

Some thoughts about the Think Tanks Alliance

Dr. Patrick C. P. HO

Deputy Chairman and Secretary General China Energy Fund Committee

The core spirit of the “Belt and Road” Initiative is connectivity, for the purpose of achieving a three-way combination of infrastructure, institutions and people-to-people exchanges and five-way development in policy communication, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade flows, capital flows and people-to-people bonds. Therefore, the proposed “Silk Road Think-Tank Alliance” will broadly invite the participation of think-tanks and research institutions from countries along the “Belt and Road” and devote itself to promoting connectivity by public diplomacy to build four bridges: (1) the bridge to bring together experts from various countries, (2) the bridge to combine research with decision-making, (3) the bridge to bring together the government and civil society, (4) the bridge to balance the relationship between different stakeholders. In order to realize this connectivity, the proposed “Silk Road Think-Tank Alliance” will focus on the following four areas:

Pooling wisdom for mutual benefit

The Alliance will regularly release new studies to the government and the public by deeply exploring some major topics proposed by the “Belt and Road” Initiative, publishing reviews and internal journals, and meeting the media so as to provide a reliable theoretical basis for new projects and policies.

Reaching a Consensus

The Alliance will hold regular closed-door seminars that will facilitate the members to exchange views on issues and future-plans of the “Belt and Road” Initiative. In this way, government officials can explain China’s current policies to their foreign peers, enterprise leaders and experts in

a relatively relaxing environment. Meanwhile, officials can also properly reveal some of the proposals under consideration to other members, in order to test reactions and collect feedback from them. Their advice will help to further optimize current and future policies.

Wining over Support

Through organizing various public forums and delivering comments via the media, the experts and scholars from the Alliance will inform the public of the latest news, policies and benefits of the “Belt and Road” Initiative in a light-hearted way. They can win over policy support and participation of people from different countries in the way of actively cooperating with the government’s motives, which helps to improve the image of Chinese enterprises investing in the overseas, and create a constructive social environment for the implementation of the “Belt and Road” Initiative.

Seeking Common Ground While Reserving Differences

Through the cooperation among the think-tanks within the region, the Alliance will jointly build a Track II Diplomacy platform for the “Belt and Road” to enhance the communication among all stakeholders, seek common ground while reserving differences, build mutual trust, and eliminate suspicion. Particularly in the case when tensions escalate in the region and traditional diplomacy is ineffective, Track II Diplomacy among think-tanks provides strong complement to official diplomacy.