Shanghai Declaration

31 October 2010

We, participants and friends from all reaches of the globe, drawn by the theme "Better City, Better Life," have gathered in Shanghai and jointly fashioned the first World Expo in a developing country organized under the auspices of the Bureau International des Expositions. During these 184 days, we have explored, envisioned and simulated the mosaic of urban life through the wonderful exhibitions of the pavilions, the instructive showcases of urban best practices, the in-depth intellectual exchanges in the forums and the brilliant cultural events.

We have come to realize that people's understanding and pursuit of a better life are both the foundations and the engines of urban development.

We are also convinced that it is necessary to re-examine the relationship between people, cities and our planet.

We agree that, in tackling the challenges of urban development, innovation offers solutions and the concept of "Cities of Harmony" embodies our dreams.

At present, with more than half of humankind living in cities, our planet has entered the urban age. Rapid urbanization and industrialization have offered to humanity the abundant fruits of modern civilization, but at the same time they have brought unprecedented challenges. Population explosion, traffic congestion, environmental pollution, resource shortages, urban poverty and cultural conflicts are becoming urban problems with a global scope. For historical and current reasons, these phenomena are especially prominent in many developing countries. The Shanghai Expo responded to the times by selecting cities as its theme. It also introduced the first-ever Urban Best Practices Area and Virtual Expo to pursue a ground-breaking exploration of the possible solutions to the common dilemmas faced by humankind.

Today, as this grand gathering comes to a close, we sing high praise for the important value of the World Expo as a platform to confront these challenges and as a vehicle for dynamic exchange and interaction between civilizations. We enthusiastically issue this Shanghai Declaration as a summary of the substantive achievements of the Shanghai Expo and an expression of the shared aspirations of people around the world for a "Better City, Better Life."

We aspire to build cities that establish harmony between diverse people, between development and environment, between cultural legacies and future innovations. A City of Harmony reveals itself when people are in harmony with nature, society, and themselves, and when there is also harmony between generations.

To this end, we join together in proposing:

To Establish an Ecological Civilization Oriented toward the Future

Cities should respect nature, consider the urban ecological environment as an asset, integrate environmental issues into urban planning and administration, and accelerate the transition to sustainable development. They should promote the use of renewable energy sources and build low-carbon eco-cities. They should strongly advocate for conservation of resources and promote environment-friendly manufacturing. Cities and their citizens should join together to create sustainable lifestyles and an ecological civilization in which people and environment co-exist in harmony.

To Pursue Inclusive and Balanced Growth
Cities should balance economic growth and social development; seek to achieve an optimal relationship between social equity and economic efficiency; strive to create an institutional environment of shared rights and interests, equal opportunity, and fair competition; and work to reduce inequities in income. They should enable all residents to share the fruits of urban development and fully realize their personal growth.

To Promote Scientific and Technological Innovation as a Path to Development

Cities should strengthen scientific research and technological innovation, as well as establish and improve systems for using new technologies. They should accelerate the application of scientific findings in order to improve the quality of people’s lives and create new industries and jobs. They should leverage scientific research and technological innovation to build up the capacity of cities to prevent and mitigate urban and natural disasters. They should apply principles of openness and mutual benefit in strengthening scientific and technological exchanges and collaboration to promote urban development around the world.

To Build a Smart and Accessible Information Society

Cities should recognize that information and communication technologies are essential to a vibrant social, economic and cultural life of the city. Cities should invest in information and communication technology infrastructure so as to strengthen services across multiple sectors, and to build an intelligent digital nervous system supporting urban operations. They should strengthen the use of information technology in education, reduce the digital divide, and increase the access of residents to information.

To Foster an Open and Sharing Multicultural Society

Cities should endeavor to protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage and encourage the development of multicultural Society. Like the ocean that embraces all rivers, cities should keep an open spirit and actively engage in intercultural exchanges and interactions. Cities should pursue cultural innovation based on respect for cultural traditions and the preservation of cultural diversity, so as to generate lasting momentum for urban and human development.

To Build Friendly and Livable Communities

Cities should promote a harmonious and friendly social environment, and build civil, safe and livable urban neighborhoods through rational planning. They should provide high-quality public services in employment, healthcare, education, housing, social welfare and other areas. They should encourage public participation in urban planning and governance, take into consideration the practical and psychological needs of migrants to the cities, and eliminate social barriers and conflicts.

To Pursue Balanced Urban-Rural Development

Cities should coordinate balanced development with rural regions through the provision of services and infrastructure. Cities should strive to reduce the urban-rural gap, take into consideration the interests of disadvantaged social groups, and encourage and aid the integration of rural populations into the city. More efforts should be taken to improve and optimize urban-rural linkages as well as regional networks. Cities should actively initiate urban-rural dialogue to achieve harmony in their interactions.

We therefore call upon the world to pursue the efforts we have undertaken in the Shanghai Expo: to promote sustainable urban development, to foster cooperation and exchanges among cities and regions, and to share experiences and lessons in urbanization.
We propose to undertake initiatives for knowledge sharing and capacity building for cities around the world as they tackle the economic, social and environmental challenges of the 21st century. One such initiative will create educational materials for future city planners and managers by compiling the intellectual contributions of the Shanghai Expo.

We propose that October 31st, the day of the closing ceremony of World Expo 2010 Shanghai China, should be nominated as World Better Cities Day, so that the ideas and practices of the Shanghai Expo will be recalled, renewed and advanced in the future, inspiring humankind in its enduring pursuit of urban innovation and harmonious development!