

Promoting AI Governance Jointly

Voice of the World

By LI Yang & TANG Zhexiao

Representatives from China and Japan shared their insights on promoting artificial intelligence (AI) governance and data sharing at a sub-forum of the 20th Beijing-Tokyo Forum in Tokyo recently.

The sub-forum contributed eastern wisdom to AI governance and digital social development, demonstrating the significance of international cooperation for the development of the digital economy, according to Gao Shaolin, advisor at Peking University's Legal Artificial Intelligence Research Center.

AI governance framework

The participants agreed that the next 10 years will be a critical period for the development of AI.

Gao Wen, academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE), said since China's State Council issued a guideline on developing AI in 2017, the nation has made significant progress in AI research and development and industrial layout, especially in computing power and 5G network construction.

By the end of 2023, China had over half of the world's 1.57 billion 5G users, according to the *World Internet Development Report 2024*. It ranked second globally in AI and computing power scale, which has laid a solid foundation for the rapid development of AI.

Tatsuo Yamazaki, project professor at the International University of Health and Welfare, said it was very meaningful for Japan and China to discuss



A visitor experiences a multisensory art therapy system integrated with AIGC technology at the Light of Internet Expo held during the 2024 World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, Zhejiang province. (PHOTO: VCG)

strengthening AI governance rules.

Fumihiko Kamio, research director of the Nomura Research Institute, echoed his view. He emphasized that the core goal of AI technology is to improve productivity and eliminate obstacles to social development, and called on Chinese and Japanese experts to work together to build an AI governance framework to cope with the global challenges.

Deepening international cooperation

China put forth the Global AI Governance Initiative in October last year. In July, the UN General Assembly adopted a China-sponsored resolution on enhancing international cooperation on AI capacity-building.

The participants spoke highly of the Global Cross-Border Data Flow Cooperation Initiative recently proposed by China.

They agreed that AI governance requires global collaboration, especially in the formulation of international standards and the construction of ethical frameworks, where China and Japan can play an active role.

Ding Wenhua, academician of the CAE, said China and Japan have both similarities and differences in technology development and governance priorities, so deepening cooperation will bring unique value to global AI governance.

"China and Japan should deepen AI technology cooperation between enter-

prises, work together in AI security research, talent exchange, and jointly explore more possibilities for the application of technology," Wang Zhongyuan, president of the Beijing Academy of Artificial Intelligence, said.

Balancing development & risks

AI governance refers to the guardrails established to ensure AI systems and tools remain safe and ethical and respect human rights.

Xu Zhilong, editor-in-chief of *Science and Technology Daily*, stressed that AI, as a revolutionary technology, has far-reaching impacts on all areas of society and economy.

However, its potential risks such as data leakage and the spread of false information should not be ignored. "Technological progress and security ethics should be developed in a balanced way to ensure that AI technology always serves the progress of human civilization," Xu said.

AI governance should not only heed the current technological ethics issues, but also prevent possible long-term risks, such as AI going out of human control, according to Toshio Iwamoto, senior corporate advisor of NTT DATA. He said AI R&D and application should abide by the principles of fairness, transparency, safety and availability.

Yuan Yue, chairman of Beijing Dataway Horizon, shared his view from the perspective of regulatory models. "Policy choices should be based on the current status and goals of national technological development," Yuan said, adding that China prefers to provide a more friendly development environment for enterprises while ensuring an effective response to risks.

Comment

Combating Desertification Needs Universal Push

Edited by TANG Zhexiao

The 16th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was recently held in Saudi Arabia's Riyadh, calling for global efforts to restore land and boost drought resilience.

With a total area of more than 600 square meters, the China Pavilion was the largest national pavilion apart from that of the host country. It showcased the nation's decades-long efforts and achievements in combating desertification, particularly through the Great Green Wall, which is officially known as the Three-North Shelter Forest Program.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of UNCCD. Since China's acceding to UNCCD in October 1994, 53 percent of the nation's treatable desertified land has been managed. By the end of 2023, the forest coverage rate had exceeded 25 percent, with forest stock volume surpassing 20 billion cubic meters and annual carbon sequestration reaching more than 1.2 billion metric tons, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

Leveraging innovative support

The use of science and technology is directly related to the effectiveness of desertification control.

For years, China has kept exploring new technologies and methods to prevent and control desertification, selecting and promoting drought-resistant and wind-resistant tree and grass species, and scientifically promoting sand control systems such as Shapotou in Ningxia Hui autonomous region, Minqin in Gansu province, Dengkou in Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Kekoya in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, and Saihanba in Hebei province.

Developed by Chinese researchers, the straw checkerboards, a dune fixation technique in which straw is placed on the desert surface in the shape of a checkerboard, has been well received by countries which suffer from desertification.

Endrias Geta, state minister of the Ethiopian Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands, said that China has a lot of experience in restoring degraded areas and making them productive, "We need to strengthen our long-term relationship with China in terms of transferring knowledge, technologies, and also in capacity building."

Development of sand control has also been accelerated, with widely adopted mechanized and intelligent technologies, such as sand fixation machinery

and drone seeding.

Currently, nearly half of the afforestation in the Great Green Wall project is done mechanically.

In keeping with China's National Action Program to Combat Desertification, the country carried out national desertification monitoring, to gain timely and accurate information on the national trend in desertification and to provide professional information for macro decision-making in combating desertification.

Engaging in international cooperation

Climate change and desertification have reminded us of the importance of unity, being one for all, all for one, said Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene, urging nations to strengthen collaboration in combating desertification.

China has not only accelerated desertification control, but also carried out extensive international cooperation to share experience and promote the Chinese solutions of desertification control to the world.

The nation has successively hosted the Asian ministerial conference and the Asian-African conference to promote regional implementation cooperation and actions.

The UNCCD Secretariat has twice honored China for its "outstanding contribution to combating desertification," and the Great Green Wall project has been recognized in the Global 500 Roll of Honour for Environmental Achievement by the United Nations Environment Programme.

UNCCD Deputy Executive Secretary Andrea Meza Murillo said that she was moved by the images of different generations of Chinese people fighting desertification and by China's leadership in this process. The effective policies, community and local government involvement, as well as innovation and technology, are key components of China's success.

"To fight desertification needs international cooperation," Ahmed Nazal Nuri, official from the League of Arab States' environment and climate affairs department said, adding that they are grateful for participating in the tour-study program to see how China tackles this problem.

China has made tremendous efforts to combat desertification, and Africa can learn lessons from it to better address its sustainable development and climate change issues, according to *Africa-China Review*.



Workers set up straw checkerboards to prevent wind and fix sand in the Kubuqi Desert, China's seventh-largest desert, nestled in the northern part of the Ordos Plateau in Inner Mongolia. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

Chinese Contribution to Rural Transport Development

Opinion

By LU Zijian

Through institutional innovation, systematic planning and targeted policy implementation, China has managed to build a path for its rural road development that suits its national conditions. The experience gained in this process is now being shared with developing countries, where inadequate rural transportation is often a crucial factor that restrains economic and social development.

According to a white paper titled "China's Rural Roads in the New Era," recently issued by China's State Council Information Office, China has been providing technical standards for rural roads that are feasible and suitable to national conditions of countries in need. Since 2012, China has published 73 standards

in English, French and Russian regarding the survey, design, construction, maintenance, quality inspection and evaluation of roads, bridges and tunnels.

Hundreds of projects in dozens of countries have applied China's road construction standards, including the Surabaya-Madura Bridge in Indonesia and the Maputo-Katembe Bridge in Mozambique. China has also signed a *Five-year Action Plan (2023-2027) for Highway Technical Cooperation* with Pakistan in 2023, and the latter can set standards for road engineering by adapting Chinese technologies and standards to its own situations.

By establishing cooperation platforms, engaging with international organizations, and conducting training, China spared no effort to share its experience in rural road development. To assist with this, conferences like the Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference and Global Sustainable Transport Forum were held. In

addition, the Global Sustainable Transport Innovation and Knowledge Center was established under China's Ministry of Transport.

Meanwhile, China engages with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program, to share its extensive experience in developing rural roads, and raise awareness of rural road safety with other countries.

Furthermore, China has sent experts to the Technical Committee 2.2 Roads for Equity, Accessibility and Mobility in Rural and Interurban Areas of the World Road Association.

Training sessions of all kinds, such as road design and management, highway engineering, road network planning and technical personnel, have been held for over 800 people from developing countries, especially countries along the Belt and Road, in order to help them de-

velop their own technical experts.

Apart from experience and skills sharing, China also vigorously supported the rural road projects of developing countries. Since 2018, China has offered support to 24 developing countries including Cambodia, Serbia, Rwanda, Namibia, Vanuatu and Niger in road and bridge construction and maintenance.

By participating in project construction and offering technical and human resources support, China has helped to optimize the local rural road infrastructure, which greatly cut the logistics costs and promoted the circulation and market entry of local farm products, contributing to poverty alleviation and wellbeing improvement of local people.

Upholding the idea of openness, cooperation and mutual benefit, China will continue strengthening exchanges and cooperation with other countries in rural road development, and dedicating to the global cause of rural road development and poverty alleviation.

impaired individuals.

During the discussion, Pan Qingzhong, executive dean of Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University, shared his experience with the youthful audience. Pan said he had visited an automated production line of a top Chinese automaker, where he found that only 12 workers were involved in the manufacturing process.

This marks a shift in focus toward the growing need for skilled workers required to maintain and manage robots in manufacturing workshops in the AI era.

As AI technology becomes increasingly pervasive, adapting to this shift is no longer optional but essential, Pan said. To remain competitive in the future, individuals should reinvent their skill sets, learn to coexist with AI, and master new skills that complement or surpass the capabilities of machines, he added.

Gen Z Meets with AI

AI Ripples

By GONG Qian

The rapid development of AI has brought both opportunities and challenges across the board, in both work and private lives.

A group of young people shared their insights on how AI is changing the lives of young generation and how they should embrace the challenge brought by AI at the Global Young Leader Dialogue Annual Forum recently held by the Center for China & Globalization in Beijing.

In 2023, the daily average video views for AI-related content on Bilibili,

China's popular video-sharing platform, increased by over 80 percent year-on-year, covering trendy topics such as science popularization, AI technology applications, digital humans, and creative applications.

Anthony Wang, a VC Investor and Schwarzman Scholar of Tsinghua University, said AI is a powerful tool to democratize fundraising process for two key reasons.

First, it allows entrepreneurs to spend less time on the fundraising process itself and focus more on building their innovations. By leveraging AI, entrepreneurs can efficiently target a broader range of investors. For example, entrepreneurs can utilize AI-driven tools such as databases, investor profiles and automated emails, to reach a

wider audience of investors.

Second, AI enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of fundraising materials, helping streamline documents like pitch decks. It also makes the fundraising process less subjective. AI helps to level the playing field for entrepreneurs worldwide. It allows for a more objective assessment of funding applications, directing capital to the most promising ventures and funds.

According to Cai Cong, partner at the OPO Disability Group, digital technology empowers disabled people to realize greater possibilities for the future. Training AI models demands more data annotation workers, which merely requires basic computer operation skills in a short training period. This offers more employment opportunities for visually

Tech and Solidarity Revive Notre-Dame

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In February, Zhou Ping, deputy director of the Qin Shi Huang Mausoleum Museum, and Chen Weichang, deputy director of the Grotto Stone Carvings Institute of the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, participated in the Notre-Dame restoration work.

In May, China and France reached

an agreement to jointly carry out research on the protection of wooden remains and earthen archaeological sites, specifically preserving and restoring fire-damaged wood at Notre-Dame.

Today, the revitalized cathedral is not only an important symbol of European culture, but also an important bond of friendship between China and France.