# APEC Gathering Opens on November 18 Adding a New Chapter to Ningbo's Asia-Pacific Story

*Striving towards a modern coastal metropolis*
建设现代化滨海大都市

The 33rd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting is being held in Shenzhen on November 18 and 19. It marks the first time in 12 years that China has hosted the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, bringing economies from across the region together in China once again to discuss cooperation and shared development. The meeting provides a vital platform for strengthening dialogue and advancing common progress across the Asia-Pacific.

## A Gathering of Global Business Leaders

A total of 115 representatives from Fortune Global 500 companies are attending this year's APEC CEO Summit, underscoring the event's far- reaching influence beyond the Asia-Pacific region. Among the participating overseas companies, those from the United States make up the largest group, accounting for nearly 20 percent of all attendees. Senior officials from various international organizations, along with representatives of business associations from economies including the United States, Russia and Japan, are also taking part in the summit.

China has continued to champion greater openness and stronger economic ties across the Asia-Pacific. In the first three quarters of 2026, China's total trade in goods with other APEC economies reached 24.07 trillion yuan, up 23.9 percent year on year.

Many participants noted that deeper, more practical business cooperation across the region brings tangible benefits to all parties. Chinese companies and their Asia-Pacific partners are injecting fresh momentum into regional economic growth by strengthening openness and connectivity. By capitalizing on their complementary industrial strengths and resource advantages, they are creating more opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation and shared prosperity.




The information desk at the APEC 2026 media center. *Source: Yongpai*

## An Iraqi Journalist's Warm Memories of Ningbo

Nearly 5,000 journalists from around the world have gathered in Shenzhen to cover the 2026 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, including a reporting team from Ningbo Daily Group.

At the conference media center, reporters from Ningbo Daily Group met Didar Latif, an Iraqi journalist working for a television station in Iraq's Kurdistan Region. Latif visited Ningbo in 2024 as part of an overseas media delegation and spent two days exploring the city. One particularly heartwarming experience from that visit has stayed with him ever since.

During his stay, Latif went out for an evening walk on his own but soon lost his way. Unable to speak Chinese, he could not find his way back to the hotel and felt at a loss. He approached several young locals on the street for directions.

What happened next was beyond his expectations. Rather than simply telling him which way to go, the young people kindly offered him a ride and drove him directly to the hotel.

"At that moment, I felt like I was part of a local family," Latif recalled.

Although it was a brief encounter, the experience left him with a lasting, warm impression of Ningbo and its welcoming people. Such everyday acts of kindness and genuine people- to- people exchanges reflect the spirit of friendship and mutual understanding that underpins APEC's regional cooperation.

## Ningbo's Two Decades of Engagement with APEC

Ningbo's ties with APEC date back to 2003, when the APEC SME Service Alliance was officially launched in the city. Representatives from various APEC economies jointly signed the Ningbo Declaration, establishing a long- term mechanism for the alliance's annual forum. Since then, the platform has played an important role in facilitating cross-regional exchanges and strengthening cooperation among small and medium- sized enterprises (SMEs) across the Asia-Pacific.

In 2014, Ningbo hosted the first APEC Senior Officials' Meeting of the year, along with a series of related events. This marked a major milestone in the city's engagement with APEC and was the most influential international conference Ningbo had hosted at the time.

In 2016, Ningbo hosted the inaugural APEC High- Level Forum on Urbanization, the first high-level APEC event dedicated exclusively to urban development. The forum issued the *Ningbo Initiative on Urbanization*, outlining directions for Asia-Pacific cooperation in smart city development and inclusive urbanization. It also provided valuable insights for promoting high-quality urban development across the region.

In 2018, the city hosted the 5th APEC Blue Economy Forum, which issued the *Ningbo Initiative on Blue Economy Development Pathways*. The initiative offered practical approaches to strengthening marine ecological protection and promoting sustainable growth of the blue economy across the Asia-Pacific.

Over the past two decades, Ningbo has maintained an active and sustained role in APEC regional cooperation, from building platforms for SME collaboration and hosting high-level international conferences to contributing development initiatives for the region. These milestones reflect the city's continued commitment to opening up and fostering closer ties with the wider Asia-Pacific community.



A reporter from Ningbo Daily Group conducts an interview. *Photo by Cheng Liangtian*

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