

Cooperation Between China and Republic of Congo in the Field of Digital Economy from the Perspective of “The Belt and Road”

Taking the Cooperation Between Qilu University of Technology and Africa-Asia International Co., Ltd. as an Example

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ABSTRACT

“The Belt and Road” initiative provides broad space for digital economic cooperation between China and Republic of Congo. Qilu University of Technology cooperates with Africa-Asia International Co., Ltd. to help African enterprises establish digital sales platforms, improve customer procurement, payment, delivery and other trade processes, establish a digitally empowered matchmaking trading platform, thereby solving the problem of trade settlement difficulties caused by foreign exchange shortages in African countries, expanding the settlement ratio of the RMB in international trade, and deepening scientific and technological exchanges and economic and trade cooperation between China and Africa. There is enormous cooperation space between China and Africa in the field of digital economy, and both sides need to strengthen communication and cooperation in areas such as talent cultivation, digital security governance, and sustainable development in the digital field. Taking the wave of digital economy development as an opportunity will continuously promote Sino-African cooperation to a new level.

Keywords: "The Belt and Road", Sino-African cooperation, Digital economy.

1. INTRODUCTION

“The Belt and Road” is the abbreviation of the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”. In September and October 2013, President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China proposed the cooperation initiatives to build the “New Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” respectively. “The Belt and Road” is a symbol of the ancient Silk Road that the Chinese government uses to hold high the banner of peaceful development, strengthen economic cooperation with countries along the route, and jointly build a community of interests with economic integration. As one of the countries along “The Belt and Road”, the African Republic of Congo actively responds to the initiative, adapts to the development of the times, and strengthens cooperation with China in the field of digital economy. Taking the cooperation

between Qilu University of Technology and Africa-Asia International Co., Ltd. as an example, the implementation of the digital economy project in Republic of Congo has made important contributions to the development of the digital economy in Africa and promoted cooperation in the field of digital economy between China and Africa.

2. THE COOPERATION BETWEEN CHINA AND REPUBLIC OF CONGO IN THE FIELD OF DIGITAL ECONOMY HAS A GOOD FOUNDATION AND GREAT SIGNIFICANCE

2.1 Both Sides Have a Solid Foundation of Cooperation and Strong Capabilities

In March 2016, Qilu University of Technology signed an overseas employment and internship base contract with Africa-Asia International Co., Ltd. (formerly Africa-Asia Travel Agency), which is a significant initiative. The first is to provide students with broader internship opportunities. Through overseas internships, students can better understand the culture, economy, law, and other aspects of African countries and regions, and enhance their cross-cultural communication and cooperation abilities. At the same time, overseas internships also enhance students' language skills and international perspectives, which will help them excel in their future career development. The second is to enhance the innovation capability and competitiveness of African enterprises. The cooperation with Qilu University of Technology has injected fresh blood into the development of Africa-Asia International Co., Ltd., enhancing students' innovation capabilities and competitiveness. The third is to promote cultural exchange and project cooperation between China and Africa. By establishing connections between Chinese colleges and universities and African enterprises, it is aimed to bridge the gap in scientific research cooperation, technology transfer, and other areas between China and Africa.

Qilu University of Technology has established long-term and stable cooperative relationships with colleges and universities, research institutions, and well-known enterprises in more than 50 countries and regions around the world. Over the years, it has achieved fruitful results in high-level visits, joint research, joint construction of research and development platforms, and exchange of scientific and technological personnel with its partners. Qilu University of Technology has established over 40 national and provincial-level international science and technology cooperation bases (research and development centers), and has been approved to build the first international top scientist studio in Shandong Province. It has also established the Shandong China Ukraine Technology Innovation Research Institute and the Shandong Academy of

Sciences Belarus Research Center; As the main initiating unit, the school established the Shandong International Science and Technology Cooperation Innovation and Entrepreneurship Community, established overseas offices, and obtained approval for two provincial-level "National and Regional Research Centers". In the past 5 years, the school has undertaken over 260 international cooperation projects and more than 240 national and local talent introduction projects. It has achieved over 200 high-level collaborative research results in fields such as information, biology, ocean, new materials, and new energy. At present, there are about 300 foreign experts who exchange and visit each year, and nearly 120 foreign experts who work in China for a long time. Three foreign experts have won the "National Friendship Award" and the honorary title of "exemplary organization for Introducing Intelligence Work" awarded by the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs.

Africa-Asia International Limited is a comprehensive company with a wide range of business, involving tourism, air tickets, logistics, trade and other businesses. It has branches in more than ten African countries, including the Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, and has a significant influence in Africa. Firstly, it was the first transport company established by Chinese from Congo Brazzaville to Cape Black, which played an important role in facilitating local residents' travel and promoting local economic and social development. In 2018, it was interviewed, filmed, and broadcasted by China International Television, a subsidiary of China Central Television, in the "New Era of China Africa Cooperation". Secondly, it is the first to provide full process services to assist Congolese customers in selecting suppliers, payment, and logistics in China. This service model not only provides more choices for Congolese customers, but also facilitates Chinese enterprises in expanding into the African market. Thirdly, the founder of the company, Chi Chengfeng, was the fourth, fifth, and sixth secretary-general of the Congolese Overseas Chinese Chamber of Commerce. He has long been committed to assisting overseas Chinese in conducting business in Republic of Congo, ensuring the safety of overseas Chinese, and donating materials to local orphans. Accompanied by Chi Chengfeng, the Chinese Ambassador and Counselor to Republic of Congo visited and guided the construction of the intensive care unit initiated by him, and reported on the embassy's website. These measures not only demonstrate the sense of

social responsibility of Africa-Asia International Co., Ltd., but also add a lot of color to the friendship between China and Africa and “The Belt and Road”.

2.2 Profound Significance of Cooperation in the Field of Digital Economy Between Both Sides

The first is to solve the problem of trade settlement difficulties caused by foreign exchange shortages in African countries. Affected by the international political situation, more and more countries in Africa are facing the dilemma of foreign exchange shortages, which seriously restricts the normal operation of international trade. The research results of this project will increase the proportion of barter (labor barter) trade in international trade.

The second is to expand the settlement ratio of the RMB in international trade. The operation of this project adopts RMB settlement, which will actively promote the settlement ratio of RMB in African trade, expand the influence of RMB, thereby expanding China's trade volume with Africa, and promoting economic cooperation and exchanges between the two countries.

The third is to deepen scientific and technological exchanges and economic and trade cooperation between China and Africa. This project will expand China Africa scientific and technological innovation exchanges, promote economic and trade cooperation between China and Africa and African countries, achieve mutual benefit and win-win results, deepen and implement “The Belt and Road” initiative, and inject new vitality and impetus into China Africa friendly cooperative relations.

3. COOPERATION PATH BETWEEN CHINA AND REPUBLIC OF CONGO IN THE FIELD OF DIGITAL ECONOMY

3.1 Assisting African Companies in Establishing Digital Sales Platforms

Qilu University of Technology has gained a deep understanding of the market demand and consumer behavior in the cloth market of Republic of Congo, helping Africa-Asia International Co. Ltd. and even African enterprises to build digital sales platforms. On the one hand, introducing high-

quality products and services from China and leveraging local enterprise resources and market advantages to enter the African market can help Chinese enterprises transfer production capacity. On the other hand, with the help of digital sales platforms, African countries can collaborate with Chinese enterprises to enhance their productivity and economic level by leveraging their local resources and market advantages. By providing training and technical support, it is aimed to help African companies improve their digital capabilities and achieve mutual benefit and win-win outcomes. Digital sales platforms can also help companies expand into new business areas. By providing more accurate data analysis for the company, the companies can understand which products or services perform well in the market, help them understand customer needs and market trends, develop more accurate sales strategies, and quickly enter these new business areas, improving the companies' competitiveness and market share.

3.2 Improving Customer Procurement, Payment, Shipping and Other Trade Processes

Qilu University of Technology has carried out operational model transformation and upgrading for Africa-Asia International Co., Ltd., established a digital service platform, further optimized and improved customer procurement, payment, delivery and other trade processes, and improved work efficiency. The first is to adopt an intelligent procurement management system. The system will automatically compare supplier quotations, product quality, and other information to provide procurement personnel with the best procurement plan. The second is to introduce advanced payment solutions. Cooperating with financial institutions allows customers to make online payments directly through the platform without the need to redirect to other websites, which is both convenient and secure. The payment process will provide customers with more payment options to meet the needs of different customers. The third is to establish an intelligent shipping management system. The system will automatically arrange shipment based on order information and ensure accurate and timely delivery of goods to customers through logistics tracking function. At the same time, continuously improving inventory management and order processing functions can make the entire shipping process more efficient and accurate. The fourth is to establish a comprehensive customer service system, provide a good user experience and

customer service, ensuring that customers receive timely and effective assistance when encountering problems, and promptly resolve user issues and provide feedback. It is necessary to provide relevant training and supports to help users better utilize the platform for trade, and develop intelligent customer service robots to automatically respond to common customer questions and improve customer service efficiency. At the same time, the customer service team will also be online 24/7 to provide customers with thoughtful manual services. In terms of security and compliance, the platform will strictly comply with relevant laws and regulations, including data protection, anti-money laundering, taxation, etc., to ensure the security of the platform, such as data encryption, firewall, etc. In order to better manage data and gain a deeper understanding of customer needs and market trends, it is also necessary to further improve the data management system. By unifying the management of customer information and transaction data, it is possible to better analyze market conditions and customer needs, providing strong data support for business decision-making. Meanwhile, the performance and functionality of the data management system will be continuously optimized to ensure data security and reliability.

3.3 Establishing a Digitally Empowered Matchmaking Trading Platform

Qilu University of Technology helps African companies establish a digitally empowered matchmaking trading platform, attracting Sino-African trade and related companies to join the system, in order to promote transaction efficiency in Sino-African trade and related industries. The platform will adopt advanced technological means, including artificial intelligence, big data analysis, etc., to achieve intelligent transaction matching and online communication. In the meantime, the platform will also provide diversified transaction services, including real-time quotation, order tracking, payment settlement, and logistics tracking, to meet the needs of different companies. In order to attract more companies to join the platform, there is a must to actively establish cooperative relationships with trade promotion agencies, chambers of commerce, industry associations, etc. in China and Africa, and organize online and offline activities to promote the platform. At the same time, personalized service solutions will be provided to meet the needs of different companies. This platform has mobile adaptation capabilities,

allowing users to conduct transactions anytime, anywhere on their mobile phones.

4. PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY BETWEEN CHINA AND REPUBLIC OF CONGO

4.1 Great Potential for Future Cooperation Between Both Parties

With the deepening of “The Belt and Road” initiative, the digital economic cooperation between China and Republic of Congo will usher in a broader space for development. Both sides should strengthen policy communication and jointly formulate a plan for the development of the digital economy, enhance infrastructure connectivity and promote the construction and interconnection of digital economy infrastructure, and strengthen trade facilitation and expand the scale and variety of trade in the field of digital economy. Both sides should also enhance financial integration and provide more financing channels for digital economy cooperation, and strengthen people to people communication and improve cultural and friendly exchanges between people.

4.2 Long-term Cooperation Between Both Parties in the Future

In order to achieve long-term cooperation in the digital economy between China and Republic of Congo, the two sides should also pay attention to the following points: the first is to strengthen talent cultivation and introduction. The development of the digital economy in Republic of Congo requires a large amount of talent support, and both sides should strengthen talent training and introduction to enhance the core competitiveness of the digital economy. The second is to improve risk management and prevention. There are certain risks and challenges in cooperation in the field of digital economy, and both parties should strengthen risk management and prevention to ensure the security and stability of cooperation. The third is to focus on sustainable development. Cooperation should focus on environmental protection and sustainable development, and promote the coordination between economic growth and environmental protection in Republic of Congo.

5. CONCLUSION

The digital economic cooperation between China and Republic of Congo is an important part of the economic and trade cooperation between China and Republic of Congo, and also a new highlight of China Africa cooperation under “The Belt and Road” initiative. The cooperation between Qilu University of Technology and Africa-Asia International Co., Ltd. in the field of digital economy has achieved initial results, injecting new impetus into the friendly cooperative relationship between China and Congo, and promoting the comprehensive development of the digital economy between the two countries. Both sides should further strengthen policy communication, facility connectivity, smooth trade, and people to people communication, elevate the level of digital economy cooperation, innovate cooperation models, continuously deepen practical cooperation in various fields, make greater contributions to the economic development and social progress of China and Republic of Congo, and promote the healthy and stable development of bilateral relations.

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