

Speech on the 5th Meeting of CICA Youth Council

(Liu Kai, Deputy Secretary-General of the All-China Youth Federation)

Session: Prioritizing youth development in national and regional development agenda (7 minutes)

Distinguished guests and colleagues from CICA Member Countries,
Dear young friends,

It's my pleasure to join you in CICA Youth Council meeting, and I'd like to express my sincere appreciation for the organizer and greetings for you all.

The All-China Youth Federation that I am working for is a national umbrella organization for major youth organizations and institutions in China, reaching more than 100 million young people across the country through our 50 member organizations, as well as a network of local youth federations in 300 cities in 31 provinces. We are responsible for advocating for youth policies, coordinating and implementing national youth development plan, maintaining close ties with youth organizations, youth movements and young leaders, and implementing youth engagement and youth development programs.

Dear colleagues,

CICA Youth Council aims to promote comprehensive cooperation among the youth of the CICA Member States towards strengthening interaction, peace and friendship. I think this is very important especially at this historical crossroads. Nowadays, changes of the world, of the time and of history are unfolding in ways like never before, posing unprecedented challenges for the global development. The young generation is disproportionately impacted by these challenges. This is exactly why we need more conversation and exchanges on how to prioritize youth development in national and regional development agenda.

On one hand, youth development is a positive and powerful drive to promote sustainable development and global development.

Development is a timeless theme for humanity. We are meeting at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is eroding decades of gains in global development, the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda is encountering difficulties, the North-South gap keeps widening, and crises are emerging in food and energy security. To cope with these unprecedented challenges, the world needs to focus on peace and development. During the UN General Assembly, President Xi Jinping proposed the ***Global Development Initiative (GDI)***, calling on the international community to accelerate the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda, and promoting stronger, greener and healthier global development. GDI helps to provide an acclaimed roadmap to SDGs and to build a better world.

Youth are an important force in promoting global development and tackling global challenges. We recognize that Youth 2030-the UN youth strategy provides a guiding structure in integrating youth development into sustainable development for all of us. CICA member states have large youth population. It is time for us to provide more support and platforms for youth participation in implementing the UN 2030 Agenda, and call for active actions from youth organizations, youth network and young individuals to contribute meaningfully as agents of change.

On another hand, youth development itself is an end that we are striving to achieve and prioritize. It's important to listen to young people, engage young people, empower young people, meet their needs and realize their rights, and promote positive youth development at all levels.

Chinese government attached great importance on youth development and has given priority to youth development in national agendas. With a series of laws, we have built a legal shield protecting the legitimate rights and interests of young people. The needs of young people have also been given particular attention when putting in place major national strategies.

Increasing attention and support have been given to young people in top-level design. Chinese government launched the ***Medium and Long-Term Youth Development Plan (2016-2025)***, providing fundamental policy guidance for young people in China to grow and develop, with 10 key areas such as education, health, employment and

entrepreneurship, social integration and engagement are identified. Now, more than 90 cities in China are joining a nationwide scheme to build youth-development-oriented cities. In April 2022, China released the white paper on *Youth of China in the New Era*, which is the first of its kind and records the youth development of the country and what young people are expecting and visioning for the future.

With the efforts of the whole society, young people in China now are having better conditions for development as well as more opportunities to fulfil their potential.

For example, young people in China enjoy more equal and higher-quality educational opportunities. In 2021, the completion rate of compulsory education in China reached 95.4 percent, and the gross enrollment rate in higher education reached 57.8 percent, with 44.3 million students on campus, ranking first in the world. Entrepreneurship is thriving across China, and young people constituted the main driving force behind startups. From 2015 to 2020, China's youth entrepreneurship indexes rose from 100 to 167.5. As of 2021, more than 90 million people aged between 14 and 35 had registered as volunteers at the national volunteering platform, and performed active volunteerism in various areas.

In order to prioritize youth development in national and international agenda, and advocate youth actions to implement the 2030 Agenda, the All-China Youth Federation is initiating the *World Youth Development Forum* from July 21 to 23, which is supported by Chinese government and UN agencies. We are inviting around 100 guest speakers and 400 youth delegates from the world to participate. Our young delegates are warmly welcomed to join us by sharing your youth development programs or stories with us.

Dear colleagues and young friends,

Young people are not only the future, but also the present of the world. We should engage all the stakeholders extensively, and pool the most potential resources together to support young people, work together with young people and for young people. A community of shared future

depends on all, especially on our future generations.

Thanks!