

Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth*

Xi Jinping: We need to find a way for man and nature to live in harmony, balance and coordinate economic development and ecological protection, and work together to build a prosperous, clean and beautiful world.



*We present to your attention the full text** of the speech of the Chinese President Xi Jinping, on Wednesday, at the United Nations (UN) Summit on Biodiversity, September 30th, 2020:*

Mr. President,
Colleagues,

At the special moment as the United Nations marks the 75th anniversary of its founding and countries around the world strive to emerge from COVID-19 and promote high-quality economic recovery, the UN has convened this Summit on Biodiversity. It gives us an opportunity to discuss major issues of biodiversity protection and sustainable development and therefore has both practical and far-reaching significance.

The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diver-

sity (COP15) will be hosted by China next year in the city of Kunming. COP15 offers an opportunity for the parties to adopt new strategies for global biodiversity governance.

At present, there exists an acceleration of the global extinction of species. The loss of biodiversity and the degradation of the ecosystem pose a major risk to human survival and development. COVID-19 reminds us of the interdependence between man and Nature. It falls to all of us to act together and urgently to advance protection and development in parallel, so that we can turn Earth into a beautiful homeland for all creatures to live in harmony. To that end, I would like to make the following proposals:

First, we need to adhere to ecological civilization and increase the drive for building a beautiful world. Biodiversity affects the well-being of humanity and provides the very basis for the human race to survive and thrive.

* The text is titled by BRIQ.

** The text is retrieved from <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-09-30/Full-text-Xi-Jinping-s-speech-at-UN-summit-on-biodiversity-Udo37GZogE/index.html>.



Chinese President Xi Jinping addresses the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity via video on Sept. 30, 2020. (Xinhua/Ju Peng)

The industrial civilization, while creating vast material wealth, has caused ecological crises as manifested in biodiversity loss and environmental damage. A sound ecosystem is essential for the prosperity of civilization. We need to take up our lofty responsibility for the entire human civilization, and we need to respect nature, follow its laws and protect it. We need to find a way for man and nature to live in harmony, balance and coordinate economic development and ecological protection, and work together to build a prosperous, clean and beautiful world.

Second, we need to uphold multilateralism and build synergy for global governance on the environment. Since the founding of the UN, the international community has made active efforts toward global environmental governance. International instruments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement form the legal foundation for environmental governance in their respective fields. They represent important accomplishments of multilateral cooperation and enjoy broad support and participation from the international commu-

nity. Faced with the risks and challenges to the environment worldwide, countries share a common stake as passengers in the same boat and form a community with a shared future. Unilateralism finds no support; cooperation is the right way forward. We must firmly safeguard the UN-centered international system and uphold the sanctity and authority of international rules so as to enhance global governance on the environment.

Third, we need to continue with green development and increase the potential for high-quality economic recovery after COVID-19. Globally, the coronavirus has wreaked havoc on every aspect of economic and social development. We need to have our eyes on the long run, have determination and stay the course for green, inclusive and sustainable development. The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development points the way forward, and recognizes biodiversity as an important basis, a goal and the means for achieving sustainable development. Recognizing that "our solutions are in Nature", we could strive to find development opportunities while preserving Nature, and achieve win-win in both ecological conservation and high-quality development.

Fourth, we need to heighten our sense of responsibility and strengthen the power of action to tackle challenges to the environment. Being at varying stages of development, developed and developing countries have different historical responsibilities and practical capabilities for addressing environmental issues. We need to uphold the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits, and accommodate developing countries' concerns over funding, technology and capacity building. We need to earnestly fulfill our commitments, focus on our targets, and effectively reverse biodiversity loss so as to protect the planet we call home.

Mr. President,

“Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth”, which is the theme of next year's Biodiversity Conference in Kunming, embodies humanity's hope for a better future. As the host country of COP15, China is happy to share with all parties its experience of advancing biodiversity governance and ecological progress.

- *China has pursued development under the vision of building an ecological civilization.* From the traditional Chinese wisdom that the laws of Nature govern all things and that man must seek harmony with Nature, to the new development philosophy emphasizing innovative, coordinated, green and open development for all, China has always prioritized ecological progress and embedded it in every dimension and phase of its economic and social development. The goal is to seek a kind of modernization that promotes harmonious coexistence of man and Nature.

- *China has rolled out strong policies and actions.* China adopts a holistic approach to conserving the mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes and grasslands, and makes coordi-

nated efforts to advance biodiversity governance. We have stepped up national legislation for preserving biodiversity, and are drawing red lines for protecting the ecosystems. We have effected a national parks system, carried out major biodiversity conservation projects, and increased social participation and public awareness. For the last 10 years, China has topped the world in forest resource increase, with more than 70 million hectares of land afforested. We have made long-term, large-scale efforts to combat sandification and desertification, and we have effectively protected and restored the wetlands. We now have one of the world's largest banks of genetic resources reserve. Ninety percent of terrestrial ecosystem types and 85 percent of key wild animal populations are under effective protection.

Guided by the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, China will continue to make extraordinary efforts to scale up its nationally determined contributions.

- *China has taken an active part in global environmental governance.* China takes seriously its obligations under environment-related treaties, including on climate change and biodiversity. We have hit, ahead of schedule, the targets set for 2020 for tackling climate change and establishing protected areas. As the largest developing country, China is prepared to take on international responsibilities commensurate with its level of development, and contribute its part to global environmental governance. Guided by the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, China will continue to make extraordinary efforts to scale up its nationally determined contributions.



Xi Jinping visits Niubeiliang National Nature Reserve to learn about ecological conservation in the Qinling Mountains, Shaanxi Province. (Xinhua, 2020)

China will adopt even more forceful policies and measures and strive to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060, thus making greater efforts and contributions toward meeting the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

Mr. President,

As the saying goes, “Little by little, grains of soil pile up to make a mountain and drops of water converge to form a river.” To enhance

biodiversity conservation and global environmental governance require sustained efforts by all parties. I want to welcome you to Kunming, the beautiful “Spring City”, next year, to discuss and draw up plans together for protecting global biodiversity, and I look forward to the adoption of a comprehensive, balanced, ambitious and implementable framework of action. Now, let us proceed from this Summit and work in concert to build a beautiful world of harmony among all beings on the planet.