

***Organized by the Department of Management Science
and Project Planning, University of Nairobi,***

Venue: University of Nairobi

Date: February 7-9, 2023

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List of Abbreviations / Acronyms

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| HEIs | Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) |
| BRI | Belt and Road Initiative |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| 4IR | Fourth Industrial Revolution |

Background

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a major strategy to align China's development with that of other countries along the routes while addressing different needs. The Belt and Road Initiative was proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China in the autumn of 2013. The goal of the BRI is fivefold; (i) policy coordination; (ii) facilities connectivity; (iii) unimpeded trade; (iv) financial integration; and (v) people-to-people bonds. The Initiative aims to interconnect countries in Asia, Europe and Africa through an ambitious vision for infrastructure, economic and political cooperation. The BRI has drawn wide attention and gained positive response from international community. Shichor (2018) opined that policymakers especially Chinese leaders were surprised by the enthusiastic welcome to President Xi Jinping's proposal of the BRI just like other countries¹. To this effect, the Chinese Government committed US\$1 trillion towards the initiative for 10 years. On March 28, 2015, the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China through the State Council a document titled "*Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road*." The aim of the document was to promote the implementation of the Initiative, instill vigor and vitality into the ancient Silk Road, connect Asian, European and African countries more closely and promote mutually beneficial cooperation to a new high and in new forms². Several nations, agencies and the Chinese provinces are encouraged to be involved in the BRI's decision-making and implementation processes.

By December 2021, 142 countries from Asia, Europe and Africa signed the Belt and Road Initiative MoU with China. The Initiative first focused on Asia and Europe countries before inclusion of African countries in which South Africa and Egypt were among the first to sign the Belt and Road Initiative Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Africa. The BRI focus is to connect all 54 African countries through transportation infrastructure projects, including modern highways, airports, and high speed railways. The BRI is expected to promote trade and strengthen

¹ Yitzhak Shichor (2018). China's Belt and Road Initiative Revisited: Challenges and Ways Forward. *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, 4(1), 39–53

² Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road," Issued by the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, March 28, 2015. Available at: <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/qwyw/qwfb/1084.htm>

economic growth across the region;³ leads to a 25% reduction in road transport margins and 5% in sea transport margins; and coordinate economic policy and improve regional collaboration and contribute to lifting 7.6 million people from extreme poverty and 32 million from moderate poverty by 2030⁴. Furthermore, the Belt and Road Initiative aims to promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas, establish and strengthen partnerships among the countries along the Belt and Road, set up all-dimensional, multi-tiered and composite connectivity networks, and realize diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development in these countries⁵. The connectivity projects of the Initiative will help align and coordinate the development strategies of the countries along the Belt and Road, tap market potential in this region, promote investment and consumption, create demands and job opportunities, enhance people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and mutual learning among the peoples of the relevant countries, and enable them to understand, trust and respect each other and live in harmony, peace and prosperity.

Despite these benefits, the Initiative is perceived as a debt trap and strategy by China to dominate the world. Shichor (2018) revealed that the BRI practically ignores a variety of obstacles and risks such as; piracy, terrorism, Islamic extremism, ethnic and national rivalries, internal and interstate violence along the routes along the routes (both on land and sea). These challenges if not addressed may disrupt the movement of investments, goods and people at unexpected times. Similarly, it is hard to find reliable data on BRI⁶. This is because it is difficult to distinguish a BRI project from regular economic or diplomatic relations. Hence, BRI lacks clear description; leaving the reader with a choice of interpretations. It is against this background, the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences, University of Nairobi (UoN) in conjunction with Zhejiang University, Ocean College and the Global Transport and Logistics Research Group, RMIT University is organizing the 7th Global Research Network - Belt and Road Initiative Conference 2023 that will

³ Maryla Maliszewska and Dominique van der Mensbrugghe (2019). The Belt and Road Initiative: Economic, Poverty and Environmental Impacts. *World Bank Group*. Policy Research Working Paper 8814

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Grzegorz Stec (2018). China's Belt and Road Initiative is Neither a Strategy, Nor a Vision. It is a Process. European Institute of Asian Studies. Available at: https://www.eias.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/EU_Asia_at_a_Glance_Stec_BRI_2018-1.pdf

be held on **February 7-9, 2023** at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. The aim of this conference is to bring academics and researchers in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as well as industry experts from around the world to exchange insights on Belt and Road Initiative past, present and future challenges and opportunities. All accepted papers will be peer reviewed and published in referred journals. Therefore, you are invited to submit your theoretical and empirical full papers in any of the following or related areas:

1. The BRI and the development of digital and logistics infrastructure
2. Port development, operations, and management
3. Global supply chain and international trade
4. New technologies and work in transport and logistics
5. Urban transportation and regional connectivity
6. Logistics infrastructure and regional economic development
7. Global trade, transport, and the environment
8. Geopolitics, trade and development
9. Human resource management and digital skills development
10. The blue economy and maritime logistics
11. Green logistics and circular economy
12. Supply chain sustainability and resilience
13. Global logistics distribution center development along the belt and road
14. Economic impact studies of the BRI
15. The Maritime Silk Road and its impacts on the African Continent

Target Participants

The Conference targets only 100 career researchers, government officials, academic faculty graduate students and sponsors of BRI. This two-day Conference will include keynote talks and

panelist discussions in order to ignite debate in the areas of BRI as well as enrich the existing knowledge.

Mode of Delivery

The Conference will be conducted face to face in the University of Nairobi

Guideline to Authors

Authors must adhere strictly to the following guidelines:

- a) Manuscript must be original. All manuscripts will be checked for plagiarism using Turnitin Similarity Check by Crossref and those with more than 15% similarity index will be sent back to author(s) for redress.
- b) The Manuscript structure should include: Title, Author(s), Author(s) Affiliation including E-mails; Abstract of not more than 250 words and 3-5 key words. The papers should include; Introduction / Literature Review; Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion and recommendation.
- c) All citations must be well referenced using APA 7th edition format. Please consult the document for guide.
- d) Authors should not submit more than **Two (2)** manuscripts.
- e) All illustrations, figures, and tables must be placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end of the manuscript. Ensure to cite sources if you are not the originator and reference carefully.

General Style

- a) Use single line spacing throughout the document.
- b) Keep all text aligned justified, and only center the chapter title, author's name and affiliation, and captions and legends of illustrations.
- c) Start a new paragraph by indenting it from the left margin, not by leaving a line blank, except after a (sub-) heading.

Reference Style

All sources cited (author, date) in text must appear in the reference list, and all items in the reference list must be cited in text. In-text example (Mabati, 2020) or Mabati (2020) stated that... In the reference, give details of the source. You are encouraged to use reference management software such as Endnote, Mendeley, and RefWorks.

Important Dates

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Submission of Abstract / Papers | July 29, 2022 |
| Abstract Acceptance Notification | September 30, 2022 |
| Receipt of First Draft from Author(s) | November 11, 2022 |
| Review Feedback from Convener | November 30, 2022 |
| Receipt of Final Draft from Authors | January 15, 2023 |
| Programme Publication | January 25, 2023 |
| Presentation | February 7-9, 2023 |

Conference Registration Fees

| Delegates Categories | Fees |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| National and International | KSH. 23,000 (USD 200) |
| Students | KSH. 11,500 (USD 100) |
| All Online | KSH. 11,500 (USD 100) |

Publication of the Conference Papers

Authors who wish their papers to be published in the conference proceedings should submit full papers within the timelines. All papers to be considered for publication in the selected discipline journals will undergo a rigorous double blind peer review process.

Submission of Abstract/ Full Papers

Delegates can submit abstracts of up to 250 words on any one or combination(s) of the specific themes stated above. Full papers should be at least 4,500 words and not more than 9,000 words and should be prepared in accordance with the generally acceptable manuscript standard. Authors should submit their abstracts/ full papers to: briconference@uonbi.ac.ke . For further information, please visit our conference page: <https://doxa.co.ke/bri/>

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