

Thoughts on the linkages between China's Belt and Road Initiative and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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Abstract—The 2030 agenda for sustainable development was presented not only to accomplish the unfinished business of the Millennium Development goals, but also to bring global forces together to address global challenges. Agenda 2030 has shaped the three pillars of society, economy and environment, reshaping the governance system of current global sustainable development, which provides an opportunity for developing countries to participate in global sustainable development governance. The in-depth implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative in China has pushed forward the realization of the goals of 2030 Agenda. Although it is accompanied by challenges, China has actively responded to the pursuing of its own development and participating in global governance and trying hard to realize the great mission of "community of common destiny for all mankind".

Keywords: *the Belt and Road Initiative; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Opportunities and challenges*

I. INTRODUCTION

From 25 September 2015 to 27 September 2015, 193 member States of the United Nations formally adopted the outcome document-----Transforming our World : The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This document, including its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, aims to advance the achievement of

three ambitious global goals over the next 15 years: the eradication of extreme poverty, combat inequality and injustice and protect the environment and curb climate change. The three dimension of the agenda set up ambitious development goals for the sustainable development of human society, namely, economic development through good governance, social inclusion and environmental sustainability[1]. The 2030 sustainable development agenda represents a major improvement and upgrading of the Millennium Development goals. Its implementation will mobilize countries around the world to trace the target of sustainable development throughout the global and national strategies of their respective development. The Chinese government attaches great importance to the 2030 Agenda. In the fifth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee the CPC Central Committee held in October 2015, it makes clear that "active participation in the 2030 sustainable development agenda" is written in the communique from the Plenum [2]. Agenda 2030 provides an international opportunity for further implementation of the Belt and Road initiative. And the international community has full expectations for the implementation of the 2030 agenda in China. China should also seize this historical opportunity hard and actively participate in the construction of the new international development governance system. Through thinking about the opportunities and challenges of the linkage between China's Belt and Road initiative and the 2030

sustainable development agenda, this paper puts forward some suggestions for China to better carry out the Belt and Road initiative and participate in the global sustainable development governance.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE TO THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

A. *The Belt and Road Initiative provides a platform for the Global implementation of SDGs*

The 'Belt and Road' would be an important platform for the implementation of the 2030 sustainable development agenda", Ms Akhtar, Executive Secretary of the Asia-Pacific Economic and Social Commission, stated at the 72nd annual meeting of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in May 2016. The objective of SDGs is to achieve sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic development, while the objective of "Belt & Road" is to realize the pluralistic, autonomous, balanced and sustainable development of the countries along the routes, with priority objectives : poverty alleviation, education, health, employment and other basic issues. Therefore, to promote the construction of Belt and Road is to promote the implementation of the 2030 sustainable development agenda.

China is also actively implementing the sustainable development agenda. And this agenda is incorporated into the Development Strategy of China and we will support other developing countries to achieve sustainable development goals within the limits of our capabilities. For example, China is making great efforts to promote international exchanges and cooperation, including South-South cooperation, and the establishment of the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund, the China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund, the Academy for South-South Cooperation and Development, and the International Development knowledge Centre (DRC in charge of preparation).

B. *"The Belt and Road" contributes to a better realization of SDGs*

Fred Krupp, the president of the Environmental Defense Fund, considers that Belt and Road initiative could bring the double benefits of economic prosperity and environmental

improvement. This initiative will not only promote the economic development of the countries along the routes, improve people's living standards, but also make China a exporter of capital and capacity as well as a sustainable development concept. In the future, China still hold great potentials in helping developing countries to cope with climate change, maintain environmental safety and human health, and maintain the marine ecosystem, all of which are the embodiment of in-depth implementation of SDGs in China[3].

The combination of China's Belt and Road Initiative and the 2030 agenda by China can not only promote its own development, but it can also effect on the 2030 agenda, thus promoting construction of the sustainable development of global governance. First, The Belt and Road advocates win-win cooperation and mutual development. It is exploring the new mode and new practice of South-South cooperation South-North cooperation, trilateral cooperation. And it is an important supplement to the traditional international development cooperation, which is beneficial for countries along the routes to share experiences, learn from each other, and promote strategy synergy and policy communication of each other. Secondly, Belt and Road Initiative encourages of state-owned enterprises and private enterprises initiative undertake the social responsibility to protect the ecological environment and biological diversity. To integrate the concept of sustainable development into the construction of Belt& Road is the internal requirement of carrying out the concept of scientific development and the construction of ecological civilization, which is helpful to promote the international extension of the concept and achievements of ecological civilization in China. At the same time, the opinions on accelerating the Construction of Ecological Civilization issued in April 2015 further demands that the construction of ecological civilization should be accelerated from a global perspective, and transforming green development into a new national strength and influence and a new international competitive advantage. To promote global ecological security by strengthening dialogue, exchange and practical cooperation with other countries in the field of ecological civilization [4].

C. "The Belt and Road" promotes the implementation of the 2030 sustainable development agenda

Belt and Road, relying on the construction of transportation and other infrastructure, establishes cooperation and contacts with the countries along the routes, which meets the needs of the countries along the routes. The improvement of investment in infrastructure construction can form a new economic growth point, and promote a series of activities such as consumption, investment, employment and so on, and contribute to eradication of the countries' poverty along the routes. In addition, the fundamental force and support of implementing SDGs is that "Belt and Road" can promote the cooperation of trade, investment and industry in the countries along the routes, and realize the industrial complementation of industrial basis and resource advantages. Huge regional cooperation advantages being translated by combining the financial, productive and technological advantages of the related countries will accelerate and expand the trade and investment of the relevant countries along the routes and promote industrial upgrading.

III. THE CHALLENGE OF CREATING SYNERGY BETWEEN THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE AND THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

A. The challenges that arise from the 2030 sustainable development agenda policy itself.

First of all, it is rather difficult for any government to achieve economic development, environmental sustainability and social inclusion at the same time and the challenge of accomplishing them within the policy implementation cycle of 15 years is unprecedented [5].

Secondly, the Rio+20 Summit launched the sustainable development goal-setting process with "small number, easy to quantify and universality", but the global sustainable development goals include the 17 goals which further subdivided to 169 specific targets. That is a wide range of targets, and among them, some targets are duplicated, some are not operable, and others are not universal. One of the key links in implementing SDGs is to collect measure and monitor the data of each SDGs target. Owing to the large number of global sustainable development goals projects and

the fact that at least 91 of the 169 indicators need further refinement, with the exception of 29 Percent of the index scientific methods are rigorous and clearly defined, while others are vague and difficult to measure[6]. In practical implementation, it is difficult to evaluate the progress of implementing SDGs in various countries, especially in developing countries, both in terms of method and data availability. The lack of data brings challenges to the detection of SDGs objectives, so countries, especially developing countries can only gain ground in realizing global sustainable development goals by investing more in other data collection and building statistical capacity [7].

Furthermore, the sustainable development goals are setting from a global perspective, without corresponding recommendations for different countries. Due to their different national conditions and being at different stages of development the target values set out in the sustainable development goals are difficult for many countries to adopt directly.

B. The challenges the Belt and Road Initiative pose for the implementation of the 2030 sustainable development agenda

Numerous challenges and risks faced by the implementation of Belt and Road initiative will make it more difficult to implement the Belt and Road initiative. It will become a realistic obstacle for China to help other countries to promote the realization of the SDGs. It will ultimately affect China's role in promoting economic and social development in all countries.

Secondly, countermeasures of the green development and environmental protection for China's participation in the development and construction of the countries along Belt and Road routes need to be improved. Protecting the planet, degradation governance, managing natural resources and combating climate change are important components of the 2030 agenda. The environment becomes one of the core pillars of the sustainable development agenda 2030. The ninth target of the SDGs puts forward "Building disaster-resilient infrastructure", "Building sustainable, Infrastructure for the use of environmentally sound technologies and clean energy" are mentioned in sub-goals 1, 4 and 5[8]. Infrastructure is a

priority development goal, and the Green and sustainable development within the infrastructure region plays a fundamental role, but in the process of our infrastructure construction carried out by Belt and Road, Because it is characterized by long service cycle and high utilization of infrastructure it determines that its energy conservation and environmental protection will affect the environment and resources in the region for a long time in the future. In the process of infrastructure construction, it will bring new environmental problems .by the consumption of large amount of resources and energy, the discharge of waste water and solid waste [9].

Moreover, if we would like to play the increasing effect of Belt and Road Initiative by combination of these two subjects, we need to find out how to focus on the focus on and find out the integrating point of them. Belt and Road's initiative focuses on "unimpeded connection between facilities and trade, and as for agenda 2030, in addition to sustainable economic growth and infrastructure requirements, it also covers a number of non-development areas, such as human rights, security, governance, and so on." Belt and Road "is one of region with the most prominent ecological environmental problems in the world. Developing countries along the route are facing serious environmental security challenges, and their coping capacity is very weak[10].The issues of security issues, ecological protection and social inclusion are required to be considered in the process of implementation of Belt and Road Initiative.

IV. HOW TO REALIZE SYNERGY BETWEEN THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE AND THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA BETTER

A. Reinforce the study and publicity of the 2030 sustainable development agenda

Adhere to promoting the "Belt and Road" construction in the framework of SDGs of the United Nations, China should seize opportunities, meet challenges, and actively participate in related processes on the premise of adhering to the basic position of developing countries. At home, we should carefully analyze and study the development concept of the 2030 Sustainable Development agenda and closely combined it with

China's development strategy. From The External Environment, we should actively and deeply carry out international development cooperation and development assistance, broaden the field of development cooperation, and make China's contribution to the realization of the agenda of other developing countries on the basis of the principle of "within our power and for mutual benefit."

B. Seek for different levels of docking

First of all, enhancing synergy between the strategic concept of inclusive development and interconnected development, inclusive development refers to reducing inequality and injustice in global economic development, while coordinating the response to challenges such as climate change and the ecological environment. The interconnected development means to break the chains of the flow of capital, technology and talents through the interactive and interconnection of infrastructure, so as to build a new open world economy system.

Secondly, it is committed to "build a multilevel intergovernmental macro policy exchange and communication mechanism" seek the synergy of cooperative policy, and to reach a new consensus on cooperation through the full exchange of economic development strategies and countermeasures [11].

Furthermore, to achieve the synergy of specific targets, the core is the construction of infrastructure interconnection and inter-working, and network is undoubtedly the synergy of them, the emphasis is to promote and investment cooperation, deepening financial cooperation, and create a the synergy between them.

C. Enhanced and improved assessment methodology and capacity for sustainable development goals

Connect "Belt and Road" construction and "2030 sustainable development agenda" more closely, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund will support the implementation of the agenda for the countries along the route.

Initiating periodic national sustainable development, monitoring and assessing report writing processes to advance country-level assessment processes in close cooperation with

global assessment processes[12]. Under the premise of ensuring national ownership, we should take an active part in the design of national sustainable development monitoring index and the construction of follow-up evaluation system.

D. Enhancement of people's trust of China and countries along "Belt and Road" routes

Developing countries have a large population base, rapid labor growth and severe employment problems. Local employment pressure is high, "Belt and Road" brought employees to occupy jobs. It will lead to contradictions in the case of unclear public awareness and may lead to social instability in the long run [13]. The education level of the people along the route is not enough to meet Belt and Road's demand for employment, which is not conducive to sustainable development. We need to strengthen the trust of people while we seek intergovernmental trust. We should solve the local employment problem in order to seek common development on the premise of ensuring the construction period of the project and meeting the employment standards of enterprises.

The launch of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda provides an unprecedented opportunity for China to establish a new global development partnership through the implementation of the "One Belt and One Road" initiative. This interconnection can push Chinese enterprises to behave in a sustainable way and fulfill their social responsibilities. Although the initiative and the 2030 Agenda differ in many aspects, the docking also faces a series of challenges, China needs to design in-context plan to develop their own indicators of supervising and evaluating the progress of the 2030 Agenda.

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