drew lessons from the hot wars, broke through the dark clouds of the Cold War, and triumphed over obsolete and narrow-minded ideas such as bloc politics and sphere of influence. They advocated mutual trust, friendship and cooperation between all countries, called for peaceful settlement of disputes, and greatly advanced the cause of world peace and development. Today, humanity lives in a global

village, and countries are more interconnected and interdependent than ever before. The world has entered a new period of turbulence and change, where factors of instability and uncertainty are notably increasing. Facing hotspot issues such as the Ukraine crisis and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and global challenges like climate change and cybersecurity, no country can stay insulated from their impact, still less resolve them by going it alone or resorting to exclusive blocs. Championing the essence of the Five Principles under the new circumstances is an inevitable choice for enhancing solidarity and cooperation among all countries to meet challenges and build a better future together.

From a theoretical perspective, it is an important cornerstone for building a new type of international relations. As the first systematic theory of international relations proposed by developing countries, the Five Principles stress the importance of mutuality and equality in handling state-to-state relations, and highlight the essence of international rule of law, i.e. the intercorrelation of rights, obligations and responsibilities. Replacing power politics, bullying and the law of the jungle with respect for sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit, the Five Principles have served as the prime guidance for the establishment and development of relations between countries with different social systems, and set an important benchmark for international relations and international rule of law. Facing the various practices of unilateralism, protectionism, power politics and bullying, humanity must make a historic choice between peace and war, prosperity and recession, and unity and confrontation. Championing the essence of the Five Principles under the new circumstances is an inherent requirement for building a new type of international relations, and achieving peaceful coexistence of human society that is more secure and

prosperous.

From a practical perspective, it offers a path to upholding the U.N. Charter and international rule of law. The Five Principles are highly consistent with the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter. Shortly after their debut in Asia, the Five Principles soon ascended to the world stage, forming the basis for the ten principles outlined at the 1955 Bandung Conference and becoming the guiding principles of the Non-Aligned Movement that rose in the 1960s. The Declaration on Principles of International Law adopted at the UNGA Session in 1970 and the Declaration on the Establishment of the New International Economic Order adopted at the Sixth Special UNGA Session in 1974 both endorsed the Five Principles. With their inclusion in important international documents, the Five Principles have become open, inclusive, and universally applicable basic norms for international relations and fundamental principles of international law. China has taken the Five Principles as the bedrock of its independent foreign policy of peace. Guided by the Five Principles, China has properly settled historical issues with neighboring countries, helped restore peace in Indochina, and established diplomatic relations and advanced friendly cooperation with 183 countries. China has also written the Five Principles into its Constitution. Championing the essence of the Five Principles under the new circumstances, and moving forward hand in hand along this path that has proven right and drawn followers in all countries, humanity will continue to embrace an even better future.

II. Articulating that the Vision of Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind is the most effective move to sustain, promote and upgrade the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence under the new circumstances

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that the baton of history is passed from generation to generation, and the cause of human progress moves forward from one era to another as mankind seek answers to the questions of the times. Seven decades ago, leaders of China, India and Myanmar jointly advocated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, giving the answer of their times to the major question of how to handle state-to-state relations. Seven decades on, bearing in mind the common and fundamental interests of people around the world, General Secretary Xi Jinping put forward the important Vision of Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind, the response of our times to the question of “what kind of world to build and how to build it.” The Vision both carries forward and renews the spirit of the Five Principles. It is an all-round and creative enrichment and expansion of the goals, pathways, values and practices of the Five Principles, and defines the noble goal for China’s major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics for the new era. This is a new historical step forward in the progressive cause of humanity.

The Vision of Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind has added new layers to state-to-state relations and represents a historical step toward helping each other succeed and working together for this one and only planet Earth where our shared future depends. General Secretary

Xi Jinping pointed out that the Vision captures the reality that all countries have a shared future and intertwined interests, and sets a new model of equality and coexistence for international relations. The world today has become a community with a shared future, i.e. the future of all countries are bound more closely together for good or ill by common challenges, common interests and common responsibilities. Living in such an era, we need to take more proactive steps to pursue win-win cooperation under the principles of equality and mutual benefit, and take peaceful coexistence to the higher level of harmony and shared prosperity. In building a community with a shared future for mankind, the basic underpinning lies in building a new type of international relations characterized by mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation. This affirms that all countries, regardless of their size, strength and wealth, are equal members of the international community, sharing interests, rights and responsibilities in international affairs, and bound to join hands to tackle challenges and achieve shared prosperity. With applying the common values of humanity as its guiding principle, and taking peace and development as a common cause, fairness and justice a common ideal, and democracy and freedom a common aspiration, the Vision encourages civilizations to coexist in harmony and facilitate progress in one another, and provides the right conceptual guidance for building a better world.

The Vision of Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind has lent strong impetus to advancing world peace and development and represents a historical step toward building a common homeland for humanity. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that the Vision responds to the world's prevailing trend of peace, development, cooperation and win-win, and opens up

new prospects for peace and progress. A common question facing the international community is how to inject greater stability and positive energy into the changing and turbulent world and promote peace and development for humanity. The Vision focuses on the future of mankind and the well-being of the people. It advocates peace and development over conflict and confrontation, common security over absolute security, and mutually beneficial cooperation over zero-sum game. It calls for exchanges and mutual learning to prevent clash of civilizations, and champions ecological conservation to protect planet Earth. It aims to build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world of lasting peace, universal security and shared prosperity. It has shown a way toward a common future for people of all countries. Guided by this noble goal, China has been working with partner countries to advance high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, making it the international cooperation platform that is broadest in coverage and largest in size. The BRI has become a pathway of cooperation, opportunity and prosperity, one that leads to common development. China has also proposed and is working to implement the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, bringing minds and hands together in the joint pursuit of development, security and advances in civilizations.

The Vision of Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind explores a right way for building a just and equitable international order, and is a historical step forward toward conducting global governance featuring extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit. As pointed out by General Secretary Xi Jinping, the Vision keeps pace with the historic trend toward multipolarity and economic globalization,

and inspires new ways to achieve development and security. The destiny of the world should be kept in the hands of all countries, international rules should be written by all countries, global affairs should be governed by all countries, and the fruits of development should be shared by all countries. The Vision advocates global governance featuring extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit. It practices true multilateralism, firmly upholds the authority and standing of the U.N., and resolutely opposes all forms of hegemony and power politics. The Vision advocates an equal and orderly multipolar world, and promotes greater democracy in international relations. It aims to ensure that countries find their place in the multipolar system and play their role under the premise of observing international law, and that the process of world multipolarity is generally stable and constructive. The Vision advocates a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, and encourages sharing of growth opportunities, accommodation of development paths, and proper solutions to global and regional imbalances, with a view to achieving common prosperity and development of all countries, especially developing countries.

The building of a community with a shared future for mankind meets the prevailing aspiration of people around the world, points the direction for the progress of world civilization, and underscores the CPC's commitment to pursuing not only happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation but also human progress and world harmony. Entering the new era, China has been working with all sides to take profound and concrete measures in building a community with a shared future for mankind. Communities with a shared future of varying forms have been built between China and dozens of countries and

regions, and communities in health, man and nature, cyberspace and maritime fields, among others, are taking shape. High-quality Belt and Road cooperation has drawn active participation from more than three quarters of the countries around the world and several dozen international organizations. The Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative have been warmly received by the international community. The building of a community with a shared future for mankind has grown from a Chinese initiative to an international consensus. The beautiful vision has been put into productive actions. It has expanded from bilateral to multilateral, regional to global, development to security, and cooperation to governance. It is becoming a banner leading the progress of the times, and is moving the world to a bright future of peace, security, prosperity and progress.

III. Steering the direction of building a community with a shared future for mankind

General Secretary Xi Jinping solemnly proclaimed that China's resolve to stay on the path of peaceful development will not change, China's resolve to develop friendship and cooperation with all countries will not change, and China's resolve to promote common development across the world will not change. On the new journey ahead, China stands ready to work with all countries to carry forward the essence of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, shoulder the responsibility of building a community with a shared future for mankind, and make unremitting efforts toward a brighter future of humanity.

Staying committed to mutual respect to consolidate the

foundation for friendship and cooperation between countries. It is important to respect the different histories, cultures and development stages of countries, respect each country's core interests and major concerns, and respect the development path, system and model independently chosen by people of different countries. At the same time, it is important to oppose the imposition of one's own will upon others, oppose camp-based confrontation and various "small circles," and oppose the act of forcing others to pick sides. China will stay on the right path of peaceful development, actively expand global partnerships based on equality, openness and cooperation, and commit to expanding shared interests with all countries. China will promote coordination and sound interactions among major countries, work for healthy, stable and sustainable development of relations with the U.S., strengthen its comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for the new era with Russia, and enhance high-level exchanges and strategic communication with Europe, thus fostering major-country dynamics featuring peaceful coexistence, overall stability and balanced development. In its neighborhood, China will adhere to the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness as well as the policy of developing friendship and partnership with its neighbors. It will seek to deepen friendship, trust and common interests with its neighboring countries. With developing countries, China will stay committed to the principle of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith, and take the right approach to friendship and interests. It will strengthen unity and cooperation with fellow developing countries and firmly safeguard common interests.

Pursuing universal security and making positive contributions to maintaining peace and tranquility. It is important to practice the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable

security, settle disputes through dialogue, resolve differences through consultation, enhance security through cooperation, share in the responsibility for maintaining peace, and join the pursuit of peaceful development. With the best track record with respect to peace and security, China will continue to promote the implementation of the Global Security Initiative, and explore and practice a distinctly Chinese approach to resolving hotspot issues. On the Ukraine crisis, guided by the four points on what must be done [The sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries must be respected; the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter must be fully observed; the legitimate security concerns of all countries must be taken seriously; and all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis must be supported.], the four things the international community must do together [Jointly support all efforts aimed at peaceful settlement of the Ukraine crisis, call on all parties concerned to stay level-headed, exercise restraint, and make direct contact as soon as possible, in order to create conditions for relaunching negotiations; jointly reject the use or threat of nuclear weapons, reaffirm that nuclear weapons should never be used, and nuclear wars should never be fought, and prevent a nuclear crisis on the Eurasian continent; make joint efforts to stabilize the global supply chain, and prevent any disruption to international energy, food and financial cooperation that may undermine global economic recovery, especially the economic and fiscal stability of developing countries; and jointly provide winter relief for civilians in the crisis-affected areas, improve humanitarian situations on the ground, and prevent humanitarian crisis on an even larger scale.] and the three observations of the crisis [Conflicts and wars produce no winner; there is no simple solution to a complex issue; and confrontation between major countries must be avoided.] put forward by General Secretary Xi Jinping, China will continue to

promote peace talks and work for the political settlement of the crisis. On the Palestinian-Israeli issue, China will firmly defend fairness and justice, make every effort for an immediate and enduring ceasefire in Gaza, advocate the convening of a more authoritative international peace conference, and promote the full implementation of the two-State solution. On the Korean Peninsula issue, the Iranian nuclear issue and issues relating to Myanmar and Afghanistan, China will continue to play a constructive role.

Promoting openness and cooperation to create a strong engine for shared prosperity. It is important to make economic globalization universally beneficial, inclusive and win-win, promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, firmly oppose all forms of unilateralism and protectionism, address structural problems impeding the healthy growth of the world economy, and keep global industrial and supply chains stable and smooth. China will press ahead with high-standard institutional opening up, deliver on the eight major steps under high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, ensure the success of such platforms for open cooperation as the China International Import Expo, the China International Fair for Trade in Services, and the China International Supply Chain Expo, roll out major measures to further deepen reforms in all respects, and provide new opportunities for global development through new achievements in Chinese modernization. China will actively implement the Global Development Initiative, and work to restore development as a central item on the international agenda, reinvigorate global partnerships for development, nurture new drivers of global development, and work with people around the world in exploring the paths to modernization.

Championing inclusiveness and mutual learning to provide an inexhaustible driving force for the progress of human civilization.

It is important to encourage equal-footed dialogue, exchange and mutual learning among civilizations, enhance understanding and affinity among people of all countries, and make humanity's common values a truly international consensus accepted and followed by all. China will advance the implementation of the Global Civilization Initiative, make good use of such platforms as the International Day for Dialogue Among Civilizations, the Understanding China Conference, and the Liangzhu Forum, enhance inter-civilization communication and dialogue, strengthen experience sharing on governance, and deepen educational, scientific and technological, cultural, subnational, people-to-people and youth exchanges. China has agreements with 24 countries on mutual visa exemption for holders of all types of passports, and implements a unilateral visa-free policy for 16 countries. China will continue to facilitate travels to China by foreign nationals, and build more bridges for friendly interactions between China and the world.

Moving forward hand in hand to form synergy for the Global South achieving greater strength through unity.

It is important for the Global South to carry out, as General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed, open and inclusive cooperation and act as a staunch force for peace, a core driving force for open development, a construction team of global governance, and advocates for exchange among civilizations. China is always a member of the Global South and always stands with all countries of the South through thick and thin. China will accelerate the implementation of the eight measures in support of Global South cooperation, ensure the success of the upcoming Beijing Summit of the Forum

on China-Africa Cooperation, develop the “five cooperation frameworks” in concert with Arab states, upgrade its relations with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and deepen cooperation with Pacific island countries. China will stay committed to the development and revitalization of the Global South and walk side by side with other Global South countries in our common pursuit of modernization.

Upholding fairness and justice to contribute China’s proposal for better global governance. It is important to uphold true multilateralism, defend the authority and role of the United Nations, follow the vision of global governance featuring extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit, continue to increase the representation and voice of the developing countries, and make the global governance architecture more balanced and effective. China will take an active part in the reform and improvement of the global governance system, support the Summit of the Future in adopting a Pact for the Future that reflects the trend of our times and the aspirations of people around the world, actively participate in international cooperation on climate change, build greater consensus on the Global AI Governance Initiative, and work for improving the governance rules for such new frontiers as deep sea, polar regions, outer space and cyberspace. It is important to deepen cooperation under the expanded BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, support Brazil and Peru in hosting G20 and APEC meetings respectively, and augment the strength of the South in global governance.

One learns from the past in order to understand the future, and follows the right path to go far. The implementation of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence is an ongoing process. So is the

building of a community with a shared future for mankind. Taking the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as a new starting point, China will work with all countries to draw wisdom from history, undertake the responsibility for our times, and keep striving for the great goal of building a community with a shared future for mankind. 