

CIIS Report



Promoting Modernization Across Countries Through the Global Development Initiative

China Institute of International Studies

June 2025

A large, stylized globe graphic is positioned in the bottom right corner of the cover. It is composed of a network of interconnected nodes and lines, creating a digital or global connectivity theme. The globe is rendered in a lighter shade of blue against the dark blue background.

On September 21, 2021, President Xi Jinping formally proposed the Global Development Initiative(GDI) at the General Debate of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, calling on countries to accelerate the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, pursue more robust, greener and more balanced global development, and work together to build a global community of development with a shared future. As an important public good that China has contributed to international development cooperation in the new era, the GDI, with its forward-looking principles and pragmatic outcomes, has provided a novel solution and crucial impetus for countries worldwide in their pursuit of modernization.

This research paper is the result of a systematic study of the GDI, conducted by a special team of the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS). The study covered such dimensions as new developments in the modernization of countries worldwide, the meanings and features of and interrelationships between the modernization drives of countries, the intrinsic logic of the GDI promoting modernization across countries, and China's contribution to this cause.



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01

Abstract

01 Abstract

Modernization has become an unstoppable prevailing trend in global development since modern times. It represents a common cause of all humanity and a shared aspiration of the whole world. Modernization can be conceptualized as an interactive development process that shifts from agricultural to industrial civilization in the economic sphere, from feudal dictatorship and rule of man to democracy and rule of law in the political sphere, from agricultural to urban civilization in the social sphere, and from uniformity to diversity in the spiritual sphere. Throughout the dynamic process of modernization, both opportunities and challenges arise for “first-mover” countries, which are the first to achieve modernization, as well as “late-mover” countries, which are at the nascent stage of modernization. At present, profound changes unseen in a century have accelerated across the world. New developments have unfolded in the processes of modernization across various countries. The Global South has accelerated their modernization processes while facing certain challenges. “First-mover” countries have encountered multifaceted and comprehensive shocks and challenges in maintaining their modernization processes, such as economic inequality and populism. Since World War II, Western modernization theories have long dominated the global development discourse. However, the limitations of their internal logic and practical outcomes have become increasingly exposed, rendering them more inadequate to address modernization challenges faced by countries worldwide. Against this background, Chinese modernization, along with its historic achievements, provide alternative choices and empirical references for developing countries regarding the path to

modernization.

Modernization exhibits universal and common features across countries. In the context of economic globalization, it is also characterized by a profound interactive relationship of interdependence and mutual enhancement with diversity and unity. These features are reflected in a variety of aspects, including the development of productive forces, the enhancement of national governance capacity, the changes in social structure, the coordinated development of the environment and culture, the impact of economic globalization, and the formulation of development paths tailored to local conditions. With the advancement of economic globalization, modernization is no longer a process carried out by one country or region in isolation, but a historical practice jointly advanced by countries in an interconnected and interdependent manner. In this process, modernization in all countries overall is moving towards the direction of interdependence, shared prosperity, peaceful development, security and mutual trust, exchanges and mutual learning, and beauty in diversity.

Along with new dynamics in the modernization processes of various countries, grim challenges related to development have arisen amid accelerated profound changes unseen in a century, including the widening North-South divide, food security crisis, and inadequate progress in the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the context, China put forward the Global Development Initiative (GDI) in September 2021, calling on the international community to uphold the concepts and principles of development as a priority, people-centered approach, benefits for all, innovation-driven development, harmony between man and nature, and results-oriented actions. A range of concrete measures have been introduced to implement the Initiative, injecting new momentum into global stability and common prosperity. The GDI stays committed to development as a priority, reflecting the primary task of modernization in all countries; stays committed to a people-centered approach, revealing the fundamental objective of modernization in all countries; stays committed to benefits for all, creating an avenue of cooperation for modernization in all countries; stays committed to innovation-driven development, providing a growth engine for modernization in all countries; stays committed to harmony between man and nature, creating a favorable environment for modernization in all countries; and stays committed to results-oriented actions, serving as practical impetus to modernization in all countries.

As new opportunities and new challenges coexist for global development, the GDI

is promoting the establishment of a more equitable and inclusive international development paradigm with a range of tangible results of cooperation. China has made active efforts to advance the implementation of the GDI, including expanding the Group of Friends, augmenting development financing, advancing practical cooperation and upgrading human resources, which have yielded significant results. These practical achievements have fully proved that the GDI is not an empty slogan, but a pragmatic platform that transforms development concepts into concrete actions and turns beautiful visions into vivid realities. As an important public good that China has contributed to international development cooperation in the new era, the GDI, with its forward-looking principles and pragmatic outcomes, has provided a novel solution and crucial impetus for countries worldwide in their pursuit of modernization.

02

New developments in modernization across various countries

- Accelerated processes of modernization in the Global South, despite challenges that can not be ignored
 - Increasingly exposed flaws of “first-mover” countries in their processes of modernization
- Failure of Western modernization theories to address modernization challenges facing various countries
 - Historic achievements of Chinese modernization

02

New developments in modernization across various countries

Modernization is essentially an open-ended historical practice of continuous self-renewal and enrichment, rather than a unilinear and limited development process. It cannot be encapsulated by a theoretical model that posits a “traditional-modern” dichotomy. Driven by modern productive forces, peoples across various regions of the globe have, at different rates and through different methods, transcended their original agrarian social forms and evolved into industrial social forms or undergone adaptive transformations.^① At present, a new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is advancing. The standard of modernization has gone beyond the conventional framework of industrialization and substantially expanded its connotations in both depth and breadth. The progress towards modernization is not uniform across nations as varied paths and methods are adopted. “There is no such a thing as a single authorized model of modernization nor a universally applicable standard of modernization.”^② The modernization processes of countries worldwide exhibit special and complex characteristics while sharing universal and common features. In the context of profound changes unseen in a century, new developments have emerged in the modernization processes of various countries, which can be categorized as follows:

^① Luo Rongqu, “Historical positioning of modernization and new understanding of modern world development,” *Historical Research*, No.3, 1994, p.161.

^② *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (IV)*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2022, p.123.



(i) Accelerated processes of modernization in the Global South, despite challenges that can not be ignored

Since the onset of the 21st century, the collective rise of the Global South has become a significant feature of the global modernization process. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), emerging market countries and developing economies accounted for 58.9% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023, serving as the primary driver of global economic growth with a contribution of more than 80%. In terms of development potential, the Global South exhibits a strong catch-up momentum within the realms of scientific, technological and industrial revolution, particularly in the areas of artificial intelligence (AI) and green technology. Among them, China has entered the “first square,” taking a leading position in the development of 5G technology and new energy. In contrast to the gone dominance of developed countries in the scientific and technological revolution, the Global South as an economic collective has demonstrated the greatest development potential. Over the past three decades, the proportion of intra-developing economy trade in the global trade has increased from 10% to 26%, with an expected rise further to 32% by 2032. The Global South is emerging as an important force in advancing regional integration and economic globalization. Notably, China has completed a process of industrialization that took Western developed countries several centuries within just a few decades, bringing about the two major miracles of rapid economic development and enduring social stability. Chinese modernization has been widely recognized as “a true miracle in the history of human development” and “a pioneering undertaking in the development of human society.” The Global South is profoundly reshaping the global economic landscape, playing a crucial role in safeguarding world peace, promoting global development and improving global governance.

However, the development divide between the North and South remains a reality while witnessing the historic rise of the Global South. Challenges faced by the Global South are growing increasingly prominent amid their accelerated modernization processes.

Firstly, certain Global South Countries are facing the “middle-income trap” due to the significant lock-in effect at the lower end of the international division of labor. As revealed in the examination of modernization trajectories of developing countries, the economic development of some Global South countries is still driven by the export of primary products and raw materials, with low added value and high vulnerability to fluctuations in global economic conditions and commodity prices. Such reliance

places them in a marginalized status in the global economic and trade system. Some Global South countries that have achieved initial industrialization now face a loss of development momentum while attempting to climb up the industrial chain. They find themselves behind in international competition, having lost their comparative edge in labor costs without successfully cultivating comparative advantages in capital and technology.^① This makes them fall into the “middle-income trap” and prolonged economic stagnation.

Secondly, certain Global South Countries that have applied the Western modernization model blindly are caught in a dual predicament of political disorder and economic stagnation. The adoption of the “Washington Consensus” as a doctrine on a global scale has caused disastrous consequences. This Western-promoted doctrine, which advocates for privatization, marketization and liberalization through the elimination of government intervention, ignores its fundamental mismatch with local knowledge and practice, resulting in socio-economic and political instability in developing countries. Moreover, the attempt to replicate Western democracy in some developing countries lacks adaptability to local contexts. Rather than facilitating development, the so-called democratic transition is often accompanied by social conflict and violence.

Thirdly, the reform of global governance system has been sluggish, failing to address in a timely manner the development needs of the Global South countries. The current global governance system, dominated by Western countries does not adequately and promptly reflect the dramatic changes in the international economic landscape. The absence of effective response to the pressing demand for reform has resulted in a lack of systematic institutional arrangements for development issues. Under this framework, the primary development needs of developing countries, which have limited representation and voice, remain inadequately addressed. The resources allocated for their development are insufficient, leading to a vicious circle of “funding gap, development stagnation, and funding depletion.” Multilateral

^① Cai Fang, “Middle-Income Trap: Theory, Experience and Relevance,” *Economic Perspectives*, No. 12, 2011, pp. 4-9.



development banks, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, are also confronting considerable funding shortfalls, finding it increasingly difficult to meet the financing needs of developing countries for infrastructure construction and economic development.^① In addition, the economic hegemony of the United States has further undermined the international order and global governance.

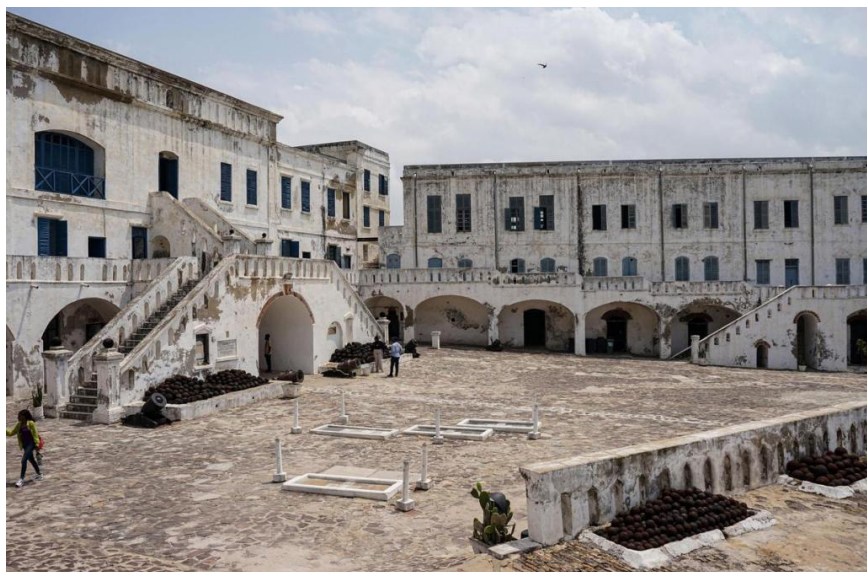
(ii) Increasingly exposed flaws of “first-mover” countries in their processes of modernization

From modern to contemporary times, fundamental flaws can be identified in the modernization processes of “first-mover” countries. At the initial stage, the original impetus of modernization was deeply rooted in the unjust system of colonial expansion, which inflicted deep adversities on the vast developing countries. At a further stage in the contemporary era, capital-centered Western modernization is encountering systemic crises.

The early modernization of Western capitalist countries was based on the primitive accumulation by external colonial bloody plunder and internal brutal exploitation. This impetus stemmed from the exploitative and plundering nature of capitalism. Domestically, these capitalist countries enacted harsh laws through the state apparatus and violently suppressed the resistance of dispossessed peasants and workers. Internationally, they grabbed raw materials and markets from their colonies, engaged in inhuman slave trade, and waged wars and invasions with their military might to facilitate, maintain and bolster global capital profits.^②

^① Luo Hang and Yang Lize, “Evaluation of Power Patterns in International Organizations—A Comparison of the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank,” *World Economics and Politics*, No. 11, 2022, pp. 29-63.

^② Dai Mucai, “On the complexity of the world modernization movement,” *Studies on Marxism*, No. 7, 2024, pp. 26-41.



Slave castles in Cape Coast, Ghana, which were used by Westerners for slave trade.
(Source: Xinhua)

Western modernization is centered on capital rather than people, and pursues the maximization of capital interests instead of serving the interests of the broader populace. This biggest flaw has led to a wide gap between the poor and the rich that contributes to serious polarization.^① In recent years, Western countries have suffered setbacks in their modernization process, grappling with challenges such as sluggish economic growth, wealth polarization, hollowing-out in manufacturing, and deteriorating innovation system. Following the 2008 global financial crisis that undermined the US-dominated free world economic order, the Washington Consensus and neo-liberalism have been questioned as Western countries are plagued by stagnant economic growth and widening wealth gap. In the United States, for example, the annual household income has increased markedly for the top 5% over the past 30 years, while the bottom 20% has seen a decline. Heavily impacted by income and wealth imbalance, the middle class has been descending to the lower social strata, exhibiting

^① Xi Jinping, “Chinese modernization: A broad avenue to building a strong country and realizing national rejuvenation,” *Qiushi*, No. 16, 2023.



an uncontrollable shrinkage.^① These changes have created a social environment for the resurgence of conservatism and the rise of populism, which as radical political waves, disrupt social and political order. In addition, Western countries bear the pressure of industrial and technological innovation due to excessive de-industrialization. For instance, developed European countries find themselves at a disadvantage in the global competition of emerging technologies, Internet revolution and AI. Failing to nurture emerging industries, they experience economic downturn with a lack of scientific and technological innovation, and lag far behind other economies in the realm of AI.^②

The historical predatory primitive accumulation and the structural contradiction in contemporary practice highlight the fundamental problems of the modernization processes of Western developed countries. This precisely reveals that in the pursuit of modernization, human society should not adopt Western modernization as the sole model, but rather explore diversified practical approaches under the premise of respecting the subjectivity of various civilizations.

(iii) Failure of Western modernization theories to address modernization challenges facing various countries

Firstly, Western modernization theories, characterized by a distinctly Western-centric perspective, impose limitations on the modernization processes of developing countries. Scholars from the West have unilaterally defined “modernization” as the “process of disseminating systems and values originating from Western Europe and North America to the rest of Europe after the 17th century and to the rest of the world between the 18th and 20th centuries.” From the “stages of economic growth” model proposed by American economist Walt Whitman Rostow in the 1960s to the recent analysis of the relationship between institutions and national development within the new institutional economics, these Western theories maintain a unilinear view of history based on their own development experience. They oversimplify and even distort the intricate historical and social development processes, serve the international strategies of the Western world with a distinct ideological

^① Pang Jinyou, “The common challenges facing the modernization of European countries and the United States,” *People’s Tribune*, No. 6, 2023, pp. 23-27.

^② “Europe faces multiple challenges to reviving economy,” *Economic Daily*, February 15, 2025.

perspective, and reflect a deep-rooted tradition of “colonialism.” Developing countries are reduced to passive objects shaped by Western modernization theories, with a risk of being Westernized. For those countries seeking to leverage Western modernization theories in the pursuit of modernization, it is commonly seen that such theories fail to adapt to new contexts. The various policies associated with the “Washington Consensus” have caused disastrous outcomes during the neo-liberal reforms of Latin American countries, the Asian financial crisis, and the formulation of world development plans. This has ultimately led to the economic stagnation of developing countries and the widened disparities with developed countries.^①

Secondly, the inherent defects of Western modernization theories become increasingly evident, as they fail to address the development problems of Western countries themselves. The capital-centered model of Western modernization has widened the income inequality, triggering a series of chain reactions such as political polarization and social unrest. The United States is one of the developed countries with the fastest deterioration and largest inequality in income distribution. The current income gap reaches historically high levels compared to the 19th and 20th centuries. This persistent inequality reflects deep-rooted problems within political, economic and social spheres, and reveals institutional inadequacies in effectively bridging the divide between the rich and the poor.^② In the recent decade, a new wave of populism has emerged in Western countries, rather than in developing countries as before. In Western Europe, the decline of mainstream political parties and the general rise of far-right parties have impacted the systems and values of Western countries. Internationally, Western countries have begun to question and retreat from the liberal international order that they have previously established. More specifically, they have begun to withdraw from the international system, challenge the global governance system, erect trade barriers, and retract commitments to providing international public goods, thereby undermining the post-World War II international economic order. At the spiritual

^① Guo Qiumei and Lu Yong, “Chinese modernization and the transformation of the global development system,” *International Forum*, No. 1, 2025, pp. 58-75.

^② Wang Haixia and Zhao Mei, “Policy measures and institutional deficiencies in regulating wealth gap in US,” *International Economic Cooperation*, No. 6, 2024, pp. 64-65.



level, it is not by chance that Western society has experienced value fragmentation and identity crisis. The root cause lies in human alienation by the logic of capital. Human values have been alienated into labor commodities in market exchanges, thus dissolving human subjectivity and severing the bond between human and society. This situation sends a profound cautionary signal for human society to explore a new path towards modernization that genuinely centers on comprehensive human development.

Thirdly, Western modernization theories are unable to overcome the inherent defects of capitalist development. These theories place one-sided emphasis on material growth and wealth accumulation. Whether it is “growth first, welfare later” in the social realm or “pollution first, control later” in the ecological context, these ideas reveal the serious limitation of Western modernization, that is, the prioritization of material growth based on the logic of capital. Neoliberalism asserts that laissez-faire policies will stimulate economic growth, generating a “trickle-down effect” that ultimately benefits the poorest. However, capital income has outpaced labor income in recent decades, as proven in practice.^① This suggests that the fruits of growth have been usurped by a tiny elite at the top. Unregulated capitalism has intensified wealth inequality, which cannot be rectified through a free-market economy. The increasing control of contemporary capitalism over natural resources, coupled with its imperative to maximize profits, will inevitably exacerbate the plunder of global natural resources and the monopolization of the world economy, thereby undermining the global ecological environment and precipitating an ecological crisis. Meanwhile, contemporary capitalism reallocates resources on a global scale by transferring high energy-consuming and polluting industries to developing countries. While mitigating local environmental pollution and ecological damage, this approach magnifies ecological crisis on a broader scale.^②

^① Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Beijing: CITIC Press, 2014.

^② Zhang Xiaomeng, “Anti-ecology of Capitalism—A perspective of Ecological Marxism,” *People's Daily*, March 16, 2015.



Occupy Wall Street protesters stage a march to the homes of super riches in New York on October 11, 2011.
(Source: Xinhua)

Moreover, the capitalist world system naturally fosters a “core-periphery” structure. The exchanges between the core and the periphery are unequal, forming a dependent relationship that is exploitative in essence. The surplus value created by workers in peripheral regions fundamentally accounts for the development of developed countries, as well as the underdevelopment of developing countries. It can be said that the modernization of “first-mover” countries is accompanied by the colonization and semi-colonization of third-world countries as a by-product. This exploitative relationship is born out of capitalism and cannot be overcome. “Late-mover” countries aspiring to modernization face a dilemma between “dependence” and “decoupling.” If opting for dependent development and integration into the global industrial chain, they would be trapped at the bottom of the value chain and be subject to exploitation by “first-mover” countries. If attempting to decouple from the global production system and resist economic globalization, they may be precluded from access to capital accumulation, technology transfer and international markets, suffering the loss of impetus for development. This structural predicament reveals the fundamental flaws of Western modernization that the capitalist world system has historically failed to provide equitable development opportunities and upward mobility for “marginal countries.”



(iv) Historic achievements of Chinese modernization

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, especially since the reform and opening up, China has successfully promoted and expanded the Chinese path to modernization through long-term exploration and practice, making new contributions to humanity's search for the road to modernization. China has stepped up the efforts to comprehensively deepen reforms, with many sectors transformed and restructured in historic, systematic and holistic ways, and embarked on a new journey of building a modern socialist country in all respects, thus making new and greater contributions to the noble cause of peace and development for humankind. In full and thorough implementation of the new philosophy of development and with adherence to the principle of seeking progress while maintaining stability, China has promoted high-quality development as a priority, pushing its economic, scientific and technological strength, national defense strength and comprehensive national strength to a new level. China has won the battle against poverty on an unprecedented scale in human history with the historical eradication of absolute poverty, and met the poverty reduction target of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ten years ahead of schedule, making a significant contribution to the cause of global poverty reduction. On the strategic basis of expanding domestic demand, China has endeavored to build new systems for an open economy at a higher standard, and committed itself to openness to meet development challenges, foster synergy for cooperation, build momentum of innovation, and deliver benefits to all. China has consistently advanced economic globalization, aiming to enhance the dynamics of growth for every country and provide all nations with greater and fairer access to the fruits of development.

Chinese modernization has shattered the myth that modernization equals Westernization. It has broken identity limitations, enriched the theories, smashed Western dominance of discourse, and reshaped the global landscape of modernization, and created a new form of human advancement and value orientation. For a considerable period of time, the West has dominated the discourse on modernization, equated modernization with specific identity markers such as Western ideology and culture, and touted Westernization as the only way for developing countries to achieve modernization, which has seriously constrained the possibilities for countries to explore respective paths of modernization. Prior to the emergence of Chinese modernization, global modernization was confined to a few people. Chinese modernization is the modernization of its 1.4 billion people, which is more than the combined population

of all developed countries. It will represent the most extensive modernization in human history, and steer the global modernization process towards a more equitable direction.^①

Chinese modernization has overcome the intrinsic shortcomings of capitalist modernization and opened up a new realm of socialist development.^② It truly embodies the endogenous driver of modernization, which fundamentally differs from “pseudo endogenous” Western modernization.^③ The Chinese path to modernization is not an “evil road” based on colonization, exploitation and expansion, but rather a “good approach” of openness, peace and cooperation for mutual benefits and win-win results. This approach encompasses reform and opening up, mutual learning, self-exploration, persistent efforts, and developmental accumulation from a domestic perspective, while upholding peace and cooperation, mutual benefits and win-win results in external relations.^④ It enables the modernization of a huge population, of common prosperity for all, of material and cultural-ethical advancement, of harmony between humanity and nature, and of peaceful development.

Chinese modernization has blazed a new path for “late-mover” countries to pursue modernization. By broadening practical pathways and enriching scientific methods, it provides alternative choices and inspirations for developing countries on the path to modernization, and contributes to building a community with a shared future for mankind, which is of far-reaching historical significance.^⑤ Western developed countries exhibit a “tandem” process of development, as manifested in the sequential advancement of industrialization, urbanization, agricultural modernization and

^① Wu Xiaodan, “The global significance of Chinese modernization: An economic perspective,” *Contemporary World*, No. 12, 2024, pp. 16-22.

^② Qi Yu, “Understanding the global significance of Chinese modernization and fostering majestic forces for a new journey,” *Qiushi*, No. 8, 2023.

^③ Du Qinghua, “The world historical significance of Chinese modernization,” *Studies on Marxism*, No. 2, 2025, pp. 32-44.

^④ Dai Mucai, “On the complexity of the world modernization movement,” *Studies on Marxism*, No. 7, 2024, p. 28.

^⑤ Du Qinghua, “The world historical significance of Chinese modernization,” *Studies on Marxism*, No. 2, 2025, pp. 32-44.



informatization. In contrast, China's development has unfolded as a "parallel" process, in which industrialization, informatization, urbanization and agricultural modernization are superimposed. This enables China to accomplish, in just a few decades, what took Western developed countries hundreds of years, creating a miracle of rapid economic development and enduring social stability. China's process of modernization proves diversity of paths to modernization, providing a reference for other nations.^① This suggests that "late-mover" countries can successfully shake off the "doctrine" of Western developed countries and independently chart their own way to modernization. Thus, Chinese modernization serves as a paradigm that encourages "late-mover" countries to leverage the "latecomer's advantage" in their processes of modernization, rather than replicating Western development process and experience.



The Qingdao Area of the China (Shandong) Pilot Free Trade Zone.
(Source: CCTV News)

^① Wu Xiaodan, "The global significance of Chinese modernization: An economic perspective," *Contemporary World*, No. 12, 2024, pp. 16-22.

03

Connotations, characteristics and interconnections of modernization across various countries

- **Common features of modernization shared by all countries**
- **Interconnections of modernization among various countries**

03

Connotations, characteristics and interconnections of modernization across various countries

The modernization processes of various countries share universal and common features, and exhibit a profound interactive relationship of interdependence and mutual enhancement in the context of economic globalization. This reflects the duality of diversity and unity. In the contemporary era, modernization is recognized as a historical process and an inherent necessity for countries striving for economic growth, social progress and cultural prosperity. It embodies the trend of the times to pursue common development through interconnectedness and mutual learning on a global scale, as well as the inevitable result of creating a shared future for all countries. For a better understanding of the rich connotations of modernization across various countries, it is necessary not only to grasp the common features, but also to examine their interactive relationship and synergistic development mechanism in the context of economic globalization.

(i) Common features of modernization shared by all countries

Modernization represents a common goal pursued by countries at different historical stages. While the starting points, paths and models of modernization vary among countries, the overall processes of modernization exhibit several universal and common features. These features are manifested in the development of productive forces, the enhancement of national governance capacity, the changes in social structure, the coordinated development of the environment and culture, the impact of economic globalization, and the formulation of development paths tailored to local conditions.



Firstly, the development of productive forces is the material basis for modernization.

The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. The modernization of productive forces lies at the core of modernization. It serves as a critical measure of modernization in a country and a decisive force driving social transformation. As articulated by President Xi Jinping, “development is the foundation and the key for solving all China’s problems.” This assertion highlights the fundamental role of developing productive forces in the modernization process.

Economic growth and industrial upgrading are core links in the modernization process. Under the combined effects of technological progress, capital accumulation and labor quality improvement, modernization has propelled the transition from a traditional agricultural economy to an industrial economy and then to a knowledge-based and digital economy. Scientific and technological advances, alongside technological innovation, are the primary driving force for the development of productive forces. They have not only changed the mode of production, but also impacted social relations and human lifestyles in a profound way. Consequently, a modern market economic system has been progressively established and refined, which facilitates the efficient allocation of resources, the socialization of production and the process of economic globalization, thereby providing robust support for the realization of modernization across various countries. Rapid advancements in modern information technologies, such as AI, big data and cloud computing, are reshaping the global industrial chain and economic development paradigm, giving fresh impetus to the modernization of countries worldwide.

Secondly, social structural change and governance capacity improvement are essential prerequisites for modernization. Modernization is initiated on the premise of social improvement, reform or even revolution, which in turn, constantly catalyzes profound changes in social structure throughout its development process. Therefore, the establishment of an appropriate social governance system and the modernization of national governance capacity become pivotal factors spurring the continued development and transformation of modern society.

The modernization process is initiated by profound social changes as the starting point. Whether it is gradual social improvement, institutionalized reform or fierce revolution, all these changes are necessary means to break the shackles of traditional values and replace outdated and corrupt classes, thus paving the way for modernization. In the

modernization process, the rapid advancement of industrialization and urbanization has dismantled the conventional social stratification system and stimulated population concentration in cities. This shift has led to the gradual emergence of diverse social classes and a notable increase in social mobility. The substantial changes in social structure have put forward higher requirements for national governance. In light of the complex modern social relations and diverse governance needs, the modernization of national governance system and capacity has risen to be a central task in addressing these challenges. To align with the development needs of modern society, countries have taken steps to modernize their governance systems and capacities, including reforming the administrative system, reinforcing the rule of law and improving the public service system. These measures have enhanced governance efficiency and transparency, promoted social stability and elevated living standards, providing a solid institutional foundation and governance guarantee for deepening and sustaining modernization.

Thirdly, the coordinated and sustainable development of the economy and ecology is an inevitable choice in the modernization process. Modernization is not merely about economic growth. It also necessitates the coordinated development of environmental protection and social progress to realize the benign interaction among economic, social and ecological dimensions. As President Xi Jinping reiterated on many occasions, “lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets.” This notion profoundly underscores the inherent relationship of mutual support between ecological progress and economic development. Amid the fast pace of industrialization and urbanization, the world is facing harsh challenges such as resource depletion, environmental pollution and ecological degradation. Ecological modernization has emerged as an important dimension that cannot be ignored in the modernization process. Effectively promoting ecological progress not only ensures a sustainable resource base for the modernization process, but also optimizes the mode of economic growth through environmental governance, delivering the win-win results of ecological and economic benefits. Therefore, sustainable development represents an important objective of modernization, as well as an inherent requirement for further improving the quality of development.



A drone photo of the lake sunset scenery in Arxan National Forest Park, Inner Mongolia.
(Source: Xinhua)

Fourthly, human modernization and cultural-ethical advancement are integral components of modernization. The modernization processes of various countries encompass the promotion of material progress and development, as well as the realization of “human modernization” and comprehensive cultural-ethical advancement. The two components are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. As underlined by President Xi Jinping, “the ultimate goal of modernization is the free and all-round development of people.” Modernization of all countries should be pursued by enhancing human capital and cultivating high-quality workforce to facilitate people’s all-round development and improve people’s well-being.

On the one hand, high-quality development of human resources is urgently required for advancing modernization. By improving the educational system, optimizing the workforce structure and promoting scientific and technological innovation, specialized professionals and high-quality workers that meet the development needs of modern economy can be cultivated. They not only provide solid intellectual support for advancing modernization, but also create the necessary conditions for economic restructuring and industrial upgrading, contributing to an overall leap in the innovation capacity of society.

On the other hand, cultural-ethical advancement and all-round human development are the fundamental objectives and intrinsic aspirations of modernization. Specifically, cultural-ethical enrichment is a major cornerstone for social harmony and sustainable economic growth. Social progress is contingent not only on material wealth accumulation, but also on moral strength and cultural heritage. Cultural-ethical advancement enhances moral consensus and cultural identity within the society, providing ideological impetus and spiritual assurance for healthy economic and social development. A shared value pursuit among members of the society enables a stable and amicable social environment by reducing social conflict and enhancing cohesion. Moreover, cultural-ethical development is a vital pathway to achieving all-round human development. Central to modernization is promoting the comprehensive progress of each individual in intellectual, moral and cultural dimensions, which encompasses personal skill enhancement and self-realization, and overall improvements in social responsibility and cultural literacy. Cultural-ethical enrichment nourishes all-round human development and promotes harmony between humanity and nature, between humanity and society, and within humanity. This fulfills the humanistic concerns and ultimate objectives of the modernization process.

Fifthly, economic globalization is a critical thrust force for modernization. It is indispensable for initiating and deepening modernization. No country can achieve modernization in isolation. Rather, it must actively integrate into the international economic system and global governance framework. Economic globalization provides important impetus for the modernization of all countries through trade liberalization, capital movement, technology transfer and cultural exchanges. By engaging in the division of labor in the global value chain, countries can fully leverage international markets and resources to expedite industrial upgrading and technological innovation, moving forward comprehensive economic, social and cultural development. President Xi Jinping has stressed the need to proactively participate in and advance economic globalization, calling opening up the only path towards development and progress and the fundamental way to build a prosperous and strong country. Promoting reform and development through openness is not only the basic experience derived from China's sustained economic growth, but also a crucial instrument for achieving new milestones in Chinese modernization.

Meanwhile, the deep integration of international economic system necessitates that countries participate in global governance and work together to address global challenges such as climate change, public health crises and poverty. By joining



international organizations and enhancing regional cooperation, countries can share development experiences and coordinate policy actions, thereby achieving a balance between national interests and global common interests. Economic globalization serves as a pivotal force driving modernization and the only pathway to deepening modernization. Only through openness and cooperation can countries maximize the benefits of modernization.

Lastly, modernization should be suited to local conditions and characteristics.

Modernization is not a singular linear trajectory, but a diversified development process. Theoretically, due to various factors, there exists no uniform model for modernization, whether it pertains to the “Western modernization” of “first-mover” countries or the catch-up modernization of developing countries. Among the factors are geographic locations, natural conditions, cultural traditions, values, and economic, political and technological contexts. From a practical point of view, the successful experiences of modernization from various countries indicate that there is no one-size-fits-all “unique solution” to pursuing modernization. Even “first-mover” countries have, without exception, integrated foreign experiences with their own national realities on their respective roads to industrialization and modernization.^① “Late-mover” countries must adopt a more flexible approach to adapt their modernization processes to local conditions, particularly when confronted with the challenges of resource constraints, backward technologies and imperfect systems. By synthesizing external experiences with domestic cultural, history and social structure, “late-mover” countries should tailor the development models to their specific conditions, so as to prevent incompatibilities and institutional obstacles in the modernization process.

(ii) Interconnections of modernization among various countries

In the context of deepening economic globalization, modernization is no longer a process carried out by one country or region in isolation, but a historical practice jointly advanced by countries that are interconnected and interdependent. In this process, multi-tiered interactions emerge across the economic, security and cultural-ethical dimensions of modernization, which collectively shape the overall trends of global

^① Wang Mingye, “General law of world modernization and country-specific characteristics,” People’s Tribune, No.6, 2023, p. 17.

modernization in the contemporary era.

Firstly, the modernization of all countries should be interdependent and bring prosperity to all. Economic globalization injects great energy into modernization. Accompanied by technological progress, accelerated dissemination of information and upgraded modes of transportation, economic ties among countries have become closer, creating an interconnected global economic pattern. As countries are intertwined within industrial chain, supply chain and value chain, their modernization processes are deeply integrated with international trade, cross-border investment and technological cooperation to promote shared economic development. For example, China has deeply integrated its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to the global value chain by promoting high-quality cooperation within this framework. While supporting China's modernization process, the Initiative generates win-win results by offering development opportunities for participating countries. Economic interactions in the context of economic globalization illustrate that no country can pursue modernization without the support of the global economy. Economic dependence is both a necessary condition for modernization and a crucial impetus for sustained development.

Secondly, the modernization of all countries should be underpinned by peaceful development, security and mutual trust. Security is the prerequisite for development, and development is the foundation for security. The realization of modernization depends on a stable international environment and international relations based on security and mutual trust. Historical evidence indicates that wars and conflicts not only undermine a country's economic foundation and social order, but also affect neighboring countries and beyond due to the interdependent nature of economic globalization, impeding or even interrupting the global modernization process. As a pioneer of modernization, Europe amassed abundant material wealth and experience in social progress through the industrial revolution and technological innovation from the late 19th to early 20th centuries. However, competition among capitalist countries over capital expansion and conflicting interests ultimately escalated into full-scale wars. The two World Wars not only devastated the industrial base and economic systems of major economies in Europe, but also resulted in tens of millions of human casualties and economic losses, severely hindering the continued process of modernization in the continent.

As economic globalization progresses, non-traditional security challenges have increasingly come to the fore today, across various dimensions such as economy, food,



energy, cyber and public health. These security issues are global and interconnected, which can not be addressed by any country alone. Therefore, the modernization efforts of various countries must not only prevent wars and conflicts, but also foster a new paradigm of global security governance through deepening cooperation, sharing resources and information, and improving global governance mechanisms. Countries must abandon the zero-sum mindset and unilateralism, replace confrontation with cooperation, and address common challenges through solidarity and collaboration, so as to create an enduring stable environment for modernization of countries worldwide.

Thirdly, the modernization of all countries should promote exchanges, mutual learning and beauty in diversity. As articulated by President Xi Jinping, all civilizations created by human society are splendid. They are where each country's modernization drive draws its strength and where its unique feature comes from. They, transcending time and space, have jointly made important contribution to humanity's modernization process.^① This statement underscores the profound significance of civilizational diversity in the modernization process. Achieving modernization in all countries is not simply imitating the development model of a particular civilization. Rather, it entails a historical process of exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. Countries and regions should take distinct paths to modernization due to their unique historical, geographical, economic and social conditions.

Diversity in the modernization processes of various countries should not be viewed as a source of confrontation and conflict, but a foundation for coexistence and shared prosperity. China has, with an open and inclusive attitude, embraced its modernization within the framework of economic globalization. It has actively promoted dialogue and cooperation among civilizations through international cooperation platforms such as the BRI. This practice demonstrates the unique charm of Chinese modernization, and provides a novel modernization paradigm for other countries. By promoting the GDI and dialogue and cooperation among civilizations with a global vision, China has gained new momentum of its own development, and incorporated the principle of peaceful, inclusive and sustainable development into modernization processes of countries worldwide.

^① Xi Jinping, "Join Hands on the Path to Modernization—Keynote Address at the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties," Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2023, p.7.

04

GDI as a strong impetus to modernization across various countries

- **Proposal and development of the GDI**
- **Internal logic and practical pathways of the GDI for
modernization in all countries**

04

GDI as a strong impetus to modernization across various countries

Along with new dynamics in the modernization processes of various countries, grim challenges related to development have arisen in the context of accelerated profound changes unseen in a century, including the widening North-South divide, food security crisis, and inadequate progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Moreover, President Donald Trump has enacted tariffs indiscriminately after his return to the White House, disrupting the order of international economic cooperation. The Western world, represented by the Group of Seven (G7), has sought to impose additional regulatory pressure on the Global South countries through “institutional decoupling.” Such actions have further increased uncertainty in the global development environment. In contrast, the China-proposed GDI has injected new momentum into global stability and common prosperity and created favorable conditions for sustainable development in various countries, demonstrating China’s important role as a “source of stability.”

(i) Proposal and development of the GDI

On September 21, 2021, President Xi Jinping formally proposed the GDI at the General Debate of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, calling on countries to accelerate the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, pursue more robust, greener and more balanced global development, and work together to build a global community of development



with a shared future. The GDI upholds the core principles of staying committed to development as a priority, to a people-centered approach, to benefits for all, to innovation-driven development, to harmony between man and nature, and to results-oriented actions. This Initiative has drawn a blueprint for the development of all countries and international development cooperation, and charted the course for global development and international development cooperation.

In June 2022, President Xi Jinping put forward 32 practical measures to implement the GDI at the High-Level Dialogue on Global Development, deepening cooperation in the priority areas of poverty reduction, food security, epidemic prevention and vaccines, financing for development, climate change and green development, industrialization, digital economy, and digital-era connectivity. He called for efforts to foster a development paradigm featuring benefits for all, balance, coordination, inclusiveness, win-win cooperation and common prosperity, thus charting the course for the Initiative and marking a new stage of pragmatic cooperation.^①



President Xi Jinping chaired the High-Level Dialogue on Global Development via video link, on the evening of June 24, 2022, and delivered an important speech titled “Forging High-Quality Partnerships for a New Era of Global Development” in Beijing.

(Source: China.gov.cn)

^① *Progress Report on the Global Development Initiative 2023*, Center for International Knowledge on Development.

Table 1. List of Deliverables of the High-level Dialogue on Global Development

No.	Content
1	Setting up a Global Alliance for Poverty Reduction and Development (GAPRD) to promote sharing of best practices and international cooperation on poverty reduction.
2	Launching an International NGOs Network for Poverty Reduction Cooperation.
3	Carrying out a series of dialogues on development experience sharing to help developing countries enhance capacity building for sustainable development.
4	Deepening the collaboration between China and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation on the Seminar Series on “South-South Cooperation in Cross-Border E-commerce for Poverty Eradication and Global Sustainable Development.”
5	Providing 100,000 training opportunities for other developing countries to facilitate post-COVID economic recovery and social development.
6	Launching a Food Production Enhancement Action, to further agricultural production and technical cooperation between China and other developing countries to help improve their food production capacity and enhance food self-sufficiency.
7	Holding the World Conference on Globally Important Agriculture Heritage Systems (GIAHS), and launching an initiative for agrarian civilization protection.
8	Implementing the Chemical Earth Big Science Program, to jointly build a Global Geochemical Baselines Network with other developing countries, which will provide big data support for protecting and utilizing green land and increasing the output and quality of agricultural products in these countries.
9	Training programs for Pacific Island Countries on food production, eco-agriculture and other areas via the China-Pacific Island Countries Demonstration Center for Agricultural Cooperation to help enhance food security in relevant countries.
10	Establishing an International Vaccines Research, Development and Innovation Alliance, to deepen research and development cooperation on vaccines to improve vaccines self-sufficiency of developing countries.
11	Continuing with China’s Brightness Action, the Heart-to-Heart Journey and other “small but beautiful” free medical programs for other developing countries, and stepping up cooperation between paired-up hospitals in China and Africa. By 2030, China will send 5,000 professionals of China Medical Team to other developing countries in need to help build up their capacity in infectious diseases response and medical treatment.
12	Making full use of relevant funds to support United Nations development agencies in carrying out practical projects in developing countries to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



13	Officially launching the China-FAO South-South Cooperation Trust Fund Phase III of US\$50 million.
14	Upgrading China's South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund into the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, with an additional input of US\$1 billion on top of the existing US\$3 billion, to support Global Development Initiative cooperation to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in developing countries.
15	Enhancing support for the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund established by China to support Global Development Initiative cooperation.
16	Promoting to establish the Global Clean Energy Cooperation Partnership. China will hold the International Forum on Energy Transitions and explore the establishment of the International Coalition for Energy Transitions.
17	Promoting the Blue Partnership. China will hold a series of events, and support sustainable use of marine resources and capacity building in other developing countries.
18	Jointly launching the Bamboo as a Substitute for Plastic Initiative with International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR) to reduce plastic pollution and address climate change.
19	Establishing the Global Network for Sustainable Forest Management to promote ecosystem conservation and forest economy.
20	Advancing the Partnership for New Industrial Revolution to help improve developing countries' capacity to seize the opportunities brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
21	Launching a World Vocational and Technical Education Development Conference and establishing a World TVET League.
22	Launching the ICT Capacity Building Programs for Developing Countries, with a view to improve application of information technology and capacity of telecommunications technology of relevant countries.
23	Holding the Global Development Initiative Digital Cooperation Forum and the 2022 Global Digital Economy Conference to advance cooperation on digital technology application.
24	Hosting the United Nations World Data Forum 2023 by China.
25	Launching a Digital Literacy and Skills Improvement Initiative.
26	Working with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) to implement projects on accelerating the transition to electric mobility for public transport and Smart Cities Innovation Lab.

Promoting Modernization Across Countries Through the Global Development Initiative

27	Carrying out cooperation on “Smart Customs, Smart Borders, Smart Connectivity” to promote connectivity among customs authorities and other stakeholders along supply chains.
28	Launching a Sustainable Development Satellite Constellation Plan, developing and sharing data and information for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) monitoring.
29	Holding a World Youth Development Forum and jointly initiating the Action Plan for Global Youth Development.
30	Setting up a Global Development Promotion Center, developing a project pool and holding a Forum on Global Action for Shared Development.
31	Issuing a Global Development Report.
32	Establishing a Global Knowledge Network for Development and holding a Global Development Forum.

Source: *Chair’s Statement at the High-Level Dialogue on Global Development*, June 25, 2022.



A sub-forum to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence was held in Beijing, June 2024.
(Source: China Institute of International Studies website)

In October 2022, the Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) explicitly stated that “China is prepared to invest more resources in global development cooperation. It is committed to narrowing the North-South gap and supporting and assisting other developing countries in accelerating development.” This



solemn statement underscores the CPC's mission and commitment to the world.

In December 2023, the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs defined the pillars of building a community with a shared future for mankind as a scientific system: The goal is to build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world of lasting peace, universal security and shared prosperity; the pathway is promoting global governance that features extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit; the guiding principle is to apply the common values of humanity; the basic underpinning lies in building a new type of international relations; the strategic guidance comes from the implementation of the GDI, the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the Global Civilization Initiative; and the platform for action is high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. On this basis, China seeks to bring countries together to meet challenges and achieve prosperity for all, and usher in a bright future of peace, security, prosperity and progress for the world. These statements highlight these three major initiatives as part of the “six-in-one” scientific system of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

In June 2024, President Xi Jinping announced eight measures to support Global South cooperation at the Conference Marking the 70th Anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. These measures include establishing a Global South research center; providing 1,000 scholarships under the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence Scholarship of Excellence and 100,000 training opportunities to Global South countries in the coming five years; launching a Global South youth leaders program; continuing to make good use of the China-UN Peace and Development Fund, the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, and the Climate Change South-South Cooperation Fund, and working with interested parties to set up a tripartite center of excellence for the implementation of the GDI, so as to facilitate growth in Global South countries; renewing the China-IFAD South-South and Triangular Cooperation Facility, and making an additional Renminbi contribution equivalent to US\$10 million to be used to support agricultural development of the Global South. China has actively joined hands with countries in the Global South to implement the GDI, injecting stronger momentum into the common development of the Global South.

In September 2024, President Xi Jinping said, in his keynote address at the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), that China would work with Africa to take ten partnership actions for modernization to deepen China-Africa cooperation and spearhead the Global South modernization.

Under the Partnership Action for Development Cooperation, China is ready to release the Joint Statement on Deepening Cooperation within the Framework of the GDI with Africa, and implement 1,000 “small and beautiful” livelihood projects. China will also replenish the China-World Bank Group Partnership Facility to boost Africa’s development, and support Africa in hosting the 2026 Youth Olympic Games and the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations. China will work together with Africa to deliver more fruits of development to the two peoples.

On November 18, 2024, President Xi Jinping outlined eight actions for global development in his remarks on “Fight Hunger and Poverty” at the Session I of the 19th G20 Summit. On implementing the GDI, China will, on the basis of over 1,100 development projects already in operation, make sure the Global South research center that is being built is fit for purpose, and the 20 billion US dollars of development funds will continue to be put to good use to support developing countries and deepen practical cooperation in areas such as poverty reduction, food security and the digital economy.

Mechanisms for cooperation have been established to advance the GDI. In January 2022, the Group of Friends of the GDI was launched at the United Nations Headquarters with the presence of representatives from more than 100 countries, marking its official inauguration as a multilateral cooperation platform. In January 2025, the first policy dialogue meeting between the Group of Friends of the GDI and the United Nations Task Force on Leveraging Partnerships towards the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, fostering an effective synergy to advance this Initiative and the 2030 Agenda. In addition, the Global Development Promotion Center Network and the Global South Research Center have been inaugurated. An interconnected network of cooperation covering the North and South is gradually taking shape.

Within the framework of the GDI, more than 1,100 projects have been implemented in developing countries, with over 600 projects tailored to meet specific needs through the Global Development Project Pool. These projects range from poverty reduction demonstration villages on the East African Plateau to smart agricultural bases in Southeast Asia and from digital infrastructure upgrading in Latin America to climate resilience building in the Pacific Islands. Chinese technologies and experiences have contributed energies into the development of countries worldwide by training over 60,000 talents from developing countries through more than 2,000 capacity building projects. The *World Development Report 2024*, which gives a systematic review of



practical experiences, witnesses the solid leap of the GDI from blueprint to reality as the 32 measures proposed at the High-level Dialogue on Global Development have been fully executed and more than 30 cooperation platforms have been established across eight priority areas.

The GDI has garnered great attention and acclaim from the international community. By the end of 2024, more than 100 countries and 20 international organizations had made positive response to the Initiative. In total, 82 countries have joined the Group of Friends of the GDI, and over 70 countries and international organizations have participated in the Global Development Promotion Network, thus forging a broad consensus on seeking strength through unity within the Global South. The GDI has addressed the pressing aspirations of peoples of various countries for a better life, drawn a blueprint for the development of various countries and international development cooperation, and charted the way for global development and international development cooperation.

(ii) Internal logic and practical pathways of the GDI for modernization in all countries

Firstly, the GDI stays committed to development as a priority, clearly reflecting the primary task of modernization in all countries. Development is the top priority of all countries and the fundamental way to promote social progress. People across countries are eager to realize their aspirations for a better life through development. The right to development is an inalienable right, as defined in the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development. Subsistence is the basis for all human rights, as President Xi Jinping stressed, and the ultimate human right is that people can lead a happy life. Development holds the key to people's happiness. China upholds the people-centered development philosophy to safeguard and improve people's livelihoods and protect and promote human rights through development.

Development as a priority is the intrinsic impetus for safeguarding world peace. Development contributes to world peace as poverty and imbalance often lead to conflict. In order to establish a solid foundation for lasting peace in the international community, it is imperative to unleash the development potential of various countries to realize common development. Going straight to the core, the GDI places development at the forefront of international cooperation, and opposes the politicization and marginalization of development issues. Focusing on key areas of concern to developing

countries, this Initiative makes greater efforts to improve livelihoods across various countries, and provides a viable pathway towards the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Development as a priority provides guarantee for achieving common prosperity. Economic globalization has intensified the interdependence among economies; however, imbalanced and insufficient global development can restrict opportunities for economic prosperity and growth on a global scale. Less developed countries that suffer development deficits are often unable to generate effective market demand, impeding sustained growth worldwide. Similarly, those facing financing gaps are likely to fall to the debt trap by accruing substantial foreign debt, which increases the systemic risk in the global financial system. Addressing development issues should be prioritized to strengthen weak development capacities in various countries and initiate a virtuous cycle of mutually reinforcing growth. Only by doing so can modernization be achieved in all countries to bring prosperity to all.

The principle of development as a priority upheld by the GDI has made two major breakthroughs over traditional modernization theories. This principle reconstructs the chain of causation between security and development, identifying development deficit as a source of conflict rather than a consequence and regarding development as the foundation for peace. Moreover, this principle innovates the approach to realizing the right to development, which moves beyond the limitations of Western ideological dogmatism and political conditionality on foreign aid. This provides an alternative path to sustainable development for developing countries. Only through the universal realization of development across various countries can world peace and common prosperity be fundamentally secured. By enhancing international cooperation, facilitating rational allocation of resources for development, and promoting economic growth and social progress in parallel, the GDI ensures the sustainability of modernization processes, which allows countries to pursue shared development and prosperity in a peaceful environment.

Secondly, the GDI stays committed to a people-centered approach, revealing the fundamental objective of modernization in all countries. “The people are the foundation of a country, and are also what the rule of a country is for.” The people-centered development philosophy is highly compatible with the essential requirement of global modernization for common prosperity, so that people from various countries can share the fruits of development. Western modernization meets continued challenges due to



its capital-centered paradigm, rather than people-centered. Inherently driven by the capital's pursuit of profit, Western modernization is bound to follow a capital-centered and polarized path with materialistic expansion and foreign expansion and plunder. It can never escape the control of capital logic and the resulting social contradictions and problems. This makes it necessary to explore a better path of modernization, and Chinese modernization offers a new option for human modernization.

Concern for people's well-being is a prerequisite for achieving enduring stability and building a strong and prosperous country. The "people first" thought in Chinese culture can be dated back to ancient times. As "people are the foundation of a state," people should be put first in the governance of the state. "Just as water can float a boat, so can water overturn it," said Xunzi. The state will have peace only when the people all lead a happy, stable life. From an economic perspective, the people-centered development philosophy facilitates inclusive growth and common prosperity. On the one hand, the people-centered approach emphasizes investing in human capital, such as enhancing education and training, improving health care and increasing employment opportunities, so as to stimulate people's enthusiasm for work. The approach of "investing in people" and serving people's livelihoods boosts labor productivity and innovation capacity, which translates into a driving force for sustained economic growth. On the other hand, the people-centered approach entails distributing income more equitably and helping those in need, which is conducive to expanding domestic demand and market size. Low-income groups exhibit a higher marginal propensity to consume as their income grow, contributing to a larger consumer market and a "bottom-up" growth momentum. Caring for the disadvantaged and reducing income inequity is not only a requirement of social justice, but also a wise move to ensure sustained healthy economic development.

The people-centered development philosophy encapsulates the successful experiences from China's remarkable achievements in development. China's practice has demonstrated that economic growth and social justice are not incompatible. With a people-centered policy orientation, China has not only unleashed the vitality of the market and the people to create wealth, but also ensured, through government intervention, that development benefits the people in a more equitable way. Since the reform and opening up, China has progressively risen into the world's second largest economy. In this process, efforts have also been made to resolve practical issues of the greatest and most direct concern to the people, such as employment and health. Notably, a victory in eliminating extreme poverty has been secured, creating a new miracle in the human fight against poverty. With the dramatic progress in life

expectancy, education level and living standards, China has entered a virtuous cycle of economic development and livelihood improvement.

The GDI precisely represents an extension and amplification of the people-centered development philosophy on the international scale. The people-centered concept and the prosperity-to-all vision are highly interrelated and mutually supportive. At the global level, adopting the people-centered approach to bring prosperity to all peoples is essential for establishing a harmonious and stable international order. In light of the diverse challenges facing the world today, it is increasingly imperative for countries to work together for people's well-being by aligning policies and enhancing cooperation. Looking forward, common prosperity that is inclusive and beneficial to all, both on national and global levels, can only be truly realized through a people-centered approach. This is the lesson from historical development, as well as the guideline and motivation for the way forward.

Thirdly, the GDI stays committed to benefits for all, creating an avenue of cooperation for modernization in all countries. In an era marked by deepening globalization, the modernization processes of various countries have become closely interdependent and mutually supportive. The principle of benefits for all overcomes the limitations of the traditional modernization model, abandons the zero-sum mindset, and advocates for a new model of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness and justice, and win-win cooperation. This principle emphasizes that through equitable and mutually beneficial cooperation, countries at different stages of development can find their own paths of development in the context of global development, striving towards shared prosperity. In doing so, modernization can truly benefit all countries and peoples. This principle not only gives regard to development disparities among countries, but also embodies the requirements of the times for building a community with a shared future for mankind, providing inspiration for addressing the current global development imbalance.

The principle of benefits for all requires removing barriers to development to promote economic globalization in a more open and inclusive direction. The vulnerability of the global trade system has been accentuated amid geopolitical tensions. Against the backdrop of economic globalization, certain countries have implemented protectionist policies and erected trade barriers, which seriously restricts developing countries from integrating into the global value chain and accessing critical development resources. This situation poses a severe challenge to the modernization processes of developing countries. According to the trade monitoring report published by the World Trade



Organization (WTO) in November 2024, the value of trade covered by the 169 new trade restrictive measures introduced by WTO members during the 12 months up to mid-October 2024 was estimated at US\$887.7 billion, which is US\$500 billion more than the value of trade covered by restrictions introduced in the preceding year (US\$337.1 billion).^① The GDI, as proposed by President Xi Jinping, has clearly put development on the center of the international cooperation agenda, and aims to build a global community of development with a shared future as a hedge against the policies of “small yards, high fences” and “decoupling and severing chains.” In response to the counter-current of unilateralism and protectionism, the GDI offers systematic solutions to promote multilateral cooperation mechanisms and reduce trade barriers, and provides support for developing countries in the areas of infrastructure investment, trade facilitation and industrial chain integration. This approach enables different countries to pool and share their strengths within the global economic system to achieve mutual benefits and win-win outcomes, thus creating broader development space for modernization in all countries.

The principle of benefits for all ensures equitable access to development to narrow the global development gap. Modernization should not be the privilege of only a few countries or elites, but rather, be a right enjoyed by all countries and peoples. The conventional model of economic growth tends to prioritize efficiency and neglects equitable distribution, which exacerbates the imbalance in development. The principle of benefits for all upheld by the GDI emphasizes fairness and justice in the pursuit of high-speed growth, so that the fruits of modernization are accessible to all countries and peoples around the globe. This notion of shared prosperity is congruent with the long-term vision of modernization across all countries, and serves as a foundation for building a peaceful, stable and prosperous global community. Acknowledging the serious obstacles faced by many developing countries in infrastructure construction, technology acquisition and market access, the GDI advocates for the allocation of development resources to those countries and people most in need through strengthening international cooperation. The initiative seeks to make the “pie” of economic development bigger and better, to ensure that all countries, social classes

^① “WTO report shows increase in trade restrictions against backdrop of unilateral policies,” WTO/FTA information website, Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, December 18, 2024, <http://chinawto.mofcom.gov.cn/article/tpxw/202412/20241203557220.shtml>.

and people can participate in and benefit from economic and social development. By appropriately addressing development imbalances between and within countries, the initiative reduces the development gap between the North and the South, and facilitates the journey towards modernization for all countries. The objective of shared prosperity is to extend the benefits of development to all peoples and make development more inclusive and balanced. Poverty alleviation is on the top among the eight priority areas of the GDI, which encompasses food security and other issues of immediate concern to the people of all countries. This highlights that China has deep concern about people's livelihoods and responds to the collective aspirations of the people worldwide for a better life.

The principle of benefits for all advocates the equitable participation of all countries and societal members in the global development process. The GDI not only promotes international cooperation for mutual benefits and win-win results, but also strengthens global economic resilience and steers economic globalization towards a more open and inclusive direction. Grounded in the principle of benefits for all, the GDI champions common prosperity and positions modernization a shared endeavor of all countries, rather than an exclusive aim of individual countries. Hence, the principle of benefits for all is essential for achieving global modernization that enhances mutually beneficial cooperation and brings prosperity to all.

Fourthly, the GDI stays committed to innovation-driven development, providing a growth engine for modernization in all countries. Innovation drives sustained progress in the global economy and technology, injecting new momentum to development for all countries. This provides a growth engine for global modernization to enhance mutually beneficial cooperation and bring prosperity to all.

There is a close mutually reinforcing relationship between scientific and technological innovation and global modernization with mutually beneficial cooperation. On the one hand, the continuous development of scientific and technological innovation calls for enhanced mutually beneficial cooperation. Significant scientific and technological breakthroughs hundreds of years ago often originated from the sudden inspirations of individual inventors working in isolated research environments. As the complexity of modern science and technology has exponentially increased, such model of solitary innovation becomes unsustainable. Achieving further breakthroughs in modern science and technology must rely on a high level of integration of factors of production (including talent, market, capital and technology) on a global scale. Without mutually



beneficial cooperation, scientific and technological innovation risks falling into the trap of “reinventing the wheel,” where various countries redundantly allocate human, material and time resources to similar fields, leading to a waste of research and development resources and a decline in innovation efficiency.

On the other hand, scientific and technological innovation has propelled the modernization processes of all countries towards mutually beneficial cooperation. Technological advances have significantly lowered the costs and thresholds of cross-border collaboration. Specifically, digital tools have removed spatial obstacles, and AI translation technologies have overcome language barriers to communication. The open-source global collaboration model has enabled numerous developers to concurrently refine their codes, and the cross-border sharing of academic achievements has expedited the dissemination and application of knowledge. At the same time, scientific and technological innovation continues to unveil new frontiers that necessitates international cooperation, such as global AI governance and international rule-making for space exploration, all of which require new cooperation mechanisms among countries to address challenges.

Scientific and technological breakthroughs necessitate international cooperation to harness resources, and the outcomes of such innovations further deepen international cooperation by reducing collaboration costs, fostering common interests, and forcing rule integration. This positive loop of “technological breakthrough and mutually beneficial cooperation” is growing into the core driving force for addressing the common challenges faced by humanity. Nevertheless, certain countries go against this trend to erect scientific and technological blockades and technological barriers. Although this may help maintain their technological leadership temporally, such actions will undermine the global innovation capacity in the long term, stifling the growth potential of the world economy.

Innovation-driven development serves as a growth engine for achieving shared prosperity and mutually beneficial cooperation. Specifically, scientific and technological innovation is useful for improving production efficiency, optimizing resource allocation and advancing industrial restructuring and upgrading, which bolsters the quality and sustainability of economic growth. Unlike the traditional development model that depends on resource consumption and low-end manufacturing, this innovation-driven approach prevents environmental damage and growth constraints, and more importantly, cultivates new quality productive forces by relying more on scientific and

technological advance, smart manufacturing and green industries, thereby elevating the productivity of the whole society.

Moreover, scientific and technological innovation contributes to promoting inclusive growth and reducing regional and urban-rural development imbalances. The rise of the digital economy has enabled people in remote areas to access the global market, which brings more development opportunities beyond geographical and infrastructural constraints. The innovation-driven model ensures that the fruits of development are fairly shared while generating incremental wealth. Thus, a broader range of global populations can benefit from economic development and move towards shared prosperity.

Scientific and technological innovation has the potential to narrow the development gap, creating “overtaking” opportunities for developing countries and less developed regions. Historically, modernization has entailed long periods of development, involving industrialization, urbanization, agricultural modernization and informationization. Today, developing countries can transition directly into the digital economy through scientific and technological innovation, circumventing the high costs and resource demands associated with traditional industrialization pathways. For example, the rapid popularization of mobile payment technology has enabled less developed countries to integrate into the digital financial system, sharply reducing the cost of financial infrastructure construction and promoting inclusive financial development. It should be noted, however, that if technological innovation cannot be effectively promoted in developing countries, gaps may be widened to intensify the digital divide due to technological barriers and resource concentration among other factors. Therefore, promoting technological inclusiveness and capacity building is crucial to let more countries share the dividends of science and technology.

In short, scientific and technological innovation can enhance productivity, optimize resource allocation, bolster global competitiveness, and stimulate diverse drivers of economic growth to make global development more balanced and sustainable. The world is currently at a pivotal juncture marked by a new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation. To truly unlock the potential of innovation as a catalyst for global modernization, it is essential to enhance scientific and technological cooperation and promote innovation and sharing. Science, technology and innovation should not be wielded as an instrument for confrontation between countries, but rather serve as a conduit for fostering international cooperation



and global prosperity. The GDI emphasizes scientific and technological cooperation, knowledge sharing and technological equity, presenting new opportunities for the shared development of various countries. Only by committing to innovation-driven development and open cooperation can we jointly create a better future for the modernization of all countries worldwide.

Fifthly, the GDI stays committed to harmony between man and nature, providing a favorable environment for modernization in all countries. Harmony between man and nature is closely related to modernization of all countries that enhances peaceful development and achieves shared prosperity. Modernization is more than the progress of human society. It should be built on the harmonious development of humanity and the ecological environment. By promoting green and sustainable development, the GDI ensures the rational use of natural resources to pave the foundation for enduring peaceful development and global shared prosperity while preventing ecological and social crises stemming from environmental degradation.

From the perspective of development, the ecological environment is an important prerequisite for sustainable global economic growth. Economic development and ecological protection are not antithetical; rather, they are mutually reinforcing. A healthy ecological environment is essential for the survival of human society and serves as a significant catalyst for economic growth. The rapid development of the clean energy sector has created numerous job opportunities while reducing dependence on fossil fuels, thereby positioning the green economy as a new engine of economic growth. Developing a green and circular economy not only mitigates environmental pollution, but also generates long-term economic benefits, including improved energy efficiency, infrastructure upgrade and environmental remediation. The sustainable management of natural resources is vital for the stable development of all countries.

From the perspective of security, ecological security is increasingly recognized as an important component of national security. The frequent occurrence of extreme weather events induced by climate change and the intensification of conflicts arising from water scarcity may evolve into security challenges. The degradation of the ecological environment generates adverse spillover effects across national borders, presenting a global risk and challenge. This global dimension determines that international cooperation is an inevitable choice.

Modernization built on harmony between man and nature manifests the concept of

ecological civilization that respects, conforms to and protects nature. This paradigm completely changes the antagonistic relationship between man and nature in industrial civilization, and resolves the contradiction between environment and development in Western modernization process. The coordinated development of material, political, spiritual, social and ecological civilization characterizes the distinct Chinese path to modernization, which offers a viable pathway to a new form of human civilization.^①

The principle of harmony between man and nature is an essential requirement of sustainable development, as well as a crucial guarantee for modernization across various countries. Only by promoting green development and ensuring the rational use of resources, can it be possible to expand room for global economic growth, enhance social stability and advance world peace and development. The GDI has become a significant platform for global ecological governance by facilitating green cooperation, advocating a low-carbon economy and advancing global sustainable development. Lessons can be drawn from China's practice of green development for countries around the world.

Lastly, the GDI stays committed to results-oriented actions, serving as practical impetus to modernization in all countries. Pragmatic actions are of utmost importance in the implementation of the GDI. To advance the cause of international development, we must act, not just talk. Given the complexity and urgency of global development issues, it is necessary to go beyond conceptual calls and take results-oriented actions as the key to breaking the deadlock. This makes possible global modernization that enhances peaceful development and mutually beneficial cooperation and brings prosperity to all. It is because of this methodology that the GDI has garnered wide recognition from the international community. Based on the largest common ground of development, the GDI seeks to forge international consensus and jointly address challenges. From poverty reduction and epidemic prevention to green development, from digital transition to food security, and from the top-level design of 32 practical measures to the substantive investment of US\$10 billion in special funds, every step taken under the Initiative has demonstrated the practical character of unity of knowledge and action.

^① Li Haisheng, "Promoting harmony between man and nature," *Study Times*, March 10, 2023.



The six principles upheld by the GDI have injected new momentum into the modernization process of countries around the world. Specifically, it seeks to address the dilemma of growth by promoting development as a priority, to reinforce the foundation of development by adopting a people-centered approach, to bridge the disparity in development by delivering benefits for all, to foster the drivers of growth by encouraging innovation-driven development, to redefine the mode of development by upholding harmony between man and nature, and to ensure the effectiveness of development by taking results-oriented actions. By translating development concepts into concrete actions, the GDI has offered practical solutions that enable countries worldwide to tailor their path to modernization to their specific national conditions. Throughout this process, China has consistently adhered to the principle of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions while respecting the development paths independently chosen by other countries. It has written a new chapter in the modernization of humanity.

05

China's contribution to modernization across various countries through the implementation of GDI

- **Expanding the Group of Friends and building up mechanisms**
 - **Increasing financing for development and pursuing shared prosperity**
 - **Advancing practical cooperation and promoting inclusive growth**
- **Upgrading human resources and supporting capacity building**



China's Contribution to Modernization of All Countries Through the Implementation of GDI

The six principles upheld by the GDI—staying committed to development as a priority, to a people-centered approach, to benefits for all, to innovation-driven development, to harmony between man and nature, and to results-oriented actions—not only encapsulate the successful experiences of Chinese modernization, but also align with the universal needs of the vast developing countries for sustainable development. As new opportunities and new challenges coexist for global development, the GDI is promoting the establishment of a more equitable and inclusive international development paradigm with a range of tangible results of cooperation. This initiative bolsters the confidence and motivation of all countries to join hands to cope with challenges and achieve shared prosperity.

(i) Expanding the Group of Friends and building up mechanisms

With a focus on the crucial issues of global development, the GDI has established multi-tiered and wide-ranging cooperation mechanisms while continuing to expand the Group of Friends. It provides a new platform for multilateral dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation, which has been widely recognized and well received by the international community. The GDI has demonstrated strong cohesion and appeal and given new impetus into the cause of international development.

China continues to expand the Group of Friends of the GDI. The GDI has embraced the active support and participation of more than 100 countries and 20 international



organizations. It has been welcomed and endorsed in multiple international statements for creating new opportunities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.^① Among these statements are the Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Kingdom of Cambodia on Building an All-weather China-Cambodia Community with a Shared Future for the New Era and Implementing the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, the Joint Statement of the China-ASEAN Special Summit to Commemorate the 30th Anniversary of China-ASEAN Dialogue Relations, the Joint Statement of the China-Pacific Island Countries Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Declaration of the Third Ministerial Meeting of the China-CELAC Forum, the Dakar Declaration of the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the Joint Statement between the Leaders of China and the Five Central Asian Countries on the 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Ties, and the Xi'an Declaration of the China-Central Asia Summit. The China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) has established intensive contacts and signed cooperation documents on the implementation of the GDI with over 40 countries, international organizations and financial institutions from home and abroad.

China has established new mechanisms and platforms within the framework of the GDI. The Group of Friends of the GDI has been launched at the United Nations, with the active participation of more than 80 countries. The United Nations Task Force on Leveraging Partnerships towards the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been set up to strengthen the coordination of the United Nations development agencies and collaborate with the Group of Friends of the GDI to speed up the implementation of various practical cooperation measures. China has carried out tripartite demonstration projects with African countries and United Nations agencies, and inaugurated the China-Africa-UNIDO Center of Excellence. China has hosted a range of international conferences, which have effectively forged consensus among countries on promoting global development and accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, thus injecting momentum into the implementation of multilateral development outcomes. These conferences include the High-level Dialogue on Global Development, the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of

^① *Progress Report on the Global Development Initiative 2023*, Center for International Knowledge on Development.

the Global Development Initiative, two High-level Conferences of the Forum on Global Action for Shared Development, three China-Indian Ocean Region Forums on Blue Economy Development Cooperation, as well as the National Evaluation Capacities Conference hosted together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). China has established the Global Development Promotion Center, the China Global Development Knowledge Network, and the Global South Research Center, and more than 30 cooperation platforms across eight priority areas, which significantly spurs the innovative development of the international development system.

China has fully leveraged existing international mechanisms to promote the implementation of the GDI. China has progressively fostered a comprehensive, multifaceted cooperation network for implementing the GDI by giving full play to multiple international mechanisms and platforms, such as the FOCAC, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, the China-CELAC Forum, China-ASEAN Cooperation Mechanism, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism, the G20, the BRICS, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. For example, a joint statement on deepening cooperation between China and Africa within the framework of the GDI was released at the September 2024 Beijing FOCAC Summit, in which parties expressed their readiness to step up strategic coordination and deepen development cooperation under the GDI, to contribute to building an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era.

(ii) Increasing financing for development and pursuing shared prosperity

In recent years, the gap in global financing for development has been growing amid the impacts of various crises on global economic and social development, such as geopolitical conflicts, food security and climate change. By underscoring the necessity to expand financing for development, the GDI calls on the international community to genuinely acknowledge the development challenges for developing countries and regions such as African countries and to contribute in a tangible way to the development of developing countries, thereby preventing the “commitment deficit.”^①

^① Ma Hanzhi, “GDI creates opportunities for Africa’s development,” *Guangming Daily*, August 16, 2022.



China continues to increase input into global development cooperation. “Leaving no country and no one behind” is the established objective of the 2030 Agenda and the value pursuit of the GDI.^① Under this Initiative, China has upgraded the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, increasing its capital to US\$4 billion. At the 2023 “BRICS Plus” Leaders’ Dialogue, President Xi Jinping announced the launch of a US\$10 billion special fund dedicated to the implementation of the GDI. China has created the Global Development Project Pool and Capital Pool, attracting cooperative funding, targeted donations and beneficiary funding from official sources and social entities. The total number of projects in the Global Development Project Pool has exceeded 1,100, with over 600 projects completed or underway.

China has mobilized the international community to enhance global development financing. In addition to direct funding for key projects, China has leveraged capital from diverse sources through innovative development financing methods to create a multiplier effect. It has mobilized US\$14 billion in special funds from financial institutions, and is currently exploring projects valued at over US\$4 billion, with more than 30% of these investments involving African countries.^② The Secretariat of the Joint Working Group of the China International Development Cooperation Agency and the Gates Foundation was formally established. The multi-shareholder funding platform has bolstered in-depth cooperation under the GDI. From technical cooperation to capacity building, from poverty reduction and education to the digital economy, and from high-yield rice to Juncao processing, cooperation under the Initiative has brought well-being to the Global South in all aspects, leading them on the fast track to development.

China has encouraged other development partners to augment their inputs into development. China has assumed a constructive role in multilateral institutions on

^① “Gallop on the path to modernization—The strong voice for common development from the GDI,” Portal of the Chinese Central Government, September 21, 2024, https://www.gov.cn/yaowen/liebiao/202409/content_6975705.htm.

^② “CIDCA: Positive progress in three aspects of China-Africa cooperation within the framework of the GDI,” Portal of the Chinese Central Government, August, 21, 2024, https://www.gov.cn/lianbo/bumen/202408/content_6969556.htm.

global development issues, and urged developed countries and relevant international organizations to increase their inputs into global development. China has successfully promoted the International Monetary Fund to allocate an additional US\$650 billion in special drawing rights (SDR) equivalent, called on countries with surplus resources to lend SDRs to those in need, and facilitated consensus building on the lending program within the international community. In late 2021, President Xi Jinping pledged to provide US\$10 billion in SDRs equivalent to African countries.^① China has mobilized resources from nearly 20 international organizations, including the United Nations World Food Programme and UNDP, to implement over 150 projects across nearly 60 countries, including Ethiopia, Pakistan and Nigeria, benefiting more than 30 million people.^②

(iii) Advancing practical cooperation and promoting inclusive growth

The GDI addresses the most pressing issues faced by developing countries, particularly, poverty alleviation and climate change, and translates the global consensus on development into practical actions for international development cooperation, facilitating the realization of the 17 SDGs and contributing to global sustainable development.

In the area of poverty alleviation, China has called on the G20 to implement the Initiative on Supporting Industrialization in Africa and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and urged developed countries to honor their official development assistance commitments to help developing countries enhance their capacity for autonomous development. China has actively participated in and facilitated the adoption of the United Nations resolution on rural poverty reduction, and provided assistance with experience sharing to developing countries through the “100 Poverty Reduction Programs.” China has further expanded its opening-up by granting zero-tariff treatment

^① *Progress Report on the Global Development Initiative 2023*, Center for International Knowledge on Development.

^② “Promoting global poverty reduction with international practice of Chinese modernization—CID-CA spokesperson Li Ming takes questions from the media,” CIDCA, October 17, 2024, <http://www.cidca.gov.cn/20241017/14fa0aee40f444f295c996dcab503ce1/c.html>



to all products from LDCs having diplomatic relations with China, including 33 countries in Africa, effective from December 2024. This makes China the first large developing country and the major economy to take such step. China has consistently promoted the shared prosperity and revitalization of the Global South through concrete actions, demonstrating its broad-mindedness and commitment to work together with the Global South to build a just world of common development.

In the area of climate change, China has actively carried out South-South climate cooperation through the GDI, and advocated for a path of sustainable development featuring harmony between humanity and nature. **On the one hand, China has helped developing countries enhance their capacity to address climate change,** delivering support consistently through South-South climate cooperation. As of October 2024, China had signed 53 memorandums of understanding on South-South climate cooperation with 42 developing countries, and provided support to Small Island Developing States, LDCs and African countries in tackling climate change through low-carbon demonstration zones, mitigation and adaptation projects, and exchange workshops. **On the other hand, China has assisted developing countries in pursuing green development and transition.** China's large-scale development of renewable energy has significantly lowered clean energy access thresholds, enabling developing countries to access affordable clean energy. This shift reduces their reliance on traditional high-polluting energy infrastructure and facilitates a direct transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Apart from low-carbon demonstration zones with Laos, Cambodia and Seychelles and wind power projects in Kazakhstan, China has built a solar energy demonstration village in Mali, which is equipped with solar street lights, water pumps and power systems, making clean energy accessible for tens of thousands of local residents. It has also promoted the widespread adoption of clean energy in the Caribbean through the development of a photovoltaic power plant in Cuba. China's promotion of green development has written a chapter of win-win results with the rest of the world, demonstrating its role and responsibility as a responsible large country and giving a strong impetus into the fight against climate change.



Sherek Wind Farm in Almaty Region, Kazakhstan.
(Source: People's Daily Online)

In the realm of digital economy, China adheres to the principle of inclusive development for benefits for all. It has been committed to promoting technological inclusiveness and opportunity equity to mitigate the digital divide, ensuring that scientific and technological innovation is not a game for rich countries and people. Taking AI as an example, China has taken a range of initiatives to boost innovation with open source and pursue development through inclusion. At the national strategic level, China's 14th Five-Year Plan explicitly stipulates support for the open-source development of digital technologies.^① On international cooperation, China has actively participated in the global AI governance by endorsing the Statement on Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet. The statement will enable AI to be human rights based, human-centric, ethical, safe, secure and trustworthy while narrowing the inequalities and assisting developing countries in building AI capacities.

Practices guided by this principle have yielded remarkable results. In February

^① "Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for the National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-range Objectives Through the Year 2035," Portal of the Chinese Central Government, March 13, 2021, https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2021-03/13/content_5592681.htm.



2025, China's open-source large model DeepSeek topped the download charts of app markets in 140 countries and regions around the world at the same time. This marks an important milestone for China's open source model, demonstrating China's technological self-confidence and opening up a new path for technological inclusiveness and co-existence. DeepSeek's open source strategy represents an "ice-breaking action" in the global AI domain, which allows developers worldwide to freely utilize and improve the technology and fostering a broad ecosystem of users and applications. This event accelerates the integration and application of AI in various sectors and promotes technology exchanges and cooperation on a global scale.

In the area of connectivity, the GDI coordinates efforts in upgrading conventional infrastructure and digital connectivity based on the actual needs of developing countries. While boosting regional connectivity, the Initiative has bridged the technological gap and enhanced resilience in sustainable development, thereby laying a solid foundation for the development of these countries. **Regarding conventional infrastructure**, the GDI bolsters connectivity by improving conventional infrastructure such as highways, railways and ports, and promotes local economic and social development through high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. In recent years, many landmark infrastructure connectivity projects have been implemented in the Global South, profoundly altering local development trajectories. China has been proactive in fostering a high-level connectivity network and enhancing cooperation in the industrial chain and supply chain with neighboring countries, with an aim of building a community with a shared future with neighboring countries. The Padma Bridge Rail Link, the largest railway project in Bangladesh, was constructed by Chinese enterprises with the support of preferential export buyer's credit from China. The "Dream Road" has opened across its entire line to traffic, writing a new chapter in Bangladesh's railway development. By making 2-hour travel possible within 5 minutes, the China-Maldives Friendship Bridge has fulfilled the long-held dream of the local population and brought great convenience and numerous job opportunities. The Jakarta-Bandung High-speed Railway running through Indonesia interprets the rich connotations of the Bandung Spirit of "unity, friendship and cooperation" in the new era. The China-Laos Railway has handled over 43 million passenger trips and 48.3 million cargoes in the last three years, serving as a major transportation artery that reflects the wisdom and deep friendship between two peoples.



Chinese and Lao employees work together at the Luang Prabang Maintenance Center of the China-Laos Railway.
(Source: People's Daily Online)

With respect to digital connectivity, China has identified the digital economy as a priority area of cooperation under the GDI. Through assistance in digital infrastructure, China has accelerated the pace of modernization in developing countries in the global wave of digitization. In Africa, Chinese companies have laid 200,000 kilometers of fiber optic cables, enabling broadband Internet access for 6 million households, and built more than 50% of local wireless sites. In Tunisia, the China-Arab States BDS/GNSS Center—the first overseas center for China's Beidou Satellite Navigation Satellite System—provides high-quality satellite navigation services for Arab and African countries, covering precision agriculture and transportation. In Rwanda, China Agricultural University has spearheaded the demonstration program of industry-university-institute cooperation on “Smart Fisheries,” and launched the China-Rwanda digital fisheries demonstration project, promoting friendly bilateral cooperation in digital agriculture. In Thailand, Huawei has invested in a 5G Innovation Center to help improve the digital skills of local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), startups and educational institutions. In Indonesia, Tencent Cloud has opened Data Centers to deliver cloud computing technology and industrial digital solutions tailored to the needs of the relevant industries for digital transition...Keeping up with the development trends of informatization, digitization, networking and intelligence, digital economy



cooperation has become a new highlight of South-South cooperation.^①



An African journalist experiences AI-powered digital human multi-scene broadcasting at the media center for the 2024 FOCAC Summit.

(Source: People's Daily Online)

(iv) Upgrading human resources and supporting capacity building

In global development cooperation, China engages with developing countries to address major development issues from a long-term perspective, and helps them improve their institutional systems by innovating development concepts and sharing governance experiences. In the meantime, China assists in developing practical skills at the grassroots level according to people's livelihood needs, and fosters a capacity building model that combines conceptual guidance and practical assistance. This approach has realized all-around support ranging from development concepts to production technologies.

Adhering to the principle of “teaching fishing rather than giving fish,” China has

^① “Seizing digital opportunities for cooperation and development (Shared future—Serial review of the Global Development Initiative),” *People's Daily*, April 30, 2022, p. 03.

injected conceptual impetus to lasting development of developing countries through knowledge sharing and capacity building. As an active practitioner in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, China has taken the lead in issuing country programs and progress reports to selflessly share with the world its concepts, solutions and wisdom. China has also published the Global Development Report, contributing Chinese wisdom to international development cooperation. At the 2024 Beijing FOCAC Summit, China announced the Partnership for Mutual Understanding among Civilizations, which aims to build a platform for sharing experience in governance through the establishment of the China-Africa Development Knowledge Network and the invitation of 1,000 African political parties to China for exchanges. Within the framework of the GDI, China has pledged to provide 100,000 training opportunities for other developing countries to facilitate post-COVID economic recovery and social development. It has so far rendered 40,000 opportunities, covering all the countries in the Group of Friends of the GDI. Since its inception, the Institute of South-South Cooperation and Development has trained over 400 individuals for master's and doctoral degree from more than 70 countries, all of whom have now become builders of their respective countries and promoters of bilateral friendship. The Innovative Training Base of the Global Development Promotion Center offered offline training classes for students from 36 countries in 2023, which were well received by developing countries. The China House of Foreign-Aid Programs Trainees and the Young Leaders Community for Global Development have seen the extensive participation of African youth, as well as officials, experts and scholars in the field of international development cooperation.^①

China has remained committed to strengthening cooperation in human resources development and helping developing countries cultivate talents. In recent years, China has trained over 400,000 development talents of various types for more than 180 countries and regions. It has assisted other countries in improving labor quality and fostering economic diversification through technical training, management knowledge transfer, and vocational education. In Kyrgyzstan, China has offered “Intellectual Women, Intellectual Nation” training classes to empower local women with practical

^① “CIDCA: Positive progress in three aspects of China-Africa cooperation within the framework of the GDI,” Portal of the Chinese Central Government, August, 21, 2024, https://www.gov.cn/lianbo/bumen/202408/content_6969556.htm.



skills such as information technology and business planning. In Fiji, the China-Pacific Island Countries Juncao Technology Demonstration Center has delivered shared benefits to local people by introducing “the grass of happiness.” The Luban Workshop, a brand of international cooperation in vocational education, shines in 29 countries across Asia, Africa and Europe, cultivating numerous vocational and technical talents and vigorously boosting local employment. In addition, Chinese enterprises have actively embraced their global responsibilities, and carried out cooperation in talent training and technology transfer with relevant countries. Huawei has entered into cooperation with Thai universities, research institutions and enterprises with the goal of training 100,000 digital talents by 2025. Alibaba signed a cooperation agreement on a global trade platform with the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce in 2023 to provide digital training for nearly 100 local SMEs.



Participants of the Pacific Island Countries Juncao Technology Training Course from Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Cook Islands, Samoa and Nauru pose for a photo at Bula Agro Juncao Technology Demonstration Base, Fiji.

(Source: China-Fiji Juncao Technology Demonstration Center)

06

Conclusion

06

Conclusion

The modernization processes across various countries are ushering in a critical period. The Western modernization model has fallen into the trap of capital expansion and the mire of social split. Developing countries are striving to break through the dual constraints of international regulatory system and domestic structural imbalance. China, through its dedication to the unity of knowledge and practice, has transformed its own modernization experience into a global public good, providing an innovative alternative for the advancement of human civilization. The successful practice of Chinese modernization has reshaped the global modernization landscape. In just a few decades, from building a moderately prosperous society in all respects to making solid progress towards common prosperity and from leaping to the world's second largest digital economy to leading the world in installed capacity of renewable energy, China has completed the industrialization process that took Western countries several hundreds of years, creating a miracle of development. Over this course, the world has witnessed China's speed of "parallel" development. More importantly, the Chinese path dispels the myth of "modernization equals Westernization," and proves that there are more than one path towards modernization for all countries.

The GDI stays committed to development as a priority, to a people-centered approach, to benefits for all, to innovation-driven development, to harmony between man and nature, and to results-oriented actions. It has injected new impetus into modernization for all countries with its grand vision and pragmatic measures. In response to the

pressing need to revitalize global development, China has facilitated the establishment of the Group of Friends of the GDI. In order to bridge the development gap between the North and the South, China has leveraged cooperation resources through the US\$4 billion Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, and launched more than 1,100 projects aligned with development needs. China has always upheld the oriental wisdom of harmonious coexistence, in contrast to the zero-sum mindset adopted by certain countries. On the rails of the China-Laos Railway, between the blades of wind turbines in Kazakhstan, and in the fertile Juncao fields in Fiji, what the world sees is not a “core-periphery” dependent system, but a cooperation paradigm of peaceful development. It demonstrates the leapfrog program of green transition, instead of shifting costs by “pollution first, control later.” It embodies the value pursuit of people’s well-being, rather than the growth logic of capital supremacy.

“Global modernization should be pursued to enhance peaceful development and mutually beneficial cooperation and bring prosperity to all,” said President Xi Jinping. At present, global development arrives at a critical juncture. History and practice have repeatedly proved that modernization is not an “exclusive patent” of a small handful of countries, but a “symphony” encompassing various countries, and it is not a “single-answer question,” but a “pluralistic solution” featuring harmony in diversity. Facing up to the challenges of the times and conforming to the historical trends of peace and development, China has actively offered its solutions to promote international development cooperation, which demonstrates its commitment as a major country in revitalizing global development. Looking ahead, China will remain a contributor to global development through the implementation of the GDI, while holding high the banner of building a community with a shared future for mankind. China will contribute its wisdom and strength to addressing global development challenges and promoting global development towards a new era.

The English version is a translation from the Chinese version.



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