

TOP NEWS

China-proposed group to boost AI cooperation

International community urged to build partnerships for ‘brighter, smarter future’

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A new international group proposed by China was launched at the United Nations on Tuesday, during a meeting co-chaired by China and Zambia, to promote global cooperation in building artificial intelligence capacity.

Representatives from more than 80 other countries, including Egypt, Pakistan, Brazil, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Russia, the United States, France and the United Kingdom, also attended the inaugural meeting of the Group of Friends for International Cooperation on AI Capacity Building.

The UN's Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology was represented as well.

Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN, emphasized the need to harness AI for good, promote fairness and inclusivity, uphold multilateralism and focus on capacity-building.

He said that the Group of Friends aims to foster broad partnerships, implement practical actions, and support sustainable development worldwide through AI.

"We hope this Group of Friends can play a role in helping the international community seize the immense opportunities presented by digital development, build partnerships, and undertake actions for a brighter and smarter future," Fu said. "We must promote AI for good."

AI can play a crucial role in implementing the UN's 2030 Agenda, enhancing people's well-being and addressing global challenges, he added, but the development of AI also could bring conflicting rules, social risks and ethical challenges.

"We must always keep in mind that high-quality AI development can only be possible when robust security guardrails are in place. AI must always be under human control," he said.

Fu also said that "we must uphold fairness and inclusiveness," and he called for ensuring that all nations have equal opportunities to develop and benefit from AI in an open, nondiscriminatory environment.

In addition, he called for "championing multilateralism" and advocating collaborative global efforts to make AI a tool for the collective benefit of humanity rather than a privilege for a select few.

Emmanuel Pamu, permanent secretary for budget and economic affairs in Zambia's Ministry of

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Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN

Finance and National Planning, stressed the importance of bridging the AI divide and supporting the UN's role in global AI governance.

He called on all parties to back the Group of Friends and strengthen international cooperation.

China has increasingly focused on AI development in recent years. Last year, President Xi Jinping introduced the Global AI Governance Initiative, aiming to address key challenges in AI governance and promote global cooperation.

In July, under the guidance of the initiative, China led the unanimous adoption of a UN General Assembly resolution on AI capacity-building. The resolution was co-sponsored by 143 countries, including the US.

The Group of Friends is rooted in the resolution, which aims to enhance international collaboration on AI capacity-building and promote "an open, fair and nondiscriminatory business environment".

The resolution "encourages international cooperation to help countries, especially developing ones, strengthen AI capacity, enhance their representation in global AI governance, and advocate for an open, fair and nondiscriminatory business environment", Fu told the General Assembly.

More recently, China and Zambia co-hosted the High-Level Meeting on International Cooperation on Capacity-Building of AI during the General Debate of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in September.

At the event, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi introduced the AI Capacity-Building Action Plan for Good and for All. He also proposed establishing the Group of Friends for International Cooperation on AI Capacity Building.

Diplomacy: Long-term resolution of conflict sought

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"China's diplomatic support has also materialized in its organization of other states in seeking a long-term resolution to the conflict," the scholars wrote, noting that China presented a five-point proposal to the United Nations Security Council last year for establishing a comprehensive ceasefire to end the fighting in Gaza.

Regarding the Ukraine crisis, China and Brazil jointly proposed a six-point consensus for its political settlement. As of September, the proposal had received positive response from more than 110 countries, according to the Foreign Ministry.

Also in September, China, Brazil and other Global South countries jointly launched the Friends for Peace group, which seeks a peaceful resolution of the Ukraine crisis, at UN headquarters in New York.

Wu Zhicheng, director and professor of the Institute of International Strategy at the Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (National Academy of Governance), said: "To safeguard multilateralism, justice should be served and double standards should not be practiced. Major countries, in particular, should play

an exemplary role, shoulder greater responsibility and fulfill their due role as major countries.

"It is important to enhance the representation of developing countries in the global governance system, and to make international organizations such as the United Nations better represent the interests of the vast number of developing countries," he added.

Keith Bennett, a London-based senior analyst on international relations and co-editor of the Friends of Socialist China platform, warned that "the challenges facing humanity are growing", such as climate change and pandemics, and "none of these issues now can be reasonably tackled and addressed without the active involvement of China".

To address such issues, China has come up with proposals, solutions and theoretical frameworks, as summed up in the three global initiatives of President Xi, he said.

As a major country, China "is actually putting forward comprehensive and realistic proposals for addressing these issues in a way that is acceptable to the majority of countries in the world and certainly to the majority of the people of the countries in the world", he added.

Major gate gets face-lift



The Gate of Supreme Harmony, or Taihe Gate, at the Palace Museum in Beijing undergoes renovation on Wednesday. The gate is the largest of its kind in the Forbidden City. Next year, the museum will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its establishment. YI HAIFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Macao bolsters role as bridge, trade hub

By ZHANG YI
and WANG JING in Macao

Products such as Portuguese wines, Brazilian coffee and rice from Mozambique in Southeast Africa can all be found in Macao, as the special administrative region, a vibrant melting pot of Chinese and Portuguese influences, is positioning itself as a key trade hub between China and Portuguese-speaking nations.

At an exhibition center in Macao specializing in products from Portuguese-speaking countries, around 3,000 items, primarily food products with vibrant and exotic packaging from nine such countries, are elegantly displayed, awaiting Chinese buyers.

Each displayed item is accompanied by a QR code, streamlining communication with suppliers. Green QR codes denote products readily available in Macao, while blue codes signal opportunities for foreign suppliers seeking agents and distributors in China. Chinese-Portuguese translation services are provided for negotiations.

Ao Ieong Ka-lok, from the Macao Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute, said, "Businesspeople need not travel vast distances to Brazil, Angola or Portugal. By visiting Macao, they can learn about the diverse array of products originating from Portuguese-speaking countries."

He said that, Porthos, the oldest brand of Portuguese sardines, famous for eye-catching bright colors and iconic artwork of the tins and the sardines' exquisite taste, is the most popular and representative Portuguese import. Nowadays, it adorns the shelves of specialty stores lining the streets of Macao.

"This distinctive canned fish from Portugal has been an integral part of Macao residents' lives for generations," said the 30-year-old. "During my childhood, whenever typhoons struck Macao, stocking



up on these canned goods was a common practice in our homes."

Macao, where Chinese and Portuguese are official languages, maintains close ties with Portuguese-speaking countries. About 68 percent of young people are fluent in two out of the three languages — Chinese, Portuguese and English — and 28 percent are proficient in all three, according to data from the SAR government.

Fu Tang-long, vice-president of the Macao Live Streaming Association, said it is exploring the use of e-commerce talent in Macao to assist Chinese brands in expanding into Portuguese-speaking countries and to facilitate the introduction of overseas brands into China.

Jose Chan Rodrigues, a host and livestreaming blogger from Macao, whose grandfather is from Portugal, said that Macao people of Portuguese descent can play a significant role in interactions between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

"They have a deep understanding of Portuguese culture and overseas connections with relatives living abroad, and they are proficient in Portuguese, Mandarin, Cantonese and English," he said.

Last year, the trade volume between China and Portuguese-speaking countries reached \$220.9 billion. In the first three quarters of this year, the value of goods traded between China and those countries amounted to \$174.18 billion, up 7.84 percent year-on-year, data showed.

"The trade meets the development needs of both sides and demonstrates remarkable resilience," said Ji Xianzheng, secretary-general of the Permanent Secretariat of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries. Established

in 2003, the forums held in Macao have been instrumental in facilitating close economic, trade and cultural exchanges.

Portuguese-speaking countries have urgent development needs in areas such as automobiles, high technology and agricultural machinery, and have a strong demand for infrastructure development, Ji said, adding that Macao should continue to serve as a bridge connecting China and those countries.

President Xi Jinping's attendance at the 19th G20 Summit and his state visit to Portuguese-speaking Brazil last month injected more confidence into future cooperation between the two countries.

Ma Chi Ngai Frederico, president of the Macao Chamber of Commerce, said Brazil is an important trade partner for China, with traded goods primarily consisting of food items such as meat, pepper and soybeans.

Macao's contribution in trade between them lies in providing services such as forums to help support the country's high-level opening-up and maintain international friendships, he said.

Gabriela Rorato, a Brazilian student at University of Macau, said it is convenient living and studying in Macao, as the city has road signs in Portuguese, and she also enjoys buying items that are of good quality and reasonably priced from Chinese e-commerce platforms.

China and Brazil are very open to each other, which allowed Rorato to enjoy preferential visa policies and work in companies that mix Chinese and Brazilian culture, she said.

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Nation's anti-desertification experience seen as inspiring

By YAN DONGJIE
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Goji berries from the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, raisins and walnuts from the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, and other economic crops grown in the desert have been highly welcomed by people from around the world at the China desertification control achievement exhibition in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

"I have never seen a berry that can produce so many different types of food, and they all taste great. The staff on site told me that they are all grown in the desert, not only preventing wind erosion but also bringing considerable income to the local people," said Cesar Luis Garcia, an environmental technology expert from Argentina.

He made the remarks while visiting the China Pavilion at the 16th Session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to

Combat Desertification, which opened in Riyadh on Monday and will continue until Dec 13.

Liu Jun, vice-chairman of Ningxia, said there are over 150 types of goji berry products alone in Ningxia, including dried berries, fruit paste and juice.

"We have planted goji berries on our deserts and barren lands, as well as wine grapes grown at the same latitude as Bordeaux, France. The cultivation of these has transformed the ecology and developed industries," she said.

Liu said that photovoltaic desert control, which involves laying photovoltaic panels for electricity generation and planting crops beneath them, is becoming an increasingly common industrial model in desertification control areas.

Guan Zhi'ou, head of the Chinese delegation to COP16 and director of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, said that over the past 30 years of implementing the UNCCD, China has embarked on a



Workers unload stacks of straw for use in sand-fixation to fight desertification at the edge of a desert in Minqin county, Gansu province, in November. ZHANG ZHIMIN / XINHUA

unique path of desertification control characterized by balancing ecological construction with economic development, achieving a win-win situation in combating desertification and alleviating poverty.

Since the launch of the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program in 1978, 13 provincial-level regions in northern China, while planting trees and promoting the ecology, have been utilizing the unique resources of sandy areas to moderately develop

industries such as traditional Chinese medicine and desert tourism.

Hussein Nasrallah, from Lebanon's Ministry of Agriculture, visited Ningxia in October last year to learn about sand control and economic development methods. He said he is still impressed by the goji berry farms and factories he visited.

"What I learned from my trip to China has shed many insights for land degradation control in our country," he said.

Political Lens

Top legislator meets with Cambodian senate president

Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, met on Wednesday with Cambodian People's Party President and Senate President Samdech Techo Hun Sen in Beijing.

Zhao, who is also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, noted that the building of the China-Cambodia community with a shared future has entered a new era of high quality, high level and high standard.

He said China stands ready to work with Cambodia to firmly support each other, deepen practical cooperation and expand people-to-people exchanges in accordance with the important consensus reached by the top leaders of the two parties.

Hun Sen said that Cambodia-China cooperation is of great significance to Cambodia's economic development and poverty alleviation. Cambodia will deepen all-around friendly cooperation with China and firmly push forward the building of a Cambodia-China community with a shared future, he added.

XINHUA

Order: Not a situation for martial law, expert says

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"People were shocked by President Yoon's order, because it is not a situation for implementing martial law," Woo said, adding that a president could declare martial law during wartime, war-like situations or other comparable national emergencies.

Hoo Chiew-ping, co-founder and senior fellow of the East Asian International Relations Caucus in Malaysia, said that Yoon frequently invoked the term "anti-state forces" in his remarks at various Cabinet meetings, a euphemism aimed at describing opposition parties and their members. However, "using such Cold War rhetoric to target a modern, democratic opposition is not only illogical but also profoundly inappropriate", Hoo said.

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, ROK's largest labor union, launched an indefinite nationwide strike starting on Wednesday, urging its members not to go to work until Yoon resigns.

Ryu Yong-wook, assistant professor at Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at National University of Singapore, said, "If the president resigns, a presidential election must be held within 60 days, according to law."

If the impeachment motion is passed, Yoon can challenge its legality in the Constitutional Court, which could take months to make a decision, Ryu added.