

Young Chinese promote external ties in 2004

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BEIJING, Jan. 9 (Xinhuanet) -- A record number of exchange programs between young Chinese and foreign youth were unfolded in 2004, marking youngsters' bigger role in non-governmental diplomacy.

"There were more than 100 exchange programs in 2004, involving about 3,000 foreign youngsters visiting China and 1,000 young Chinese going out to countries throughout the world," according to a figure from the Central Committee of Communist Youth League of China (CYLC), one of China's major mass organization of youth.

The Chinese young people's exchange with foreign youngsters is a major way for them to participate in world affairs, said China's youth leader Zhou Qiang, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the CYLC.

In 2004, some youth exchange programs were conducted to celebrate the important anniversaries between China and other nations.

As the year 2004 marked the 55th forging anniversary of China-Russia diplomatic relations, presidents of the two nations set the year as "Friendship Year for Chinese-Russian Youth". The young people from the two countries held 15 celebration activities throughout the year, including knowledge contest on Russia, youth leader forum and exchange of visits.

The Chinese and Russian youth leaders even signed a letter of intent, blueprinting the future cooperative initiatives between the young people.

Chinese youth also pushed their ties with Romanian counterparts on the occasion of marking 55 years of China-Romania diplomatic ties. A Romanian delegation of 58 young people was invited to China, warmly hosted even by Chinese President Hu Jintao.

"China-Romania friendly relations can be traced back to the time when I was a kid," said Yang Huaijing, a Chinese entrepreneur attending China-Romania Youth Festival. "Now it is time for us young people to build and pass on this friendship."

Some youth exchange programs were initiated to discuss the issues of common concerns of both Chinese and foreign youngsters.

In June 2004, nearly 100 young people from 25 member nations of Asia-Europe Conference gathered in China to embark on "a journey of aquatic civilization". By traveling along and conducting researches on "China's mother river"-- the Yangtze River, the longest in China and the third longest in the world, the young people reached consensus on protecting rivers and voiced their shared determination to join environmental protection initiatives.

Chinese youth also discussed with foreign youngsters on HIV/AIDS control and prevention, starting business, employment, healthcare and globalization.

"These initiatives broaden the horizons of young people and deepen their mutual understanding," Jiang Guangping, who is in charge of international affairs with the CYLC.

"This has also laid a solid foundation for the long-term trust and amity between China and other countries."

In year 2004, some youth exchange programs were even turned into long-standing mechanisms. Among them were China-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth, China-Africa Youth Forum, China-US Youth Leader Dialogue and China-Vietnam Youth Gathering etc.

As a figure from the CYLC revealed, about eighty percent of youth exchange programs in 2004 featured interaction with China's neighboring countries.

The "Great Wall Program" designed for promoting the ties between Chinese and Japanese young statesmen was resumed in 2004 after three years' suspension.

"This program is a well-known one among the ongoing non-governmental exchanges between China and Japan," said Chen Yongchang, vice-president of China-Japan Friendship Association.

Also in 2004, a total of 500 young Chinese, Chinese youth's largest-ever group visit abroad, set their feet on the soil of the Republic of Korea (ROK). This program will continue in 2005 and 2006 with 500 young Chinese touring ROK annually.

More than 100 Pakistani students also paid a visit to China in fall 2004.

The exchange programs targeting neighboring countries were too many to be exhausted here.

Reviewing China's youth exchange initiatives in 2004, Zhou called on Chinese young people to "take a more active attitude and play a bigger role in the global youth affairs." Enditem