A Vision of China’s Peaceful Development and World Harmony

Wang Chen

Director of the Information Office of the State Council of China

Ladies, Gentlemen and Friends,

I am glad to attend the 4th World Forum on China Studies. I, on behalf of the Information Office of the State Council of China, one of the sponsors of the Forum, humbly express the warmest congratulation to the holding of this session of the Forum, and the most heartfelt welcome to all attendants.

Today’s world is witnessing an increasing interdependence between all countries, and all peoples has had their fate more closely connected, so it has become the development trend of international relationships to establish peace, seek co-operation and promote development. This session of the Forum has its theme “Harmonious Co-existence: The Way to Both China and the World’s Harmony”. It displays the Chinese people’s wish for the world’s peace, development, security and prosperity, and shows the Chinese people’s kindness, openness, dialogues and tolerance for all the people of other countries, their expectation to co-build a harmonious world where there are permanent peace and shared prosperity under the condition of mutual benefits, co-operation and win-win with all the other countries, and their confidence and determination to firmly grasp the theme of the times, that is, peace and development, and firmly follow the road of peaceful development. This is very significant for China to make for and embrace the world, and make the world understand a true, developing China.

1. China Has Its Idea of Peaceful Development Deeply Rooted in
Its Excellent Cultural Tradition, It Is a Historical Choice of the Chinese people to Take the Road of Peaceful Development, and It Conforms to the Development Direction of China as a Characteristic Socialist Society and Today’s World Development Trend

The Chinese people know well the value of peace and development, so they are peace-loving and yearn for development. The two world wars last century caused enormous disasters and traumas to the world, and all people in the world, including the Chinese people, are well aware of that only peace can bring about development, and that only development can provide a better guarantee for peace.

China’s peaceful development indicates the peaceful spirit in the Chinese nation’s excellent traditional culture. “Harmony” is a basic concept in Chinese culture and philosophy and has had a history for thousands of years; the love for peace and the pursuit of peace have been a basic embodiment of the Chinese’s nation culture. In the history of the world, the Chinese people are the earliest to have the idea of “harmony”, which has the most abundant connotations and the most profound influence compared with similar concepts of other nations in the world. As early as over 2,500 years ago, the Chinese thinker Confucius had put forwards the idea that “harmony is desirable”, which has fostered the broad mind of the Chinese nation. So, the Chinese nation has always pursued credit and harmony, valued peace and gotten well along with all other countries in the world, and had always advocated and followed the doctrine of “harmony rather than echoes” and the teaching that “Don't do unto others what you don't want others do unto you”. China’s choice of peaceful development is closely related its traditional culture, and is deeply rooted in the quintessence of the traditional culture, that is, the thought of “harmony”.

China’s peaceful development has shown the Chinese people’s vision of peace that they have valued much more than anything else. China had suffered frequent adversities in the early modern times, so it cherishes peace, well-being, harmony and freedom to the utmost. Over 100 years after 1840, China had been invaded by the Western powers, the country had been accumulatively deprived and weak, and it had been sluggish in the course of development; likewise, the Chinese people had been fed up with poverty and sufferings. It has been a goal that the Chinese people have persistently sought for since the early modern times to eliminate wars, establish peace and build an independent, prosperous, powerful and well-being country. Because of their own suffering experience, the Chinese people are well aware of the invaluableness of peace and the
urgency of development; they are convinced that only peace can bring about a good and prosperous life, and that only development can bring about a well-clad and well-fed life; and they know well that only a peaceful mode can guarantee permanent development, and development both beneficial to the Chinese people and all the other people in the world.

China’s peaceful development has embodied its pursuit of peace in the exploration of its own development. After its founding in 1949, New China faced austere situations both at home and abroad, so it creatively brought forth the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, proposing to “unite and co-operate with all countries that are willing to establish peace”, and affirming that “countries of different systems can coexist peacefully”. Since its reform and opening to the outside world in 1978, with regards to the world history and the changing background of international relationships, China has made the scientific judgment that “peace and development” is the theme of the times, so it has adapted its view of international order on time, and proposed to establish a new order of international politics and economy on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. In the face of the tendency of world multipolarization and the opportunities and challenges brought about by economic globalization, China has put forwards its new security view to democratize international relationships and seek common security with mutual benefits and co-operation, and its claim to admit the diversity of civilizations of all countries. As time goes into the 21st century, China acclimates to the tendency of the times and its basic domestic conditions, learning from the world powers for their experience and lessons, earnestly announcing to “unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development”. That is a strategic choice and a solemn promise of China’s road of development.

China’s peaceful development has demonstrated the peaceful quality of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Since the reform and opening to the outside world, China has highly carried the banner of peace, co-operation and development, unswervingly performed the policy of independent peaceful diplomacy, and unswervingly taken peaceful development as its basic political concept. On the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, it has been peacefully getting along with all the other countries, making concerted efforts to push the international political and economic order toward the direction of justice and reasonableness. In dealing with international affairs, it has firmly performed on the principle of interdependency, independently judging right and wrong in accordance to matters themselves and thus deciding its
own positions. It has persisted in regarding all countries equally no matter whether they are large and rich or small and deprived, and it has insisted on not separate the world ideologically, not intervening the domestic affairs of other countries, and not allying with any factions. As for the issues concerning Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, it has adhered to the guideline of “Peaceful Reunification and One Country, Two Systems”. With regards to international security, it has actively advocated the new security view of “mutual trust, mutual benefits, equality and co-operation”. All these have embodied the political idea of peaceful development. The new generation of group leaders centered on Mr. Hu Jintao have specifically pointed out that China is to firmly follow the road of peaceful development: domestically, it shall be concentrated on construction and development, building up a harmonious society of democracy, legal governance, justice, sincerity and credit, kindness, vigor, steadiness and orderliness, and environment-friendliness; internationally, it will insist on treating neighboring countries with open arms and bringing benefits to them, exerting itself to guarantee world peace and enhance common development, and building a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity. This serial strategic thought has become the common understanding of all the Chinese people, and has been embodied in the far-reaching development planning.

China has made historic achievements of world interest by resolvedly following the road of peaceful development. It has greatly enhanced its economic strength and comprehensive national strength, remarkably improved the Chinese people’s living standards, greatly lifted the its society to a higher level of civilization, constantly promoted its international exchanges and co-operation, and taken the historic stride from subsistence to the better-off of all the Chinese people. Since 1978, China has increased its GDP more than four times, which reached 5,000 billion US dollars in 2009. From 1978 to 2008, its total import and export have increased from 20.6 billion US dollars to 2,561.6 billion US dollars, with an annual increasing rate averaging 18%, accumulatively 124 times; its share of the world trade has increased from 0.8% to 8.9%. Impacted by the international financial crisis, the amount of China’s foreign trade decreased in 2009, but still reached 2,200 billion US dollars, making active contributions to the recovery of world economy.

China is making a new way of peaceful development different from that of the other powerful countries in the past. The quintessence of this new way lies in its consolidating domestic development with opening to the outside world, its connecting China’s peaceful development with world harmony and prosperity, and its combining the Chinese people’s fundamental interest with those of the world people. By doing so, it has struggled for the development characterized with peace, opening, co-operation and harmony, making its contributions to the sustainable development of mankind.

We have persistently struggled for the peaceful international environment to develop ourselves, and meanwhile enhanced world peace with our own development. China has successfully performed its reform and opening to the outside world and its modernization, and performed a miracle of rapid economic development, successfully overcoming difficulties and challenges one after another in its way forwards. These successes come both from our guidelines and policies, and from the peaceful and steady international environment. The Chinese people have self-dependently developed, fundamentally changed the situation of poverty and backwards within as short as 30 years, and achieved stability and prosperity and the people’s prosperous and contented life in a country whose population accounts for one fifth of the globe. It means much to the world’s development and the mankind’s progress. China’s development has inspired many other countries, especially the developing ones, encouraging them to actively resolve their problems of national planning and people’s subsistence by means of self-development. It is very significant to the world’s development and stability, and also it is an important contribution that China has made for the international community.

China has been a participant and advocate in guaranteeing a peaceful international system. By now it has joined more than 100 intergovernmental international organizations and signed nearly 300 international pacts. China performs a defensive national defense policy, actively taking part in and pushing forwards the cause of international disarmament and arms control. Over the past two decades, China has disarmed more than 1.7 million armies and strictly controlled military expenditure, so China has had a lower rate of military expenditure in the world if against its GDP and total financial expenditure. China’s military expenditure increase is mainly used to improve military men’s living standards, develop its defensive ability and guarantee the unification of
the country, rather than invade other countries and launch any wars. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has energetically advocated and actively urged the peaceful resolution of disputes, playing an important constructive role in the hot issues concerning significant regions. China has been active in the UN’s peacekeeping operations, dispatching more than 14,000 person-time personnel to take part in 25 peacekeeping operations, coming out top among the permanent members of the UN Security Council. China sent its convoy fleets to take part in the international co-operation against Somalia pirates. And also, China has done plenty of effective work for the international anti-terrorism and co-operation. As has been proved in practices, the increase of China’s comprehensive national strength has enhanced the growth of world peace, and China’s development and steadiness have made their contributions to the world’s peace and prosperity.

We have persisted in developing on our own, and adhering to the principle of self-independence in reference to our own domestic condition and reality; at the same time, we have insisted on all-round opening to the outside world at multiple levels in a wide range, making full use of both international and domestic markets and resources therein, struggling for better development. Just like any other countries, China has also been constrained by limited resources, energy and environment in the course of development. After years’ exploration and practices, we have found a road to coordinate sustainable development from all-round aspects, and that is to establish and fulfill a scientific development view and build a resource-saving, environment-friendly society. In its course of development, China has paid much attention to domestic resource exploitation, energy production and environmental protection, and it has taken a series of effective measures and reached impressive achievements. China has the largest population in the world, it has a vast territory and abundant resources, and also, it has an enormous market. All these have been an important foundation and a beneficial condition that enable us to develop on our own.

A good experience for China’s constant, rapid economic development over the 30 years after its reform and opening to the outside world in 1978 is to adhere to the basic policy of opening to the outside world, resolutely develop an opening economy, and practice an open strategy of mutual benefits and win-win. From the establishment of special economic zones to the opening of coastal, riverside, bordering and inner land areas and to joining the WTO, and from large-scaled “introduction” from the outside to the “stride out towards the world”, we have remarkably improved our skill to make use both of international and domestic
markets and resources, and constantly enhanced our capability in international competitions. By July 2010, China had accumulatively established 698,000 foreign-ventured enterprises, practically making use of 105 billion US dollars foreign capital. At present, the foreign-ventured enterprises make contributions accounting for 22% of China’s taxes, 28% of its added industrial value, 55% of its export and import, 50% of its technical introduction and 45 million jobs in China. China’s development profits from its opening, and its opening enables the international community to share its achievements of development. By the end of 2009, China had set up 13,000 enterprises abroad. The total assets of its overseas enterprises exceeded 1,000 billion US dollars, its accumulated overseas investment had reached 245.7 billion US dollars, and its ventures had been all over 177 countries and areas.

We have persisted in combining China’s development with that of the world, acclimating to the tendency of global development, and endeavoring mutually-benefited, win-win, and common development together with other countries. China has always advocated the performance of active international co-operation, the promotion of liberty and convenience in world trade and investment, the elimination of various trade barriers, and the building up of an international multilateral trade system characterized with justice, publicity, reasonableness opening and indiscrimination on the basis of mutual benefits, mutual trust and reciprocal treatment. China has taken practical actions to promote international economic and trade co-operation and facilitate the common development and prosperity of all countries. China does not develop itself at the cost of other countries; rather, it has persisted in making a larger cake of common interest and bringing about more opportunities for the development of the world. Since joining of the WTO in 2001, China has imported 687 billion US dollars commodities every year in average, creating more than 14 million occupations for the countries and regions involved. In the face of international financial crisis, China has taken the lead of economic recovery in a global sphere, with its contribution to the growth of world economy accounting for 50% in 2009. As a report from the OECD has pointed out, every 1% growth of China’s economy can bring about a 0.34% economic increase in a country of middle level revenues, and a 0.2% economic increase in a low-income country.

We have taken into consideration both the ultimate interest of the Chinese people and the common interest of the entire world. We have both had an eye on China’s reality and endurable capability and taken into account the sustainable development of human society. As a great nation of accountability, China has adopted an active, responsible attitude in the
international financial crisis. We have been steadily performing a well managed floating rate system under the principle of initiative, controllability and gradualness, keeping the exchange rates of RMB largely steady, and promoting the stability of international economic and financial system. China has actively taken part in pertinent international co-operation, dispatching several trade and investment-promoting delegations and large purchasing groups abroad. China has done its best to support and help developing countries, accumulatively exempting 49 deeply indebted countries in poverty and extremely underdeveloped ones from their debts, and granting free tariff treatment to more than 40 underdeveloped countries. While it maintains its own rapid, stable economic development, China has offered over 50 billion US dollars to the IFD, urged the establishment of the 120 billion US dollars Asian Foreign Exchange Reserves Library, and signed bilateral currency exchange agreements totaling 650 billion US dollars with related countries and regions. We have never deliberately pursued trade surplus, and have always regarded international balanced revenue and expenditure as an important task to maintain stable macro economy. Last year, China’s trade surplus decreased 102 billion US dollars compared with the year before last; meanwhile, it imported 1,005.6 billion US dollars commodities, becoming the second largest import country in the world. By doing so, China has provided plenty of opportunities for foreign products and services. China’s rapid and stable economic development is conducive to increasing China’s import and overseas investment, and it has made important contributions to international financial stability and world economic growth.

China has paid much attention to the problem of climate changes in the course of development. Starting from the ultimate interest both of the Chinese people and mankind, China has persistently endeavored and made active contributions to cope with climate changes. For recent years, we have speeded up the adjustment of industrial structure, and made great efforts to shut down backwards production facilities that consume too much energy and emit too much waste, decreasing resource consumption from the very source; at the same time, we have promoted energy-conservancy in key spheres, industries, projects and enterprises, emphatically improving the efficiency of energy utilization. In addition, we have also actively developed recycling economy and energy-conservancy environmental protection industries, taking multiple measures to boost energy conservancy and efficiency. We have made more efforts to prevent and control water pollution in key drainages, speeding up the construction of sewage disposal factories; and have strengthened the prevention and control of air pollution, performing
large-scaled desulfurization rebuilding projects for heat-engine plants. Moreover, China has fulfilled some key ecological projects such as natural forest conservancy, the returning of farmlands for forestation, and the returning of grazing lands for glass growing, increasing plenty of forest carbon sink. In the past four years, China’s energy consumption for its every unit of GDP decreased 14.38%, and its chemical oxygen demand and sulfur dioxide respectively dropped 9.66% and 13.14%. As Chinese Government has pointed out, China will energetically develop its green economy. By 2020, compared with in 2005, its carbon dioxide emission for every unit of GDP will have cut 40%-45%, and non-fossil energy will account for about 15% of one-off energy consumption. China is the earliest developing country to establish and fulfill the National Scheme to Cope with Climate Changes; it has made the most enormous efforts compared with any other countries to save energy and decrease waste emission during recent years; and it has the hugest artificial forestation areas in the world.

3. China Is Still at and Will for Long Be at the Primary Stage of Socialism, Is Still the Largest Developing Country in the World; It Still Faces Many Expectable and Unpredictable Risks and Challenges, So China’s Peaceful Develop Still Has a Long Way to Go

To firmly follow the road of peaceful development is not an expedience for China; rather, it is a solemn choice and promise of the Chinese Government and the Chinese people. Looking into the future decades, the Chinese people will continue to steadfastly follow the road of reform and opening to the outside world and peaceful development. This road has changed the fate of China and brought about fortune to all the Chinese people as a whole. We must stick to it and perfect it, and we have no reason to replace it. To exactly understand China’s confidence and determination for the road of peaceful development, one need know China and its relation to the world with a wider visual angle, a more complete view, an opener attitude and a broader mind:

First, to objectively view China’s development. We are clearly aware that China’s GDP takes the third place in the world, but its per capita share is fairly low, accounting for only one tenth of a developed country. China’s economy has kept a rapid growth for more than 30 years, its further development, however, has met a bottleneck in terms of energy, resources and environment. China has several of important products whose production rank among the first in the world, but in general they are at the lower end of the global production chain. China has become a large country of international trade, but its exported products involve little
technology and added value, and the key technology still depends upon import to a large extent. Its coastal areas and some large and middle-sized cities have modernized and prospered, but many places in its middle, west parts and rural areas are still fairly backwards, and 150 million people are still living below the poverty line set up by the UN. The Chinese people’s living condition has been greatly improved, but there is not a complete, healthy social security system, and the employment pressure is high. The social and political life in China is increasingly active, and citizens’ basic rights have been guaranteed relatively well, but the democratic and legal system is still insufficient, and problems such as social injustice and corruption still exist. After these years’ development, people’s living level has been greatly improved, but there is still a disparity compared with that in developed countries, and it still demands the enormous efforts of several generations, a dozen of generations and even tens of generations. No matter how it develops, China will always be a steadfast force to maintain world peace, promote common development, and boost international co-operation. The ultimate goal of China’s development is not to be a superpower or seize hegemony in the world, so China’s development does not cause any threat against the world. China firmly opposes hegemony; it does not seize hegemony at present, and it will never attempt hegemony even if it becomes powerful in future.

Second, to fully understand the road of development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. China is a large developing country with a population of 1.3 billion, it is still at and will for long be at the primary stage of socialism, so the contradictions and problems it will meet in the course of development will be seldom seen in the world either in scale or in complexity. Development is still the first important task of China, and is a basis and key to resolve all the problems of China. In the contemporary China, to persist in development is an essential requirement; it means to firmly follow the road of development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, to insist on scientific development and peaceful development, and to speed up the transformation of economic development and find a road of balanced sustainable development. We should take the strategic adjustment of economic structure as a main target, view technological progress and innovation as an important support, regard the guarantee and improvement of people’s subsistence as the fundamental starting point and ultimate objective, lay an emphasis on the building of resource-conservancy and environment-friendly society, and accelerate the development with reform and opening to the outside world. By doing so, we shall achieve the complete, harmonious sustainable development of China’s economy. And that will offer a
broader dominion for the development of world economy.

Third, to deeply understand China’s proposition of actively advocating, promoting and building world harmony. The international financial crisis has fully disclosed some serious problems such as the lack of sustainability in the mode of world economic development and the grave defects in the international financial system. Not only does the world face the structural contradiction in the international economic system that has been accumulated by the accelerated economic globalization, but also is threatened by some global problems concerning climate changes, grain security, energy and resource security, public sanitation security, and enormous natural disasters. All these have gravely impacted on the economic and social development and people’s life in all countries, and severely challenged the world’s long-range development. The global challenges demand concerted global responses, and demand the concerted efforts of the whole international community. At present, we should exert ourselves to resolve the problem of unbalanced development in a global scope, allowing countries in different stages of development to choose paths and rhythms conforming to domestic conditions in the course of their development; and it is unadvisable to squeeze the due development room of a developing country. Co-operation should be strengthened to make concerted efforts in guaranteeing grain security together. We should stabilize energy prices, improve energy structure, urge the transfer of energy technology, and decrease energy poverty. We should continue to further promote the co-operation in the field of disaster prevention and relief, summarize the effective measures and successful experience in the co-operation, and strengthen communication and mutual help, so that we can jointly fight natural disasters. Impacted by the international financial crisis, various forms of protectionism for trade and investment have apparently come round. This tendency is not only useless to each country’s shaking off the impact of crisis; on the contrary, it is a threat against the fragile recovery of world economy. China has been firmly supporting the liberty and convenience in trade and investment, and it has been opposing any forms of protectionism. China will never close its door opening to the outside world, and its only tendency is to be opened more widely.

One decade of the 21st century has elapsed, and China’s future and fate have been increasingly connected with those of the world. China requires a peaceful, stable, harmonious and co-operative international environment for its development; and it is willing to contribute its strength for creating such an environment. China will join the international community in the same boat, making concerted efforts to
cope with challenges and endeavoring to seek the sustainable economic and social development. It will unswervingly follow the road of peaceful development, unswervingly carry out the reciprocal, win-win opening strategy, and unswervingly seek peaceful, open, co-operative and harmonious development, making its persistent efforts to promote and build a harmonious world for permanent peace and shared prosperity.

Thank you, everyone.