

A new organization for China studies launched in Shanghai



Wang Yong

THE global studies on China got a shot in the arm as a major organization led by leading scholars and experts from around the world was launched on November 24 during the World Conference on China Studies · Shanghai Forum.

The World Association for China Studies, headquartered in Beijing, has drawn researchers from all over the world, including Asia, Africa, North America, South America and Oceania, said Gao Xiang, president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, while making the launch announcement.

He explained that the newly formed group will foster interaction between China and the rest of the globe in order to achieve humanity's common prosperity.

The formation of the new association was a highlight of the high-profile World Conference on China Studies · Shanghai Forum, which drew hundreds of foreign and Chinese researchers who discussed and debated how best to understand the country and its historical and modern interactions with the rest of the world.

Li Shulei, head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, read a letter of congratulations from Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Xi pointed out that China studies are not only the studies of historical China, but also the studies of contemporary China.

Chinese civilization has a long history and has been enriched and developed through exchanges and mutual learning with other civilizations in the world, endowing Chinese modernization with profound



Participants attend the Shanghai Forum of the World Conference on China Studies on November 24.
— Dong Jun

cultural heritage, Xi said.

“Only by tracing the origins of history can we understand the reality of the world, and only by following the cultural foundation can we identify present-day China,” he said. “It is through the mutual learning of civilizations that common progress can be achieved.”

Xi expressed the hope that experts and scholars from various countries will act as messengers connecting Chinese and foreign civilizations, uphold inclusiveness and openness, continuously promote China studies worldwide, foster mutual exchange of civilizations, and inject intellectual and cultural strength into the flourishing garden of world civilizations.

Shanghai Party Secretary Chen Jining said the city is a vivid example of China's development and an essential window through which to see China. He said one can witness how Shanghai is developing as a “people's city,” where the government prioritizes the allocation of resources to address the needs and proposals of its citizens.

An imperative

“China is helping us create a better world for humanity. This explains why the greatest global imperative today is to promote a deeper understanding of China,” Kishore Mahbubani, a distinguished fellow from the Asia Research

Institute at the National University of Singapore, said in a video speech.

Mahbubani is among three experts who received the Award for Distinguished Contribution to China Studies.

The other two are Timothy Brook, Professor Emeritus, Department of History, University of British Columbia, and Young-Seo Baik, Professor Emeritus, Yonsei University.

Mahbubani noted that most nations around the world, particularly in Asia, have maintained significant relationships with China for centuries, if not millennia.

“Hence, there is deep respect for the deep pools of wisdom in Chinese civilization,” he said.



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Rachel Murphy, professor of Chinese development and society at University of Oxford, noted that there is a concern about the limitations of Western concepts in comprehending transitions in the Chinese context. She believes that China studies are critical to the advancement of global social sciences.

Co-hosted by the State Council Information Office and the Shanghai Municipal Government, the World Conference on China Studies · Shanghai Forum is a successor to the biennial World Forum on China Studies, launched in 2004 with the goal of providing a platform for exchange for the broader China studies community.