

# Global Governance of New Frontiers: China's Perspective

---

*Yang Jian & Zheng Yingqin*

**T**he polar regions, deep sea, cyberspace and outer space are new frontiers that are necessary for the survival and sustainable development of human beings. In recent years, human activities in these frontiers have increased rapidly, climate change accelerated and environmental problems worsened, which have had serious impacts on our life. Moreover, these new frontiers have shown signs of disorder featuring growing international competition and outdated governance. Besides facing up squarely to these challenges, we need to think over whether it is possible to jettison the existing order of power politics and construct a governance order with a new value system based on the essence of human civilization on governance. After all, it has not been long since human activities started in the new frontiers, and interests of the international society in these frontiers are relatively simple. The new frontiers are where the resources and space for our survival and future development come from, and sustain the shared interests and common concerns of all humankind. This is highly consistent with the idea of a community of shared future, and the new frontiers can therefore be a perfect platform to practice the philosophy.

## Consensus Deficit: Main Challenge in New Frontiers Governance

There are three major problems in our governance of these new frontiers. First, human activities in these new frontiers have increased but the

---

**Yang Jian** is Vice President and Senior Research Fellow of Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS); **Zheng Yingqin** is Assistant Research Fellow at SIIS.

governance mechanism lags behind; second, human exploitation challenges the governance of these frontiers; and third, there are often conflicts between the interests of nation blocs and regional powers and those of the overall humankind. At the same time, we need to address challenges such as fragmentation in governance and competition for dominating the rule-making of governance. Despite the variety of challenges, the essential cause for all these challenges lies in the lack of consensus on governance philosophy.

First, the international community is divided on the identity of these new frontiers. The ownership of the sea, outer space, the polar regions, the cyberspace, or any other kind of new frontier is in one way or another not clear. Who owns these frontiers? Are they “global commons” or “terra nullius”? It is necessary to distinguish these two concepts since they are totally different in nature. The former means something owned by all and not by anyone specifically while the latter refers to something belonging to no one since it has not been occupied. Although it is widely believed among the international community that the vast majority of the new frontiers (high seas, seabed, ocean floors and their subsoil that are out of jurisdiction of any country, outer space, the Antarctic and some of the cyberspace) are “global commons” that are owned by all mankind, the new frontiers are often regarded as “terrae nullius” in practice. Great powers compete against each other to occupy them, increase their physical presence in those common domains so as to improve their influence, and even set the power game rule that whosoever enters first is the owner and whichever is practiced first becomes the law,<sup>1</sup> like the “preemptive occupation” on outer space orbit resources and the location of Antarctic expedition stations. Another example is the United States’ position that cyberspace is a common domain, which is intended to dilute the sovereign nature of cyberspace, and weaken other nations’ sovereign administration over this domain. This in essence is a kind of cyberspace hegemony.<sup>2</sup> Generally speaking, how to define the nature of

---

1 Yang Jian, *Power and Wealth in Digital Frontiers*, Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 2012, p.8.

2 Shen Yi, “Cyberspace Sovereignty: China’s Position on New Global Cyberspace Order,” *Guangming*, December 19, 2015, [http://theory.gmw.cn/2015-12/19/content\\_18163410\\_2.htm](http://theory.gmw.cn/2015-12/19/content_18163410_2.htm).

new frontiers is closely linked with the limitation on using state powers and with the allocation of rights and benefits. Some countries compete for and occupy the space and resources that should belong to the whole humankind, thus harming the shared interests of all. At the same time, it harms the due national interest of related countries that resources theoretically under the administration of a specific sovereignty are mistakenly regarded as common domain.

Second, the international community is divided on how to make rules and regulations in new frontiers, which reflects the lack of fundamental ethics and values to sustain the governance. In the development process of governance mechanisms in the new frontiers, global interests and national interests are seeing more new intersections, which engenders more clashes between different values. Different sovereign states have different understandings and ways to deal with the relationship between the two interests, and therefore the models and approaches they advocated vary greatly. At present, there are a number of notable phenomena. To start with, the governance of new frontiers is now controlled by a governing club, that is, a group of states practicing de facto governance and control over the new frontiers. To some extent, “more investment, more payback” has become an unwritten rule in this regard.<sup>3</sup> The rule means the more a nation inputs, the more it profits. Under this rule, countries with greater capabilities and capital would naturally desire for greater profits. However, the common domain in these new frontiers should fundamentally be shared and collectively owned. The nature of co-ownership means all the profits should be shared. National interests in the new frontiers should be limited instead of being maximized unlimitedly. Therefore, it is still to be answered which ethics and values could maintain a balance between specific national interests and global public interests.

---

3 Take the Antarctic for example. The Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities in 1988 states that the share of resources a country can enjoy during exploration in the Antarctic shall be determined by its contribution to Antarctic scientific research. Although the Convention fails to come into effect, the principle of “investment matching benefits” written in this Convention sets a precedence for any possible development and utilization of the Antarctic in the future. See Zheng Yingqin, “Discourse Power on the Antarctic,” *Journal of International Relations*, No.6, 2014, pp. 62-72.

There is a lesson we should reflect on. The United States, although quickly rising as a superpower, had failed to offer tenable values and public goods for the governance of the new frontiers in the five decades after WWII. Instead the US promotes hegemonism and maximizes its national interests unlimitedly with its technological advantages and military strength. As a result, the governance over new frontiers ended up either in arms race among great powers, or in the dilemma that interests are only shared by only a club of few countries.<sup>4</sup> In pursuit of its own national interests and global hegemony, the United States changes the rules of new frontier governance, and even selectively plays along or violates the rules according to its interests. One remarkable example can be found in the cyberspace. In the early 1990s, the United States called for all countries to open up their telecom markets in order to promote its own "global information superhighway" program. At that time the US advocated a globalization thinking of interdependence to gain economic benefits. But with the development of the internet, it was the first to build a cyberspace task force, and introduce the concept of deterrence into the field to seek an absolute strategic advantage in the cyberspace.<sup>5</sup> The pragmatism the US adopted, self-contradicting in these different practices, cost a best chance to build a common code of conduct among nations such as "cyberspace as non-battlefield" and "information technology as non-weapons." The US hegemonic thinking and exclusive security concept not only led to divided governance philosophies for the new frontiers, but also failed to offer a valid guide from great powers for the ethics and values in the whole process of governance. Since the end of the Cold War, the US has been used to making

---

*The essential cause for all challenges in our governance of new frontiers lies in the lack of consensus on governance philosophy.*

---

4 The "exceptionalism" of the United States in new frontiers is demonstrated as a kind of "hegemony unbounded by mechanism." That is, it excludes or rejects some important international rules and regulations in new frontiers. For example, the US has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

5 "Wrong US Security Thinking Causes Global Cyberspace Disaster: Chinese Expert," *People.cn*, March 28, 2013, <http://world.people.com.cn/n/2013/0328/c1002-20946645.html>.

strategic goals by making “potential enemies” or “imaginary enemies” to maintain its military superiority, and it has applied the old thinking of security to new frontier governance. This US thinking of clear friend-foe division has harmed the building of common security in the new frontiers.

## **Community of Shared Future and New Frontier Governance**

Improving global governance and promoting its reforms are not only to deal with various global challenges, but also to make rules and guidance for the international order and system; they are not only relevant to the competition among countries for the commanding height of development, but also to the status and role of countries in the international order and long-term institutional arrangements.<sup>6</sup> The proposal of building a community of shared future for mankind is closely linked with the historical background. Given the deepening interpretation and practice of the concept, “building a community of shared future for mankind” has grown from an idea to an ultimate goal of Chinese diplomacy and has developed into a fundamental value for global governance. The formation and evolution of the concept, in which China’s global strategic concerns for development are engaged, reflect the changes in the global situation.

### **Connotation of community of shared future for mankind**

First, the idea embodies the reality and need of coexistence. It is a new diplomatic concept that conforms to the general trend of global development in the context of deepening interdependence among countries and their intertwined national interests. This diplomatic strategy is based not only on the realistic demands that China as a rising world power should participate in building the international order, but also on the belief that this is the best and most beneficial way to guide global governance. Chinese President Xi Jinping, when analyzing about this general trend,

---

6 “Xi Jinping: Promoting Fairer and More Reasonable Global Governance,” *Xinhua*, October 13, 2015, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2015-10/13/c\\_1116812159.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2015-10/13/c_1116812159.htm).

once pointed out that reforms of global governance have come to a historic turning point. He further elaborated that in the past centuries, great powers promoted their interests and hegemony by war, colonization, and dividing spheres of influence, but now all states have gradually evolved to coordinate international relations and national interests by ways of institutional rules. He also argued that many problems are no longer confined to a single country, and many challenges cannot be dealt with unilaterally; thus all nations need to cooperate with each other to address global challenges.<sup>7</sup>

Second, the idea embodies the path and prospect of joint contribution and shared benefits, and provides a new value guide for global governance. Given the context of deepening interdependence, the participation to solve global problems is expected to be democratized and enlarged. Therefore it conforms to the interests and demands of all states that a community of shared future for mankind is essentially a community of common interests, responsibilities, and destiny. The proposal for such a community calls for the joint construction of a development path and a future with prosperity for all. Moreover, the joint contribution and shared benefits are peace-oriented. This is contrary to the traditional approach of power politics by which nations defend their national interests by fierce competition or even brutal force. In the governance of new frontiers, people have already reviewed and innovated existing ways of dispute resolution. For example, some international treaties that define the public nature of the land in polar regions are made, effective multilateral consultative mechanisms are constructed, and the participation of diverse actors in governance is emphasized.<sup>8</sup> This shows

---

*“Building a community of shared future for mankind” has grown from an idea to an ultimate goal of Chinese diplomacy and has developed into a fundamental value for global governance.*

---

7 “Promoting Fairer and More Reasonable Global Governance,” *People’s Daily* (Overseas Edition), October 14, 2015, p.1.

8 Yang Hao and Cai Tuo, “Governing Disputed Territories as the Commons: A New Thought for Territorial Dispute Settlement,” *International Security Studies*, No.3, 2013, pp.75-87.

how the concept of a community of shared future for mankind is suitable to guide the governance of new frontiers.

Third, the idea reflects the win-win concept of integrating friendship and interests, and is an inheritance and innovation of the traditional Chinese culture in the contemporary era. The ancient Chinese understanding, after thousands of years, can still inspire the world to achieve a preferable global governance. The modern concept of sustainable development is reflected in Taoism, where the believers follow objective laws to deal with the relations between human beings and nature [*Dao Fa Zi Ran*], and advocate only modest exploitation that does not violate the law of nature. China's ancient philosophy sees the world as an interconnected system superior to all differences and fights among countries [*Guan Huai Tian Xia*].<sup>9</sup> The understanding of integrating friendship and interests in this philosophy is one that focuses on the welfare of the whole mankind rather than only a group of them, and collective interests rather than interests of a few individuals. In short, one could evidently find key elements of a community of shared future from the rich culture and history of China.

Accordingly, one could also enrich the concept of such a community using Chinese philosophical ideas, such as the idea of “harmony between man and nature” [*Tian Ren He Yi*], “harmonious coexistence” [*He Xie Gong Sheng*] and “the order for the whole world” [*Tian Xia Zhi Xu*]. These ancient wisdoms of China affirm the importance of a balance between short-term and long-term interests, a balance between groups and individuals, the sustainability of our international society and the mutual dependence of man and nature. Chinese leaders have already included these thinkings into China's resolution to address contemporary global challenges. They have advocated that “common development must be promoted while seeking one's own development.”<sup>10</sup> When pursuing self-development, each country

---

9 Zhao Tingyang, “Redefining Political Concepts with *Tianxia*: Its Questions, Conditions and Methodology,” *World Economy and Politics*, No.6, 2015, pp. 4-22.

10 “Full text of Chinese President's speech at Boao Forum for Asia,” *Xinhua*, March 28, 2015, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-03/29/c\\_134106145.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-03/29/c_134106145.htm).

and each actor should consider the overall mankind, and sometimes needs to put the public interests of the human before national interests and conduct some self-restraint. This is the core value especially needed to new frontier governance, and also what a community of shared future may offer.

### **Compatibility with needs of new frontier governance**

As an important part of global governance, the governance of deep sea, polar regions, cyberspace, outer space and other new frontiers not only constitutes a global challenge, but also triggers various nations to compete for the commanding height of development. Influential great powers want to convert their own governance regime in new frontiers into international norms and institutions in order to get the upper hand in international rule-making. Once the competitive thinking is written into a state's national strategy, this kind of competition will be lifted to such a level that it undermines the security and stability of the international system. Therefore, it is urgent for the international society to build a common ethical basis for new frontier governance. New frontiers can be an ideal platform to practice the philosophy of a community of shared future. On the one hand, new frontiers present the common concerns of all countries and the destiny of mankind. On the other hand, the governance needs of these new frontiers are highly compatible with the philosophy.

First, the discovery and development of new frontiers make us aware that all of our human beings live in a community of common destiny. New frontiers not only expand the living space of human beings and provide new resources, but also show that the different parts of the earth are interconnected and that a regional consequence could have aftermaths on a greater scale. Take the polar regions for example, the melting of polar glaciers, changes in carbon sources and sinks, and ocean acidification are closely related to human activities. With regard to the future, new frontiers are where our human race could explore the space and resources for sustainable development. Currently our global development is constrained by resource shortage and environmental degradation. In this case, deep sea and the polar regions are like

treasure troves with rich resources to be developed; and outer space and the cyberspace are playing an increasingly important role in enriching our daily lives and expanding the global economic sphere. It can be said that increasing human activities in new frontiers have further deepened the interdependence among us each other. Given this interdependence, our human race shares a

---

*The availability of public goods needed by an effective governance of new frontiers demands coordination, win-win cooperation and other values promoted by a community of shared future.*

common destiny in the development of new frontiers. Whether new frontiers can be developed peacefully, harmoniously and sustainably is directly related to the common destiny of all mankind.

Second, what new frontier governance requires is highly compatible with the connotation of a community of shared future for mankind. An effective

governance on new frontiers need various public goods like institution, knowledge, capital, technology, education and international organizations, the availability of which demands coordination, win-win cooperation and other values promoted by a community of shared future. In fact, the governance practices currently carried out in new frontiers have already shown the features above. These practices include those related to the human survival and development and norms of peace, security and environmental friendliness. For example for the deep sea, since the concept of “common heritage of mankind” was written into the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and became the guidance to develop and utilize the international seabed area, the main goal of international maritime governance has become resource sharing and fair utilization. As for outer space, the moon and other celestial bodies are also defined as common heritage of mankind. In the polar regions, as human activities increase, the governance focuses on preventing global warming, ice melting and sea level rising, and protecting the environment and enhancing social adaptability. The cyberspace governance can be defined as “a wide field including infrastructure, standardization, legal, sociocultural, economic,

and development issues,”<sup>11</sup> whose goal is not only to ensure information connectivity, but also to address new global challenges such as digital gap, cyberspace ethics, and cyber terrorism. These international institutions have expressed similar ideas to the values of wide consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits defined in the concept of a community of shared future for mankind. All related parties, especially countries that enjoy technological advantages, should adhere to the ethical value and keep providing more and better public goods for the development and utilization of new frontiers.

## **New Frontier Governance for a Community of Shared Future**

New frontier governance is to address issues beyond, of, and above sovereignty. The approaches to addressing issues above sovereignty can offer some enlightenment to issues beyond and of sovereignty, especially with regard to dispute resolution. If this way of peaceful dispute resolution and the consensus on building a community of shared future could be further consolidated, the positive spillover effect of new frontier governance can be accelerated, facilitating the formation of a new governance order in new frontiers. Two preliminary conditions for this further advancement have already been fulfilled.

First, the differences in new frontier governance by different countries have become reconcilable. With the long period of overall peace after WWII, citizens of most countries started to have a renewed understanding of survival and development. Those in the developed nations have made global problems associated with the new frontiers a new priority, like the melting of polar ice caps caused by climate change and the rising sea level. The changes in public concerns increasingly affect governments’ allocation of governance resources. Meanwhile, with the deepening of modernization, those in the developing countries have also had a better understanding of the relationship between development and environmental protection and increasingly regard themselves as stakeholders in today’s global and cross-border issues. The

---

11 Panayotis A. Yannakogeorgos, “Internet Governance and National Security,” *International Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol.6, No.3, 2012, p.103.

cognitive differences between developed and developing countries caused by different stages of development are gradually narrowing, their proposals of new frontier governance thus being more compatible. It is still notable, however, that the compatibility is not equivalent in all fields. For example, regulations of cyberspace governance seriously lag behind. This is because major countries

---

*The cognitive differences between developed and developing countries are gradually narrowing, and their proposals of new frontier governance are thus more compatible.*

still have vastly diversified understanding of cyberspace legislation and the competition for a dominant role in setting related rules is fierce. In comparison, outer space governance also experienced a period of fierce competition, but is now at a relatively stable stage of development, with peaceful use becoming the main trend. There are also few disagreements with regard to the

polar regions, so ideas and proposals are relatively reconcilable.

Second, the increased influence of non-state actors in global governance has made new frontier governance more inclusive. At present, states remain the main actors in the governance and governments are the major owners of governance resources. Non-state actors, such as intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, groups of scientists and online communities, engage themselves in new frontier governance, their roles and influence increasing day by day. However, states and non-state actors have notably different thinking about new frontier governance. While states aim at maximization of national interests especially short-term profits, transnational non-state actors think in the long run and care for the future. For example, in the polar regions where scientific knowledge is the basis for any governance, scientific institutions and scientists can participate in agenda setting and priority ranking of the governance. In doing so they convert their knowledge and professional institutional designs into public goods.<sup>12</sup> The power of non-

---

12 Yang Jian and Yu Hongyuan, "The Community of Chinese Scientists and the Agenda Setting of Arctic Governance—Based on an Analysis of the Questionnaires," *Journal of International Relations*, No.6, 2014, pp. 37-49.

state actors is limited, but since they usually focus on a specific hotspot issue of new frontiers or governance in a particular field, they can usually offer convincing arguments, raising considerable global awareness.<sup>13</sup> These new actors can serve as important carriers for the philosophy of a community of shared future and organizers for its implementation. Using the philosophy to reconcile different proposals regarding new frontier governance is to provide a common value for the governance and help build a fairer and more reasonable international governance system in the regard.

Under the abovementioned global background, there are three ways to start the practice of building a community of shared future in new frontier governance.

First, we need to strengthen international cooperation in the scientific exploration of new frontiers. It is a common mission for the mankind to conduct scientific exploration in the new frontiers and knowledge is the basis for exploring, using and managing the new frontiers.<sup>14</sup> Our understanding of these untraversed and boundless areas are far less than what we need to survive and develop. Scientific research projects like landing the moon and the Mars are the collective efforts of our human race to enlarge our living space. New frontiers are often harsh in natural conditions where it is hard for human beings to survive. Besides, the cost and risk of scientific exploration is so high that it is difficult for any single country to complete a comprehensive exploration in the new frontiers. This is why the US astronauts continued to carry out cooperative exploration in the Russian International Space Station project even in the wake of US sanctions against Russia in 2014. This interdependence

---

13 Such as the World Wildlife Fund, the International Arctic Science Council, Antarctica and the Southern Ocean Alliance. When it comes to issues of environmental protection, some non-governmental organizations have not only taken part in and supervised the making of international environment-related legislation and global environmental governance mechanisms, but also how the legislation and mechanisms are implemented. See Wang Yanzhi, "Non-Governmental Organizations in Global Environmental Governance," *Contemporary Law Review*, No.1, 2012, pp 47-54.

14 The European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, "Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: Progress since 2008 and Next Steps," A joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council, Brussels, June 20, 2012, p.6, [http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/arctic\\_region/docs/join\\_2012\\_19.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/arctic_region/docs/join_2012_19.pdf).

illustrates the need for international cooperation in scientific exploration. The Treaty on Principles Governing the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies also stipulates “desiring to contribute to broad international cooperation in the scientific as well as the legal aspects of the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.”<sup>15</sup> The Antarctic Treaty, known as the constitution on Antarctic governance, clearly “recognize[d] that it is in the interest of all mankind that Antarctica shall continue forever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.”<sup>16</sup> International cooperation among scientists from all over the world has promoted the sharing of technology, equipment and academic information resources, and their contribution to governance reflects the value of a community of shared future for mankind. The Third International Polar Year Conference, jointly organized by the International Meteorological Organization and the International Council for Science in 2012, set its theme as “from knowledge to action.” It aims to transfer scientific discoveries into governance policies and actions and make a difference in global governance.<sup>17</sup> In the process of scientific exploration in new frontiers, scientists from various nations think about the challenges facing the mankind, lead the practice of scientific cooperation, and promote division of labor in new frontier governance. Conducting and encouraging international cooperation in new frontier governance is an effective way to practice the idea of a community of shared future.

Second, we need to improve mechanisms of new frontier governance. The institution building in new frontiers should reflect fair distribution of benefits, effective governance results and advanced nature of civilizational development. Scientific research is the basis and prerequisite for understanding the new frontiers. In the process, many new problems and issues have been discovered

---

15 Treaty on Principles Governing the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies came into effect in 1967. It is also known as Outer Space Treaty. See more at [http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/oosadoc/data/resolutions/1966/general\\_assembly\\_21st\\_session/res\\_2222\\_xxi.html](http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/oosadoc/data/resolutions/1966/general_assembly_21st_session/res_2222_xxi.html).

16 Antarctic Treaty, see more at <https://www.nsf.gov/geo/opp/antarct/anttrty.jsp>.

17 The International Council for Science (ICSU), “IPY 2012 ‘From Knowledge to Action’ Conference,” <http://www.icsu.org/events/interdisciplinary-body-events/ipy-2012-from-knowledge-to-action-conference>.



The third World Internet Conference, themed “Innovation-Driven Internet Development for the Benefit of All: Building a Community of Common Future in Cyberspace,” was held in China’s eastern town of Wuzhen on November 16-18, 2016.

and discussed, which not only stimulates us to further develop and utilize the new frontiers, but is also a catalyst to building a new governance system. Countries often seek greater institutional cooperation after intensified scientific cooperation. Guided by values of a community of shared future for mankind, the international cooperation in new frontiers needs to overcome unfairness and injustice in governance. This could be implemented in three ways. First, we need take the philosophy of a community of shared future as the ethical foundation to build the institutions for new frontier governance. Second, we need to expand international participation in and engagement of the institutions, especially to improve the limited involvement and less protected interests of some under-developed countries. If possible, we should call for lower barriers for the participation of new frontier governance and ensure the engagement of more countries and their utility. And third, we should promote democracy in the institutions, and improve transparency and participation of

the current decision-making process where large nations lead and all countries coordinate their interests.

Third, we need to build a community of common interests in different fields of new frontiers through international cooperation, which will lay a foundation for the community of shared future. There are obvious differences between countries in institutional designs and their interests in new frontier governance. Due to limited national strength and technological power, the vast developing world cannot join the new frontier club for the time being. Therefore, they want to maintain the co-ownership of new frontiers by all mankind, and reserve the right to participate in joint development in the future. In comparison, most EU member states, Australia, New Zealand and other Western developed countries advocate mutual benefits based on matching the distribution of interests and rights with the input of resources. Most non-governmental organizations focus on protecting the ecological environment and the sustainable development of new frontiers. In this regard, building a community of shared future for mankind can be inclusive. The philosophy of such a community is different from others because of its inclusiveness to different ideas and its compatibility with interests and demands of different groups. Such a community stands for a brand new value that focuses on the well-being of all mankind, taking into account expectations of different countries in different stages of development. It takes fair care of the weak (or less developed countries), applies necessary constraints on the strong (some developed countries), and meets the political demands of other participants (non-state actors).

In short, to practice the philosophy of a community of shared future for mankind in new frontiers is conducive to fundamentally solving the three major difficulties in their governance. First, the idea honors common responsibilities. On the basis of common engagement, it calls for international cooperation and social practice to put governance institutions in place. Second, this idea focuses on long-term sustainability and provides a solution to differences between understandings of development and environmental protection. And third, this idea aims at achieving common

interests. As long as the common interests of the international society in the new frontiers are not undermined, reasonable demands of national interests are encouraged, which balances individual and collective interests.

## **China's Endeavor to Participate in New Frontier Governance**

It is natural for China to participate in new frontier governance with its improved economic, diplomatic, scientific and technological capabilities. The Chinese government has proposed to actively participate in the making of international rules in new frontiers such as cyberspace, deep sea, polar regions and outer space in its 13th Five-Year Plan.<sup>18</sup> The proposal is not only consistent with China's strategy of building a strong nation, but is also what the international community expects from China.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has advocated building a community of shared future for mankind in new frontiers on many occasions. In December 2015, at the 2nd World Internet Conference, Xi stressed that "the Internet is a common space for mankind, and all countries should jointly build a community of shared destiny in cyberspace and promote connectivity, sharing and co-governance of cyberspace so as to help create a better future for the development of the mankind."<sup>19</sup> This is one of China's helpful efforts to use the philosophy in new frontier governance. On January 18, 2017, in his keynote speech "Work Together to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind" at the United Nations Office at Geneva, President Xi proposed that "Guided by the principle of peace, sovereignty, inclusiveness and shared governance, we should turn the deep sea, the polar regions, the outer space and the Internet into new frontiers for cooperation rather than a wrestling ground for competition."<sup>20</sup>

---

18 "The 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China," March 17, 2016, <http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201612/P020161207645765233498.pdf>.

19 "Xi Jinping Attends Opening Ceremony of Second World Internet Conference and Delivers Keynote Speech," December 16, 2015, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1325603.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1325603.shtml).

20 Xi Jinping, "Work Together to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind," January 18, 2017, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-01/19/c\\_135994707.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-01/19/c_135994707.htm).

## **Conditions for China to promote a community of shared future**

First, after nearly 40 years of reform and opening up, China has primarily owned the means and knowledge to practice the governance philosophy in new frontiers. China has gained considerable practical experience in new frontier governance over the years, and is no longer a marginalized or semi-marginalized country but a core player. China has constructed advanced mechanisms for scientific expeditions in oceans, deep seas and the polar regions as well as a complete aerospace industry and information technology industry. Chinese scientists have always been active participants of and contributors to science projects in new frontiers. In the meantime, any exploration and development of various fields in new frontiers is based on technological advancement. China has made significant progress in science and technology and is thus capable of launching major projects like the Chang'e lunar exploration program, the Snow Dragon polar exploration program, the Jiaolong deep-sea survey project and the Beidou satellite navigation and positioning system. All these efforts not only help contribute to the science and technology in the new frontiers, but also show that China has the ability to provide public goods in terms of common security and welfare for the whole humankind.

In addition, China's strong economic strength has provided solid support for new frontier governance. As the second largest economy in the world and a responsible player in global economy, China's promotion of a community of shared future for mankind is not only justified by its ethical values and outstanding civilization, but also sustained by its economic and technological power. Therefore China's contribution and efforts are both theoretical and practical lessons to the future new frontier governance.

Second, with nearly 40 years of reform and opening up, China has established institutional relations with the world in various ways. As it seeks to increase its share in the world economy, China has also improved its capability and shouldered more responsibility in global issues. China is responsible for and capable of improving the effectiveness of global governance. In this

case, China has a greater voice on the international stage when proposing its Chinese solution to global governance. While basically sustaining the existing international regime and recognizing the achievements it has made, China should promote reforms in the international order, and safeguard and enhance the interests of the vast developing world so as to realize the common interests for all. President Xi has emphasized this responsibility as China's major contribution to global order. On the one hand, China's participation in global governance aims to promote changes in the system, remove the unfair and unreasonable arrangements, advance democracy and the rule of law in its institutions, and make the system stand for the aspirations and interests of the majority of countries.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand,

---

*To build a community of shared future, China needs to advance its own development and meanwhile meet the international expectations. These responsibilities would in turn enable China's legitimacy as a world power.*

“new mechanisms and initiatives launched by China aim to complement and improve the current international mechanisms to achieve win-win cooperation and common development.”<sup>22</sup> To build a community of shared future for mankind requires China to assume more international responsibility, and strike a balance between rights and responsibility. China needs to advance its own development and meanwhile meet the international expectations. These responsibilities would in turn also enable China's legitimacy as a world power.<sup>23</sup> China is committed to promoting peaceful use and institutional improvement of new frontiers, and achieving effective governance over the polar regions, deep sea, cyberspace and outer space. Take the Arctic for example. The China-Nordic Arctic Research Center launched in 2013 is a scientist-led platform

---

21 “Promoting Fairer and More Reasonable Global Governance,” *People's Daily* (Overseas Edition), October 14, 2015, p.1.

22 “Xi Jinping Attends Opening Ceremony of the 2016 B20 Summit and Delivers Keynote Speech,” September 3, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/topics\\_665678/XJPCXBZCESGJTLDRDSYCFHJXCXYGHD/t1395086.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/XJPCXBZCESGJTLDRDSYCFHJXCXYGHD/t1395086.shtml).

23 For the responsibility of major powers and their international legitimacy, see Zhang Qianming, “International Legitimacy and Changes in the Responsibility of Major Countries,” *Zhejiang University Journal* (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition), No.2, 2014, pp.177-187.

for international cooperation. Almost five years on, it has become one of the important cooperative mechanisms between China and the Nordic countries. As an important shareholder in Arctic affairs, China honors the spirit of respect, cooperation and sustainability, and keeps improving the international cooperation mechanism.

### **Chinese efforts to practice the philosophy**

First, China actively safeguards the value of peaceful exploitation of new frontiers. Peace is the basis for cooperation and use, and is itself the value shared by the philosophy of a community of shared future for mankind. The commitment is embodied in China's 2016 White Paper on Space Activities, which elucidates that it is the mankind's persistent pursuit to peacefully explore and use the outer space. The Chinese government holds that the peaceful exploration, development and utilization of the outer space and its celestial bodies is a right equally shared by all nations. Outer space activities should be conducive to economic development and social advancement of all, and to peace, security, survival and development of the humankind.<sup>24</sup> In its National Cyberspace Security Strategy, the Chinese government also considers peace as its first and foremost goal, and prioritizes the prevention of information technology abuse, cyberspace arms race and conflict.<sup>25</sup> Safeguarding peace and promoting peaceful use can better serve the humankind, improve our welfare on a larger scale and to a higher level, and promote the cause of human peace and development.

Second, China offers to support the United Nations to set up mechanisms over new frontier governance. For example, China supports the UN to play a leading role in working out international cyberspace rules and cyberspace counter-terrorism conventions that can be accepted by all, and in improving the judicial assistance mechanism for cybercrime. The National Cyberspace

---

24 "Full Text of White Paper on China's Space Activities in 2016," December 28, 2016, [http://english.gov.cn/archive/white\\_paper/2016/12/28/content\\_281475527159496.htm](http://english.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2016/12/28/content_281475527159496.htm).

25 "National Cyberspace Security Strategy," *Xinhua*, December 27, 2016, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/2016-12/27/c\\_1120196479.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/2016-12/27/c_1120196479.htm).

Security Strategy confirmed that China, on the basis of mutual respect and trust, will improve international dialogue and cooperation on cyberspace, and promote reforming the global internet governance. The Strategy also addressed that through positive and effective international cooperation, China can build a multilateral, democratic and transparent system of global internet governance, and make the cyberspace peaceful, safe, open, cooperative and orderly.<sup>26</sup>

Third, China helps the United Nations and other international organizations to provide public goods when dealing with global issues, and plays a leading role in practicing the idea of a community of shared future in the international arena. For example, China actively takes part in international coordination of disaster prevention and relief, and provides satellite data and technical support in major international disaster relief efforts through mechanisms like the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters. These efforts have promoted the UN and other international organizations to move closer to build a community of shared future for mankind.

Indeed, it needs enduring efforts and broader participation and support to build a community of shared future for mankind. China needs the like-minded in the international community to support its solution, which is based on the philosophy of such a community in new frontier governance. It is China's high priority to win strong international support for the idea. With regard to values, we should coordinate with scientists' groups, environmental protectionists' groups and other important international organizations to shape a community of common understanding of values and ethics before we integrate it into a community of shared future for mankind and cooperate with them in new frontier governance. In terms of stance and interests, China has long been a defender of new frontier interests for the developing world. Thanks to the active promotion of China, the 51st UN General

---

26 "National Cyberspace Security Strategy."

Assembly in 1996 adopted the *Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries*. China's 2016 White Paper on Space Activities pointed out that the Chinese government, in international space exchanges and cooperation, focuses on bilateral and multilateral cooperation to support the Belt and Road Initiative, supports the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization to play an important role in regional space cooperation, and attaches great importance to space cooperation under the BRICS mechanism and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization framework. China has launched many projects such as the China-ASEAN Satellite Information Maritime Application Center and the Lancang River-Mekong River Space Information Exchange Center.<sup>27</sup> China also makes it clear in its National Cyberspace Security Strategy that it should strengthen support and assistance to spread internet technology and improve infrastructure in developing nations and under-developed areas, so as to advocate the Belt and Road Initiative, improve the international communication connectivity and achieve the "information Silk Road."<sup>28</sup> All these efforts have helped the Chinese solution to global governance gain broader and stronger support.

New frontiers serve as a new stage for international competition and cooperation, and offer an ideal platform to practice the philosophy of building a community of shared future for mankind. China should take part in new frontier governance with the well-being of all human beings and the common interests of all nations in mind. To provide an effective solution to governance, China should work with other nations to build a new order that is fair and reasonable. A successful role the Chinese wisdom plays in the governance of new frontiers will facilitate the establishing of a community of shared future for all mankind. 

---

27 "Full Text of White Paper on China's Space Activities in 2016."

28 "National Cyberspace Security Strategy."