

Inheritance, Innovation and Development

Work Report of the 11th Presidency (2013-2016) of the WCC

September 2016

“The Congress proved that when confronted with each other as artists, people could meet in a friendly spirit and with deep understanding, no matter what their race or politics. This is the first road towards bringing peace to the world. It is the things of the spirit, the arts of the country which has always led mankind forward, and it is this spirit that the craftsmen of the world must lend themselves.”

-Aileen Osborn Vanderbilt Webb (America), WCC founder, in 1956

The WCC founded by Ms. Aileen Webb has promoted the development and protection of the world crafts industry on an ongoing basis, thereby creating a legendary life story of herself.

In December 2012, the presidency of the WCC was handed over to China and the Chinese arts and crafts industry. Very luckily, China became the WCC's president for the term of 2013-2016 and, together with the international community, took on the WCC's historic mission that linked to both the past and the future: uniting craftspeople and their friends across the world and fighting for their welfares; inheriting, protecting and developing the precious crafts cultural heritage; promoting the connection between crafts culture and the modern civilizations; making people living in the modern world aware of the value and culture of crafts; boosting development of the WCC and the world crafts industry; and working hard together with the craftsmen all over the world for the arts of their respective countries and therefore making great important contribution to development of the human civilization in terms of craftsmanship.

In 2014, the WCC embraced its Golden Jubilee Celebration Summit. Looking back on its 50-year history, we find that the WCC has experienced many ups and downs. With the concerted efforts of all the craftsmen across the world, the support of the WCC regional presidents and the active participation of the WCC member countries, the WCC has successfully overcome difficulties one after another and eventually achieved a new array of honors during China's presidency. In the past 4 years, in addition to existing projects, we have been working hard in innovation in collaboration with 5 regional presidents, 20 regional vice presidents, 99 national entity members, 35 national associate members, 26 honorary members, 4 international NGOs and 110 individual members. To be specific, we have done the following jobs: initiating the WCC Craft City Program and entering into partnerships with the Craft Cities across the world; actively establishing partnerships with enterprises and organizations in the cultural industry to help the WCC members expand their space of development; promoting establishment of the craft education alliance; taking an active part in international art and cultural events to increase the WCC's influence; signing a memo of cooperation with the UNESCO to implement the Award of Excellence for Handicraft Program all over the world; promoting transformation of the craftworks into artworks by holding the 1st International

Contemporary Craft Biennale 2014 in Nantong, Jiangsu Province; organizing the 2014 WCC Golden Jubilee Celebration Summit; hosting the WCC directors-general's working conference; participating in projects of the WCC Regions (Europe, Africa, Latin America, Asia-Pacific and North America) and member countries, etc.

I. Building on previous success and promoting development of the WCC's platforms

1. Constructing the WCC's new official website: in history, the WCC had attempted several times to construct its official websites, but due to ownership problems, none of the websites once constructed was successfully carried over to the next presidency. In June 2016, the WCC Secretariat registered a new domain name (www.wcc-aisbl.org) and constructed a new official website for the WCC. As the WCC's most important window of communication, the website is used by the Secretariat to release news updates and related information on a regular basis. Moreover, we will attempt to hand the domain name over to the next Secretariat to ensure the consistency of information.

2. Composing the WCC's official song: availing the opportunity of the WCC Golden Jubilee Celebration Summit, we commissioned Ms. Dadawa, a well-known Chinese musician, to customize an official song for the WCC and put an end to the situation where the WCC had only an official flag but had no official song. At the opening ceremony of the 2014 WCC Golden Jubilee Celebration Summit, the official song was sung while the WCC's official flag was raised, rallying all craftsmen in the world and marking the entry into a new era of the human craftsmanship.

3. Registration of the WCC: under the leadership of the WCC's former president Ms. Usha Krishna, the WCC was successfully registered in Brussels, Belgium in 2013. In a nearly-50-year-long history, the WCC has had a legal identity for the first time ever. During the 4-year presidency of China, we have actively assisted the WCC's branch in Belgium in handling the annual registrations and reviews.

4. Keeping in contact with the UNESCO and renewing the consultative status with the UNESCO on a regular basis: in 1972, the WCC was approved to be an organization subordinate to the UNESCO with a consultative status. Over the years, it has always been a top priority for the WCC to keep in close contact with the UNESCO, the supreme organ in the global cultural industry. Apart from paying the membership dues in a timely manner, we have taken an active part in all the cultural events and programs of the UNESCO, while taking advantage of the UNESCO's platforms to promote the WCC. Specifically, we have taken part in the following events organized by the UNESCO during the presidency of China: the world cultural forum held in Hangzhou, China in 2013; the thematic cultural events organized during the 2010 Shanghai Expo; the cultural forum organized in Beijing in 2014; the cultural forum organized in Florence, Italy in 2015, etc. In these events, moreover, we have made use of all available opportunities to advertise the WCC. Particularly, at the 2015 international forum on world cultures and cultural industries organized by the UNESCO in Florence, we made a keynote speech titled *How to Promote Development of the Craft Industry*. On this occasion, we analyzed the challenges and opportunities faced by the world's craft

industry and presented the WCC Craft City Program and the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts Program to the world, winning a wide recognition of all participants of the forum.

II. Actively entering into partnerships with related organizations to increase the WCC's influence over the cultural industry

1. Initiating the WCC Craft City Program and entering into partnerships with the WCC-designated Craft Cities: in an effort to increase the WCC's influence over cultural industry, the WCC launched the Craft City Program which forcefully promoted development and raised people's awareness of the global arts and crafts industry. The program was well received by all WCC Regions. So far, 20 cities across the world have been designated by the WCC as Craft City and entered into partnerships with the WCC.

- At the 16th WCC General Assembly convened in Chennai in 2012, a government delegation of Dongyang, a Chinese city, submitted to the WCC "an application for designating Dongyang as a World City of Wood Carving", thus unveiling "the WCC's Craft City Program" formally.

- At the WCC-Asia Pacific Region's annual assembly convened during the Asia-Pacific Craft Culture Week in Kuwait in January 2013, Ms. Usha Krishna, the former President of the WCC, was appointed to be responsible for drafting guidelines for the WCC Craft City Program. Designation of WCC Craft City – Guidelines were finally adopted by the WCC directors-general's working conference held in Dongyang City, Zhejiang Province, China in September 2013. At the same time, Dongyang's application for the designation World City of Wood Carving was evaluated officially.

- The program attracted an increasing number of applicants. The first applicants, including Dongyang, China, Jogjakarta, Indonesia and Doñihue, Chile, were formally granted the title of the WCC Craft City at the opening ceremony of the WCC Craft Cultural Festival 2014.

- More cities applied for such designation and the WCC evaluated these applicants accordingly in the year of 2015-2016. So far, a total of 20 cities across the world have been designated as the WCC Craft City.

2. Actively entering into partnerships with enterprises and organizations in the cultural industry to expand the space of development for the WCC members: if the Craft City Program was to bridge the WCC with government agencies, then the entry into partnerships with cultural enterprises was to link the WCC with enterprises. In fact, we have established a variety of partnerships with different organizations.

- On December 28, 2013, the WCC's regional presidents were invited to take part in the opening ceremony for the Original Chinese charity fund sponsored by the cultural and creative industry and were all appointed as honorary advisors on that occasion.

- In October 2014, the WCC directors-general's working conference decided to construct the WCC International Exchange Center under the Sanya cultural industry development project to be implemented by Sanbangyou Real Estate Development

Company in Hainan Province, China. The center would provide members of the WCC with a good platform for marketing and exhibition.

- In May 2015, the WCC evaluated China National Arts & Crafts (Group) Corp.'s application for establishing the World Craftwork Research, Development and Trading Center. After discussion, the WCC President's executive meeting adopted a decision on authorizing establishment of the center mentioned above. In April 2016, an unveiling ceremony was held in Beijing for the newly created World Craftwork Research, Development and Trading Center.

- In September 2015, the WCC participated in the opening ceremony of the Hello World Art Museum in Shanghai and expressed its appreciation for Shanghai's interest in implementing a craft industry park project. The WCC vowed full support and signed memos of cooperation for that project.

3.Establishing a craft education alliance: in order to promote cooperation with art schools, we launched a WCC craft education alliance project. Some Chinese art schools have already expressed their interest in undertaking this project with a view to constructing a platform of cooperation for international schools of art. In 2015, the WCC presidents visited Shanghai Art and Design Academy and Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts to negotiate over that project.

4. Actively engaging in international art and cultural events to increase the WCC's influence: Since takeover of the WCC's presidency, we have been taking an active part in art and cultural events of all kinds, like the Santa Fe folk craft exhibition, the UNESCO global assembly, and various art and design exhibitions, etc.

- In July 2013, we took part in the Santa Fe folk craft exhibition in the United States.

- In July 2013, the WCC Secretary-general Chen Jing visited the Arts and Crafts Association of America in Minneapolis, the United States.

- From November 5 to 10, 2013, the WCC Executive President Wang Shan and Secretary-general Chen Jing attended the UNESCO global assembly.

- On May 10, 2014, the WCC Executive President Wang Shan made a keynote speech titled *Art and Design-China and Italy* at the Asolo International Art Biennale in Italy.

- From October 2 to 4, 2014, the WCC Secretary-general Chen Jing made a speech titled *An Analysis on the Factors that Promote Development of the Arts and Crafts Industry* at the UNESCO world cultural forum held in Florence, Italy.

- □ In 2013, 2014 and 2015, we respectively attended the UNESCO global assembly upon invitation and met with the UNESCO Secretary-general Ms. Irina Bokova and Assistant Secretary-general Mr.Francesco Bandarin, who was in charge of cultural affairs, to discuss the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts Program and the WCC Craft City Program.

III. Encouraging inheritance of the craft culture and innovation of the craft products, promoting marketability of craftworks and encouraging transformation of craftworks into artworks

1. Signing a memo of cooperation with the UNESCO to implement the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts Program across the globe

In 2001, the UNESCO created the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts Program with a view to encouraging the craftsmen to inherit traditional cultures by using traditional skills and materials and to raising the craftsmen's awareness of innovation, design and marketability. The program was designed to set quality standards for handicrafts, enhance their international fame and sharpen their competitive edge through innovation. Moreover, the capacity building and promotional activities within the program's framework can help the craftsmen make a living and live a happy life. By 2012, the program has been expanded to the Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean region and the West Africa, etc.

In 2013, the UNESCO Headquarters decided to end the program owing to a shortage of funds. As many WCC member countries also participated in the program, they would suffer a great loss if the program were really cancelled. With the help of Ms. Beatrice Kaldun working with the UNESCO, the WCC Secretariat began to negotiate with the UNESCO Headquarters in November 2012 with a view to taking the program over and making it continue within the WCC framework. In December 2013, a seminar was convened in Beijing, China to discuss how to sign a memo with the UNESCO on undertaking the program. With the efforts of all parties concerned, the WCC Secretariat successfully signed a Memo of Cooperation with the UNESCO Headquarters and officially took over the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts Program in June 2014. Moreover, it put on a special exhibition for the handicrafts given such award during the WCC Golden Jubilee Celebration Summit 2014. In 2016, the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts Program continues in Latin America and Asia Pacific regions in the hope of continuing to promote protection of traditions and make even greater contribution to innovation. From October 2 to 13, 2013, the WCC Executive President Wang Shan attended an exhibition of handicrafts given such Award of Excellence in Singapore. Moreover, the folk art festival held in Santa Fe, the United States set aside a dedicated area for handicrafts that have won the Award of Excellence and offered preferential conditions for them to be exhibited and sold there.

2. Promoting transformation of craftworks into artworks and staging the 1st Nantong International Contemporary Craft Biennale 2014

The 2014 Nantong International Contemporary Craft Biennale, co-sponsored by the WCC, the government of Nantong City, China Arts and Crafts Association and Tsinghua University Academy of Arts & Design, was held at the 1895 Cultural and Creative Industry Park of Nantong City on October 24, 2014. Nearly 200 artists from more than 60 countries in the world participated in this event. They brought in nearly 1,000 works from more than 40 participating countries. A total of 370 works were shortlisted and 28 candidates were finally given awards. The top award was won by a Chinese team, while

other awards were given to candidates from India, Malaysia, Norway, Kyrgyzstan, Germany, Jordan, South Korea, the Netherlands, the United States, China and Taiwan Region, etc.

During the biennale, a world biofibre art exhibition was also staged and artists from Malaysia, India, Kazakhstan and Indonesia participated with more than a hundred works. A naturally dyed fashion show and a forum as part of the biennale were also put on at the same time.

IV. Actively organizing industry-wide activities and conferences to provide members with platforms of exchanges

1. Organizing the 2014 WCC Golden Jubilee Celebration Summit

From October 18 to 22, 2014, the WCC Golden Jubilee Celebration Summit was staged in Dongyang City, Zhejiang Province, China. 2,000 craftsmen from 65 countries all over the world took part in this event. The summit consisted of a rich array of activities, including an opening ceremony, a celebratory evening gala, conferences, forums, an exhibition featuring the 50-year history of the WCC, an exhibition highlighting the works given the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts, a wood carving competition, a world craft cultural forum, parade of floats, performances and tourist activities, etc. It enabled Chinese people to see the richness of the craft cultures across the world, and also enabled the arts and crafts people from all over the world to see the hospitality, long history and lasting culture and exquisite craftsmanship of China. *Dongyang Declaration*, which called for protection of the global craft cultures, was adopted during this festival.

2. Hosting the WCC directors-general's working conferences: during the presidency of China, we have convened 6 working conferences of the WCC directors-general, who made decisions on various important matters of the WCC after consultations.

- The first WCC Directors-general's working conference 2013 was held in Dongyang, China on September 25, 2013.
- The first WCC Directors-general's working conference 2014 was held in Atlanta, the United States on April 10, 2014, in which event the WCC Executive President Wang Shan and Secretary-general Chen Jing participated.
- Another WCC Directors-general's working conference 2014 was held in Dongyang, China on October 17, 2014.
- The WCC Directors-general's working conference 2015 was held in Shanghai, China on October 21, 2015.
- The WCC Directors-general's working conference 2016 was held in Beijing, China on April 10, 2016.

V. Participating in projects of the WCC Regions (Europe, Africa, Latin America, Asia-Pacific and North America) and member countries

During the presidency of China, we have strived to participate in projects sponsored by

various WCC Regions, including:

- The WCC APR Director-general's executive meeting held in Kuwait on January 13, 2013
- The first Indonesia International Batik and Handicraft Festival held in Semarang, Indonesia in May 2013
- The 8th International OMTO Art Festival in Kyrgyzstan from July 26 to 28, 2013
- The WCC African Craft Week and the WCC African Region assembly held in Kuwait from November 11 to 15, 2013
- The International Cultural and Creative Industry Fair held in Taiwan from November 21 to 24, 2013
- The WCC Europe Region's annual assembly 2014 held in Bergen, Norway from June 26 to 27, 2014
- The WCC Latin America Region's annual assembly held in Montevideo, Uruguay from August 4 to 8, 2014
- The WCC Europe Region's annual assembly, as well as the European Practical Art Awards Exhibition and the Contemporary European Arts and Crafts Forum, held in Mons, Belgium from November 23 to 28, 2015
- The WCC Asia-Pacific Region's Craft Masters Evaluation (China Zone) staged in Nanjing on April 12, 2016.
- The WCC Africa Region's assembly held in Cote d'Ivoire from June 8 to 10, 2016
- The WCC Europe Region's annual assembly held in Košice, Slovakia from June 29 to July 3, 2016
- The WCC Latin America Region's annual assembly held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from September 6 to 10, 2016

How time flies! We have had a good time being with the WCC. Thanks to the support and assistance we got during our presidency, we have been able to do a good job in the past four years; but this is not enough, indeed. In a context where the global economic landscape is ever-changing, the craft industry is faced with both challenges and opportunities. To make correct analyses of this situation and seize opportunities in a timely manner will enable us to introduce a new round of development for the craft industry. We believe that, under the leadership of the next presidency and with the assistance of the global partners and the trust and support of all colleagues, the WCC will definitely exert concerted efforts to attain yet another summit in development of the craft industry.