

President hails work of NGOs on Belt, Road

President Xi Jinping called for nongovernmental organizations along the Silk Road to contribute to enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between people of different countries, promoting common development and building a community of shared future for mankind.

He made the remark in a congratulatory message to the First Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network Forum, which started on Tuesday in Beijing and has drawn nearly 200 representatives from more than 50 countries.

Xi said the building of the Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network is an important step for strengthening exchanges and cooperation among people of the Silk Road countries and facilitating people-to-people connectivity.

Song Tao, head of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, read the president's message at the opening ceremony of the two-day forum.

Song called for NGOs in countries along the Silk Road to contribute to promoting the development of the Belt and Road Initiative and building a community of shared future for mankind.

Xi announced China would develop the Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network in May at the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

The network aims to become a platform for the NGOs to share information and coordinate.

It encourages the organizations to carry out projects in areas such as education and healthcare to improve people's well-being, as well as projects to enhance mutual understanding and friendship between peoples, according to the China NGO Network for International Exchanges.

More than 300 NGOs from more than 60 countries and regions are in the network.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who also sent a congratulatory message, said that "civil society groups have a crucial role to play" in implementing the Belt and Road Initiative.

Victor-Viorel Ponta, former Romanian prime minister, said he appreciates the idea of cooperation among NGOs to help implement the initiative.

The NGOs should be able to explain to people the advantage of "having such a big vision", Ponta told reporters.