

## Crisis 'can bring China, US closer'

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China and the United States must strengthen cooperation as they face common challenges amid the global financial crisis, the Chinese Ambassador to the United States said yesterday.

Both countries are trying to make their economic growth more sustainable by working together, Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong said during a group discussion at the ongoing Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference meeting.

The US economy, the world's largest, heavily relies on borrowing while the Chinese economy, the world's third largest, banks on exports. Both are not sustainable "as is being highlighted by the global financial crisis", Zhou said.

"Boosting economy is in the interest of both nations and that calls for a closer cooperation between the two."

The global financial crisis has made cooperation imperative and the two are putting aside differences, Zhou said.

"In the era of globalization, interests and challenges are also globalized and should be responded to jointly," he said. "The US is aware of the difficulty and looks for cooperation. It is the direction they have to take."

The ambassador hailed the high-level exchanges between China and the new US administration describing these as "a good beginning".

They include phone talks between President Hu Jintao and US President Barack Obama and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's China visit last month.

During her visit, Clinton said that the two countries are "in the same boat" and "are rowing in the same direction".

Zhou described Clinton's visit as a success because of broad consensus reached on several issues, including environmental and economic ones.

"China and US are not only responsible stakeholders but also constructive cooperators," Zhou added.

Zhou, ambassador to the US for nearly five years, is confident of maintaining a healthy relationship with the US and has stressed the importance of avoiding differences.

The ambassador said he has a good impression of the new US president from his visit to Obama's office, telephone conversations and also by reading his biography.

"A diligent thinker and a good analyzer, he is very rational," Zhou said. "He is very active and looks forward to visiting China."

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