

INSIGHTS

Thumbs-up for Green BRI

Voice of the World

By LI Linxu

Green BRI has become an important aspect for implementing the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, which is lauded for its success around the world.

Promoting green development

During the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF), China unveiled eight major steps to support high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, including promoting green development.

BRI demonstrates that we have a historic opportunity to build modern, green cities, communities, and transportation and power systems that place resilience and sustainability at the heart, said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

He sees the BRI's potential to make valuable contributions in two key areas of action, that is, by advancing economic sustainability in developing countries and by advancing environmental sustainability.

"The Green Silk Road is an important tool that can help us all pull us out of the dead ends of the past, and set us on a new pathway that benefits people and the planet alike," added Guterres.

Over the past decade, China has always adhered to green development, strengthened international cooperation in the field of ecological and environment governance, biodiversity conservation and climate change, committing to building an ecological civilization where



The Soubre hydroelectric power station in Côte d'Ivoire. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

human and nature live in harmony.

As the BRI celebrates its 10th anniversary, we recognize not just the successes that BRI has made on numerous fronts, including renewable energy, infrastructure and commerce, but also the growing understanding of our shared responsibilities towards the planet, Jean-Paul Paddock, executive director of network development of WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) International, told *Science and Technology Daily (S&T Daily)*.

Moving forward, it is imperative to recognize that the promise of BRI extends far beyond infrastructure and trade, said Paddock, noting that BRI represents an unparalleled opportunity to champion green and low-carbon development on a scale never seen before.

Together, BRI can contribute significantly to forging an era of sustainable development and leave a legacy of a thriving, green and harmonious world, added Paddock.

Committed to green cooperation

China has signed more than 230 documents regarding BRI cooperation with more than 150 countries and 30-plus international organizations, and the Green Silk Road cooperation is a major part of all those documents.

There has never been such an initiative as the BRI that can bring together more than 150 countries, said Dilma Rousseff, president of the New Development Bank (NDB), noting that BRI and BRF will play an important role in global sustainable development and green development.

It is necessary for all countries to

address common challenges with collective action amid the current international situation, said Rousseff, adding that BRI has become the world's largest cooperation platform among countries, and NDB is willing to actively participate in Belt and Road cooperation.

During the third BRF, China pledged to deepen cooperation in areas such as green infrastructure, green energy and green transportation, and step up support for the BRI International Green Development Coalition.

The BRI is a development initiative that aligns with Kuwait Vision 2035, Khaled A. Mahdi, secretary general of Kuwait's Supreme Council for Planning and Development, said to *S&T Daily*, adding that Kuwait is looking forward to strengthening cooperation in areas such as infrastructure and green economy under the BRI framework.

Chad is interested in enhancing cooperation with China in the fields of infrastructure, energy, and renewable energy, A. Hamit E. Ali Moutaye, delegate from the office of Prime Minister of Chad, told *S&T Daily*, while speaking highly of China's newly unveiled eight major steps to support high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

Looking into the future, China will continue to make green a defining feature of Belt and Road cooperation, said Zhou Guomei, director general of the Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, pledging to pool resources, technologies and efforts from all sides, and integrate the concept of green, low-carbon, and sustainable development into all areas and all processes of Belt and Road cooperation.

China-Egypt Cooperation Benefits Both Peoples

Opinion

By Mohamed Salem

China and Egypt's cooperation is multifaceted, including financial support which comes in many ways: As Panda bond, that is, renminbi-denominated bonds, or as investments with Egypt's large scale national projects supported by many Chinese investors. These are in line with Egypt's sovereign sustainable financing framework and will contribute to Egypt achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

They are also meant to build a greener economy: the proceeds will be used to finance sustainable projects in a number of sectors, including green

transport, healthcare, sustainable water use, renewable energy, affordable housing, digital infrastructure and biodiversity conservation.

Because of international fund limitations, the African Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank have provided guarantees for the issuance of Panda bonds. This will pave the way for other issuers, particularly other African sovereign states, to access renminbi-denominated financing and China's interbank bond market. The importance of this support is to reduce dependence on the U.S. dollar. Bilaterally, it will lead to more investment and sustainable financing between Egypt and China.

The cooperation also extends to scientific research and vocational training. The Chinese government provides

many research and training opportunities for Egyptian graduates. There are also scientific cooperation projects between the research institutions and universities of the two countries, jointly supported by China's Ministry of Science and Technology and Egyptian Academy of Scientific Research and Technology.

Apart from the Talented Young Scientists Program that provides Egyptian PhD holders an opportunity to work in China for a year, Chinese universities also provide many postdoctoral positions for them.

The Chinese language is becoming one of the second languages offered to Egyptian students in prep schools, secondary schools and some universities.

Chinese companies have a unique and successful experience in terms of

quick payoffs, quality control and high-tech applications. In the manufacturing and energy sectors, such as green hydrogen production, electricity grids and sewage pumps and water desalination plants, and renewable energy sectors, China has given not only considerable financial support, but also technical help to Egyptian companies.

All this support has strengthened the cooperation between the two nations, making their thinking, and way of work and communication match. I believe China will be the country closest to Egypt and the African continent in the near future.

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Mobile Clinics Bridge Healthcare Gaps in Sierra Leone

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"Apart from six relatively large hospitals in Sierra Leone, the country mostly has small clinics, many of which can only provide limited healthcare such as herbal treatments. When people get sick, they tend to endure the pain, as they can't afford the travel and treatment expenses to see a doctor," said Xia.

On March 7, 2022, Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio officially launched the Hospital on Wheels project. Based on four mobile medical vehicles, the project encompasses infectious disease diagnosis and treatment, maternal and child healthcare, vaccinations, and other services. Its mission is to provide diagnostic and treatment services in remote areas.

During his meeting with China's then ambassador to Sierra Leone, Hu Zhangliang, President Bio hailed the project as "one of the best initiatives Si-

erra Leone [has] ever had."

Serving the people

To date, the four mobile health clinics have completed over 10 rounds of visits to remote villages and towns in different districts, attending to over 37,000 patients in total. Wherever they go, they are warmly received by local residents, with many queuing up to wait their turn deep in to the night for their encounter with modern medical facilities.

The project addresses a critical gap in reaching vulnerable populations in remote areas of the country, according to Sierra Leone's Minister of Health and Sanitation Austin Demby.

"With the support of various international partners, the project offers free treatment for infectious diseases and has also greatly promoted vaccination efforts. This achievement is particularly noteworthy as Sierra Leone is one of only four African countries to achieve 70

percent coverage of COVID-19 vaccines," said Xia.

Through mobile health services, healthcare workers have also identified previously overlooked health issues and the needs of specific groups. For example, over half of the pregnant women seeking services had never undergone prenatal examinations.

"Period poverty" is another big challenge, which affects many women across Africa who cannot afford sanitary pads, said Xia, adding that "This mobile medical service also provides free sanitary pads for women and children in remote areas, in addition to offering reproductive health consultations."

Medical help for international events

Furthermore, the mobile health clinics ensure the provision of immediate checks and basic treatment during major international and national con-

ferences in Sierra Leone. From June 3 to 9, 2022, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (Africa Region) Conference was held in Sierra Leone, with about 300 parliamentary representatives from 63 member countries in attendance.

Given the relatively advanced age of the representatives, mobile medical units were dispatched to provide on-the-spot checks and simple treatments where needed, to safeguard their health. Approximately 150 individuals received health check-ups, with 10 being referred to hospitals.

The mobile health clinic assistance project for Sierra Leone is a prime example of China's "small but beautiful" projects. It not only brings high-quality diagnostic and treatment services with high-tech support to remote residents in Sierra Leone, but also plays an active role in deepening Sino-Sierr Leonean friendship.

Comment

China-U.S. Relations Need Sub-national Level Ties

By GONG Qian

"The foundation of China-U.S. relations lies among the people, the hope is in the people, the future lies in the youth, and the vitality lies in sub-national areas," said President Xi Jinping when he met with Gavin Newsom, governor of California, in Beijing on October 25.

Newsom kicked off a weeklong trip to China on October 23, visiting Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Beijing and Shanghai. This made him the first U.S. governor to come to China in more than four years. The visit happened because China and California have a long history of partnership, with a strong bilateral foundation built by Newsom's predecessors.

Newsom said in a statement that as the second and fifth largest economies in the world, China and California are intertwined and have been since the earliest days of its statehood.

With its rich natural resources, advanced science and technology industry and strong cultural and creative industries, California, the most populous state in the U.S., has extensive space for cooperation with China in energy, science and technology, culture and other fields.

China is California's largest trading partner and California is the largest importer of Chinese goods in the U.S., with more than 165 billion USD in economic trade.

In terms of people-to-people exchanges, China and California, though geographically separated by the Pacific Ocean, have enjoyed close relations over a long period. "Our people-to-people ties are long-standing and enduring," said Newsom.

The first formally recognized Chinatown in the U.S. developed in San Francisco, where the first Chinese immigrants arrived in 1848. Now, 32 percent of Chinese immigrants in the U.S. live in California, making up the largest group of Chinese Americans. To honor the contributions of Asian Americans to the state, Newsom signed a bill in

September 2022, which made the Chinese Lunar New Year an official state holiday in California for the first time anywhere in the U.S.

According to Statista website, China is still the leading source of international students in the U.S. education market. The University of Southern California has one of the highest numbers of Chinese international students in the country.

As of 2019, 1.5 million Chinese tourists visited California annually. From November 1, Air China will resume its services on the Beijing-San Francisco route. It is expected that this will further expand tourism between China and California.

In regard to cooperation on climate change, an issue that Newsom highlighted on his visit, Shanghai and Los Angeles have reached agreements on building the world's first trans-Pacific green shipping corridor on one of the world's busiest container shipping routes — the Shanghai-Los Angeles shipping route. According to the implementation plan outline, by 2025, carrier partners will begin deploying reduced or zero lifecycle carbon emission capable ships in the corridor, Xinhua reported.

Reuters analyzed that the initial push for the green corridor came from the cities and ports themselves, which means that the development process has been more clear-cut. "We work at the city-to-city level, which makes things a lot more efficient than working at the state or national level. So, in the case of the U.S. and China, we were able to overcome some of the geopolitical tensions and complexities that were certainly not in our favor at that time," Alisha Kreynes, a key convenor of the LA-Shanghai route, told Reuters.

To some extent, California epitomizes China-U.S. relations at a sub-national level, and it is anticipated that following Newsom's visit, more U.S. governors will come to China to seek more opportunities for mutual benefit.

Hi! Tech

Humanoid Warehouse Robots Being Tested

By QI Liming

U.S. e-commerce giant Amazon is deploying a human-like robot, named Digit, in a warehouse to perform repetitive manual tasks, such as shifting empty tote boxes, and work collaboratively with employees.

Digit can move, grasp, and handle items in spaces and corners of warehouses in novel ways. Its size and shape are well-suited for buildings that are designed for humans.

The addition of the automated ro-

bots, which walk around on two legs, pick up large trays and move them elsewhere, is for "freeing employees up to better deliver".

However, the move is still a trial run and the robot is a prototype, as Amazon seeks to see if they can work safely alongside human employees.

In 2022, Amazon revealed its first robotic system Sparrow that was deployed in warehouses, streamlining the work fulfillment process by moving individual products before they get packaged.



A human-like robot carries an empty box in a warehouse. (PHOTO: SCREENSHOT)