 2018 GRF 1st information circular

The Great Rivers Forum 2018

Great Rivers Civilizations
- High Quality Development for a Sustainable Future -

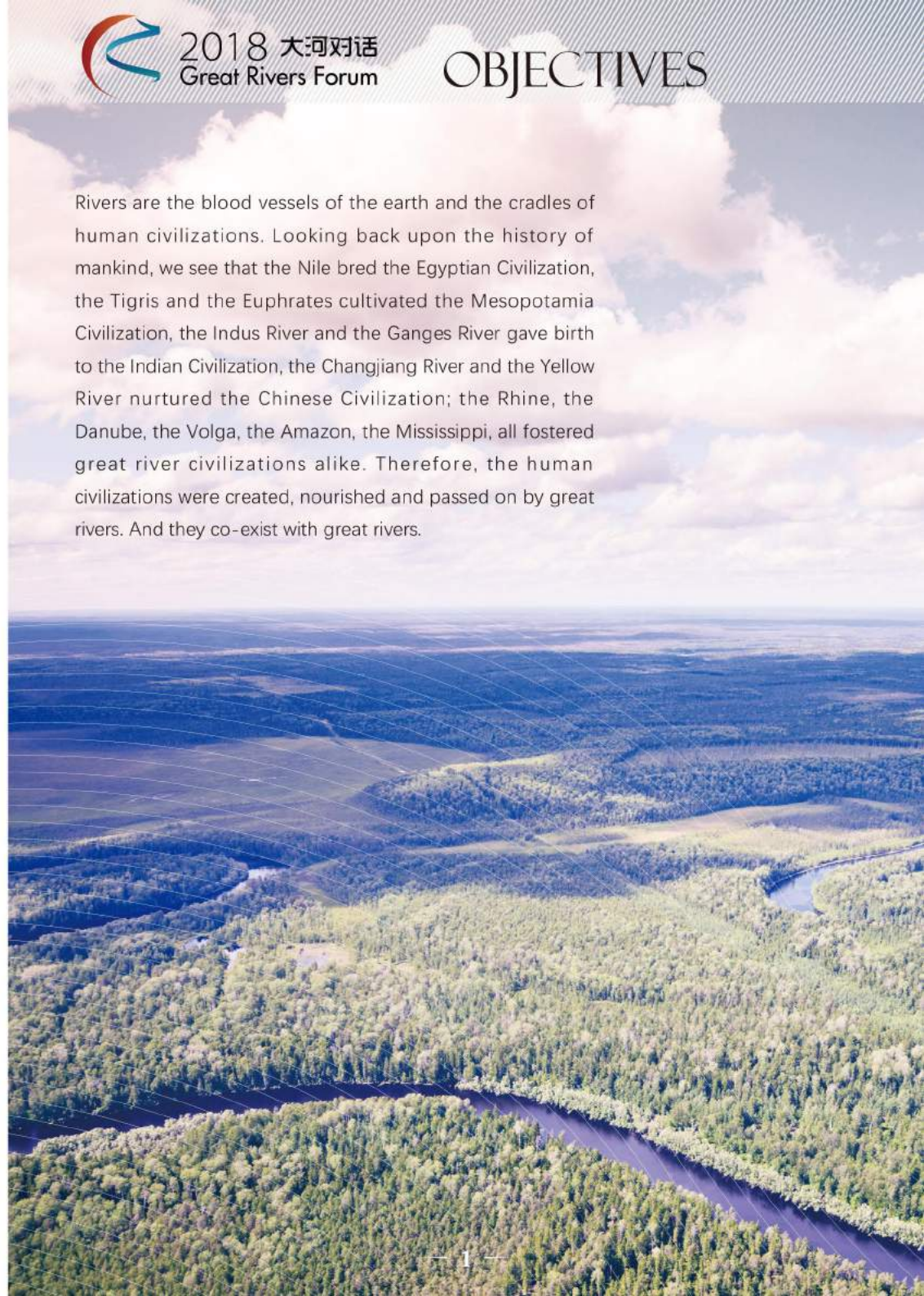
28-30 October 2018
The Changjiang Civilization Museum, Wuhan, China

2018 Great Rivers Forum

Date: October 28th to 30th, 2018

Add: The Changjiang Civilization Museum, Wuhan, China

Rivers are the blood vessels of the earth and the cradles of human civilizations. Looking back upon the history of mankind, we see that the Nile bred the Egyptian Civilization, the Tigris and the Euphrates cultivated the Mesopotamia Civilization, the Indus River and the Ganges River gave birth to the Indian Civilization, the Changjiang River and the Yellow River nurtured the Chinese Civilization; the Rhine, the Danube, the Volga, the Amazon, the Mississippi, all fostered great river civilizations alike. Therefore, the human civilizations were created, nourished and passed on by great rivers. And they co-exist with great rivers.



Every second year, the Great Rivers Forum offers itself as an international open platform for experts and managers from various horizons and disciplines. It represents a unique opportunity to gather global intelligence to exchange ideas and share experiences while sticking to the common values of all humans. The involvement of sister cities and UNESCO networks (World Heritage sites, Creative Cities, Biosphere Reserves and Ecohydrology Pilot Sites) in this cooperative effort will contribute to push forward high-quality development along great rivers, with particular attention to their ecological and cultural environment. Together, participants and partners will also explore the role great river civilizations should have in achieving a more sustainable development of the world.

Changjiang River, Wuhan



The 2018 GRF is jointly organized by the Municipal Government of Wuhan and UNESCO, through its Beijing Office. It will be held from October 28 to 30 in the facilities of the Changjiang Civilization Museum. The 2018 edition of the Forum will be focused on "Great Rivers Civilizations – High Quality Development for a Sustainable Future". The works of the Forum will revolve around 3 main parallel sessions dedicated to:

- **SESSION one**

Great River Civilization:
Preserve and Let Evolve Their Natural and Cultural Heritage;

- **SESSION two**

Water Museums and Great Rivers Civilizations
– Heritage, Memory and Sense of Place;

- **SESSION three**

Urban Development along Great Rivers
– Re-connecting the City with its River

- **Great River Civilization:
Preserve and Let Evolve Their Natural and Cultural Heritage**

Moderated by Karl M. Wantzen, Holder of the UNESCO Chair "Fleuves et Patrimoine – River Culture " at CNRS UMR CITERES, University of Tours, France.

Great rivers bear an enormous richness of biological, geophysical, and cultural heritage. As long as they are well-functioning ecosystems, they are excellent life-support systems for biota and humankind, allowing a large diversity of use strategies, which translate into biological and cultural diversities. Most running-water systems worldwide, however, have been strongly impacted for the sake of individual use forms and on the detriment of all others. The holistic view of the river as a complex and integrative system has been largely lost, it has been replaced by a perspective of short-term use of hydropower, irrigation or drinking water, source of construction material, or just as a sewer. Both riverine biocultural diversity and human water security are at risk on a global scale. Feasible solutions are urgently needed. In the Anthropocene, the return to the pre-historical environmental situation is rarely possible, but we can take efforts to re-design strongly impacted rivers (especially in cities) in a way that ecosystem functions and the evolutionary potential of biological and cultural diversity are sustainably supported. This session aims at identifying innovative approaches to solve this dilemma, but it also includes a historical perspective on partly forgotten „river cultures “.



Nile River

- Water Museums and Great Rivers Civilizations
– Heritage, Memory and Sense of Place;

Moderated by Eriberto Eulisse, Coordinator of the Global Network of Water Museums (recognized by the recent UNESCO-IHP Resolution XXXIII-6), Venice, Italy.

Different civilizations flourished all around the world by using rivers for defence purposes, irrigation, transportation, trade, and thus also as a means for cultural exchange. The unique hydraulic heritage which was built along great rivers as a result of this process is made of both tangible and intangible heritage, and includes monuments and hydraulic artefacts but also techniques and management models, as well as unique waterscapes. This cultural and natural heritage inherited from the past should be considered today to face specific environmental and societal challenges, to propose solutions for integrated water management and make cities and urban settlements along great rivers more resilient and adaptive to change. This session seeks to bring together novel insights and interdisciplinary research examining the ways in which approaches to water civilization along great rivers are affecting existing or abandoned social habits related to hydrography. It will also investigate the role of water museums in interpreting and rehabilitating this cultural and natural heritage, and explore their function in exhibiting and educating on these complex issues by using interdisciplinary and holistic approaches.

Venice

- Urban Development along Great Rivers
– Re-connecting the City with its River

Moderated by Katri Lisitzin, Architect SAR/MSA, Urban planner and researcher, International Cultural World Heritage Expert, Sweden.

Like Wuhan, most of the cities which developed along great rivers owe their prosperity to the river and to the fruition of its natural and cultural resources which have shaped their development pattern. Yet, cities historical and functional identity with the river has often been lost in the present-day' s rapid and, often chaotic, urban development and it has also been challenged by current environmental threats.

In this session, invited experts and practitioners from diverse and complementary fields will come together to explore how to re-connect the city with its river and how this relation can be made the leading concept in city development. Recent urban infrastructure and waterfront developments which celebrate the river and create new attractive places for people at leisure and work will be discussed. We will also examine how the relevance of the river in resource management can be considered, providing for urban ecosystem services and supporting a more sustainable urban development.

Concrete experiences from riverside urban developments from various parts of the world, closely related to UNESCO networks such as World Heritage Sites and Creative Cities will serve as inspiration and a base for future networks.



Ganges River

Participants of the Great Rivers Forum 2018 will include:

- UNESCO Officials and representatives of relevant Offices, Programmes, Centers and Chairs.
- International experts for the 3 thematic sessions considering in particular their connection to / interest in Great Rivers, but also their affiliation to UNESCO networks (Creative Cities, Ecohydrology, IHP Great River Initiative) and sites (WH sites, BRs).
- Representatives from Great Rivers Basins from various parts of the world (including correlative municipal leader/officials and representatives from world well known Museums). Representatives from the 4 great ancient river civilizations - Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus Valley and Yellow River Valley as well as other important basins from other parts of the World (Amazonas, Mississippi, Danube, Rhine, Volga, Po, etc
- Representatives from Chinese Great Rivers Basins
- National participants from other Chinese river basins, cities, museums, universities and research centres, etc.



UNESCO Office Beijing
联合国教育、科学及文化组织
驻华代表处



World
Heritage
Convention



International
Hydrological
Programme



Agenda of the 2018 GRF (Tentative):

Day 1 – 28 October 2018

Arrival of participants, pre-event excursions and welcoming dinner

Day 2 – 29 October 2018

- 09:30 – 10:45 Welcoming addresses by authorities and distinguished guests
- 10:45 – 11:30 Group photo and coffee break
- 11:30 – 12:30 Key lectures introducing the 3 main focus areas of the Forum
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00 – 15:45 3 Parallel sessions
- 15:45 – 16:00 Coffee break
- 16:00 – 18:00 3 Parallel sessions (continued)
- 19:00 – 21:00 Dinner

Day 3 – 30 October 2018

- 09:30 – 12:30 3 Parallel sessions (end)
Finalization of the work of the parallel sessions
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00 – 15:45 The 3 working groups elaborate their conclusions and recommendations to be presented
- 15:45 – 16:30 Coffee break and press conference
- 16:30 – 18:00 Presentation of the thematic reports and recommendations to the authorities and high level representatives. Conclusions, adoption of the final declaration and the way forward
- 18:00 – 18:30 Closing ceremony
- 19:00 – 21:00 Final dinner

NOTE: The following suggested duration of presentations is proposed in order to save enough time for discussion and elaboration of conclusions, recommendations and final declaration:

- Key Lectures: 20 minutes
- Other presentations: 10 minutes

Venue and Accommodation arrangements

The meeting programme and the field trip will be held in Wuhan, Changjiang Civilization Museum.

Travel to Wuhan, China

Travel for invited international experts will be supported by UNESCO Beijing Office through the local organizer.

There is no charge for the forum. To participate in the 2018 Wuhan Forum for Great Rivers Dialogue, domestic transportation fees and landing fee will be borne by the sponsor.

Tips

We sincerely invite every participant/representative to bring water from the river they will represent in the forum, not filled in a simple bottle but in a kind of artistic container/ bottle which would be exhibited during the forum, then kept as part of a permanent exhibition at the Changjiang Civilization Museum.

For more information, please contact:

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The Changjiang Civilization Museum

Introduction of Wuhan and The Changjiang Civilization Museum

The Changjiang River is the longest river in China and the third longest in the world. As one of the Mother Rivers of the Chinese nation, it fosters the splendid Changjiang River Civilization. Under this background, the Chinese government is implementing the Changjiang River Economic Belt Strategy for the purpose of rejuvenating the ancient Changjiang River Civilization with new vigor and vitality.

Wuhan is a central city in the Changjiang River Basin, as well as one of the cradles of the Changjiang River Civilization. The root of Wuhan – Pan Long City Site dates back to more than 3,500 years ago in the Shang Dynasty, which is honored as the origin of the bronze civilization in the Changjiang River Basin. Over 2,000 years ago, Qu Yuan, the great patriotic poet, headed eastward along the Changjiang River from here, leaving behind the historic steps and poetry of a troubadour. At the beginning of the 17th century, the Ten-thousand Mile Tea Road, starting at the Oriental Tea Port in Hankou, straddled the Eurasia and became a centennial artery connecting the Changjiang River and the Volga River. Wuhan is well known for its distinctive symbols marked with the Changjiang River: the beautiful landscape of the Changjiang River and the Han River flowing into the sea, the geographical location of thoroughfare to nine provinces, the booming business fostered by shipping, the city glory for the first bridge over the Changjiang River, and the position as the national shipping center in the middle reaches of the Changjiang River. All of these fully demonstrate the profound river culture and history of Wuhan.

In order to better inherit the Changjiang River civilization, Wuhan Municipal People's Government, the Changjiang Water Resources Commission of the Ministry of Water Resources and Wuhan University jointly built the Changjiang Civilization Museum, the first of its kind in China, and initiated the Great Rivers Forum (GRF for short), aiming to establish a platform for dialogue among great river civilizations and a bridge of cultural communication between the East and the West.

The Changjiang Civilization Museum, opened on September 25, 2015, is a non-profit cultural institution that collects, displays, and studies the natural ecology and human civilization of the Changjiang River. The permanent exhibition of the Changjiang Civilization Museum is themed "A song of the Changjiang River, and a journey of civilization", and its main connotation is "water breeds human beings, humans create civilization, and civilization blends with ecology". The exhibition displays the ecology, culture, and economy of the Changjiang River in an all-round, multi-perspective, and three-dimensional manner. The exhibition won the "Boutique Award" of the 14th Top Ten Exhibitions among China's National Museums, and the 2016 Top Six Exhibitions Award among museums in Hubei Province. By the end of 2017, the Museum had received 1.9 million visitors free of charge. It was awarded the titles of "National Water Education Base" by the Ministry of Water Resources and the "Patriotic Education Base" of Hubei Province.

