

Public Statement

China-West Dialogue Presses Urgency of US-China Leadership in Global Coordination of People-Centered Policies¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of global cooperation and coordination over geopolitical tensions and conflict.

For the rest of the world, no two countries are more important in this crisis than the United States and China, not just because of how they have been affected by it, but also because of their scale, dynamism and inter-connectedness.

Scholars and experts who have examined the dynamics between China and the US concluded that embracing the complexity and multifaceted nature of their links is the first step toward managing them responsibly.

The blame game between the US and China needs to stop, and conflicting issues need to be set aside to deal with the severity of the crisis and the complexity of their relations. The combination of the pandemic and the economic contraction resulting from it are confronting the world with its most difficult challenge in the new century.

It is incumbent on the world's largest economies to take responsibility for overcoming it. This means creating conditions for social inclusion and personal security which have been undermined in recent years by economic globalization, financial crises, climate change, migration and, now, by a global health crisis.

The United States and China should set aside their differences. This would allow them to lead the world in a global effort to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic fallout from it by focusing on people-centered policies now that improve the well-being of all and the sustainability of our planet over time.

In 2016, during the China G20 presidency, the United States and China cooperated in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 that had been endorsed by all members of the United Nations in 2015. *There is no better framework to assure that social impact is the focus of people-centered policies for global public health and recovery than the SDGs.*

Now, more than ever, is the time for global leadership to bring the world together, and not tear it apart through divisive rhetoric. This entails a common effort to lift people out of poverty as well as out of anxiety, misery and fear *by forging new systems for economic, social and environmental sustainability*, as envisioned by the SDGs for 2030.

China and the United States have a special responsibility for leading these global coordination efforts. But to do so, they must first put their differences aside for the common

¹ This statement only represents the views of the three co-conveners.

good. This would enable a broad international effort by other major nations from every region to coalesce around ambitious agendas for the benefit of all now and the longer term.

The deeper issue is, out of this catastrophic crisis, can humanity emerge with a greater sense of empathy and social responsibility for each other embodied in new policies and governance for the longer-term future? The challenges are transcendental requiring concerted transformational actions and strong global coordination.

This “public statement” is issued by Alan Alexandroff, Colin Bradford and Yves Tiberghien, as the co-conveners of the BU-CWD Workshop on “China-West Relations: The Search for a 21st Century Global Order” hosted by Boston University in cooperation with the China-West Dialogue (CWD) * on March 20, 2020.

The international group of 19 experts participating in the BU-CWD Workshop by video conferencing during the corona virus crisis consisted of:

*Alan Alexandroff (Canada), Erik Balsbaugh (US), Sergio Bitar (Chile), *Colin Bradford (US), Kerry Brown (UK), Kevin Gallagher (US), *Jorge Heine (Chile), Iain Johnston (US),* Johannes Linn Germany-US), Paul Martin (Canada), Sandra Polask (US), Eberhard Sandschneider (Germany), Vivien Schmidt US), Michael Swaine (US), Torrey Taussig (US), Susan Thornton (US), * Yves Tiberghien (Canada), *Nicolas Veron (EU), and *Richard Wike (US).

The Workshop and the group of 4 Europeans, 3 Canadians, 2 Chileans and 10 Americans was convened by the principals of the VISION20 (V20), an informal G20 engagement group co-chaired by Alan Alexandroff, Colin Bradford and Yves Tiberghien. (www.thevision20.org)

This BU-CWD Workshop would not have taken place without the generous support of the Global Development Policy Center (GDP) at Boston University and its director, Kevin Gallagher. The GDP Center financed the costs of the would-be Workshop to have been held at the BU Pardee School of Global Studies on March 20, 2020. The staff support by Professor Gallagher, associate GDP Center director William Kring and program director Ma Xinyue were critically important to the organization of the Workshop and the execution of it as a virtual undertaking.

The Workshop took place as a video conference on March 20th. All 19 participants were involved for the four hours. Many of the participants did not know each other. They came not only from different countries but also from different disciplines. The largest group is China scholars and international relations experts but there were economists, political scientists, former government and international organization officials, and at least one lawyer. While each and all are distinguished in their fields of expertise, the group came together more as *concerned citizens* than out of purely professional ambition.

We were joined together by keen concern about *deep systemic challenges* facing our economies, societies, governments and the world *even before* the corona virus crisis and its economic repercussions. In fact, the day before the virtual Workshop, the agenda was changed to

include a strong focus on the relationship of the current crises to the longer-term systemic crises.

This Workshop and the China-West Dialogue itself have no institutional home or affiliation. Each of us is participating as individuals. No institution is responsible for the Workshop or the China-West Dialogue, although the BU Global Development Policy Center is gratefully acknowledged for making the Workshop possible. Ten BU-CWD Workshop participants are on the original program for the fourth Berlin Global Solutions Summit to now be held digitally on April 20-21. (www.global-solutions-initiative.org)

*Founding Members of the China-West Dialogue.

The China-West Dialogue (CWD) was launched in April of 2019 by a eleven experts from Europe, Canada, Chile, China and the United States and was initiated by the principals of the VISION20 (V20), a G20 engagement group, co-chaired by Alan Alexandroff (Canada), Colin Bradford (USA), and Yves Tiberghien (Canada).

This “public statement” by the V20 co-chairs is being released today on the Boston University Global Development Policy Center website along with four other documents:

1. The BU-CWD Workshop Agenda of Issues discussed virtually on March 20,2020.
2. The Biographies of the 19 Participants in the BU-CWD Workshop.
3. The “China – West Dialogue (CWD) “Vision Statement”
4. “Toward ‘Effective Multilateralism’ in Turbulent Times”, by Alan Alexandroff, Colin Bradford and Yves Tiberghien, to be published in the *Global Solutions Journal* in April 2020 for the fourth Berlin Global Solutions Summit. This article explains the substantive origins of the China – West Dialogue and its relationship with the VISION20 (V20) engagement group started in 2016.

This website address will be the depository for the posting of papers prepared by BU-CWD participants and other information regarding follow up activities. Joint linkages will be forthcoming with the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia and the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London.