



## Dialogue Between Civilizations on Global Commons

jointly organized by Jeffrey Sachs (Columbia/PASS), Steve Howard (Global Foundation) and Riccardo Pozzo (Tor Vergata/PASS)



### Background

We need to implement global commons, first and foremost a common home with a common prosperity. As the Holy Father makes clear, we need to ensure that the global community, shaped by institutions, agencies, and representatives of civil society, can effectively achieve common goals and obligations that have been solemnly declared and assumed. These include the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

China, the US, Australia, and the EU are all influential economies and major traders in the world. In recent decades, China's economic and political importance has grown on an unprecedented scale and at an unprecedented speed. Recent developments within the international system, including the creation of new global frameworks and multilateral institutions such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and China's growing presence in key international institutions, evidence a newfound Chinese pro-activeness in the international sphere. Today China is a key global actor and a leading scientific and technological power.

This development has resulted in an increase in bilateral and multilateral engagements on a vast variety of issues such as trade, research/technology, sustainable development, climate change, foreign direct investment, and human rights. At the same time, this rise has revealed challenges for incorporating China into the United Nations 2030 Agenda with its various specificities,

complexities, and goals, and respond to the country's rapid evolution and new policy directions. As China becomes even more engaged in a wide array of policy areas, upgrading, supporting, connecting and mainstreaming knowledge on this development outside of China itself has become a necessity for policy-makers, stakeholders, and civil society at large, in order to best navigate strategic opportunities and challenges with foresight, instead of reacting to them after they have happened.

Because of China's increasingly central role in global matters, it is important for the world to get to know and understand China on its own terms—not through the lens of external sources but from its own perspective. This update and upgrade must be based on objective European analysis grounded in facts and insights from science and research carried out by academia and independent think tanks, as well as surveys and trend analysis on the experiences of stakeholders across a number of fields. At the intersection of science, economics, and global affairs, the conference will support an independent understanding of China and its overall defining social, economic, and political characteristics. The conference's scope will not be limited to scholars of theology, philosophy, and the law. Starting from Rome, it will produce spin-offs that will involve the general public, the judiciary and the school systems, the economic operators as well as nonprofit organizations.

Cooperation for a better world starts with thinking about ourselves and our own beliefs. We are witnessing a paradigm change from a dialogue of cultures to a dialogically born culture. In 2017, the Congregation for Catholic Education issued guidelines on *Educating to Fraternal Humanism: Building a Civilization of Love* that can be seen as a forerunner of the encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti*. As also maintained by Tu Weiming, dialogical culture does not stand for a mere exchange of views to know one another and mitigate the alienating effect of the encounter between citizens of different cultures. It must ignite an authentic dialogue within an ethical framework of requirements and attitudes for social objectives. The ethical requirements for dialogue are freedom and equality. Dialogue participants must be free from contingent interests and prepared to recognize the dignity of all parties.

These attitudes are supported by consistent dialogue with one's values. This results in a general intention to align actions with words and link ethical principles (e.g., peace, fairness, respect, democracy) with social and civic choices. As Pope Francis pointed out, we need a "grammar of dialogue" that can "build bridges and ... find answers to the challenges of our time" (Congregation for Catholic Education 2017, 12-13). Among the questions we will address are:

1. Evaluate contemporary China's social, cultural, political, and economic characteristics; assess the impact of its global policy; and understand its compliance with international obligations/laws/norms.
2. Examine new global narratives and their interactions with the SDGs to identify potential areas for global cooperation.

3. Develop and network independent knowledge and expertise on contemporary China to enhance fact-based policy-making, increase knowledge sharing, create synergies between knowledge nodes, and complement existing knowledge-enhancing strategies.