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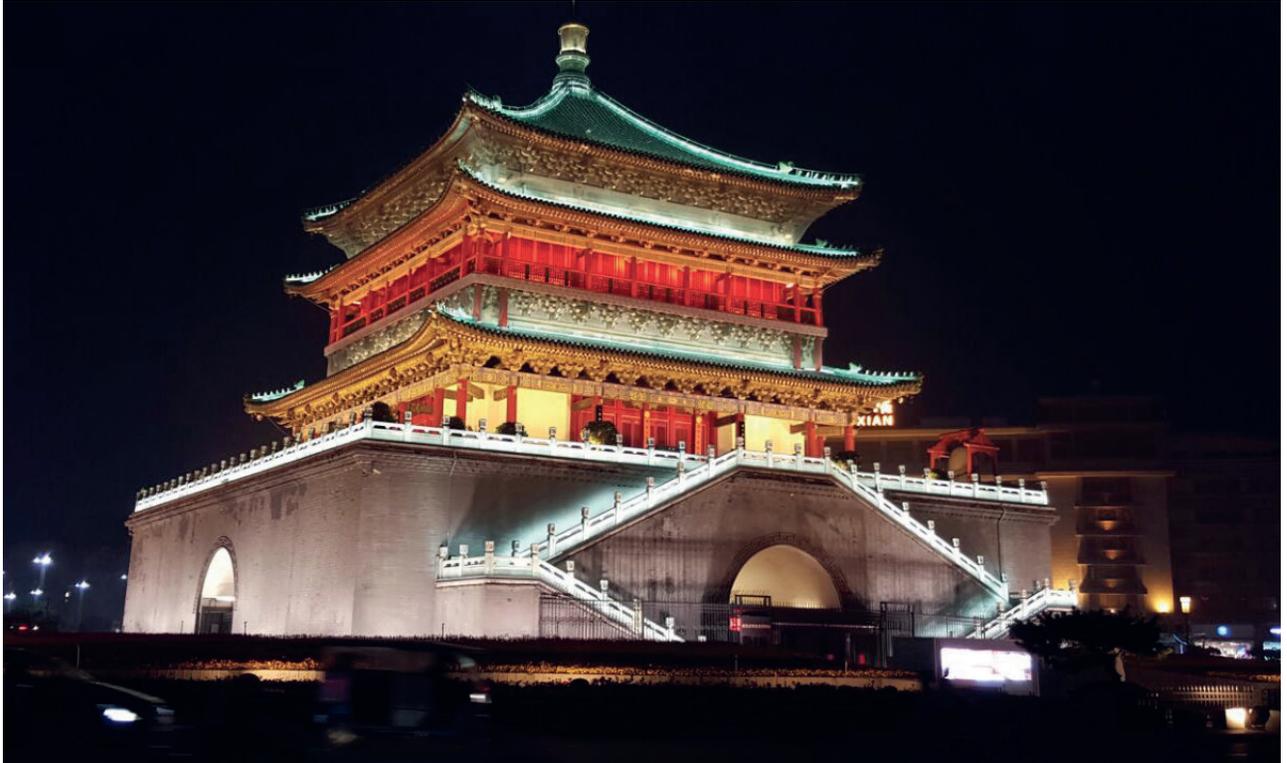
Unveiling Historical Laws of the Rise and Fall of Human Civilization and Pointing to Path for Civilization Advancement: Theoretical Connotation and Practical Value of the Global Civilization Initiative

Summary: Analyzing strategic advantages and the depth of the Global Civilization Initiative and its role in the modernization of humanity, through the practice of the Chinese path and respect for diversities, the author offers a scientific vision of further development of the planet and directions of progress. The opening of the ancient Silk Road provided important channels for the exchange of cultures, goods and information between the East and the West, laying a strong foundation for further cooperation of civilizations. Even after numerous social, political and economic changes in the international environment, China remains firm in pursuing independent foreign politics of peace, vigorously advocating Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and for continued expansion of friendly exchanges and mutually useful cooperation with the countries throughout the world which have different cultures and ideologies. The global security deficit can be solved only through honest understanding and respect, and that is why China insists on mutual consultation and understanding with the promotion of shared progress through cooperation.

Keywords: Global Civilization Initiative, mutual cooperation, unity, scientific socialism, modernization

At the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-level Meeting, General Secretary Xi Jinping put forward for the first time the Global Civilization Initiative, which profoundly answered the “question of humanity’s modernization” and instilled confidence and strength into the promotion of coexistence, exchange and mutual appreciation of different civilizations, the progress of

humanity’s modernization and the prosperity of the garden of world civilizations. The Global Civilization Initiative originates from the exploration and practice of the Chinese path to modernization and draws on the experiences and lessons of all civilizations, embodying the historical laws and practical logic of the progress of human civilizations. With rich theoretical connotation and



Mock-up of the Forbidden City, formerly the emperor palace of Chinese dynasties, today a museum, Beijing

Photo: Milica Dragić

significant practical value, the Global Civilization Initiative demonstrates the wisdom and commitment of an ancient civilization with a history of more than 5,000 years, and is another important scientific solution provided by China in the new era to address the challenges faced by the entire human race.

Profoundly Unveiling the Historical Laws of the Rise and Fall of Human Civilizations

Each of the various civilizations created by mankind has its own distinctive characteristics, and they together have made important contributions to the development and progress of humanity, accumulating a rich heritage. Based on a profound understanding of the historical

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development process of human civilizations and the new form of human advancement brought about by the Chinese path to modernization, the Global Civilization Initiative emphasises respect for diversity of global civilizations and promotes a civilizational perspective of equality, mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness. In any period of history, civilizations can be “beautiful in their own right and appreciate the beauty of others” so long as they focus on exchanges, mutual learning and inclusiveness. On the contrary, any civilization that advocates the estrangement, collision, and superiority between civilizations, based on a winner-takes-all approach, even though it may gain the upper hand that is powered through for a while, will eventually lose in the long run. As crystallization of labour and wisdom, every civilization embodies and perpetuates the spiritual lineage of a country and a nation, whose historical heritage and development innovations must follow the laws governing historical development and conform to historical trends. Chinese civilization, the only great civilization in the world that has been developing without interruption, has been rooted in the fertile soil of a multi-ethnic culture that is harmonious in diversity and has achieved inclusive development through exchanges and mutual learning with other civilizations.

Let cultural exchanges transcend estrangement. As an old Chinese saying goes, “Learning alone without exchanges with others will lead to ignorance.” The interactions among civilizations serves as the basis for the harmonious coexistence of humanity. In historical practice, communication among civilizations sustained various constraints

due to differences in geography, language and cognition, resulting in long-standing barriers. Nevertheless, mankind never relented in its efforts to promote the exchanges among civilizations. The opening of the ancient Silk Road, for example, provided an important channel for the exchanges and interactions between the Eastern and Western civilizations. Through the Silk Road, economic, cultural and scientific exchanges among countries such as the ancient China, India, Persia, Arabia and Rome continued to expand, greatly contributing to the development and progress of human civilizations. Many achievements of people-to-people exchanges were absorbed during the formation and development of ancient Chinese and Western philosophy, laying a sound foundation for exchanges among civilizations. It is not of pure coincidence in history that the ideas of Confucius and Plato are similar in some way. Their historical and cultural roots may be traced back to the exchanges and integration of early human civilizations. In modern times, exchanges and cooperation among countries around the world have become more frequent and extensive, and human society has thus created a more integrated modern civilization. At the beginning of the 20th century, Marxism spread from the West to China, and China and European countries, as representing Eastern and Western civilizations respectively, came across an important turning point for exchanges among civilizations. After its birth, the Communist Party of China (CPC), taking Marxism as its guiding ideology, has broken new ground for Chinese revolution and development, demonstrating the charm of Chinese civilization, and contributing to the enrichment and development of world civilization to a greater extent.

Let mutual learning transcend collision. As a Chinese adage goes, a delicious soup is cooked by combining different ingredients. Diversity of civilizations endows different civilizations with unique charm, and it is only by complementing each other's advantages and learning from each other can we enhance the quality of our own civilization and promote the creative development of human civilizations. There is no such thing as a perfect civilization or a good-for-nothing civilization in the world. Civilizations are enriched by mutual learning and sublimated by integration. The strong vitality demonstrated by Chinese civilization in our era lies in the extensive borrowing and absorption of advanced human civilization achievements. By combining the basic principles of Marxism with China's reality and the excellent Chinese traditional culture, the CPC has scored a series of major theoretical achievements and led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups to create a form of civilization featuring coordinated development of material, political, cultural-ethical, social and ecological advancement, providing valuable experience and useful reference for the development and revitalization of civilizations in other countries. China remains firm in pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace, vigorously advocates the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and continuously expands friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation with countries around the world with different cultures and ideologies. Unlike some Western scholars and politicians who vigorously advocate the theory of clash of civilizations in the international community, the Chinese people are not only deeply aware of the differences between the

Chinese civilization and other civilizations, but also committed to promoting broader and higher-level dialogues among civilizations, striving to transcend collision of civilizations through mutual learning among civilizations.

Let inclusion transcend alleged superiority. As an old Chinese saying goes, diversity in harmony generates while sameness stifles vitality. There is no superiority or inferiority of civilizations, only differences in characteristics. All civilizations deserve respect, and this is the necessary broad-mindedness for dealing with different civilizations. History has shown that only through inclusiveness can human civilizations have the impetus to exchange and learn from each other, and only by transcending the alleged superiority of some civilization can all civilizations achieve progress and everlasting development in exchanges and mutual learning. Drawing on their economic, technological and military advantages since modern times, some Western countries have alleged superiority of Western races, cultures and civilization, claiming Western civilization as the end of human history. This view of civilization, with its distinctive feature of capitalist ideology, not only makes Western culture suffer from increasing narrow-mindedness and seclusion, but will also inevitably intensify the clash of civilizations, inducing hatred and unrest among nations. Throughout its 5,000-year history of civilization development, the Chinese people have always followed the principle of "diversity in harmony", and have made an indelible contribution to human advancement by understanding and respecting the civilizations of other countries while maintaining their cultural self-confidence. Since the founding of the People's Republic of

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China, the Chinese Government and people have firmly advocated that civilizations should respect and learn from each other and that each country follows the path of civilization development that is consistent with its own reality and the needs of its people. China will never engage in cultural colonialism or ideological export, nor will it seek to change the political systems and development models of other countries, and even less interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. China stands firmly against all forms of alleged superior civilization and all obsessive attempts to transform or even replace other civilizations, striving for harmonious coexistence of different civilizations with mutual appreciation.

In-depth Understanding of the Practical Logic of the Progress of Human civilizations

The Global Civilization Initiative not only provides ideological guidance for the progress of human civilizations, but also clarifies the pursuit of values, indicates the direction of advancement and points to a practical path for the progress of human civilizations from a rational and pragmatic perspective, thus becoming a guide for action in advancing humanity's modernization process and making the garden of world civilizations flourish.

The Global Civilization Initiative upholds the pursuit of values for the progress of human civilizations. In the course of thousands of years of development, human civilizations have gradually absorbed the values of peace, development,

equity, justice, democracy and freedom, which are shared by the entire mankind and constitute distinctive mark of advanced civilizations. Peace and development are the common cause of mankind, equity and justice are the shared ideals, and democracy and freedom, the common aspiration. In the face of a complicated world, humanity's shared values serve as a largest concentric circle for mankind to build broad consensus, arriving at the greatest common divisor for all peoples in aspiring a better future, and leading the value orientation to work together for a better world. To advocate the shared values of mankind, countries need to uphold a highly responsible attitude towards the future and destiny of humanity, to keep an open mind in appreciating the perceptions of values by different civilizations, and to respect the exploration of path to values by people of all countries. Instead of imposing their own values or models on others or stoking ideological confrontation, countries should adhere to the shared values of mankind in a concrete and realistic way in their practice of fulfilling the interests of their peoples.

The Global Civilization Initiative makes clear the direction of progress of human civilizations. Throughout history, mankind as a whole has progressed towards the development of productive forces, political equity and justice, and well-rounded development of individuals, and towards peace, cooperation, development and win-win situations. However, this progress is not about setup divide of history, but continuously innovating in the inheritance of civilizations. At the practical level, it is about fully tapping into the historical and cultural values of each country and

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promote the creative transformation and innovative development of its fine traditional culture in modernization process. As the foundation for the inheritance and development of a country and a nation, the fine traditional culture not only needs to be protected and passed on from generation to generation, but also requires innovation in modernization by keeping pace with the times. In the process of its formation and development, traditional culture is inevitably subject to the limitations and constraints of people's level of understanding, the historical conditions and the social systems at different times, and inevitably bears the imprint of the old times, and contains obsolete and outdated things. That requires mak-

ing correct choices in the context of modernization requirements while studying, researching and applying traditional culture. Adhering to the principle of making the past serve the present and learning from the past, we should carry forward the traditional culture in a discriminative way. We should promote the integration of traditional culture and the contemporary culture in creative transformation and innovative development. All countries around the world should respond to the new requirements of the progress of the times, strengthen the harness of the relevance of their own histories and cultures to the present times, carry forward the spirit of fine traditional culture that transcends time and space, transcends



View of Gulangyu Island, which is in the UNESCO World Heritage list, Xiamen, the Province of Fujian

Photo: Ivona Katić

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national boundaries, that is full of eternal charm and values to our times, and make the most basic cultural genes of their countries to adapt to the trends of the times, harmonize with the contemporary society and co-exist with the rich and colourful civilizations created by people all over the world, so as to provide correct ideological guidance and immense impetus for pushing forward the progress of human civilizations.

The Global Civilization Initiative provides a practical path to the progress of human civilizations. Countries around the world have nurtured their respective brilliant civilizations, complementing each other, thus laying a solid foundation for international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation, which not only are important ways to promote mutual understanding and affinity among peoples of different countries and jointly advance the progress of human civilizations, but more significantly serve as important pillars for building a new type of international relations in the new era. To this end, the Global Civilization Initiative proposes a practical path to strengthening international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation, with a focus on exploring ways to build a global network for cross-civilization dialogue and cooperation, enriching the content of exchanges and expanding avenues of cooperation, so as to promote the development of diverse human civilizations through rich and colourful people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. First, we should improve the mechanism and innovate the methods for people-to-people exchanges. We should give play to the role of various regions and departments, actively carry out various forms of cooperation between parliaments, political parties,

think tanks and local governments, regularize and institutionalize people-to-people exchanges and cooperation activities, and continuously build an all-round, multi-level and wide-ranging network of international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. Second, we should continuously enrich the contents of international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. Extensive activities for people-to-people exchanges can be carried out in academic, educational, health, sports, tourism and other fields to consolidate the social foundation of people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. Third, we should make coordinated application of cultural forms such as literature, theatre, film, television, music, dance, fine art, photography, acrobatics, literary criticism and arts education, and make rational use of various means of mass communication, group communication and interpersonal communication to jointly create diverse and effective channels for people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. China initiated the Conference on Dialogue of Asian civilizations in May 2019, which together with other platforms for exchanges among civilizations serves as a new avenue to facilitate mutual learning and appreciation among civilizations in Asia and the world at large and to jointly transcend the clash of civilizations. As long as the international community continues to strengthen people-to-people exchanges and cooperation and carry out in-depth and diverse exchanges of ideas and emotions, a new prospect will be open up for enhanced exchanges and understanding among different peoples and better interactions and integration of diversified cultures. Together we can make the garden of world civilizations colourful and vibrant.

A Positive Response to the Real Challenges in the Process of Humanity's Modernization

Today's world is undergoing unprecedented changes. One important manifestation is the serious harm caused by hegemonic bullying practices that are deeply harmful. The peace deficit, development deficit, security deficit and governance deficit are aggravated, and the mankind is facing challenges never seen before. The fundamental solution to the severe challenges faced by the mankind in its way to modernization lies in promoting humanity's modernization and jointly building a community with shared future for mankind. The Global Civilization Initiative is dedicated to overcoming the common challenges that hinder humanity's modernization and profoundly reflects the real concern to care for achievements of human civilizations.

The Global Civilization Initiative cracks the peace deficit and fully demonstrates the peaceful attributes of humanity's modernization. The mankind has experienced two major world wars in the past century, which have ravaged peoples from all countries. Although without large-scale global wars since WWII, there have been frequent conflicts and unrest in some countries and regions, and the international situation has witnessed increasing instability, posing a serious threat to world peace. In this era, a very small number of major countries, still clinging to the old mindset of the Cold War and zero-sum game, use force or threaten to use force at will, wield the sticks of hegemony, power politics and neo-interven-

tionism to stir up trouble and intensify conflicts for their own interest, making the world situation even more complex and unstable. In June 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) released its Global Trends Report, which showed that some 89.3 million people were displaced globally in 2021 for such reasons as war, violence, persecution and human rights violations, an increase of 8% over the previous year and more than twice the number of people displaced 10 years ago. The growing peace deficit indicates that the peaceful nature of humanity's modernization is facing serious challenge, and that the "modernization" of some countries and regions is deviating from the fundamental direction of the progress of human civilizations. The Chinese nation is a peace-loving nation, and the CPC is a political party that regards the real lasting peace of the entire mankind as its noble ideal. Especially since the beginning of the new era, China has proposed a series of peace concepts, demonstrating its image as a peacemaker.

The Global Civilization Initiative cracks the development deficit and strives to produce the driving force for modernization of humanity. At present, the world economy suffers from sluggish recovery and insufficient global development momentum. In recent years, the world economy has faced a marked increase of unfavourable factors for growth, especially under the impact of unexpected factors such as COVID-19, the economic growth has generally been declining. According to a report released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in January 2023, the global economic growth rate in 2022 was 3.4%, a decline of 2.8

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percentage points from 2021. It is predicted that the global economic growth rate will fall further to 2.9% in 2023. At the same time, the problem of imbalanced and insufficient global development remains prominent. The World Inequality Report 2022, released by the World Inequality Lab, shows that in 2021, the wealthiest 10% of the world's population held 52% of total global income while the poorest 50% held only 8.5%. Nowadays, more than 700 million people worldwide still live in extreme poverty and their most basic needs in terms of health, education, water and sanitation still remain unmet. The poverty rate in rural areas worldwide is 17.2%, more than three times higher than that in urban areas. It follows that the global development deficit is further expanding and continuously eroding the foundation of humanity's modernization. In the face of a growing global development deficit, China adheres to the path of peaceful development, open development, cooperative development and common development, striving to achieve a development higher in quality, efficiency, equity and sustainability, actively facilitates economic globalization towards a more open, inclusive, balanced and win-win direction that will benefit all, so that the development achievements of Chinese path to modernization continue to consolidate the foundation of the progress of human civilizations and produce new driving force for humanity's modernization.

The Global Civilization Initiative cracks the security deficit and strives to build security guarantees for modernization of mankind in an all-round way. The present time witnesses a complex and serious global security situation with inter-

twined traditional and non-traditional security threats. In the sphere of traditional security, the geopolitical games among major powers are becoming increasingly fierce. The world sees more blocs formed and increasingly apparent confrontations among them, as well as an increased threat of nuclear war. The fact that the existing nuclear weapons worldwide number around 22,000 and over 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted so far is quite enough to pose a grievous threat to the security of the entire mankind. In the sphere of non-traditional security, issues in areas such as climate change, ecological environment, food and energy, information networks and public health are becoming increasingly prominent. According to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 report released by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) together with other organizations, 702 million to 828 million people in the world faced hunger in 2021, an increase of about 46 million people from that of 2020 and a cumulative increase of approximately 150 million compared to 2019. Meanwhile, the global energy production and supply situation continues to deteriorate and energy prices are volatile at high levels. We must rely on the unity and cooperation of all human beings to eliminate the global security deficit. However, the lack of mutual trust makes it difficult for the international community to build consensus and take actions for cooperation. In response, China insists on mutual consultation and understanding, winning respect with respect, resolving suspicions with frankness and honesty, and promoting common progress through cooperation. The Global Civilization

Initiative proposed by China draws experience and wisdom from the history of human civilization development and is committed to providing more comprehensive, long-term and thorough security guarantees for humanity's modernization.

The Global Civilization Initiative cracks the governance deficit and continuously improves governance system of humanity's modernization. The lack of effective control over peace deficit, development deficit and security deficit is closely related to the serious governance deficit in the international community. On the one hand, the growing prominence of global issues has put forward greater demands and higher requirements for global governance and raised greater expectations for the role played by major powers in international affairs. On the other hand, there has been a decline in the capacity and willingness of some major powers to provide public goods for global governance. As the world's largest economy, the United States pursues the priority of its own interests and wantonly upholds a unilateralist policy of beggar-thy-neighbour, benefiting itself at the expense of others, and making the current global governance system more dysfunctional, ineffective and incompetent. In recent years, the United States has repeatedly withdrawn or threatened to withdraw from international mechanisms and is keen to establish exclusive "small circles" and "small groups", making use of global governance as an instrument or weapon for political purposes, hindering the process of reforming and building the global governance system, and undermining the institutional basis of global governance. As important participants and contributors to global governance, the representation and voice of

emerging markets and developing countries are severely constrained. Faced with the turbulence and changes in the world, the global governance system needs to keep pace with and adapt to the times. To this end, China has put forward and practiced the concept of global governance based on the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, advocating that all countries in the world pool their wisdom, make use of their respective strengths, do their best and share the fruits. As a new international public good, the Global Civilization Initiative has become an important part of the global governance system, which will drive the global governance system towards a more just and reasonable direction and guide modernization of mankind into a new stage from chaos to governance and prosperity.

Full Demonstration of the Significance of Chinese Modernization to the World

For over 100 years, the CPC has been adhering to the shared values of peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom for the entire mankind, striving to advance the great cause of human civilization progress and creating a new form of human advancement with Chinese path to modernization through continuous exploration and practice. The new form of human advancement created by the CPC has emerged from more than 5,000 years of Chinese civilization, from the exchange and mutual learning among civilizations, and from the combination of the basic principles of

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Marxism with Chinese realities and with Chinese fine traditional culture, and is therefore a new form of human advancement with rich contemporary connotations and strong vitality. The Global Civilization Initiative is a major theoretical innovation arising from the process of Chinese modernization, with its significance to the world having been fully demonstrated.

Chinese path to modernization actively practices a new concept of advancing the progress of human civilizations. The core idea of the new form of human advancement through the Chinese path to modernization is to ensure that modernization is people-centred and to continuously realize the people's aspiration for a better life. During the New Democratic Revolution, the Communist Party of China, guided by Marxism-Leninism, formed and developed the values that led the practice of revolutionary struggle, completely ended the history of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal society in the old China, and achieved the great leap from feudal politics of thousands of years to people's democracy in China. After the founding of the People's Republic, the CPC united and led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in self-reliance and hard work, achieving extraordinary development accomplishments that made the Chinese people extremely proud. In the long-term practice of reform and opening up and socialist modernization, the CPC has united and led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in making unremitting exploration and achieving the tremendous transformation from standing up and growing prosperous to becoming strong. Entering a new era, General Secretary Xi Jinping put forward the concept of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared

development and took sharing as the starting point and foothold of development, leading the Chinese people to make historic strides towards the all-round human development and the shared prosperity for all people.

Chinese path for modernization has found a new avenue for promoting human advancement. The core element of the new form of human civilizations created by Chinese modernization is the successful exploration of a Chinese path to modernization. Upon its founding the CPC was deeply aware of all the maladies of capitalist modernization and has drawn profound lessons from the history of many developing countries that have fallen into the development trap due to copying the Western model. To this end, the CPC has adhered to the independent exploration of a modernization path that was in line with its own realities, and has united and led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups to make remarkable historic achievements in its modernization process in just a few decades since the founding of the People's Republic of China. In contrast to the modernization path of developed Western countries, the new Chinese modernization path not only breaks the myth that modernization can only be achieved by following the capitalist model of modernization, but also expands the avenue for developing countries to move towards modernization, providing a new option for the modernization for many countries and peoples in the world who aspire to develop independently, and contributing new solutions to the problems arising from humanity's modernization and to the challenges of human civilizations.

Chinese path to modernization steadily develops a new system that promotes human advancement.

The great practice of Chinese path to modernization as a new form of human advancement is a historical process of exploring, creating, consolidating and developing the socialist system, and is furthermore a great undertaking leading the world socialist movement. For over a century, the CPC has united and led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in an arduous struggle, accomplishing the socialist revolution, establishing and developing a socialist system, and advancing the revival and development of the world socialist movement. The new form of human advancement created by the CPC, which has a strong vitality and lasting influence, demonstrates the incomparable superiority of the socialist system. The socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era is profoundly influencing the world landscape and the process of human advancement with even more brilliant development achievements, continuously pushing the world socialist movement into a new historical stage and giving scientific socialism a new vitality in China in the 21st century.

Chinese path to modernization promotes the building of a new order that promotes the progress of human advancement. The new form of human advancement created by Chinese path to modernization is one that advocates openness, inclusiveness, cooperation and win-win outcome. Internationally, it calls for promoting the building of a more just and equitable international order and the creation of a new world of lasting peace and

universal prosperity. As a Marxist party striving to achieve social justice and equity, the CPC has always supported the efforts of the vast number of developing countries to build a new international order and advocated that the new international order should reflect the general aspirations and shared interests of people all over the world, and should reflect the requirements of historical development and progress of the times. This new order is about putting an end to hegemony and power politics, pursuing democratic international relations and giving every member of the international community a voice in international affairs. China will continue to practice true multilateralism, advocating that international affairs should be handled by all countries through consultation. China will continue to act as an advocator and defender of the international rule of law, a firm guardian of the international fairness and justice, and a contributor to and builder of the global governance system.

The Global Civilization Initiative follows the trend of historical development, gives Chinese answers to the question of humanity's modernization, and provides ideological and action guidance for progress of human advancement. As more and more countries actively answer the call of Global Civilization Initiative and facilitate its implementation, the humanity will inevitably embark on a new journey of modernization and build a more prosperous garden of world civilizations.