



EXPO INSIGHT



At next year's Shanghai Expo, five theme pavilions will show many Chinese solutions to achieve a better urban life by showcasing cutting-edge technologies and innovative exhibitions. — Zhang Suoqing

Smart future starts here

Yang Jian

With heavy coverage from newspapers and television, you may have become quite familiar with the theme of the Shanghai World Expo — “Better City, Better Life.”

But have you ever thought of the meaning behind the phrase? Do you know what a better city is and how to achieve a better life?

These questions will be answered in five theme pavilions at the grand event that opens on May 1 next year.

As each World Expo since 1933 has taken a theme, beginning with “A Century of Progress” in Chicago, the theme pavilion has been the most important venue at the event.

Vicente Loscertales, secretary-general of the International Expositions Bureau, says the theme pavilion is the most eye-catching exhibition at each World Expo, setting the tone for a high-quality event.

At next year's Shanghai Expo, the organizer will provide many Chinese solutions to achieve a better urban life by showcasing cutting-edge technologies and innovative exhibitions.

Two of the five theme pavilions, Future and Footprint, will be housed in two renovated factory buildings in Puxi. The Urbanian, Life and Earth pavilions are at the main Pudong section of the Expo site.

With construction having finished on the main theme pavilion late last month, some exhibition plans were also unveiled.

The exhibition in Pudong

will focus on the relationships among people, city and the Earth. The two Puxi pavilions will look back at the history of world cities and showcase what city life will be in the future, says Zhang Keqin, leader of the preparation team.

Visitors will begin their journey in the Urbanian Pavilion.

The organizer is filming the daily lives of six ordinary families from across the world.

They include an American family in Phoenix, Arizona; a single person living in Rotterdam, the Netherlands; a single-parent African family in Ouagadougou, Burkino Faso; a four-generation family in China's Zhengzhou, capital city of Henan Province; a senior couple in Sao Paulo, Brazil; and a migrant family in Melbourne, Australia.

The final work will be more than a movie and a documentary. It will compare the six families' work, studies and communications with their friends, says Herman Kossman, a Dutch designer in charge of the exhibition.

Construction, commercial streets, nightlife and slums will be displayed in multimedia and models.

The 13,000-square-meter Urban Life Pavilion is a cube with screens on the walls, floor and ceiling. The screens will show street life of different cities around the world, taking visitors on a journey of discovery.

The area also features a virtual “traffic hub,” where streams of people, cargo, energy, cash and information meet, says pavilion designer Song Jianming of the China Academy of Art.

It will also display a 360-degree movie showing the spirit of humanity that permeates modern cities.

For example, scenes of rescue efforts during last year's 8.0-magnitude Sichuan earthquake, where people united to overcome the disaster and aid survivors, will be one of the highlights.

In the Earth Pavilion, visitors will stand on a 12-meter-high bridge above a virtual planet. Spectators are able to see the Earth degenerate rapidly, changing color from green to yellow before burning and finally returning to green, says Lutz Engelke, of design company Triad Berlin from Germany.

After the three-minute performance, some solutions will be presented to the challenges facing the planet.

After visiting the three theme pavilions, visitors can take a shuttle bus to the Pudong section of the Expo site through the Xizang Road S. Tunnel to the Footprint and Future pavilions.

Exhibitions in the Footprint Pavilion are arranged by the Shanghai Museum. It aims to seek an “ideal city” from human history.

Scenes from ancient China and the kingdoms of Babylon, Sumeria and Assyria will be shown in video and pictures, showing how civilization flowed to West Asia from the upper valley of the Tigris River in what is now Iraq.

A large number of precious cultural relics from museums all over the world will also be exhibited, says Chen Xiejun, director of the Shanghai Museum.

The Future Pavilion is where China's cutting-edge technology in traffic, energy, health care and agriculture will be exhibited, featuring companies at Shanghai's Zhangjiang High-Tech Park.

Visitors will have the chance to talk to virtual people from the future.

The 130,000-square-meter Main Theme Pavilion will be turned into a world-class exhibition space after the Expo.

Dream a little theme

EACH theme pavilion shows a distinct aspect of the city, with a unique focal point.

- Urbanian Pavilion
Focal point: Urbanization must meet and respect the demands of those who live in the city. A city can achieve sustainable development even if its citizens enjoy a comfortable life.
- Earth Pavilion
Focal point: A city resembles the characteristics and

laws of an organism. The life of city needs intensive care from its citizens.

- Life Pavilion
Focal point: People, city and the Earth are interconnected with each other.
- Footprint Pavilion
Focal point: The experiences and wisdom of mankind in history's process.
- Future Pavilion
Focal point: The outlook of a better city and a better life.

Tibetan savior of antelope wins Expo honor

Bob Yang

HASHI Tashi-Dorjie still has nightmares of the day his best friend was shot dead in an ambush by 18 antelope poachers in Hol Xil, an uninhabited area in western China's Qinghai Province during an anti-poaching patrol.

His companion's body was found frozen on one knee, his pistol raised to shoot, after the clash 15 years ago.

However, instead of being scared by the violence, 48-year-old Hashi took over his dead friend's mission to protect the Tibetan antelope, one of the mascots of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Two non-government natural protection organizations were established to educate local people about the importance of the natural environment.

With his efforts, the 50,000-square-kilometer Hol Xil area now has more than 10,000 antelopes, triple the number 10 years ago.

Last Tuesday, the Shanghai Expo organizer along with L'Oreal, a project sponsor of the 2010 event, selected Hashi as one of the first batch of 100 “Shanghai Expo Stars” for his efforts in protecting the natural landscape. The title means he is now a model citizen, able to spread the word about environmental protection.

Hashi, who lost his parents at the age of eight, says he began his mission to protect the Tibetan antelope because his dead friend frequently shouted to him in his dreams: “Never give up.”

But now he knows that “education is far more effective than the gun.”

He uses dances and performances as well as organizing horse-riding competitions and other sports to urge local people not to hunt animals and pollute rivers.

Now many people in his hometown have given up wearing clothes made from animal skins, he says.

From 2002, Hashi travelled across 23 villages in Qinghai and Tibet Autonomous Region to investigate the geological conditions of these areas. Many of his photos of endangered species have been published in school textbooks.

Hashi is now the secretary-general of the Snowland Great Rivers Environmental Protection Association and a council member of the China Environmental Culture Promotion Association.

But he says he still misses his days patrolling the land in Hol Xil to protect the deer from poachers.

“Driving a jeep across the borderless grassland, living with the wild snow leopard and antelope — that was the happiest time in my life,” says Hashi.



Hashi Tashi-Dorjie feeds a young Tibetan antelope in Qinghai Province.