Bridge role of people-to-people exchanges hailed

2017-12-16

By Hong Xiao in New York |   
 China Daily |  
 Updated: 2017-12-16 07:33

Friendly people-to-people exchanges can be conducive to states' relations, with talent exchanges and cooperation in particular serving as bridges and bonds for mutual learning among civilizations, said Zhang Jianguo, administrator of the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs.  
Zhang made the observations on Thursday in New York City at a ceremony celebrating the 30th anniversary of the founding of the New York office of the China Association for International Exchange of Personnel.  
About 30 guests, including professionals and officials in China and the United States, attended the event.  
Zhang Qiyue, China's consul general in New York, said: "If we look back at China-US relations, our state-to-state ties began with people-to-people exchanges 50 years ago. It was ping-pong diplomacy that drove normalization of China-US relations.  
"On this people-to-people exchange, the association has played a positive role in fostering subnational ties between our two countries over the last 30 years," she added.  
The association has maintained deep engagement with a host of US educational institutions, industrial associations and famous scholars, made significant efforts in arranging academic visits, and offered helpful services to foreign experts working in China, Zhang Qiyue said.  
"This has greatly substantiated our people-to-people ties, as we see many foreign experts have come to China, lived in China and helped China in many ways to transform into a modern and prosperous society," she said.  
According to statistics jointly released by the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs and the National Bureau of Statistics, the number of foreign experts working in China surpassed 908,000 in 2016.  
Zhang Jianguo said President Xi Jinping attaches great importance to Sino-US relations and pays great attention to the international exchange of professionals.  
Xi has pointed out that strengthening international talent exchanges and cooperation helps China learn from the achievements of other civilizations and deepens mutual understanding between peoples around the world, he said.  
At the 19th National Congress of the CPC in October, General Secretary Xi re-emphasized that no country alone can address the various challenges facing mankind, and no country can afford to retreat into self-isolation.  
Stephen Orlins, president of the National Committee on United States-China Relations, a nonprofit educational organization, said, "If the people-to-people relationship is weak, then there is no foundation that the government-to-government relations can sit on."

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201712/16/WS5a345be2a3108bc8c6734fbf.html