COMMENT

Editorials

Global Development Initiative aims to propel shared development of world

As a major country in the world, China has both the capability and the willingness to contribute to global development. The Global Development Initiative is a public good offered to the world with the aim of helping advance global development and fulfill the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It was presented as a timely response to the development deficit that had become increasingly evident.

Proposed by President Xi Jinping during the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2021, the initiative places development at the center of the global macro-policy framework, and seeks to help developing countries make shared progress. Upon its unveiling, it immediately received a positive response from the UN, other international organizations and many countries, as it addresses the urgent needs of people around the world for peace, development and cooperation.

The international community faces major challenges in implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as the global development deficit continues to worsen.

Development issues have not received the attention they deserve. Unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise, with some countries erecting barriers and pushing for "decoupling", leading to the disruption of global industry and supply chains. All these factors, compounded by geopolitical conflicts, climate change, and energy and food crises, undermine the interests of countries — especially developing ones — making it even more difficult to achieve the UN 2030 targets.

Having accumulated development experience in its efforts to eradicate abject rural poverty, China put forward the initiative to promote global development.

Nearly five years have passed, and the initiative has made progress in its transition from concept to practice. It has now received the support and participation of more than 130 countries and international organizations, with more than 80 countries joining the Group of Friends of the GDI. The group works to advance the initiative's action-oriented, people-centered approach to accelerate the implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals through policy dialogue, experience sharing and practical cooperation.

With China's strenuous efforts, the initiative has mobilized over $23 billion to support the development of the Global South, and launched more than 1,800 cooperation projects. It has also provided training for more than 200,000 personnel from developing countries in various fields. All this has contributed to the economic and social progress of emerging market economies.

To review the initiative's achievements and further consolidate international consensus, a high-level meeting on the Global Development Initiative held in Beijing on Tuesday aimed to help translate cooperative commitments into concrete actions that will more effectively benefit the international community over the next five years.

In the face of a volatile international landscape, solidarity and cooperation are the only viable choices. In response to the global aspiration for peace and development, China will continue to uphold peaceful development, foster an open environment for sustainable growth, and ensure that the benefits of development reach more people.

All like-minded countries are invited to seize the opportunities presented by China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), share in the development dividends brought by Chinese modernization, and jointly explore new avenues for global development.

Over the past five years, the Global Development Initiative has served as both a road map for bridging the North-South divide and addressing development imbalances and as an "accelerator" for advancing the UN 2030 Agenda.

China stands ready to work with all parties by leveraging the projects related to the Global Development Initiative as platforms to pool broad development resources, build a solid foundation for shared progress, and foster an inclusive environment for growth, contributing to the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

Washington's 6G club built on shifting sand

It seems the US administration likes to treat every major technological advance by China as a geopolitical emergency — this time the target is 6G.

China accounts for about 40 percent of global 6G patent applications, has completed the first phase of national 6G technology trials, and has accumulated more than 300 key technologies for the next generation of wireless telecommunications. Alarmed, Washington has unveiled another technology coalition, a more than 20-member clique to accelerate "secure" 6G networks. The strategy is familiar. Build an exclusive club, write the standards and fence China out. But behind the sound bites lies the same illusion that has plagued Washington's technology policy for years: geopolitics overrides economics.

The US administration hopes the new alliance will shape international 6G standards ahead of next year's World Radiocommunication Conference in Shanghai. Its claim that 6G will be dramatically different from 5G is less a technological assessment than a political "justification" for replaying its campaign against the Chinese tech company Huawei under a new label.

The problem for Washington is its 5G playbook delivered far less than it had promised. Billions were spent removing Huawei equipment from US networks, yet rural replacement projects remain incomplete. The campaign complicated deployment, increased costs and failed to halt Huawei's global technological development. Repeating the same strategy under the banner of 6G is unlikely to produce a different outcome.

And the belief that US allies will sacrifice their commercial interests in pursuit of Washington's strategic goals is equally wishful thinking. The "Chip 4" initiative is an instructive precedent. The Republic of Korea joined only after insisting on conditions that avoided explicit restrictions on commercial ties with China, which accounts for roughly 40 percent of its semiconductor exports. The Netherlands' ASML has repeatedly resisted expanding restrictions, noting that US technology companies themselves derive a large share of their overseas revenue from the Chinese market.

The same contradictions will haunt the new 6G alliance. Germany, Japan, the ROK and the United Kingdom all maintain extensive commercial ties with China's telecommunications industry. Huawei and ZTE occupy key positions in the deeply integrated global supply chains that deliver substantial cost advantages over competitors. Asking allies to abandon those relationships in the name of "shared security" amounts to asking them to absorb substantial economic losses for dubious geopolitical gains.

Washington's campaign to reduce dependence on Chinese critical minerals reveals a similar disconnect between political will and economic reality. US President Donald Trump has designated January next year as the deadline for achieving independence from Chinese rare earths, tungsten and tantalum, while directing tens of billions of dollars toward domestic mining and processing. Yet the numbers tell a different story. US demand for common rare-earth magnets reached roughly 48,000 metric tons in 2025, while domestic supply stood at around 300 tons. The US has not produced tungsten since 2015 or tantalum since 1959, and industry experts acknowledge that rebuilding these supply chains will take years. And the more the US tries to separate these systems through political pressure, the more frictions it creates for its own companies and partners.

Technological leadership cannot be secured through alliances and sanctions alone. The emergence of China's Kimi K3 model is the latest proof of that. China continues to strengthen the industrial base that underpins its self-reliance in sci-tech innovation, with Chinese companies investing heavily in indigenous innovation.

The new 6G coalition may improve coordination among like-minded governments, but it will not diminish China's role in developing the technology's global standards or supply chains. Nor will it persuade US allies to disregard their own economic interests.

The US should invest in research, infrastructure and industrial competitiveness instead of forging a new containment coalition and imposing another round of restrictions. Technological innovation in this century will be achieved through cooperation rather than monopoly.

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Opinion Line

US seeks to reap dividends from managed instability

Just weeks after declaring the interim peace arrangement with Iran dead and resuming heavy strikes, United States President Donald Trump now says there is a good chance of a new agreement. That makes Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's White House visit this week hardly coincidental.

Meanwhile, a Ukrainian strike on an Iranian merchant vessel in the Caspian Sea has unexpectedly opened a new front.

This is the Great Game of the 21st century. It is fought less for territory than for markets, which reward uncertainty far more readily than they reward lasting peace, creating incentives to oscillate between confrontation and conciliation.

The Middle East illustrates this logic. The US and Israel have paused major strikes on Iran without abandoning the threat of force. Officially, diplomacy has been given room to work. Yet the Strait of Hormuz remains only partially open, while Houthi attacks in the Red Sea continue to threaten regional energy infrastructure. The objective is neither war nor peace but controlled instability, with oil prices serving as the principal transmission mechanism.

The political arithmetic is straightforward. Military pressure pushes Tehran toward negotiations, while the prospect of a diplomatic breakthrough pulls crude prices lower, easing inflation and reducing gasoline prices for US consumers. Markets respond not to peace itself but to expectations of peace. For any US administration facing the midterm elections, those expectations can prove almost as valuable as an actual agreement.

Netanyahu's visit adds another layer of complexity. Reports of tensions between him and the US leader, alongside Washington's willingness to pursue policies that unsettle Israel, suggest that the White House views an open-ended regional conflict as increasingly costly.

Following Ukraine's strike on the Iranian vessel, Tehran has accused Kyiv of acting on Israel's behalf in an effort to widen the conflict. The Caspian Sea — another major production base of oil and natural gas — has become an arena where the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East intersect.

Markets reacted exactly as US politicians might have expected. Earlier diplomatic engagement between Washington and Tehran helped pull Brent Crude off wartime highs, delivering a sharp decline in energy inflation. Trump's renewed talk of negotiations pushed oil futures lower, laying the ground for a new round of reaping, despite little immediate change in the underlying security situation.

This reflects a broader pattern of hegemonic leverage. Washington can tighten sanctions to increase pressure, ease them to calm energy markets, then restore restrictions if negotiations falter — all while preserving the US dollar's central role in the global energy trade. Carefully timed communications from the US Federal Reserve have repeatedly amplified market expectations, reinforcing financial stability at politically opportune moments. Whether diplomacy succeeds or fails, the cycle ultimately strengthens the US' financial hegemony.

The substance of negotiations remains far less convincing. Proposals requiring Iran to dismantle significant elements of its nuclear program while committing the US to a substantial regional military withdrawal are politically ambitious and strategically difficult to implement. Few observers expect a comprehensive settlement in the near term. The mooted negotiations therefore serve as much to shape market expectations as to resolve the underlying disputes.

The contradictions therefore remain intact. Lower energy prices offer only temporary relief from broader inflationary pressures, while regional tensions continue to simmer beneath successive rounds of diplomacy. The oscillation between confrontation and engagement has become less a pathway to peace than a mechanism for the US managing domestic political risks and fleecing world markets.

That may be the defining feature of contemporary geopolitics engineered by the US. Stability is no longer the immediate objective. Managed instability can generate strategic, financial and political dividends that durable peace cannot. The Caspian Sea incident is a reminder that, in today's world, the choreography of crisis often matters as much as its resolution — and that the true currency of US geopolitical competition is increasingly volatility itself.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Digital cooperation to empower Asia-Pacific MSMEs

Editor's note: *The recent 2026 APEC Digital and AI Ministerial Meeting adopted a ministerial statement in which all parties agreed to jointly promote digital and artificial intelligence technologies to empower the Asia-Pacific community. China Economic Times spoke to Wang Jian, a member of the expert committee of the APEC E-Commerce Business Alliance, on the future of regional cooperation. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

For most members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation mechanism, development remains the fundamental objective. Against this backdrop, the meeting identified technological empowerment and industrial upgrading as key areas of consensus. This pragmatic approach reflects the realities of the region, focuses on the broadest common ground for digital cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and lays a solid foundation for deeper collaboration.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises account for more than half of the trade and jobs across the Asia-Pacific, which makes them the primary beneficiaries of digital transformation. However, many such companies and businesses in remote areas have long struggled to join the digital economy because of the high investment required for digital systems, a shortage of technical professionals and inadequate network and computing infrastructure in less-developed regions.

The ministerial statement addresses these challenges by promoting lightweight digital tools, expanding access to computing and communications infrastructure and improving digital literacy across societies.

The statement also emphasizes improving internet accessibility in rural and remote areas and for vulnerable groups, aiming to overcome the geographical limitations facing the digital economy. As digital connectivity expands and digital skills become more widely available, economies at different stages of development and businesses located in different regions will be better positioned to participate equally in the Asia-Pacific marketplace.

The inclusion of open-source cooperation in the statement is a forward-looking breakthrough and provides a new pathway for inclusive and mutually beneficial AI industry collaboration in the region.

Open-source collaboration is a cost-effective channel through which developing economies can gain access to foundational AI technologies. In effect, it enables businesses and institutions embarking on digital and intelligent transformation to adopt AI applications more rapidly while offering a practical solution for narrowing the regional digital divide.

Security and development are mutually reinforcing. As the digital economy continues to expand, cross-border data flows, technological cooperation and trade become increasingly frequent, making robust security frameworks more essential than ever.

By building consensus on cybersecurity, data security and supply chain resilience, the statement builds on APEC's achievements in digital cooperation and addresses the shared concerns of member economies. In doing so, it provides greater confidence for businesses engaged in regional digital trade and technological collaboration. The meeting has also strengthened expectations for enhanced collaboration on AI governance and rulemaking within the APEC framework.