

# *Opportunities, Challenges and Paths for Green Development of “the Belt and Road Initiative” in the Post-Pandemic Era*

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**Abstract:** With the steady progress of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the overall level of green development in the countries along the Belt and Road has been improved, but the level remains low compared to that of developed countries, and the ecological environment is fragile due to frequent human activities. With the outbreak of the new pneumonia epidemic spreading around the world, green cooperation has become an important development direction for international governance in the post-epidemic era in the face of the epidemic and global climate change and other challenges common to the human community, and new opportunities for green development in countries along the Belt and Road. However, the spreading and mutation of the epidemic has brought more uncertainty to the cause of global sustainable development, the contradiction between the development model and green development of the countries along the Belt and Road, and the weak international influence of the green development system of the countries along the Belt and Road, making the green development of the countries along the Belt and Road facing many new challenges in the post-epidemic era. Countries along the "Belt and Road" should cooperate to build a green economic community and environmental governance community in the post-epidemic era, promote the construction of a digital Silk Road, deepen the partnership for green development, and jointly promote the construction of a green "the Belt and Road".

## 1. Introduction

As shown by the change in GDP growth rates of the world's major economies in 2019-2021 (Figure 1), the century-old Newcastle pneumonia epidemic (hereinafter referred to as "the epidemic") has seriously disrupted the normal functioning of the world economy. However, the epidemic has not slowed climate change and the global warming trend will continue in the future, with the world already well off the timeline for achieving the Paris Agreement climate targets [1]. In the face of the epidemic and the common challenges of the human community such as global climate change, green cooperation is an important development for international governance [2]. "The Belt and Road" Initiative will contribute to economic recovery in the post-epidemic era, and to green recovery and sustainable development [3]. Most of the countries and regions along the Belt and Road (hereinafter

referred to as countries along the route) are developing countries and emerging economies, and the ability of developing countries to achieve low-carbon development plays a decisive role in global climate change [4], the countries and regions along the "Belt and Road" refer to the 64 countries and regions (excluding China) under the framework of "Six Corridors, Six Roads, Many Countries, Many Ports". Therefore, in the post-epidemic era, the extent to which countries along the Belt and Road implement green and low-carbon development will, to a large extent, affect the achievement of the global carbon emissions and the vision of carbon neutrality.

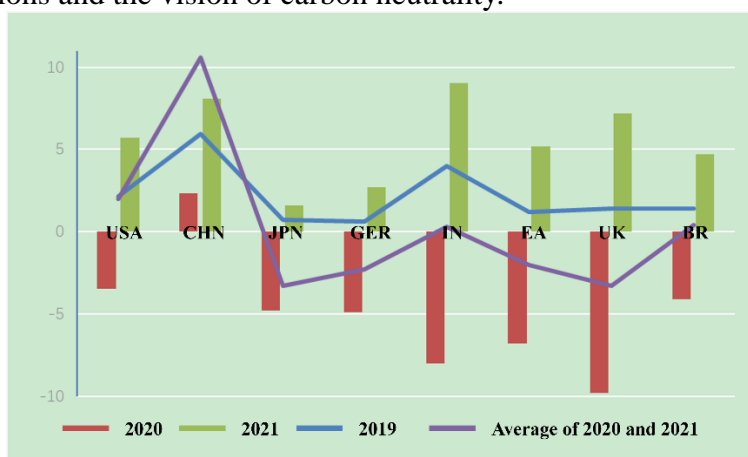


Figure 1: GDP growth rate of major world economies, 2019-2021 (Source: IMF)

## 2. Status of Green Development in Countries along the "Belt and Road"

### 2.1. The Countries along the Belt and Road are Characterized by Strong Human Activities and Fragile Ecological Environments

The countries along the "Belt and Road" are mainly concentrated in Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and North Africa, with a vast territory and a land area accounting for one-third of the total area of all countries in the world, but the total population accounts for nearly 70% of the world's total population, and the population density is more than half of the world average. There is a clear mismatch between population and resources. The region has highlands and mountains, plains and seas, as well as forests and grasslands and deserts. The natural environment is very complex, and most countries along the route are in sensitive zones of climate and geological change. Desertification is one of the most serious ecological and environmental problems in the world [5] and one of the most important challenges to the green development of the countries along the Belt and Road. Many countries along the Belt and Road have poor soils, are located in arid and semi-arid areas, and the proportion of forests, grasslands and shrublands is significantly lower than the global average, resulting in serious desertification and desertification problems [6]. Four of the six economic corridors along the Belt and Road have desertification problems, and the key region of Central Asia is the most prominent area with desertification problems.

### 2.2. The Level of Green Development in Countries along the "Belt and Road" Has Been Increasing, But the Level is Relatively Low and the Differences are Obvious

There have been research results of reality, from 2008 to 2017, the green development level of countries along the "Belt and Road" has shown a small increase, from 0.43 to 0.47, with an overall oscillating upward trend, but there are large differences between each other, with the best green development level in West Asia and North Africa, where developed countries are more concentrated,

and other regions. The other regions are South Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and Central Asia in descending order, with more than half of the countries at a lower level of green development [7]. The main reason is that most of the countries along the Belt and Road are developing countries with few technology and knowledge-intensive industries, insufficient investment in research and development, and low levels of innovation. According to statistics, except for a few developed countries such as Singapore, Israel and Slovenia, which have invested more than 2% of their GDP in R&D and have reached the world average, the vast majority of countries have invested less than 2% in R&D, and Kazakhstan, Bahrain, Vietnam, Cambodia and Mongolia are even less than 0.2% [6], and there is a serious shortage of technology supply for green development.

### **3. Opportunities for Green Development in Countries along the "Belt and Road" in the Post-Epidemic Era**

#### **3.1. Green Development Has Become the Core Trend and Basic Guideline for Building the "Belt and Road" in the Post-Epidemic Era**

In the wake of the global financial crisis in 2008, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) launched a global initiative for a "green economy" and a "green new deal", and the green economy has become a new trend of global environment and development. At the 21st United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2015, 178 parties from around the world signed the Paris Agreement, making unified arrangements for global action on combating climate change after 2020, demonstrating the global determination to move towards a green and low-carbon path. At the opening of the 25th UN Climate Change Conference in 2019, UN Secretary-General Guterres said in his keynote address that people should not be afraid of the green economy and should embrace this new opportunity with open arms, demonstrating that green has become the underpinning of global development and governance. At the UN Climate Ambition Summit at the end of the year, more than 70 countries and traditional fossil energy companies such as Shell and Total set net-zero emissions targets [8] and the reshaping of the economy in the post-epidemic era will provide a broader stage for green transformation.

The Vision and Actions for Promoting the Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, released in 2015, clearly proposed "building a green Silk Road", indicating that green is the basic color of the Belt and Road. Subsequently, the "Guidance on Promoting Green Belt and Road Construction" and the "Belt and Road Ecological and Environmental Protection Cooperation Plan" were released, reinforcing that the "Belt and Road" is based on green development and ecological civilization construction. The construction of the "One Belt and One Road" is guided by the concepts of ecological civilization and green development, integrating ecological protection into all aspects of the construction of the "One Belt and One Road" and the whole process, promoting the green development process and effective fit of the global environmental governance system along the "One Belt and One Road". In the post-epidemic era, promoting a balance between economic and social development, climate and environmental governance and promoting green transformation [9] is the key to deepening the green development of the Belt and Road, as well as responding to the general expectation of the international community for the Belt and Road to contribute more to the world's environment and sustainable development. In June 2021, at a high-level meeting on international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, 29 countries, including China, jointly proposed the "Belt and Road" green development partnership initiative, calling on the international community to cooperate to achieve a green and sustainable economic recovery and promote low-carbon, resilient and inclusive economic growth in the wake of the epidemic [10].

### **3.2. China's Commitment to Green Development Provides a Strong Impetus for the Green Development of Countries Along the Belt and Road**

The Chinese government has attached great importance to ecological protection and the construction of ecological civilization, and incorporated the construction of ecological civilization into the overall layout of the "five-in-one" cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The Fifth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee put forward the "Five Development Concepts", making green development an important concept in relation to the overall development of China. Documents such as the Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of Ecological Civilisation and the General Programme for Reforming the Ecological Civilisation System have been issued one after another, forming an institutional framework for the construction of ecological civilisation <sup>[11]</sup>. The establishment of green production and consumption of the legal system and policy guidance, the establishment of a sound green low-carbon cycle development of the economic system speed up. It implies that it has become an inevitable choice in the new era to promote the transformation of China's economic development model into a green economy <sup>[12]</sup>. The Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee included carbon peaking and carbon neutrality targets in the 14th Five-Year Plan for the first time, and the Central Economic Work Conference in 2020 clearly stated that China's carbon dioxide emissions should strive to peak by 2030 and become carbon neutral by 2060 [13]. In March 2022, the National Development and Reform Commission and four other departments issued the Opinions on Promoting Green Development of the "One Belt and One Road", which focused on promoting cooperation in key areas of green development and promoting green development of overseas. The construction of the Green Silk Road is facing unprecedented opportunities [14].

Guided by the concepts of "harmony between man and nature", "green water and green mountains are the silver mountain of gold" and "a good ecological environment is the most popular welfare of people's livelihood", the whole country has been making persistent efforts to promote the construction of ecological civilisation. Between 2012 and 2020, China's forest coverage will increase from 20.36% to 23.04%, energy consumption per unit of GDP (tons of standard coal per 10,000 yuan) will drop from 0.77 to 0.535, and the proportion of wetlands in the area of jurisdiction will increase from 4.01 to 5.58. The effectiveness of China's ecological civilization is becoming increasingly evident. The concept of "green water and green mountains are golden mountains" is influencing China and should also inspire the world to see the many opportunities that green development can bring, such as creating jobs, promoting economic development and creating a better future for humanity [15]. China's experience and technology in optimising its energy structure, building low-carbon infrastructure, building a green and low-carbon transport system, developing a circular economy, promoting technological innovation, developing green finance and green investment can provide a strong impetus for the green development of countries along the Belt and Road in the post-epidemic era.

### **3.3. Green Development in Countries along the "Belt and Road" Has Become an Important Grip for Global Green Recovery in the Post-Epidemic Era**

The epidemic has triggered the international community to think deeply about the harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature, and against the backdrop of the current lack of global economic growth momentum, green recovery has become an important driving force for high-quality global economic development in the post-epidemic period [16]. The regions along the Belt and Road have maintained rapid growth over the past two decades and are among the more dynamic regions of the world economic map [11]. China has been an active participant and contributor to the global climate governance process and the multilateral biodiversity process, and is ahead of schedule in meeting the 2020 targets for climate change and the establishment of nature reserves. Within the

framework of international cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, we have worked with relevant countries to put forward green investment principles, establish an international alliance for green development under the Belt and Road Initiative and set up a green investment fund. The IFF 2021 China Report's fourth annual survey of central banks in the Belt and Road countries shows that 87% of the central banks surveyed believe that Belt and Road projects will contribute to economic recovery in the "post-epidemic era". The results of the fourth annual IFF 2021 China Report survey show that 87% of central banks surveyed believe that Belt and Road projects are contributing to economic recovery in the "post-epidemic era", with 75% saying that they are contributing to green recovery and sustainable development [17]. At present, countries along the Belt and Road are trying to make useful attempts in green development, green recovery and green transformation, contributing their wisdom and strength to the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and working together to build a community of human destiny.

#### **4. Challenges to Green Development in Countries along the "Belt and Road" in the Post-Epidemic Era**

The new epidemic has had a tremendous impact on the world, the century-old changes have accelerated and the risks and challenges have continued to grow. In the post-epidemic era, countries along the "Belt and Road" are facing many challenges to their green development, from old problems that have not yet been properly addressed to new problems brought about by the spread of the epidemic.

##### **4.1. The Spreading and Mutating Epidemic is Creating More Uncertainty for the Cause of Global Sustainable Development**

As a world power, the United States formally withdrew from the Paris Agreement on 4 November 2020 and re-acceded to it on 19 February 2021. This act of treating accession to international conventions as child's play has brought more uncertainty to the world's carbon neutral process and green development. The UK was a pioneer in promoting green development and an important force in driving EU environmental policy, and now Brexit has become a reality. Post-Brexit, the uncertainty of environmental policies on both sides will further increase. It has been more than two years since the outbreak of the new crown epidemic, which is still spreading and mutating around the world, and it is still uncertain when it will end. This poses a huge challenge to global environmental governance, more uncertainty about the development of the global political and economic order, and the risk of regression in the quality of the ecological environment. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020 states that progress towards achieving the 17 SDGs by 2030 through 15 years of effort is already behind schedule at the end of 2019, and the unprecedented crisis caused by the outbreak of the new crown pneumonia epidemic has made the achievement of this goal a serious challenge [18]. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts that by 2024, the New Crown epidemic will cost the global economy more than the previous estimate of US\$12.5 trillion. Under the impact of the epidemic, countries will be under greater pressure to cope with the epidemic and recover their economies, which will have a negative impact on existing bilateral or multilateral environmental governance consultations and cooperation and increase the difficulty of global environmental governance, but the impact of the epidemic cannot change the long-term fundamentals of high-quality development of the world economy. The economic recovery in the post-epidemic era has put forward higher requirements for global environmental governance and green development, and the construction of the "Belt and Road" may face higher green standards and stronger green competition.

## **4.2. Contradictions between Development Models and Green Development in Countries along the "Belt and Road"**

Most of the countries along the Belt and Road are developing countries, which are also the world's most concentrated producers of mineral resources. They rely more on the exploitation of water, oil and gas, and mineral resources for their development, and are eager to pursue rapid economic growth in order to get rid of poverty, resulting in heavy resource consumption, high pollution emissions and low industrial structure. Since the outbreak of the epidemic, developing countries have been more vulnerable to being hit hard by the epidemic compared to developed countries. Developing countries in Asia have the first negative growth in 60 years in 2020, with 0.8-1.6 billion people returning to poverty and an unpredictable inflection point [19]. In the post-epidemic era, developing countries are more eager to achieve economic recovery than developed countries, and traditional development inertia often takes precedence over green development concepts. "Countries along the Belt and Road supply 57.9% of the world's oil, 54.2% of its natural gas, 70.5% of its coal and 47.9% of its electricity generation [6]. In the post-epidemic era, these countries' need for faster GDP growth and rapid industrialisation will further weaken their focus on improving the quality of economic development and their ability to develop sustainably, which in turn will push up the development costs of the green Belt and Road construction. Countries along the Belt and Road are also concentrated consumers of the world's mineral resources, consuming 50.8% of the world's primary energy, including 41.1% of crude oil, 47.1% of natural gas, 72.2% of coal and 40.1% of hydropower [6] and over 70% of the world's crude steel and finished steel products. 83.2% of cement. Although the current per capita carbon emissions of countries along the route are lower than the global average, energy consumption per unit of GDP, water consumption, non-ferrous metal consumption and carbon dioxide emissions are more than 1.5 times the world average. In the post-epidemic era, the pursuit of economic recovery will catalyse the consumption of resources, which will further lead to the continuous emergence of various ecological and environmental problems and seriously constrain green development.

## **4.3. Weak International Influence on the Construction of Green Development Systems in Countries along the "Belt and Road"**

While promoting international cooperation, eco-environmental issues also lead to international strife and carry more competing interests in the current international political arena. Under the Belt and Road cooperation framework, infrastructure connectivity is a top priority, which in practice has led to a large number of infrastructure projects and other cooperation projects for countries along the routes. These projects carry certain environmental risks, and in the event of an environmental dispute, they may become an entry point for Western media and forces to attack the Belt and Road project, and a gaming tool for political diplomacy by the countries concerned. The outbreak of the new epidemic and its global spread will have a serious impact on the infrastructure development of the Belt and Road countries. The overall infrastructure development index for Belt and Road countries slips to 110 in 2020, the lowest level in the past decade [20], and rebounding to 113 in 2021, but still at the lowest level in the past decade [21]. The impact of the epidemic is unlikely to be removed in the near future, and infrastructure development in the Belt and Road countries will face more uncertainty.

As the world's second largest economy and largest developing country, China has been committed to promoting global green development and environmental governance. In 2020, China's carbon emission intensity was 18.8 percent lower than that of 2015 and 48.4 percent lower than that of 2005, exceeding the 40-45 percent target it had promised to the international community, basically reversing the trend of rapid growth in carbon dioxide emissions [22] and demonstrating the responsibility and commitment of a major country. However, the influence of institutional building in global sustainable

development and climate governance is still relatively weak and does not match China's contribution to world climate and environmental governance. Chinese environmental standards lack international recognition and are more adapted to the requirements of international markets for environmental standards. In the process of promoting the Belt and Road Initiative, green governance is one of the main elements of the institutional framework system of bilateral cooperation treaties, but it remains mainly at the level of principles, lacking a clear and detailed green regime. In the post-epidemic era, the international community expects China and the Belt and Road to play a greater role in global environmental governance, but due to the weak position of international influence, there is a gap between expectations and actual capacity.

## **5. Deepening the Path of Green Development in Countries along the Belt and Road in the Post-Epidemic Era**

The epidemic is a shock, but also a node and a starting point. In the post-epidemic era, the global fight against the epidemic and economic recovery have put forward stronger requirements for the construction of "One Belt, One Road", which should deepen the green development path in many aspects based on the achievements of green development and environmental governance.

### **5.1. Building a Green Economy Community in Countries along the Belt and Road to Enhance Its Conceptual Contribution to Global Environmental Governance and Its Ability to Lead the Agenda**

First, establish unified legal rules to promote the overall development of the green economy along the route, incorporate the concept of green development into legislation, law enforcement and justice, and provide clear descriptions of how countries along the route can cooperate, areas of cooperation, content of cooperation, and violations of cooperation, so as to overcome the shortcomings of the legal rules system for building a green economic community. Secondly, we should do a good job of top-level design, establish a mechanism for sharing and building green technologies and green science and technology, and accelerate the construction of a green science and technology innovation community. The implementation of the innovation-driven development strategy should not be "a foot on the watermelon rind, slipping to nowhere", but should grasp the top-level design and task implementation. The construction of a green economic community in countries along the Belt and Road cannot be built without the effective support of green technology. Through the design of policies and systems, an atmosphere of willingness to share green technology and green technology will be formed along the route, and the development of green technology and green technology will be vigorously promoted to make up for the shortcomings of the weak scientific and technological foundation of the developing countries along the route. Third, the establishment of a financial support system to support the construction of a green economic community in the post-epidemic era in the countries along the route. The framework of the financial regulatory system for the construction of the "Belt and Road" has been improving, but the epidemic has caused the global economy to come to a halt and the "Belt and Road" financial cooperative has been severely affected, with many problems and challenges. Mobile payment has played a major role in stopping the spread of the virus and has played an important role in promoting international cooperation during the epidemic. China is an early adopter of mobile payment systems and has already established a comprehensive mobile payment system. Countries along the route should accelerate the establishment of a financial support system with RMB as the settlement currency. At the same time, we should actively mobilise international green investment, focusing on the introduction of platforms such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund to promote the construction of green financial systems in countries along the "Belt and Road" and to help the green development of countries along

the "Belt and Road".

## **5.2. Strengthen International Cooperation and Exchange to Build a Win-Win "Belt and Road" Environmental Governance Community**

First, based on the "One Belt, One Road" Green Development Partnership Initiative, we will deepen our support for green development talents, focusing on training talents for environmental policy research and environmental cooperation diplomacy under multilateral platforms, so as to lay a global talent base for green development in countries along the "One Belt, One Road" in the post-epidemic era. Secondly, to establish a database of green development projects, case studies and case studies in countries along the Belt and Road, and to fully and objectively disclose the results of environmental assessment of Belt and Road construction projects on the basis of adequate investigation, so as to enhance international trust in the green development of the Belt and Road and to work with countries along the Belt and Road to avoid or better cope with environmental governance risks. Thirdly, we should establish a "one-country-one-policy" cooperation model for green development in the Belt and Road, fully consider the environmental carrying capacity of the host country, make environmental risk response plans in advance, support the host country's environmental governance and environmental protection standards, and actively provide financial and talent training support to prevent environmental risks from turning into uncontrollable situations or even spilling over into the political and security spheres. Fourth, we should further strengthen the construction of bilateral or multilateral cooperation platforms, promote the construction of environmental cooperation and governance mechanisms under the framework of China-ASEAN, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, Lan-Me Cooperation, Boao Forum for Asia and other cooperation frameworks, strengthen the synergistic process of green development, and promote trade and investment in environmental products and services. Fifth, we will accurately identify the main challenges and cooperation needs of ecological and environmental protection in countries along the route, design projects and invest resources around the environmental concerns of host countries, improve the accuracy and fit of China's cooperation projects, and actively carry out environmental protection assistance projects for countries with outstanding contradictions between economic development and ecological protection.

## **5.3. Promote the Construction of the Digital Silk Road to Lay a Solid Foundation for the Green Development of Countries along the "Belt and Road"**

In 2020 published the "area" high-level video meeting of international cooperation joint statement made clear that "the outbreak hit against the background of global economic and social development, countries should strengthen in the digital economy, food security, health care industry in the areas of cooperation, in electronic commerce, big wisdom city, artificial intelligence and data technology application in the fields of cooperation, We should foster new economic growth points, learn from good international practices and narrow the digital divide." Since the outbreak of the epidemic in 2020, cross-border e-commerce has grown against the trend, and the "Belt and Road" has seen rapid development in the areas of smart manufacturing, smart agriculture and smart tourism, providing new momentum for the green development of countries along the route. As the construction of digital transportation corridors and China-ASEAN Information Port continues to advance, the construction of the Digital Silk Road will become a new cooperation highlight of the Belt and Road, and will also become a grip and breakthrough to accelerate the green development of the Belt and Road. Under the ASEAN arrangement, Thailand will become the digital hub of ASEAN. The 5G Ecosystem Innovation Centre, built by Huawei's investment in Thailand's Digital Economy Promotion Authority, will be able to incubate more than 100 SMEs related to 5G technology within three years. 2020 In



May, construction began on Africa, a submarine cable with the widest coverage on the African continent, connecting the Middle East and the African continent. The cable is being laid in partnership with China Mobile International Limited, Facebook, Telecom Egypt, South African telecoms operator MTN Global Connect, Saudi Telecom and French telecoms operator Orange. The completion of this cable project will greatly enhance connectivity between the African continent and the Middle East, connecting Africa to Asia [23] and this new infrastructure will provide a solid foundation for the promotion of green development under the One Belt and One Road.

#### **5.4. Strengthen People-to-people Diplomacy to Promote People-to-people Ties and Deepen Green Development Partnerships**

The One Belt and One Road initiative is the fundamental destination of people-to-people exchanges, and is also the lubricant and social foundation for green development and cooperation among countries along the Belt and Road. Civil society organisations are the bridge and link between people, governments and enterprises, and their diplomacy is an important part of China's diplomacy as it carries "profit, love and justice". Since the spread of the epidemic worldwide, China has provided material assistance to more than 150 countries and international organisations, exported epidemic prevention materials to more than 200 countries and regions, and provided more than 320 billion masks, 3.9 billion pieces of protective clothing and 5.6 billion testing kits to foreign countries...[24]. According to incomplete statistics, more than 60 social organisations have joined together to carry out more than 100 international anti-epidemic projects in more than 60 countries or regions [25]. Relevant social organisations have also joined hands with enterprises and the media to organise the translation and publication of multi-lingual anti-epidemic books, manuals and picture books to popularise anti-epidemic knowledge and promote scientific epidemic prevention [26]. The activities carried out by our civil society organisations have brought tangible benefits to the people of the countries along the route, enhancing understanding and friendship between our country and the people of other countries, promoting people-to-people contact along the Belt and Road, and increasing the enthusiasm of people from all countries to participate in the construction of the Belt and Road. In the post-epidemic era, as China's participation in globalisation and global governance deepens, the international environment will become more complex and sensitive, and the green development of countries along the Belt and Road will also face greater challenges. It is all the more necessary to play the diplomatic role of civil society organisations, strengthen the "Belt and Road" people's hearts and minds, establish a wide network of partnerships, deepen green development partnerships, accelerate the green development of countries along the Belt and Road, and promote the green recovery of the world economy in the post-epidemic era.

#### **6. Conclusion**

With the global spread of the epidemic, countries along the Belt and Road have also been affected by the impact of the epidemic, and the progress of Belt and Road projects and cooperation, including green projects, has been hampered by the closure or control policies of various countries. The progress has been slow. In the post-epidemic era, a green and sustainable development path will become more of a global consensus. This paper explores the opportunities, challenges and ways to deepen green development in countries along the Belt and Road in the post-epidemic era, and draws the following conclusions:

(1) With the steady progress of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the overall level of green development in countries along the "Belt and Road" has been improved, but the level is still not advanced compared to that of developed countries, and there are obvious differences among them, and the ecological environment is fragile and affected by human activities. The ecological

environment is fragile and is greatly affected by human activities.

(2) With the outbreak of the new pneumonia epidemic and its continuous global spread, green cooperation has become an important development direction for international governance in the post-epidemic era in the face of the epidemic and global climate change and other challenges common to human society, and green development has become the core trend and basic guideline for building "One Belt, One Road" in the post-epidemic era.

(3) The continuous spread and variation of the epidemic has brought more uncertainty to the cause of global sustainable development, and there are contradictions between the development models and green development of countries along the Belt and Road, as well as weak international influence on the construction of green development systems in countries along the Belt and Road, making green development in countries along the Belt and Road face many new challenges in the post-epidemic era.

(4) In the post-epidemic era, the global fight against the epidemic and economic recovery have put forward stronger demands for the joint construction of the Belt and Road. Countries along the Belt and Road should build a green economic community and environmental governance community in the post-epidemic era, promote the construction of the Digital Silk Road, deepen green development partnerships, deepen green development cooperation, and jointly promote the construction of the Green Belt and Road.

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