



The Global Development Initiative in the Context of Global Governance and of “a Community of Shared Future for Mankind”

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“The continual endeavor of man should be to lessen the sum of suffering and cruelty: that is the first duty.” *Jean-Christophe*, Romain Rolland (1866-1944).

Summary of the Study:

China's initiatives to enrich global governance, including the “Global Development Initiative”, take on their full meaning in light of the revival of Chinese civilization. They are also necessary for a complex globalization not only weakened by “failed States” but quite simply by a “failed world” incapable of giving itself the means to resolve the economic, social, geopolitical and environmental crises to which mankind is confronted.

Complex Globalization and Global Governance

The notion of global governance, which is now at the heart of international relations, is linked to the history of globalization but also to the geopolitical transformations that accompany it.

Indeed, it is clear that without the phenomenon of globalization, the question of global governance would not arise. Political science would continue to question the mechanisms of power, the nature of political regimes and the relations between States, but there would be no need to analyze what has been rightly defined as “the set of transactions by which collective rules are elaborated, decided, legitimized, implemented and controlled”¹ .

Some analysts believe it can be said of the process of globalization that it is on the ebb. As the second decade of the 21st century begins, the term de-globalization comes up more and more frequently in the media, on the

¹ This definition of governance is from Pascal Lamy. It is quoted in *Gouvernance mondiale*, report of the Economic Analysis Council (Conseil d'analyse économique), Pierre Jacquet, Jean Pisani-Ferry, Laurence Tubiana, 2001, page 13.

boards of directors of large companies or in intellectual debates.

Admittedly, there are signs supporting the idea of a regress in globalization. The immense crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic which has been going on since the beginning of 2020 has of course had an impact on the way States approach their sovereignty, whether political or economic. Everything will be done so that they no longer find themselves in situations of dependence during health shocks which we know will recur².

Preceding this tragedy, the 2016 Brexit had illustrated a rise in populism presented by some of its defenders as an alternative to a globalization perceived as alienating and generating growing inequalities.

Since Donald Trump's term in the White House which ended in January 2021, himself being the embodiment of a form of populism, we must also take into account the tensions of the decoupling between the United States of America and China.

Finally, the conflict that broke out in Ukraine on February 24, 2022 further divides an international community³ weakened by the economic difficulties

² In France, in the first government which was announced on May 20, 2022 of Emmanuel Macron's second presidency, the very name of the Ministry of the Economy contains the notion of "sovereignty": Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty.

³ Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock, letter to shareholders, March 24, 2022: "The Russian invasion of Ukraine has put an end to the globalization we have experienced over the last three decades".

caused by the public health crisis. One of the consequences of these troubles is inflation⁴, which hits the poorest first, causing serious political instability, as in Sri Lanka in May 2022.

Everyone can see that these new realities create a world far removed from the one that Thomas Friedman described in 2005⁵. They should not, however, lead us to adopt the thesis of a pure and simple de-globalization which would render useless the efforts to perfect the existing elements of global governance.

Globalization is indeed complex, neither unidirectional nor unidimensional, made of ebbs and surges depending on the nature of the relations between the global and the local, between the norms to which the nation-states have chosen to submit and the sovereignties. Added to this is that new balances must be found between the West and the rebirths of other civilizations, primarily the Chinese civilization.

Technological advances combining to form what some call a Fourth Industrial Revolution⁶ are objective

⁴ Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, *Shifting Geopolitical Tectonic Plates*, IMF publication, June 2022: “Because Russia and Ukraine are major producers and exporters of oil, gas, metals, and grains the price of these commodities has soared, causing hardship around the world and contributing to a significant increase in inflation.”

⁵ Thomas Friedman, *The World Is Flat*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2005.

⁶ “Mastering the Fourth Industrial Revolution” was the theme of the 2016 annual meeting of the World Economic Forum.

elements of this complex globalization introducing ever more intense connections between peoples. If cyberspace is fragmented, it nonetheless generates references, representations and practices that all those who have access to it share.

In addition, the issues that are at the heart of States' concerns do not stop at their borders. The problems they have to deal with are transnational, in other words globalized, and they constitute as many calls for a more effective collective organization. The climate challenge that threatens all of humanity, but also that of biodiversity's protection⁷, concern us all and can only be resolved through coordination and cooperation at the global level.

Moreover, and this is in our eyes fundamental, the awareness of belonging to the same human civilization has never been so strong and shared by peoples on all continents.

Everything leads us to think that in a more extended time frame, this awareness will only grow stronger. Let us mention two developments that will most likely be sources of this phenomenon. One is the formidable epic of space exploration unfolding before our eyes. One should not underestimate the “overview effect” felt by the astronauts when they see the Earth from space, and

⁷ Climate and sixth mass extinction of species are also linked: “Climate change and extreme weather events induced by humans have considerably damaged ecosystems and lead to an increase in the risk of extinction of more than 10,000 species”, Joint statement of the Commissions of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, 23 March 2022.

the fact that such an effect is perceived through photography by billions of human beings⁸.

The other evolution is linked to new issues that strengthen this feeling of belonging to a common humanity. If technological developments, in the field of neurotechnology for example, produce a transhumanist movement of which we can say that it is only in its infancy, by contrast it brings us back to a shared humanity whose dignity we must always and everywhere defend.

In this complex globalization, identities are mere syntheses between different intertwined affiliations. Thus, one can be Chinese, French or Canadian, experience a very legitimate feeling of patriotism, and at the same time, identify oneself as Asian, European or North American, and moreover, think of oneself as a “citizen of the world”. In that sense, as Jean Jaurès (1859-1914) had already clearly understood: “Patriotism and internationalism are only two forms, complementing each other, of the same love of humanity”⁹.

Geopolitical Factor as one of the Determinants of Global Governance

⁸ What is called the *Blue Marble* photo taken on December 7, 1972 from Apollo 17 is now firmly anchored in the collective imagination.

⁹ Speeches by Jean Jaurès, *Patriotisme et Internationalisme*, Paris, 1895, page 7. In French.

Power relations are another determinant of global governance. Until the end of the 20th century, it was largely developed under the impetus of the Western world, and in particular the United States of America, which became the dominant economy in 1885¹⁰.

The Chinese renaissance and its acceleration since the process of “reform and opening up” launched by Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) in 1978 profoundly changed geopolitical dynamics. It is therefore important to recall the history of relations between China and the instruments of global governance, and to analyze how the second economy of the planet influences them. This is what we propose to do in this study.

Chinese philosophers thought of the universal long before globalization. The concept of Tianxia (天下) has often been commented¹¹. This was also the case with the thinkers of classical Greece. But in reality, the world known to the Chinese or Europeans was for many centuries only a small part of the planet. To put it another way, their cartographers could only make imprecise and incomplete representations.

¹⁰ Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*, Princeton University Press, 1998, page 46.

¹¹ The work of the philosopher Zhao Tingyang on the rich concept of Tianxia, “All Under Heaven”, has the merit of generating a fruitful dialogue between intellectuals from different cultures.

There were certainly great empires that were prosperous and created artistic abundance. However, their knowledge of the world was nonetheless fragmentary, and even if they were linked to each other by trade routes, their exchanges remained limited.

The planisphere called “*Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*”, map of the “Myriad of countries of the world”, can be interpreted as the symbol of a great change in both scale and perspective. Printed during the Ming Dynasty in 1602, designed by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), it was therefore the product of a Sino-European encounter as the Americas featured on it expanded the space of the mandarins who could study it. With this map, which was closer to the real geography of the world, the universal became more concrete for the two edges of Eurasia.

In the 18th century, the dynamics that are at the foundation of our world took shape with greater precision. With the Industrial Revolution, distances were reduced, and we began to believe in progress by gradually moving away from a cyclical conception of time. We started talking about economic growth while the world population was also going to experience an upward curve.

This century inseparable from the Enlightenment is also defined by universalism that occupies the minds as never before¹². Since that moment harboring modernity, the

¹² There is obviously a link between *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, fundamental text of the French Revolution of 1789, and *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10 1948 in Paris at the Palais de Chaillot. The former announces the latter.

interdependence between the actors of international life, first imposed by the colonial phenomenon, has only intensified.

It is in this context that the first manifestations of international governance appeared in the second half of the 19th century. In 1874, the Treaty of Berne established the General Postal Union which would evolve into the Universal Postal Union¹³. In 1886, the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works can also be considered as a step forward in the field of international coordination. A few years earlier, the International Committee of the Red Cross (1863) had also shown the way towards a richer architecture linking nations to each other.

Unfortunately, these constructions did not lead to universal peace, quite the contrary. In 1914, European nationalisms collided resulting in a conflict, said to be the last, that would kill 15 million people. The United States of America did not enter the First World War until 1917. If we owe the League of Nations, the first attempt at global governance to end the war, to the personal commitment of the American President Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924), the fact that his country refused to become a member condemned it to failure.

¹³ The Universal Postal Union, whose official language is French, has become a specialized agency of the United Nations. It should be noted that it was under the impetus of the United States – Montgomery Blair (1813-1883) in particular – that Treaties were signed at the end of the 19th century creating this first international organization. The Trump administration has threatened to quit the Postal Union amid a trade war with China. Fortunately, a compromise could be found in 2019.

Then the world marched towards a Second World War. The massacre was even more terrible with 70 million lives mowed down by the guns. It was also characterized, in addition to the horror of the concentration camps, by the use of the nuclear bomb, that is to say that with its end the atomic age started.

To prevent the worst from happening again, the world then designed the United Nations (1945). As for the European continent, whose military adventures had exhausted, it took the path of integration which led to the European Union (1992).

For its part, the very young Republic of China born in 1912 thanks to the action of Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) succeeded a Qing dynasty (1644-1911) which had for 267 years organized the life of a fifth of humanity. The Republic of China joined the Postal Union in 1914. It would also become a member of the League of Nations. Four years after the end of World War II, Mao Zedong (1893-1976) proclaimed the birth of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949.

China then recovered its sovereignty which it had lost through a series of Unequal Treaties¹⁴ that it was forced to sign after the Opium Wars (1839 and 1856) in particular. Properly evaluating what it means for China to join an intergovernmental organization also means remembering that this country was deprived of real

¹⁴ Among these Unequal Treaties, we can mention the Treaty of Nanjing (1842) or that of Shimonoseki (1895). The Treaty of Nanjing forces the entry of Europeans into Shanghai and proclaims the cession of Hong Kong to the United Kingdom. That of Shimonoseki gives Taiwan to Japan.

sovereignty for a century, from the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 until Mao Zedong's declaration of October 1 1949: “The Chinese people have stood up!”

However, as early as 1953 Premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) presented the guidelines of Chinese diplomacy with “the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence”: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference, equality and peaceful coexistence. These principles shared by the India of Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), which had freed itself from British colonization in 1947, already contained an ambition for peace and announced a vision of the world reflecting a culture, a history and a sense of universal¹⁵.

The analyst must keep it in mind, China is an immense demographic weight¹⁶, an essential economic force, but it is above all a very much alive civilization which has always known how to reinvent itself over the course of four millennia.

Fundamentally, at the heart of a complex globalization, we find the signs of a slow formation of a world society not only induced by Western civilization, but whose sources are civilizations that have evolved for millennia in parallel. Their harmony cannot be easy to build. This phenomenon is all the more complicated in that it must be combined with the demographic factor. At the dawn

¹⁵ The Five Principles are reaffirmed in the preamble of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China which also states that “the future of China is closely linked to the future of the world”.

¹⁶ Indeed, the Chinese population has always been between a quarter and a fifth of the world's population.

of the 20th century, the planet had 1.5 billion inhabitants, it will reach 8 billion this year.

1.1 The People's Republic of China and Global Governance – Three Decades to Join a Pre-existing System (1971-2001)

October 25, 1971 is a milestone in the relations between China and the system of global governance. Indeed, by resolution 2758 entitled “Restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations”¹⁷, Beijing joined the successor of the League of Nations.

This event was part of a diplomatic history made up of clearly visible ideological oppositions and, at a deeper level, of the wounds of colonialism but also of cultural differences. When Mao Zedong proclaimed the birth of the People's Republic of China, the Cold War was dividing the world into two antagonistic blocs. A few months after the installation of the new China in Beijing, it was involved in the Korean War and confronted the

¹⁷ The end of the resolution ends with: “(...) the immediate expulsion of the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the seat which they illegally occupy at the United Nations Organization and in all the bodies connected with it”.

United States from 1950 to 1953 in a conflict where these blocs opposed each other with weapons.

But in 1964, the French Republic of General De Gaulle (1890-1970) decided to establish diplomatic relations with the new China despite pressure from the administration of Lyndon B. Johnson (1908-1973) who wanted to isolate the Beijing regime. It was in the context of the Cold War a major decision founding specific relations¹⁸ between the two countries located on opposite sides of the Eurasian continent.

De Gaulle, a man of culture and of the long term, was only showing America the sense of history. In the year following China's return to the United Nations, President Richard Nixon (1913-1994) visited China in February 1972 where he was able to meet with Mao Zedong. The United States needed China to get out of the trap of the Vietnam War, while Beijing saw a rapprochement with Washington as a way to protect itself from growing rivalries with the Soviet Union.

The United States of America and China finally established diplomatic relations on January 1, 1979. President Jimmy Carter welcomed Deng Xiaoping on January 29 of the same year to the White House.

The United States of America normalized its relations with China while the country had also been able to enter the atomic age. With Project 596, or otherwise called Miss Qiu, China had indeed detonated its bomb on

¹⁸ These relations remain specific and have not exhausted their potential. David Gosset, *Limited Views on the Chinese Renaissance*, Grandeur and Centrality, page 86.

October 16, 1964. In 1992, it joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty which had been designed in 1968. While India¹⁹ did not join to this day this treaty essential to global security, China now occupies a central position in the nuclear field having very close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)²⁰.

With resolution 2758, there followed a greater political cohesion of a world united by the fundamental text that is the Charter of the United Nations. It remained to lay the foundations for a better economic and monetary organization of the world. It was necessary to avoid a repetition of the crisis of 1929 which paved the way for all forms of extremism. We remember that Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) was elected in 1933 by a German society impoverished by the crisis and which had more than 30% of unemployment.

The work of John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), *The Economic Consequences of The Peace* (1919), had understandably made a deep impression. He highlighted the importance of economic reconstruction and the imperative not to humiliate the vanquished.

The Marshall Plan (1948) but also the Bretton Woods Agreements (1944) owe much to Keynes' thinking. The

¹⁹ To date, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel have not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

²⁰ *The Future of Nuclear Power in China*, Mark Hibbs, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 14, 2018. "China is on the course to lead the world in the deployment of nuclear power technology by 2030. Should it succeed, China will assume global leadership in nuclear technology development, industrial capacity, and nuclear energy governance".

International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank which emerged from the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference were largely designed by a compromise reached between the British Treasury adviser, John Maynard Keynes himself, and Harry Dexter White (1892-1948) the chief economist of the US Treasury Department.

The working relationship between China, the IMF and the World Bank did not begin until the 1980s after Deng Xiaoping had put his country on a new trajectory that gave more space to market forces.

It then remained to deal with international trade. Successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) signed in 1947, it was the World Trade Organization (WTO) which was created in 1995 which became the regulatory framework for world trade.

A GATT observer, China had been seeking to join the general agreement since 1986. The negotiations were long and difficult, but they resulted in China officially becoming a member of the WTO on December 11, 2001.

10 years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, China's entry into the WTO marked a new intensity for a globalization based on a theoretically complete global governance architecture. This process led from China by Jiang Zemin – general secretary of the Communist Party from 1989 to 2002 – took place despite a war against terrorism which began after September 11, 2001 and continued until the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan on August 30, 2021.

1.2 The People's Republic of China is a Pillar of Global Governance – 2001-2013

Since its accession to the World Trade Organization, China's weight relative to other world's economies has continued to grow.

It clearly benefited from the structures of international governance that it had decided to join despite resistance inside but also outside. By integrating into it, China acted in accordance with its desire for peace, it was consistent with its ability to think about the universal and it acted in its interests through advances in all the dimensions that form power.

In this new phase, 2008 was a highly symbolic year. By organizing historic Olympic Games²¹, China was no longer only an inescapable reality for decision-makers on all continents, but it had a profound effect on world public opinion. With such Games, the country which was then led by Hu Jintao – Party Secretary from 2002 to 2012 – signified the solidity of its belonging to the international community, exceptional organizational skills but also a capacity for victories – with 48 gold medals for China against 36 for the United States. When

²¹ *L'Echo*, August 24, 2008, JO Rogge closes the “truly exceptional” Games. “Through these Games, the world has learned a lot about China and China has learned a lot about the world,” said Jacques Rogge (1942-2021), the eighth President of the International Olympic Committee.

we remember that the same year, the country was hit by an earthquake which made more than 100,000 victims, we can get an idea of the resilience of an ancient civilization capable of absorbing the most destructive shocks. China is now a key player in the Olympic movement that Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937) reinvented in 1894. After He Zhenliang, Yu Zaiqing is the second Chinese citizen to hold the position of Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee.

Two years after the Beijing Olympics, the Shanghai World Expo was another major event in the relations between China and the world. It was in 2002 during an election within the framework of the International Bureau of Expositions that it won the right to organize it. In eight years, the economic capital of China was transformed. While 192 countries and 50 international organizations were represented at the Expo, 73 million people visited it, including 4 million foreigners.

2010 is also the year when China became the first exporter in the world²². Also in that same year, it overtook Japan to become the world's second largest economy²³.

²² *China: The Rise of a Trade Titan*, Alessandro Nicita and Carlos Razo, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), April 27, 2021.

²³ *China overtakes Japan as world's second-largest economy*, Justin McCurry and Julia Kollewe, *The Guardian*, February 14, 2011.

These dynamics by which China regained a position of centrality²⁴ in world affairs were also synonymous with the reorganization of value chains, created unprecedented levels of interdependence between nations and benefited American and European consumers.

While relying on its economic successes, China objectively became one of the pillars of the international community and of its governance. This is first and foremost true on the political and global security level. One of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, China had been committed for several decades to serving as peacekeeper. In September 2007, General Zhao Jingmin became the head of MINURSO in Western Sahara, the first Chinese officer to command such a peacekeeping force²⁵.

China's stabilizing role was also evident in the economic domain. The financial crisis of 2008 did not slow down Chinese growth, which was 9.4% in 2009. This performance was certainly linked to measures to stimulate the economy which had the advantage of being coordinated between the major economic areas of the world. While the Chinese market proved to be essential to the growth of the world economy, the G20 upgraded to Heads of State and Government became the symbol of

²⁴ The notion of centrality seems important to us to understand the representation that China has of itself in the world. Reference can be made to Chinese Centralities, in *Limited Views on the Chinese Renaissance*, page 157 – see bibliography.

²⁵ *China's Armed Forces: 30 Years of UN Peacekeeping Operations*, White Paper of China State Council Information Office, 2020.

a renewed multilateralism capable of responding to the most serious crises.

China accompanied this transformation of multilateralism. The Hangzhou G20 communiqué in 2016, which recognized the progress made since the crisis, called for the strengthening of cooperation for inclusive growth. At the heart of the “Hangzhou consensus” was the need to achieve the “Sustainable Development Goals” of the 2030 agenda. But we had already entered another phase by then, with China no longer just a pillar of global governance but a generator of initiatives to complete it.

1.3 The People's Republic of China Generating Initiatives for Global Governance – 2013-2022

Xi Jinping assumed the post of General Secretary of the Communist Party of China following the 18th Congress in November 2012. The imperfections of global governance had often been highlighted long before that moment²⁶, but the scale of the financial crisis of 2008, which had its source in Wall Street, questioned the sustainability of a system that produced profound imbalances. To put it in the simple but accurate words of

²⁶ Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents*, W.W. Norton & Company, 2002.

Tony Judt (1948-2010), we could not “continue to live like this”²⁷.

It was in this international context that a new stage began for China, which now had also an economic might that enabled it to become a force for proposal and action.

First there was the Belt and Road Initiative, the first elements of which were announced in Kazakhstan by the Chinese President in September 2013. A new vision for the economic development of Eurasia, Africa and South America, this strategy with global ambitions was remarkable in that it was designed neither by Europe nor by America, but by a power that did not belong to the Western world. 146 countries – the United Nations counts 193 members – have so far joined an initiative which was from the start structured in a pragmatic way around financial institutions including the Silk Road Fund.

In addition, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)²⁸ established on October 24, 2014 was intended to support the vision of the New Silk Roads underlying “One Belt, One Road”. With an initial capital of 100 billion dollars, this new institution complemented the system of development banks composed, among others,

²⁷ “We cannot go on living like this. The little crash of 2008 was a reminder that unregulated capitalism is its own worst enemy: sooner or later it must fall prey to its own excesses and turn again to the State for rescue”. Tony Judt, *Ill Fares the Land*, Penguin Press, 2010.

²⁸ Connectivity Infrastructure for Asia and Beyond, essay by AIIB President Jin Liqun, in *China and the World*, Volume 1, page 117. See bibliography.

of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Some continue to believe that these Chinese initiatives are intended to weaken the architecture that took shape in Bretton Woods. However, China is only responding to objective needs, while it continues to be one of the pillars of the Bretton Woods system²⁹. Along with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the New Development Bank was set up in Shanghai. Initially the BRICS bank (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), it expanded for the first time in 2021 to the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Bangladesh. In 6 years of existence, the New Development Bank has not only laid the foundations for an expansion that will continue, but it has also positioned itself to become an exemplary institution in the green finance sector, one of the keys to meeting environmental challenges.

The notion of “ecological civilization” is one of the principles that has guided China's action since 2012. It was even integrated following the 18th Congress into the constitution of the Chinese Communist Party. The COP21 in Paris in 2015 was indeed organized by French diplomacy under the expert leadership of Laurent Fabius, but its success would not have been possible without the convergences which on this subject brought Chinese President Xi Jinping and American President Barack Obama closer together. The same was true for the Joint

²⁹ China and the World: The role of China in the Evolution of the Global Financial Architecture, essay by Leslie Maasdorp in *China and the World*, volume 1, page 127. See bibliography.

Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) which made it possible to control the Iranian nuclear program.

The arrival of Donald Trump in the White House in 2017 brought with it major changes. He took his country out of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), withdrew it from the Paris Agreement and ended the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The international community no longer found itself trying to perfect multilateralism but it was simply trying to avoid its collapse. From this point of view, we must remember the joint efforts of China, France and Germany in 2018 and 2019 to face this major upset caused by the first economic power on the planet and which was at the source of multilateralism in the 20th century.

While the United States of Donald Trump pushed back against multilateralism, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in nations becoming even more inward-looking.

After Barack Obama and Donald Trump, Xi Jinping's third interlocutor at the White House was Joe Biden, who took office in January 2021. His election certainly had the advantage of signifying the return of American power to the service of multilateralism. But he had to rebuild what his predecessor had undone.

The contrast between contradictory policies on the one hand, and the coherence of a strategy on the other, can only strike the analyst. While the United States changed course on issues critical to the future of the world, China kept affirming itself as a responsible and predictable power.

First, at the end of 2020 there was the agreement on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). It should be noted that this was concluded while the United States exerted great pressure to once again isolate China. However, the Partnership is now operational, bringing together 15 countries, 30% of the world's population and 30% of the world economy.

In addition, the Global Development Initiative was going to be another proposal worth highlighting.

2.1 The Global Development Initiative: Context and Content

It was during the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 21, 2021 that Chinese President Xi Jinping first mentioned the “Global Development Initiative” – known in Chinese as 全球发展倡议 (quanqiu fazhan changyi).

In 2015, he had already launched the China-UN Peace and Development Fund, a mechanism that has been extended until 2030 coinciding with the Sustainable Development Goals³⁰.

³⁰ On the funding of UN activities, some note the differences in approach between the two main contributors, the United States and China. “China’s prompt and full payments to the UN send a contrasting signal to the growing rather than shrinking US debt and poor payment history”. This is how Andrew Hyde presents

The Global Development Initiative was announced in a speech articulated around four main axes: the need to defeat COVID-19, the imperative to revive the economy and promote global development, the duty to put into practice international relations marked by mutual respect and finally to improve global governance and practice true multilateralism³¹.

Considered as a whole, this speech delivered within the framework of the United Nations is above all a call to fight against unilateralism and the reaffirmation of China's commitment to multilateralism. It would be a mistake to underestimate the devastating effects on the international community of Donald Trump's populism, which for four years weakened the spirit of cooperation between nations. However, the Chinese President clearly stated: “We must improve global governance and practice true multilateralism. There is only one international system, the one centered on the United Nations, only one international order, the one based on international law, and only one set of rules, the fundamental rules governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.”³²

It was when Xi Jinping mentioned his second point, that is to say the requirement of development, that he

the situation. China's Emerging Financial Influence at the UN Poses a Challenge to the US, Stimson, April 4, 2022.

³¹ President Xi Jinping's September 21, 2021 speech can be found below in appendix.

³² Excerpt from President Xi Jinping's September 21, 2021 speech. It can be viewed below in appendix.

presented the Global Development Initiative. It gives priority to development and aims to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It puts the well-being of the people at the heart of its concerns. It strives to meet the needs of the poorest countries. It hopes to make good use of technology. It serves the idea of harmonious development between man and nature. It seeks to implement concrete actions³³.

In 2020, the People's Republic proclaimed that it had eradicated extreme poverty within its borders. Given its demographics and recent history, this constitutes a unique step that can be seen as a source of inspiration³⁴.

It is because it is itself a reference in the field of development that China is able to formulate strategies that can serve other nations. From this point of view, it can be said that its influence will be simply proportional to its ability to achieve the rebirth of Chinese civilization. To put it another way, success attracts. To which we will add that the opposite is also true, that is to say that failure repels.

This ambitious initiative, which comes on top of that of the New Silk Roads, is also the expression of voluntarism and hope. This voluntarism is at the source of the movement for emancipation and modernization

³³ Speech of September 21, 2021 by President Xi Jinping which appears below in appendix.

³⁴ *Four Decades of Poverty Reduction in China: Drivers, Insights for the World, and the Way Ahead*. World Bank Group, Development Research Center of the State Council, PRC, 2022.

that has guided the Chinese Communist Party since its creation in 1921.

In 2020, as the world celebrated the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, Xi Jinping gave a speech – on September 21, 2020 – in which he put forward a deep conviction: “Never has humanity had so many means to solve the difficulties she encounters and to change the world that is hers”.

However, despite all these resources, humanity suffers. In the 2021 Sustainable Development Goals Report³⁵, it appears that more than 100 million people have been pushed back into extreme poverty as the pandemic rages. If the trend continues, explains this same report, the target of eliminating poverty in 2030 would not be reached, and there would be 7% of poor people in the world in eight years. The report also points out that 2.37 billion people “are without food or cannot have a balanced diet on a regular basis”.

We can ignore it, or worse, pretend not to see it, and yet the urgency is there. The Global Development Initiative tries to respond to this responsibly. The initiative also echoes principles that we must always bear in mind and which are clearly set out in founding declarations.

Chapter IX of the Charter of the United Nations, article 55, reminds us that the members of the organization shall promote “higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of progress and development in the economic and social order”. And, moreover, article 25 of

³⁵ Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021, United Nations, 2021.

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims: “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, in particular for food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services.”

2.2 Reactions to the Global Development Initiative

A month after the introduction of the Chinese President's initiative, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reacted favorably to it. This was on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of resolution 2758 on October 25, 2021.

Since then, the initiative has been mentioned in several official documents between China and the Pacific countries, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Africa and Latin America.

In January 2022, the Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative was born. The event brought together 100 countries and 20 international organizations. At the time of writing this text, 53 countries have already joined the plan launched by China.

On May 9, 2022, this Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative held another online meeting led by Zhang Jun, Chinese Ambassador to the United Nations³⁶. Opened by State Councilor Wang Yi and

³⁶ Development initiative lauded at UN, *China Daily*, May 10, 2022.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, it was an opportunity for various personalities to discuss the meaning of the Global Development Initiative and the synergies to be created with already existing projects. Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Burhan Gafoor, Ambassador of Singapore to the United Nations, Mathu Joyini, Ambassador of South Africa to the United Nations, Qu Dongyu, Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Bruno Rodriguez, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Sameh Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, or Liu Zhenmin, United Nations Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs, were among the speakers.

In a reaction that could not be clearer, former African Union Commission deputy chairperson Erastus Mwencha told of the Global Development Initiative that it was simply vital for Africa.

On April 25, 2022, when the coordinator of the United Nations system in China, Siddharth Chatterjee, was received by State Councilor Wang Yi, he declared that everything will be done to ensure that Chinese efforts come into synergy with the work of the various United Nations agencies.

Through its representative in China, Rebecca Ivey, the Davos Forum (World Economic Forum) has also expressed its support for the initiative³⁷. By announcing a China strategy on June 1, 2022, Sanda Ojiambo, CEO of

³⁷ How China's efforts are advancing global development, Rebecca Ivey, May 25, 2022.

UN Global Compact, whose raison d'être is to mobilize the private sector to go beyond short-term financial profits, also joined the Global Development Initiative³⁸.

In just a few months, momentum has certainly been created and this despite a war in Ukraine which since February 2022 has divided the international community and occupied the attention of the media.

Everything must be done to not only maintain this momentum but to amplify it.

2.3 The Global Development Initiative, the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

During the 50th anniversary of resolution 2758 on October 25, 2021, Antonio Guterres rightly spoke of the alignment between the Global Development Initiative and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2000 with the Millennium Development Goals, the community of Nations set itself development goals to be achieved by 2015. In 2015, with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals Development Goals, it has given itself new requirements for 2030. Despite Chinese achievements, if everything continues as it is, the SDGs will not be achieved at the global level.

³⁸ UN Global Compact China Strategy, United Nations Global Compact, 1 June 2022.

At the May 2022 meeting of the Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative, the UN Secretary-General was very clear: “Progress is at risk”³⁹.

Yet, one should not lose sight of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the pandemic is a colossal obstacle that stands in the way of progress. In the 2021 report on the SDGs already quoted, it is pointed out that “the pandemic has halted or reversed progress in health and reduced life expectancy”. COVID-19 has also wiped out 20 years of progress in education. It also led to the loss of the equivalent of 255 million full-time jobs. This is four times more than during the financial crisis of 2008.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) also raises the alarm in its 2022 Report on the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific⁴⁰. The study simply states that under the current circumstances the region will not achieve any of the 17 goals!

Whether for the Asia-Pacific region or for the world in general, goal 16 which relates to peace, is obviously fundamental. On April 21, 2022, while delivering the opening speech of the Boao forum, Chinese President Xi Jinping not only reiterated the importance of the Global Development Initiative, but he also announced a Global Security Initiative which in a way complements it. This

³⁹ Development initiative lauded at UN, *China Daily*, May 10, 2022.

⁴⁰ *Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2022*, ESCAP.

is consistent with the China-UN Peace and Development Fund discussed above and whose title is self-explanatory.

While speaking on June 1, 2022 during a high-level meeting between Chinese and Russian academics, State Councilor Wang Yi himself linked the two initiatives which, according to him, aim to remedy the four deficits of peace, security, trust and governance⁴¹.

The Concept of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind

One of the building blocks of our times is the revival of Chinese civilization. Such a process has economic, social and political dimensions, but it is also characterized by China's projection towards the world. The opening up that Deng Xiaoping designed must be understood as a receiving attitude in relation with the world but also as a capacity to emit towards the outside.

The material content of this projection is obvious. We can mention exports, investments or even the internationalization of certain companies among other vectors. If the qualitative aspects of the projection are by nature less visible, they are no less decisive. The rebirth

⁴¹ The China-Russia High-level Think Tank Forum co-organized by China Academy of Social Sciences and the Russian International Affairs Council has been held annually since 2018. For Wang Yi's remarks, see: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202206/t20220601_10697595.html

of a civilization has a whole series of quantitative elements, but it is also the reactivation of ideas and values that come from a more distant past.

At the heart of this civilizational metamorphosis, we find the notion of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind⁴². In March 2018, this concept of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind was even included in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

It is a principle by which China objectively fits into the universal. It also comes to found and justify strategies such as those of the New Silk Roads or the Global Development Initiative. If Nations' futures are inseparable from each other, if they are interdependent, then we must work tirelessly to include those which are still on the periphery of modernity.

If the expression of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind as such is relatively recent, the spirit that animates it seems to us to be one of the permanent features of Chinese civilization. Indeed, it can be understood as a variation on the Confucian concept of “great unity” (大同 - Da Tong), itself more recently reinterpreted by Kang Youwei (1858-1927) in his *Book of Great Unity*⁴³, a surprising but stimulating work. We

⁴² David Gosset, From the Chinese Renaissance to “a Community of Destiny for Mankind”, in *Limited Views on the Chinese Renaissance*, page 9. See bibliography.

⁴³ *The One-World Philosophy of K'ang Yu-wei*, translated from Chinese by Laurence G. Thompson, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1958. Available in English on the Internet Archive, and in Chinese here [Zhonghua Diancang \(中华典藏\)](#). In this work, Kang writes: “(...) the solution lies only in following the Way of One World of Complete Peace-and-Equality”. Such a reinterpretation

will add that if to the left of the portrait of Mao Zedong in Tiananmen Square when facing it, we can read the expression "Long Live the People's Republic of China" (中华人民共和国万岁), to its right one reads "Long Live the Great Unity of the World's Peoples" (世界人民大团结万岁), another reference to the universal.

Not to be mistaken with an imperialist doctrine which would aim to impose itself on the outside, refusing isolationism, the ideal of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind is an invitation to harmonize universalisms in that one could call an amicable multipolarity, seeking a middle way between hegemonic uniformity and the clash of civilizations.

Changing Paradigm to Navigate Complexity: Interactions between Failed States and “Failed World”

We would like to insist on the fact that what is truly new in our times is not globalization's deconstruction, but the level of complexity of the interconnectedness that makes up our world.

In this context, a paradigm shift is needed. If the problem of failed States remains, that of a failed world, that is to say an international community incapable of renewing its mechanisms of governance, could indeed constitute the major risk of our time. Let's borrow an architectural metaphor. To be stable and durable, any great building

by Kang Youwei of the notion of Da Tong (大同) may seem utopian, but isn't it a matrix of progress?

certainly needs pillars that support it, but it is its keystone that gives it cohesion and balance.

The process by which we have gone from a truly fragmented world where governance for its better functioning was absent, to that of the League of Nations, then to that of the United Nations, shows that we can meet the challenges of complexity through legal constructions that are as many milestones on the path to progress. In the 21st century, the improvement of the intergovernmental mechanisms can only be done in a patient dialogue between civilizations that this study would like to be able to modestly encourage.

In the report led by Maria Langan-Riekhof, *Global Trends 2040*⁴⁴, a publication of the US National Intelligence Council, “Tragedy and mobilization” is one of five scenarios that could unfold over the next two decades. According to this construction, it would be following a tragedy of great magnitude that China and the European Union would see themselves as the source of a global mobilization to revitalize multilateral institutions to meet common challenges.

May we have enough sanity not to let tragedies occur which we know that today's cooperation could prevent! It is now that China, the European Union and the United States must mobilize with others to save humanity from unnecessary suffering and lead it towards ever greater shared progress.

⁴⁴ *Global Trends 2040*, National Intelligence Council, March 2021.

David Gosset, sinologist, is the founder of China-Europe-America Global Initiative (2021)⁴⁵.

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⁴⁵ <http://www.ourglobalinitiative.com/en>

**Appendix: Speech by Xi Jinping,
President of the People's Republic of China
At the General Debate of the 76th Session of
The United Nations General Assembly,
21 September 2021.**

**Bolstering Confidence and Jointly Overcoming
Difficulties to Build a Better World**

Mr President,

The year 2021 is a truly remarkable one for the Chinese people. This year marks the centenary of the Communist Party of China. It is also the 50th anniversary of the restoration of the lawful seat of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations, a historic event which will be solemnly commemorated by China. We will continue our active efforts to take China's cooperation with the United Nations to a new level and make new and greater contributions to advancing the noble cause of the UN.

Mr. President,

A year ago, global leaders attended the high-level meetings marking the 75th anniversary of the UN and issued a declaration pledging to fight COVID-19 in solidarity, tackle challenges together, uphold multilateralism, strengthen the role of the UN, and work

for the common future of present and coming generations.

One year on, our world is facing the combined impacts of changes unseen in a century and the COVID-19 pandemic. In all countries, people long for peace and development more than ever before, their call for equity and justice is growing stronger, and they are more determined in pursuing win-win cooperation.

Right now, COVID-19 is still raging in the world, and profound changes are taking place in human society. The world has entered a period of new turbulence and transformation. It falls on each and every responsible statesman to answer the questions of our times and make a historical choice with confidence, courage and a sense of mission.

First, we must beat COVID-19 and win this decisive fight crucial to the future of humanity. The history of world civilization is also one of fighting pandemics. Rising to challenges, humanity has always emerged in triumph and achieved greater development and advancement. The current pandemic may appear overwhelming, but we humanity will surely overcome it and prevail.

We should always put people and their lives first, and care about the life, value and dignity of every individual. We need to respect science, take a science-based approach, and follow the laws of science. We need to both follow routine, targeted COVID-19 protocols and take emergency response measures, and both carry out epidemic control and promote economic and social

development. We need to enhance coordinated global COVID-19 response and minimize the risk of cross-border virus transmission.

Vaccination is our powerful weapon against COVID-19. I have stressed on many occasions the need to make vaccines a global public good and ensure vaccine accessibility and affordability in developing countries. Of pressing priority is to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of vaccines globally. China will strive to provide a total of two billion doses of vaccines to the world by the end of this year. In addition to donating 100 million US dollars to COVAX, China will donate 100 million doses of vaccines to other developing countries in the course of this year. China will continue to support and engage in global science-based origins tracing, and stands firmly opposed to political maneuvering in whatever form.

Second, we must revitalize the economy and pursue more robust, greener and more balanced global development. Development holds the key to people's well-being. Facing the severe shocks of COVID-19, we need to work together to steer global development toward a new stage of balanced, coordinated and inclusive growth. To this end, I would like to propose a Global Development Initiative:

— Staying committed to development as a priority. We need to put development high on the global macro policy agenda, strengthen policy coordination among major economies, and ensure policy continuity, consistency and sustainability. We need to foster global development partnerships that are more equal and balanced, forge greater synergy among multilateral development

cooperation processes, and speed up the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

— Staying committed to a people-centered approach. We should safeguard and improve people's livelihoods and protect and promote human rights through development, and make sure that development is for the people and by the people, and that its fruits are shared among the people. We should continue our work so that the people will have a greater sense of happiness, benefit and security, and achieve well-rounded development.

— Staying committed to benefits for all. We should care about the special needs of developing countries. We may employ such means as debt suspension and development aid to help developing countries, particularly vulnerable ones facing exceptional difficulties, with emphasis on addressing unbalanced and inadequate development among and within countries.

— Staying committed to innovation-driven development. We need to seize the historic opportunities created by the latest round of technological revolution and industrial transformation, redouble efforts to harness technological achievements to boost productivity, and foster an open, fair, equitable and non-discriminatory environment for the development of science and technology. We should foster new growth drivers in the post-COVID era and jointly achieve leapfrog development.

— Staying committed to harmony between man and nature. We need to improve global environmental governance, actively respond to climate change and create a community of life for man and nature. We need

to accelerate transition to a green and low-carbon economy and achieve green recovery and development. China will strive to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. This requires tremendous hard work, and we will make every effort to meet these goals. China will step up support for other developing countries in developing green and low-carbon energy, and will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad.

—Staying committed to results-oriented actions. We need to increase input in development, advance on a priority basis cooperation on poverty alleviation, food security, COVID-19 response and vaccines, development financing, climate change and green development, industrialization, digital economy and connectivity, among other areas, and accelerate implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, so as to build a global community of development with a shared future. China has pledged an additional three billion US dollars of international assistance in the next three years to support developing countries in responding to COVID-19 and promoting economic and social recovery.

Third, we must strengthen solidarity and promote mutual respect and win-win cooperation in conducting international relations. A world of peace and development should embrace civilizations of various forms, and must accommodate diverse paths to modernization. Democracy is not a special right reserved to an individual country, but a right for the people of all countries to enjoy. Recent developments in the global situation show once again that military intervention from the outside and so-called democratic transformation

entail nothing but harm. We need to advocate peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom, which are the common values of humanity, and reject the practice of forming small circles or zero-sum games.

Differences and problems among countries, hardly avoidable, need to be handled through dialogue and cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual respect. One country's success does not have to mean another country's failure, and the world is big enough to accommodate common development and progress of all countries. We need to pursue dialogue and inclusiveness over confrontation and exclusion. We need to build a new type of international relations based on mutual respect, equity, justice and win-win cooperation, and do the best we can to expand the convergence of our interests and achieve the biggest synergy possible.

The Chinese people have always celebrated and striven to pursue the vision of peace, amity and harmony. China has never and will never invade or bully others, or seek hegemony. China is always a builder of world peace, contributor to global development, defender of the international order and provider of public goods. China will continue to bring the world new opportunities through its new development.

Fourth, we must improve global governance and practice true multilateralism. In the world, there is only one international system, i.e. the international system with the United Nations at its core. There is only one international order, i.e. the international order underpinned by international law. And there is only one set of rules, i.e. the basic norms governing international

relations underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

The UN should hold high the banner of true multilateralism and serve as the central platform for countries to jointly safeguard universal security, share development achievements and chart the course for the future of the world. The UN should stay committed to ensuring a stable international order, increasing the representation and say of developing countries in international affairs, and taking the lead in advancing democracy and rule of law in international relations. The UN should advance, in a balanced manner, work in all the three areas of security, development and human rights. It should set common agenda, highlight pressing issues and focus on real actions, and see to it that commitments made by all parties to multilateralism are truly delivered.

Mr. President,

The world is once again at a historical crossroads. I am convinced that the trend of peace, development and advancement for humanity is irresistible. Let us bolster confidence and jointly address global threats and challenges, and work together to build a community with a shared future for mankind and a better world for all.