Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to attend the Beijing Forum on “Diversity in the Development of Human Civilization”.

I’ve been to about 170 countries. Wherever they are, no matter in Asia, Europe, Africa or America, I have always been impressed by their unique beauty. It is the coexistence of different civilizations that makes the world so diversified and colorful; it is the interaction between different civilizations that makes the river of history running so tirelessly.

Despite their distinctive features, all civilizations are similar in their pursuit of peace, development, justice and freedom.

Dear friends,

The Chinese nation has created a splendid culture in its long history. Among all the central elements in the Chinese civilization, a most important one is the concept of “harmony”.

Harmony means appropriateness. According to the Doctrine of the Mean, a Chinese classic of Confucianism, harmony is the universal path which all the human actions should pursue. It advocates that human feelings and desires should all act in their due degree without going to extremes. In that way, harmony and peace can be ensured in society.

Harmony is peace. China’s traditional culture values harmony, stressing that people should be friendly toward each other and countries should live side by side in peace and avoid war or violence.

Harmony allows differences. Musical instruments have different tones, but working together, they produce pleasant melodies. That is the beauty of harmony. Any society needs harmony for common prosperity and needs difference for complementarity.

Harmony also implies harmonious coexistence between man and nature. The Chinese culture advocates unity between heaven and man, and between man and nature.

Harmony is in line with other fundamental principles in the Chinese civilization, like benevolence and tolerance. The concept of harmony is highly relevant in tackling the challenges faced by mankind today.

Dear colleagues,

The traditional principles in the Chinese civilization still have a profound impact on the Chinese culture and society. China’s diplomacy is also deeply influenced by the national tradition. China is firmly committed to the path of peaceful development and the building of a harmonious world. It is a reflection of the pursuit of harmony by the Chinese civilization.

Some people might ask: What kind of path will China take? What kind of foreign policy will China adopt? The answer is simple and clear: China is taking a path of peaceful development. President Hu Jintao has long since pointed out that “China’s development is peaceful, open and cooperative”, that “China strives for a peaceful international environment to develop itself, and promotes world peace through its own development”, and that “China is always a staunch force for safeguarding world peace and promoting common development.”

Peaceful development, a strategic choice of China, is determined by its national conditions, history, cultural traditions, its own need for development and the trend of human progress.
Dear friends,

I was posted in Kenya for 7 years in the 1970s. There is a port called Mombassa in Kenya. Chinese navigator Zheng He led a fleet to the port in early 15th century, before Colombo discovered the American continent. At that time, China was one of the most prosperous countries in the world. What China took to Kenya was friendship, not guns or colonialism, and what China brought back was giraffe, a symbol of good luck, not gold or slaves.

In over 100 years after the Opium War in 1840, China was invaded and bullied many times and knew too well the misery of a nation under aggression and oppression. As a Chinese saying goes, “Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you.” We will never inflict the suffering we experienced on other nations. China is sincere in its commitment to peaceful development.

In safeguarding and advancing our national interests, we mainly rely on our own strength rather than resort to aggression, expansion or colonization. China does not seek hegemony or sphere of influence. China respects the sovereignty of other countries and poses no threat to any other country. It is a force promoting regional stability and world peace. Some say that China is at the so called “strategic crossroads” and its future is still uncertain, and they will therefore “hedge” relations with China. Such views and practice are totally unwarranted.

Together with other countries, China pursues the building of a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity. China advocates that all countries should respect each other politically and conduct consultation on an equal footing to promote democracy in international relations; they should cooperate with each other, draw on each other’s strengths and work together to advance economic globalization in the direction of balanced development, shared benefits and win-win progress; they should learn from each other in the spirit of seeking common ground while shelving differences, respect the diversity of the world and make joint efforts to advance human civilization; they should trust each other, strengthen cooperation, settle international disputes by peaceful means and maintain world peace; and they should assist and cooperate with each other in conservation efforts to take good care of the Earth, the only home of human beings.

All countries, big or small, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community. There ought to be diversity in development modes and democracy in international relations. It is important to uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and promote democracy, harmony, and cooperation and win-win solutions in international relations.

Our national interests are consistent with the overall interests of the whole humanity. China does not seek development at the expense of the interests of other countries or of the international community, nor does it seek its own development only. We seek to properly address frictions over interests among nations and achieve mutually beneficial and win-win results through equal and friendly cooperation.

We advocate that different civilizations have dialogue and exchange, respect and learn from each other to draw on each other’s strengths; we respect the right of all countries to independently choose their development paths and do not seek to influence political systems and development modes of other countries. We oppose creating conflicts on the ground of differences in ideology, values and religious belief.

As globalization gains momentum and interdependence among countries increases, global challenges call for global cooperation. China is playing a constructive role in the Korean and Iranian nuclear issues, the Darfur issue, climate change and the fight against terrorism of all forms. Chinese concepts, such as valuing harmony, seeking common ground while shelving differences and building trust, are offering new perspectives and driving forces for promoting stability in international relations.

We are actively promoting harmonious development between man and nature. As a developing country, China is fulfilling its due international obligations with a highly responsible attitude towards the Chinese people and the rest of the world. We have successively signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, released the National Program on Addressing Climate Change and other policy papers and set the target of bringing down energy consumption per unit of GDP by 20% between 2005 and 2010, in an effort to contribute to the slowing down of global warming.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Globalization is developing rapidly and people in the world find their destinies more closely intertwined. Therefore, exchange and dialogue among civilizations have become more important and urgent than ever. It is more necessary for all civilizations to seriously understand and modestly learn from each other. There is still a long way to go. This Beijing Forum with the theme “the Harmony of Civilizations and Prosperity for All” is therefore highly relevant and most timely.
I wish the Forum a complete success!
Thank you!