Chinese, US textile companies share worldview

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By Amy He in New York |   
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The Chinese and American textile industries are collaborating more closely than ever as the US becomes a "key player in the international strategy" of China's textile companies, said Xu Yingxin, vice-president of the China National Textile and Apparel Council.   
"The United States is not just a key trading partner with China in the textile industry; it is also a key player in the international strategy of China's textile industry," Xu said on Monday at the opening ceremony of the 18th annual China Textile and Apparel Trade Show at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York.   
Chinese businesses have made greenfield investments in the US, set up US branches and opened R&D facilities and manufacturing plants for chemical fiber, cotton textiles and original design.   
"All these cooperation channels have shown that there is a great potential for practical cooperation and complementarity in China and the United States, and big promises for win-win cooperation in the future," he said.   
This year's textile show - organized by the China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC), the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Specialized Textile and Apparel and Messe Frankfurt - features nearly 1,000 designers from 14 countries and will run through Wednesday. About 650 Chinese companies attended. Textile companies from Suzhou, at the center of textile and apparel production in China, have their own exhibition area at the Javits Center.   
"Today, China is the US' largest trading partner-our bilateral trade, bilateral investment, and people-to-people exchanges have all reached historic highs, and in this connection, I think the textile industry has made big contributions to this growth," said Zhang Qiyue, Chinese consul general in New York.   
"The textile cooperation has not just brought tangible benefits to our two peoples, it has also contributed to global economic growth," she said.   
Nicholas Zhou, sales representative for Aiyimei, said that the company has participated in the textile show for several years, having secured many of its clients through the trade event.   
The company, based in Ningbo, East China's Zhejiang province, designs and manufactures outerwear, dinner jackets and other formal wear for US and Europe-based clients, including Jones New York and Andrew Marc.   
"We feel that more Western clients are taking interest in our designs - the newer, trendier and unique designs," he said.   
Zhou said that the industry is a tough one to work in now, as it recovers from a worldwide slump the past few years.   
"We work with smaller brands now, collaborating with them directly, like with Jones New York and Andrew Marc. The clients may order less product, but the prices of the pieces are higher, and so we're earning more profit," he said.   
China Textiles Development Center, based in Beijing, is a new participant to the textile show. It produces formal and athletic wear for mostly European clients, though it is exploring the US market right now.   
"We're newcomers to the exhibition, so we haven't received a lot of feedback yet," said Lydia Zhang, vice-president of the center. "Through participating in this exhibition, we want to better understand the US market and to expand from there. In this industry, the big companies have a pretty fixed customer base, so you can't just come in and expect to expand immediately."   
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