Road to Innovation

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The world has witnessed rapid and significiant progress in economy and society in the past 30 years. Yet, one must acknowledge that these progress has been rather uneven and insufficient. We are still at a time to meet immense challenges for shared and sustainable development.

In 2013, Chinese President XI Jinping proposed the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, collectively called as the "Belt and Road" Initiative, signaling to the whole world a concept of common development for humankind. This proposal aims to address diverse development challenges faced by the world and to promote the common prosperity of all nations, reflecting the development needs of both China and the world. Since then, countries along these routes have enthusiastically responded, leading to a new round of fruitful cooperation and connetiveness in infrastructure, trade and culture among the countries. The "Belt and Road" Initiative (BRI) has become a globally accepted initiative in the promoting of common development of the whole world, tying together global efforts in the building of a community of shared future for humankind.

Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) are the core driving force for the BRI development. As the largest scientific research organization in China, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), while taking advantage of its integrated strength in research, education and policy consultation, has played a leading role in the support of the BRI development through STI.

With a close linkage to its internationality promotion policy, CAS has developed a comprehensive framework of programs to support the BRI and the related scientific cooperation. These programs includes

the "Science and Education International Outreach Program to the developing world," the "Belt and Road Science and Technology Cooperation Action Plan," the "President's International Fellowship Initiative" and a series of talent-and-student training programs. These programs have been of much importance to not only helping make BRI the "road of innovation" and the "road of green development," but also to promoting the importance of STI for the BRI development.

In the past five years, CAS has efficiently integrated both internal and external resources to the implementation of these programs, which led to the construction of nine overseas research and education centers in the core BRI countries, and the implementation of over100 research and development projects. In addition, CAS has provided training and education to over 5,000 individuals from the Belt and Road countries, of which over 1,500 are master and PhD students. Moreover, the exchange of visits between CAS and the countries in the Belt and Road regions have been continuously increasing, scientists crossing the boarder inbound and outbound have reached more than 20,000 persons/ times a year.

Across the continents, from the arid plains of Uzbekistan to the tropical forests, from villages in Sri Lanka to the expansive savannahs of Africa, one has seen the development and operation of the CAS overseas research and education centers. Developed in partnership with the local scientific institutions and focused on global scientific challenges, urgent local needs and science explorations, these centers have proved to be a big success in promoting cooperation and exchange with the locals, in the addressing of global scientific challenges, and in the meeting of the local needs such as the improvement of the livelihood and scientific capacity-building.

The Sino-Sri Lankan Center provides a striking example. It has not only helped provide the locals with weather forecasts services which they did not have, but has played an effective role in gathering together cross-disciplinary scientific teams from China to jointly address a unique unknown kidney disease, earning much praise and support from both the Sri Lankan government and people. The fact that the Sri-Lankan government has decided to provide an equally matched fund to that of the Chinese is a good indication of the importance of the issue. In Uzbekistan, joint efforts have been made in making drugs and herb medicine for the people of both countries. Furthermore, at the Sino-Africa Research Centre in Narobi, efforts have been made in protecting biodiversity and eco-environment and in supporting the local sustainable agriculture. What a pleasure to see that the local siensts can conduct research with modern facilitiese there provided by China.

Through five years of hard efforts in exploring on how to best support BRI, CAS has found a path that both suits its institution development and the needs of the Belt and Road development in particular. This special publication – "Science, Technology and Innovation for Common Development" – explores this progress as well as what lies ahead.

People should not set their resolve on what is easy, nor should they avoid what is difficult. As BRI advances to a new stage, the international cooperation of CAS will also become more deeply integrated with the BRI. In November 2018, the Second International Science Forum of Scientific Organizations on the Belt and Road Initiative will convene in Beijing, during which the Alliance of International Scientific Organizations for the Belt and Road (ANSO in short) will be established. Looking ahead, CAS and its scientists will work hands in hands with the scientisits and scientific organizations in the Belt and Road countries to continuously explore ways and means of cooperation in addressing the most pressing common challenges and in meeting the needs of sustainable development. Together, they will make prominent contributions to the high quality development of the Belt and Road.