

Flowing Rivers, Converging Future

Nanjing Declaration of Yangtze Culture Forum 2023

On November 24, 2023, the Nanjing Forum on Yangtze Culture has been officially inaugurated. Under the guidance and assistance of UNESCO, more than 300 representatives from international organizations, cities in the great river basins, enterprises, and social organizations, experts, scholars, and media members from all over the world conducted in-depth discussions on the theme of "Flowing Rivers, Converging Future". The Forum aims at building a platform for dialogue and cooperation between the cities in the great river basins, and promoting the sustainable development of the basins.

We are grateful to the city of Nanjing for hosting such an important international conference.

We note that rivers are the arteries of Earth, which have nurtured splendid human cultures and are, therefore, important birthplaces of human civilization.

We recognize rivers as iconic cultural symbols of a country as well as links of communication and exchange between civilizations.

We are mindful that sustainable river biodiversity/thriving ecosystem is the precondition and foundation for sustainable development within the basin. In the context of globalization and regional integration, the destruction of river biodiversity will have an unrecoverable impact on the comprehensive political, economic and cultural development of regions along the rivers.

We believe that, as important as ecological barriers and economic ties, the high-quality development of rivers is crucial to the sustainable future of the world. Rivers played an important role in the development of commercial and cultural hubs and urban centers along the historic Silk Roads, and ultimately facilitated Dialogue and Exchange among near and far cultures and civilizations. The high-quality development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt is China's wisdom and solution as a contribution to the ancient river civilization.

We are concerned that in the process of modernization and industrialization, many countries have experienced varying degrees of river pollution, heritage destruction and erosion of riverfront spaces in cities, bringing about lasting and immense negative impacts on the development of human civilization.

We appreciate the critical role of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in integrating river basin management, which is essential to achieving the prosperity and progress of human civilization. Humanity is a community with a shared future, and the realization of SDGs requires global partnership.

We, therefore, call for the active implementation of the river-related targets set out in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through prompt action, and with an open and inclusive mindset:

Work together to protect the riverfront natural cultural heritage, creatively awaken the memory of civilization, and empower new momentum for the development of modern civilization. Cultural confidence, identity and memories linked by rivers are the spiritual

cornerstone and driving force for sustainable development. We will promote archaeological research on the origins of great rivers civilizations and the live presentation of the riverfront natural cultural heritage, provide new contexts and vitality to the ancient heritage, and use big data and AI and other technologies to recreate river past and future visualisations to awaken the ancient memories of great rivers civilizations.

Respect cultural diversity and work together to build a network of great rivers civilizations in the globe with an open and inclusive mindset. The special environment of the great river basins has shaped diverse civilizations, and we must uphold the principles of equality and mutual appreciation, respect our differences and jointly protect the cultural diversity of mankind.

Establish a mechanism for global river cities to interact with each other and start a new chapter of global governance under the guidance of UNESCO, and support the establishment of a cooperation mechanism and network of river cities, and hold regular forums and seminars to explore joint governance and share experiences and cases.

Emphasize the role of the media and literature, science and technology in promoting the sustainable development and management of rivers, raise public awareness of the importance of protecting rivers and their cultural heritage, publicize measures for promoting the recycling of water and their significance, encourage active participation of youth and community, make good use of modern technology in the protection of rivers, cultivate

environmentally friendly community cultures and build green community lifestyles.

Bring together all stakeholders to build a community with a shared future for mankind through high-quality development, gather global wisdom, and use the rivers as a medium to jointly draw up a paradigm for the interaction of the world's great rivers civilizations in the new era.

From the government to the people, through dissemination, education and exchanges, we will gather the strength of the global community by implementing Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative, and promote the construction of the global consensus on a community of river culture cities with a shared future for mankind.