

New Measures for Yunnan Province to Integrate into the International Cooperation of the Belt and Road Initiative

Ni Cai

Oxbridge College of Kunming University of Science and Technology, Kunming, Yunnan Province, China

Keywords: people-to-people bond; The Belt and Road; Yunnan Province; achievements.

Abstract: Nowadays, the Belt and Road Initiative is a platform which attracts an increasing number of countries to explore new mechanisms of international economic governance. Yunnan Province needs to think about problems from a global perspective, and rationally plans the allocation of resources. With the help of existing basic conditions, such as the advantages of its geographical location and the similar customs, Yunnan should promote the construction of the people-to-people bond which belongs to “five bonds”. That goal should be realized through the four dimensions of the government, the universities, the scholars and the enterprises. In the implementation of this great strategy, Yunnan Province should try to realize its own leap forward development, and take on the responsibility of international communication and exchanges.

1. Introduction

Since 1999, the policy of “Western Development” has been promulgated to enhance the economic and social development of the western region and consolidate national defense through utilizing the surplus economic development capacity of the eastern coastal areas. In early 2015, “The Belt and Road” initiative was officially launched, in which Yunnan was positioned as the “radiation center for the Southeast Asia and the South Asia”. But as far as future development planning is concerned, brotherly provinces have put forward their development goals according to local conditions. For example, Guangxi has put forward four major strategies and “two overall goals of construction” during the 13th Five-Year Plan period. One of them is to basically build an international corridor for countries of the ASEAN, to build a new strategic center for the opening up and development of the Southwest China and the South-central China, and a build hub that integrates the economic belts of the Silk Road and the marine Silk Road of the 21st century. Guizhou plans to implement the “big data” strategy. The Yunnan provincial government, on the contrary, only mentions issues concerning people’s livelihood in the working report of 2018. It can be seen that the government holds a pragmatic attitude and possesses determination. However, after all, 15 years have passed from the proposal of the western development plan to “The Belt and Road” initiative. On one hand, Yunnan is still lagging behind in its development. It still focuses on getting rid of poverty and becoming well-off. On the other hand, Yunnan has made certain progress in its economic development in the past 15 years, and has the strength to find its role in the “going out” strategic deployment of our country.

2. The Development Opportunities of Yunnan Province under the Background of “The Belt and Road” Initiative

In the programmatic document of the Vision and Proposed Actions Outlined on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, Yunnan will take its own geographical advantages to construct international transport corridors with neighboring countries, build a new highland for regional economic cooperation in the Greater Mekong Sub-region and establish a radiation center for the South Asia and the Southeast Asia. It can be understood that the positioning of Yunnan Province in the national strategy plays a vital and forward-looking role in Yunnan’s development and can help the province to make huge progress. To promote its own development, Yunnan must integrate itself into the implementation of the national strategy, seize

opportunities and find out its location clearly, and then work hard on the basis of formulating clear development plans.

Now The Belt and Road Initiative is a platform which attracts an increasing number of countries to explore new mechanisms of international economic governance. The Yunnan Province needs to think about problems from a global perspective, and rationally plans the allocation of resources. With the help of existing basic conditions, such as the advantages of its geographical location and the similar customs, Yunnan should promote the construction of the people-to-people bond which belongs to “five bonds”. That goal should be realized through the four dimensions of the government, the universities, the scholars and the enterprises. In the implementation of this great strategy, Yunnan Province should try to realize its own leap forward development, and take on the responsibility of international communication and exchanges. This is also the only way for Yunnan Province to achieve its own development.

3. Conception of Yunnan Province to Promote the Development of “The Belt and Road” National Strategy

3.1 Referential research and technical routes

Technological route one: the Rajasthan Branch of the Indian Institute of Technology is launching a project to connect India’s poorest people with the global digital flood. The institute designed and manufactured an ipad-like Tablet computer to reach the “last person” (the group of people with the worst economic conditions) and to make the poorest Indian families (only have a balance of \$2.5 each monthly) affordable to integrate into the modern digital network. Referring to this case, this project establishes a connection with the “last person” in countries along the China- Indo China Peninsula through technical route one by similar products (hardware products) and network channels, so as to understand their needs. Technical route two: a questionnaires survey was conducted among people lived along the road (from 1-3 countries), government staffs (from 1-3 countries), students studying abroad and teachers (from 3-5 universities) and people in Yunnan Province (from 1-3 prefectures), in order to understand the needs of the “last person”.

3.2 Four dimensions of the development conception

The first dimension is the role of the government. The opening of the China Railway Express to Europe has clearly demonstrated the commercial value of “the Belt and Road” logistics map, and is of practical significance. The China - Indo-China Peninsula economic corridor is one of the six major economic corridors along the “Belt and Road”. Starting from Nanning in Guangxi and Kunming in Yunnan, and ending in Singapore, the corridor runs through Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia and other countries in the Indo-China Peninsula. For China, it is a continental bridge connecting the Indo-China Peninsula. With the construction of infrastructures, the Yunnan provincial government can take this as a road map of the “people-to-people bond” project. On one hand, through establishing government communication mechanisms with friendly cities or carrying out private exchanges such as the business fairs and the cultural fairs, we can find out the “rigid demand” for the future development of countries along the road. The other party may pay more attention to ecological protection like Kazakhstan, (employees of one Chinese enterprise “pick” turtles in the desert and eat them, which is harmful to the image of Chinese enterprises,) may emphasize more on the protection of religious traditions and environment, (uncivilized behaviors of Chinese tourists in Buddhist sites of Thailand arouse disgust and resistance), and may focus on economic and trade, culture, personnel training, infrastructure and other needs. On the other hand, in the field of foreign exchange, the government can share successful experiences in targeted poverty alleviation (such as the experience of poverty alleviation in the Old Dengmu Village of Nujiang River in Yunnan), or publicize the values of China’s peaceful development. The “Belt and Road” embodies the Silk Road culture of China, carries forward the spirit of friendly cooperation, and promotes the regional development concept as well as the experience of sharing, cooperation and achieving win-win results. The inclusive development and the human destiny community are

also concepts worth sharing. Thirdly, under the guidance of the sustainable development concept of protecting green mountains and rivers, Yunnan should realize the “five bonds” with other cities, actively develop partnerships with major cities of countries along the line, try to become the radiation center of regional development, and jointly build a community with shared interests, destiny and responsibility on the basis of political mutual trust, economic integration and cultural inclusion.

The second dimension is the role of universities. At present, Beijing, Ningxia, Fujian and other provinces have proposed and started implementing Sino-foreign university cooperation projects. For instance, China and Egypt signed cooperation agreements in the field of education, science and technology; Ningxia and Arabia universities began to cooperate; nearly 80 projects on education cooperation have been implemented effectively between Fujian and 24 countries along the road; the China-Russia Economic University Alliance is in progress. These examples provide references for colleges and universities in our province. “The most direct way for universities to take part in ‘the Belt and Road’ is to enhance communication among people through cultural exchanges.” Lu Zeng, the vice president of Huaqiao University, said. The “Belt and Road” initiative will provide more connotation and extension to university cooperation. The university cluster in Yunnan has abundant resources from the history of school building to the strength of professional discipline building. Firstly, according to the planning and advantages of professional discipline construction, we should build a talent training base by means of project construction, so as to gather high-quality resources of both sides, provide a platform and opportunity for the exchanges and cooperation between teachers and students, promote the implementation of the innovation-driven development strategy, the strategy of rejuvenating the country through science and education, and the strategy of reinvigorating China through human resource development. Talents with excellent qualities, language abilities as well as management and technology skills can be cultivated for both sides. Second, we can rely on 1-3 colleges and universities in Yunnan to establish Confucius Institute projects in countries along the border, so as to publicize China’s “the Belt and Road” development concept, and provide a window for the outside world to understand China, Chinese thought, Chinese culture as well as Chinese experience. Finally, we should give full play to the role of scientific research positions of colleges and universities and study the “government, industry, university and research” cooperation strategy.

Scholars need to find out reasons for the lagging behind economic situations of minority areas along “the Belt and Road” area, and help them to explore economic development paths on the basis of local resources and cultural characteristics, so as to realize reasonable human capital institutional arrangement and industrial selection with local characteristics. Scholars should provide the theoretical basis and methods which can build bonds between different countries on development targets, ideological concepts, emotional communication and civilization exchanges, and offer constructive suggestions to promote the cultural exchanges between people from all countries along the road, so as to achieve the harmonious coexistence of different cultures and promote civilized mutual learning.

The fourth dimension is the role of enterprises. When proposed the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative, President Jin-ping Xi pointed out that “we must strengthen friendly exchanges among the people, promote mutual understanding and traditional friendship, and lay a solid foundation of public opinion and the society for regional cooperation.” At present, China strengthens cooperation in eight key areas with countries along the Silk Road, including economic and trade cooperation, industrial investment, energy and resources cooperation, financial cooperation, cultural exchanges, ecological environment cooperation and maritime cooperation. As the mainstay of social development, enterprises should become the main force of “the Belt and Road” strategy. Companies must get rid of misunderstandings of “poverty relief” or “blind development and utilization”, and establish the concept of cooperation, environment protection and win-win results. Enterprises should attach importance to social responsibilities they should undertake, engage in projects of constructing countries along the line with the spirit of “honesty, sincerity and tolerance” and build good images for Chinese companies. They should take more social responsibility in protecting local

environment and ecological diversity, absorbing local employees and cooperating with local social parties, so as to avoid the loss caused by local people's doubts and resistance and obtain supports and recognition to the greatest extent.

3.3 Yunnan's actions and responsibilities in promoting the development of "The Belt and Road" national strategy

Under the background of the new era, Yunnan Province shoulders the two burdens of leapfrogging development and ecological protection. At the closing ceremony of the two sessions in 2019, the governor of Yunnan Province proposed that relying on abundant biological resources and good ecological environment, Yunnan is continually building the three brands of world-class "green energy", "green food" and "healthy life destination". In the process of regional economic development and under the principle of ecological protection, Yunnan can not only achieve the strategic goal of sustainable development, but also promote "The Belt and Road" initiative under the guidance of the "green, sharing, peace and development" concept.

4. Conclusion

Today, Yunnan needs to integrate itself in "The Belt and Road" initiative to promote its own development and undertake the responsibilities of the times. Experiences from other countries can be used as reference to figure out technical routes; the government, universities, scholars and enterprises need to play their roles in this process, so as to explore new mechanisms of international cooperation and to achieve people-to-people bond.

Acknowledgement

This paper is the outcome of the research, People-to-People Bond: How can Yunnan Province Promote "The Belt and Road" Initiative Based on its Regional Advantages, which is supported by the Foundation for Scientific Research Projects of the Education Department of Yunnan Province (Teachers' Projects). The Project number is 2018JS755.

References

- [1] Liu W D. "The Belt and Road": Leading Inclusive Globalization [J]. Bulletin of Chinese Academy of Sciences, 2017 (3).
- [2] Guo X G, Jiang Z D. "People-to-people Bond": Cognitive Misunderstandings and Advancing Ideas: on the Ideological Understanding of "the Belt and Road" Construction [J]. Peace and Development, 2015 (5).
- [3] Zhao G C. Perspective of China's Soft Power in the Context of "the Belt and Road Initiative" [J]. Middle East, 2016 (1).
- [4] Xu L Q, Yang X Y. The Significance and Countermeasures of Accelerating the Development of a Friendly City under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative [J]. Urban Insight, 2017 (5).
- [5] Fan J H. The Role of Yunnan in "the Belt and Road" National Open Strategy [J]. Journal of Dali University, 2015 (3).
- [6] Ji Z, Chen X L. From High Mountains to the Sea [N]. Yunnan Daily, June 15, 2017.
- [7] Liu W D, et al. Strategic Research on the Belt and Road Initiative [M]. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2017.
- [8] Dicken P. Global Shift (the sixth edition) [M]. London, UK: Sage, 2010.