



中国传媒大学  
COMMUNICATION UNIVERSITY OF CHINA



Institute for a Community  
with Shared Future  
人类命运共同体研究院



**Overview of the White Paper "The Belt and Road Initiative: A Key Pillar of the Global Community of Shared Future"**



Advocate Zaildar Ahsan Shah, Vice Chairman, Board of Experts, Pakistan Research Center for a Community with Shared Future (PRCCSF), Islamabad

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On October 10, 2023, China's State Council Information Office published a white paper titled "The Belt and Road Initiative: A Key Pillar of the Global Community of Shared

Future." This white paper consists of an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion. It aims to showcase the achievements of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) over the past decade,



with the goal of enhancing international understanding of the initiative's value, promoting high-quality cooperation, and delivering benefits to a broader range of countries and people.

World is currently experiencing unprecedented and significant changes, with ongoing challenges that pose threats to human civilization, the BRI serves as a response to this evolving global landscape. China, considering the future and the collective interests of humanity, introduced the BRI, drawing inspiration from the Silk Road's rich history, which is a valuable part of human heritage. China-Proposed, BRI is viewed as a global endeavor that benefits the entire human population, connecting the past, present, and future.

### **Ultimate Goal of Belt and Road Initiative:**

According to White Paper, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) ultimately aims to facilitate the establishment of a global community of shared future. This initiative is a significant public good that contributes to enhancing global governance and serves as a



platform for translating this vision into reality. The BRI involves a wide array of countries from diverse regions, various stages of development, and distinct cultural backgrounds. It transcends differences in ideologies and social systems, fostering the opportunity for nations to collaborate, achieve mutual development and prosperity, and construct a community characterized by shared interests, responsibilities, and destinies. This community is underpinned by mutual political trust, economic integration, and cultural inclusiveness. As a pragmatic approach to constructing a global community of shared future, the BRI has introduced novel perspectives and ignited global imagination. It has also contributed fresh ideas and methods to international interactions, working toward the creation of a more equitable and just global governance system, with the ultimate goal of leading humanity toward a better future.

**Principle, Concepts, Objective and Vision of BRI:**

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a comprehensive framework that embodies principles and objectives aligned with the concept of a global community of shared future. It promotes and implements ideas relevant to the current era, addressing issues related to development, security, openness, cooperation, civilization, and governance. It offers both a conceptual framework and a practical roadmap for nations to achieve shared development and prosperity. White paper provides following principles that promote the concepts and objectives of BRI.





**Extensive Consultation:** This principle promotes genuine multilateralism, emphasizing collective decision-making while respecting the diverse levels of development, economic structures, legal systems, and cultural traditions of participating nations. It highlights equal participation, effective communication, and voluntary engagement without political or economic preconditions, fostering maximum consensus. All countries, regardless of their size or strength, participate on an equal footing, contributing opinions and proposals in bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

**Joint Contribution:** To encourage extensive participation, this principle encourages countries and businesses to engage in various forms of cooperation, creating synergy for development. Market forces play a central role, with businesses as the main actors and governments focusing on building platforms and providing policy guidance.

**Shared Benefits:** Emphasizing win-win cooperation, the principle of shared benefits aims to identify common interests, meet the development needs of all parties, and address the real concerns of people. It emphasizes sharing development opportunities and outcomes among all participating countries, ensuring that none are left behind. Most participants are developing countries seeking to address challenges like inadequate infrastructure, industrial development, and economic growth, promoting their own development.

**High-Standard Cooperation:** The BRI introduces universally accepted rules and standards to guide business practices in various sectors. It advocates high-standard cooperation and construction, including the establishment of free trade zones aligned with international standards. The goal is to ensure safe, smooth, and orderly flows of



people, goods, funds, and data, fostering greater interconnectivity and cooperation while maintaining world-class standards and cost-effectiveness.

**Sustainable Development:** Aligned with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the BRI promotes coordinated economic, social, and eco-environmental development. Its aim is to achieve lasting, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, integrating sustainable development principles into project selection and management. The initiative follows international debt sustainability principles, establishing a stable, transparent investment and financing system to prevent participating countries from falling into a debt crisis due to BRI cooperation.

**People to People Approach:** The BRI adopts a people-centered approach, focusing on eradicating poverty, creating jobs, and improving people's well-being to ensure the benefits of cooperation reach individuals. It encourages deeper cooperation in areas such as public health, poverty reduction, disaster mitigation, education, and cultural exchanges, fostering a sense of gain and fulfillment among the people. Through foreign aid, China actively supports small-scale projects like infrastructure development to improve people's lives and reduce poverty in the countries involved.

### **Objectives:**

White paper emphasized that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is dedicated to fostering sustainable development by addressing economic, social, and environmental dimensions, in alignment with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its primary goal is to facilitate enduring, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth through the integration of sustainable development principles into the selection and



management of projects. The BRI adheres to international debt sustainability principles to establish a transparent and stable investment and financing system, preventing any participating country from experiencing a debt crisis as a result of BRI cooperation, White Paper said.



**Vision:**

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) constitutes a comprehensive strategy characterized by progress, collaboration, and inclusivity. It aims to bolster trust, enhance interactions, and realize collective development and shared prosperity. The BRI is an advocate for peace, rejecting power conflicts, and fostering a fresh model of international relations built on principles of mutual respect, fairness, justice, and mutually beneficial cooperation. It contributes to the establishment of a peaceful and stable environment for development. It prioritizes win-win outcomes, shared development, and the efficient mobilization of resources, thus creating opportunities for worldwide economic growth and comprehensive development. Moreover, the BRI actively champions social progress through its dedication to equality, mutual learning, dialogues, and the inclusive exchange of ideas among different civilizations. It encourages the celebration of cultural differences, the cultivation of mutual understanding, and cooperation across various domains, thus fostering trust among nations and expanding consensus on shared values and ideals.



## **Promoting All-round Connectivity:**

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a comprehensive international cooperation platform focused on enhancing connectivity through policy coordination, infrastructure development, trade, financial integration, and people-to-people ties. It encompasses "hard connectivity" in infrastructure and "soft connectivity" through harmonized rules and standards. Here is a summary of key points in White Paper:

**Extensive Policy Coordination:** The BRI prioritizes policy coordination, working with participating countries and other international organizations like World Health organization and World Trade Organization to align development strategies, economic policies, and administrative rules. This results in joint efforts to facilitate and accelerate cooperation, making the BRI a crucial framework for international collaboration.

- i. **Global Policy Support:** At the global level, the BRI has gained support and recognition from 193 members of the United Nations and other international organizations, leading to UN resolutions and agreements on regional economic cooperation through the BRI.
- ii. **Multilateral and Bilateral Cooperation:** The BRI successfully coordinates with various regional strategies and initiatives in different countries and regions, fostering alignment with Russia's Eurasian Economic Union, Kazakhstan's Bright Road economic policy, and similar initiatives in other nations.
- iii. **Long-Term Coordination Mechanism:** The BRI has established a long-term mechanism for policy coordination, involving regular communication channels across different levels and platforms. These efforts have been facilitated through diplomatic leadership and support from intergovernmental communication.



- iv. **Multilateral Cooperation:** Under the BRI framework, twenty plus multilateral dialogue and cooperation mechanisms have been launched in various domains e.g., railways, ports, energy, finance, taxation, environmental protection, disaster prevention and relief, think tanks, and the media, attracting increased participation from both Chinese and foreign partners.
- v. **Coordinated Rules and Standards:** The BRI promotes cooperation on standardization, with 107 agreements and documents signed with standardization bodies in 65 countries and regions e.g., Pakistan, Russia, Greece, Ethiopia, and Costa Rica, covering diverse areas such as civil aviation, climate change, and logistics. Chinese standards in foreign languages have been expanded to facilitate understanding and implementation.
- vi. **Legal and Regulatory Cooperation:** Initiatives to strengthen cross-border accounting and auditing regulatory cooperation have been undertaken with 22 countries and regions including Russia, Malaysia and Singapore, providing institutional guarantees, providing institutional support for cross-border investment and financing channels.

### **Achievements of BRI During Last Decade:**

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has achieved significant milestones across various sectors. By June 2023, China had signed over 200 BRI cooperation agreements with more than 150 countries and 30 international organizations, resulting in signature projects and impactful initiatives, White paper said. Below is the summary of BRI achievements:





**High-Level Forums:** China has hosted the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation twice, providing a crucial platform for participating countries and international organizations to enhance exchanges, mutual trust, and strengthen ties.

**Infrastructure Connectivity:** Substantial progress has been made in constructing six economic corridors, enhancing connectivity between regions and nations. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor, the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor, the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor Railways in Africa, such as the Mombasa-Nairobi and Addis Ababa-Djibouti lines, have become key drivers of development in East Africa and the continent as a whole.

**Maritime Connectivity:** The Maritime Silk Road has expanded to 117 ports in 43 countries, with the participation of over 300 Chinese and international shipping companies and port enterprises, promoting maritime connectivity.

**Air Connectivity:** China has signed bilateral air transport agreements with 104 BRI partner countries and established direct flight routes with 57 partner nations to facilitate cross-border transportation.

**International Inter-Modality Transport:** The China-Europe Railway Express connects over 200 cities in 25 European countries, contributing to the transportation of a wide range of goods. Rail-sea freight train routes have expanded to cover more than 18 provinces and administrative units in China, reaching more than 300 ports in over 100 countries.



**Trade and Investment:** The cumulative value of imports and exports between China and BRI partner countries reached \$19.1 trillion from 2013 to 2022, with an annual growth rate of 6.4 percent. Two-way investment between China and partner countries reached \$380 billion during this period, with China contributing \$240 billion. China also initiated the Initiative on Promoting Unimpeded Trade Cooperation Along the Belt and Road, which attracted the participation of over 80 countries and international organizations.

**Industrial Cooperation:** By June 2023, China had signed industrial capacity cooperation agreements with more than 40 countries, expanding cooperation in traditional and emerging industries, such as steel, automotive, digital economy, and new energy.

**Financial Cooperation:** Chinese-funded banks established 145 offices and branches in 50 BRI partner countries, enhancing financial services. Bilateral currency-swap agreements with 20 partner nation and renminbi clearing arrangements with 17 BRI partners have been set up. China's Silk Road Fund and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) have supported projects, with the AIIB approving 227 projects with a total investment of \$43.6 billion. As of June 2023, the Silk Road Fund (SRF) had entered into agreements for 75 projects, committing investments totalling approximately 22 billion U.S. dollars.

**Culture and Tourism Cooperation:** Cultural and tourism cooperation documents have been signed with 144 BRI partner countries, fostering cultural exchanges and tourism development.

**Clean and Green Development:** Efforts have been made to promote green development through cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme, environmental agreements with 30 countries, and the Belt and Road Initiative International Green Development Coalition, involving over 150 partners from more than 40 countries.

**Scientific and Technological Innovation:** Intergovernmental agreements on scientific and technological cooperation have been signed with more than 80 BRI partner countries. China has hosted more than 10,000 young scientists and provided technical training to 16,000 technicians of partner countries. Cross-border technology transfer platforms have been established in various regions, including ASEAN, South Asia, Arab states, Africa, Latin America and promoting agricultural technology, health, and research cooperation by establishing over 50 joint BRI laboratories.

**Digital Silk Road:** Agreements related to the Digital Silk Road, e-commerce, and digital economy investment have been signed with 17 countries, promoting digital connectivity. China has entered into e-commerce collaboration agreements with 30 countries and established more in-depth digital economy investment cooperation arrangements with 18 countries and regions.



**Poverty Reduction:** China has signed over 100 agricultural and fishery cooperation agreements with nearly 90 BRI countries, dispatching 2,000 experts and technicians, and



introducing agricultural technologies to aid rural poverty reduction in Asia, Africa, the South Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Boosting Employment:** Industrial parks and industrial cooperation have created job opportunities for locals in participating countries. A significant proportion of employees in Chinese firms in Africa are recruited locally, contributing to local employment. BRI-related investment is expected to lift 7.6 millions of people out of extreme poverty and 32 million out of moderate poverty by 2030, according to estimates by the World Bank.

### **Conclusion:**

The Belt and Road Initiative has revitalized a rich history of cultural interactions spanning over two thousand years and has ignited the aspirations of over 150 nations to achieve fresh ambitions. Over the past decade, collaboration within the BRI framework has led to remarkable and profound transformations on a global scale, marking a significant milestone in human history.

White paper emphasized that China is ready to increase its resource input in global cooperation and do its best to support and help other developing countries to progress faster. It will work to achieve a greater say for emerging economies and developing countries in global governance, and contribute to the common development of all countries. China sincerely welcomes more countries and international organizations to join in cooperation under the BRI, and will support any initiative that can genuinely help developing countries build infrastructure and achieve shared progress, thereby promoting global connectivity and sustainable development.