

B&R for B&R: A Vision of Bamboo and Rattan for the Belt and Road

International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR) in collaboration with
UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)

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Promoting South-South Cooperation with Bamboo & Rattan

As two of the world's most important non-timber forest resources, bamboo and rattan are strategic natural resources for South-South cooperation, distributed widely and abundantly in countries along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt.

Bamboo and rattan can play a strategic role for climate change action, green infrastructure and land restoration, livelihoods development and poverty alleviation, especially for developing countries along the Belt and Road.

With the aim to help countries develop bamboo and rattan's potential, INBAR launched the Global Assessment of Bamboo and Rattan (GABAR) in 2015. GABAR will build an open, professional, and cooperative bamboo and rattan economic circle through policy improvement, capacity building, technology transfer and information sharing. UNEP-WCMC's GABAR scoping study has created the framework for further work.

This framework meshes perfectly with the core values of the Belt and Road initiative - to promote the economic development and prosperity of the countries along the Belt and Road through extensive, strong and all-round bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Bamboo and Rattan Integration with the Belt and Road Initiative

The Belt and Road Initiative connects the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. The starting point is China, the global leader in bamboo development and production, and the end point is the European Union, the world's largest bamboo and rattan importer. INBAR will work closely with its member states and partners at national, regional and global levels to push forward bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the countries with bamboo and rattan resources and industries along the Belt and Road.

Bamboo and rattan are highly compatible with the overall objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative, including promoting the green economy and environmental protection, reducing poverty, improving livelihoods, and increasing employment and income.

Win-win cooperation via bamboo and rattan development not only conforms to the core foundation of the Belt and Road Initiative, but is also consistent with the long-term developmental goals of countries along the Belt and Road - achieving sustainable development of the green economy. Bamboo and rattan can significantly advance practical cooperation in four of the Belt and Road's five key areas.

Entry points for bamboo and rattan to the Belt and Road Initiative:

Strengthen policy coordination:

- Strengthen policy coordination among INBAR members and partners along the Belt and Road to ensure that bamboo and rattan are included in relevant sector policies, as bamboo and rattan can contribute significantly to many of UN Sustainable Development Goals. INBAR has already made significant progress in these areas as an official observer to the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the UN Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD);

Develop infrastructure:

- Develop green infrastructure with bamboo. Bamboo can be used for a wide range of infrastructure developments, including the manufacture of water storage tanks, biogas generators and drainage pipes. Bamboo can help with riverbank stabilisation and erosion control mechanisms. Bamboo can be grown along highways, railways and waterways to create biodiversity-rich green corridors and act as noise barriers. Bamboo can be deployed as a strategic resource for disaster relief and post-conflict restoration. Bamboo can also be used as a source of renewable energy;

Promote trade:

- Promote the global trade of bamboo and rattan commodities through the sharing of standards and guidelines, improved technology and reliable statistics. INBAR serves as the world commodity body for bamboo and rattan and works with multiple ISO technical committees to develop standards and building codes using these materials. Bamboo can be used in many value chains with 10,000 documented uses for products that create jobs and reduce poverty;

Promote people-to-people exchanges:

- Promote people-to-people exchanges through sharing of information and experiences, training and capacity building and cross-cultural communication about bamboo and rattan, with the aim to narrow the development gap between countries and across the region. INBAR together with its partners has already trained over 2000 people, but there is potential for significantly more exchanges.

INBAR, International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation

Established in 1997, INBAR is the only international organisation which aims to promote sustainable development of bamboo and rattan sectors, and the first intergovernmental organisation headquartered in China. INBAR's mission is to improve the well-being of bamboo and rattan areas, which is highly integrated with the goal of Belt and Road Initiative, that is, to promote the economic prosperity, green development and well-being of the countries and regions along the Belt and Road, and across the entire globe.

INBAR currently has 42 member states, 41 of which are developing countries. The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road covers many INBAR Member states and its range extends across major areas of bamboo and rattan resources and industry in the world (East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Africa).

To set a vision for long-term cooperation with bamboo and rattan, INBAR facilitates constructive

partnerships between China – its Host Country – other Member states in Asia, Africa and Latin America and relevant international partners. Our four Regional Offices in Ethiopia, Ghana, Ecuador, and India assist in this task. Our aim is to increase the interest and attention of the global investment and donor community, and to foster recognition of bamboo and rattan in different sectors. This will help Member states to develop their bamboo and rattan resources for poverty alleviation, livelihood development, employment creation and income generation, environmental protection and climate change action, in order to achieve a green economy and inclusive sustainable development.

UNEP-WCMC, UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre

UNEP-WCMC is the biodiversity arm of UN Environment. UNEP-WCMC is a world leader in biodiversity knowledge. It works with scientists and policymakers worldwide to place biodiversity at the heart of environment and development decision-making to enable enlightened choices for people and the planet.

Since 2015, UNEP-WCMC has started its China initiative aiming to enhance UN Environment's presence in the region. In 2016, UN Environment signed an MOU with the Chinese government for collaboration within the Belt and Road initiative context. UNEP-WCMC is actively supporting this effort together with a broad range of key stakeholders and partners and fully recognizes that the essence of a successful Belt and Road initiative is planning for the balance between natural capital, human capital and physical capital.

Within this context, UNEP-WCMC is pleased to collaborate with INBAR and provide support to its Vision of Bamboo and Rattan for the Belt and Road. The collaboration between UNEP-WCMC and INBAR goes back to nearly 15 years ago in quantifying global bamboo resources. Most recently, UNEP-WCMC has collaborated with INBAR in developing the framework of GABAR.

Next Steps

- INBAR commits to formally joining the Belt and Road Initiative and to signing a cooperation agreement with the Chinese government in the near future.
- INBAR commits to creating a roadmap strategy document
- INBAR commits to working together with UN Environment in greening the Belt and Road initiative through promoting green development and ecosystem civilisations.
- INBAR commits to organising a Belt and Road Initiative session during the inaugural 2018 Global Bamboo and Rattan Congress

Conclusion

The core of the Belt and Road Initiative is win-win cooperation and it is expected to provide a new impetus to global economic growth. INBAR, the major platform for South-South cooperation on bamboo and rattan, is prepared to take full advantage of the Belt and Road Initiative to promote GABAR from its Beijing headquarters, with the aim to push forward the sustainable development of bamboo and rattan industry and economy at national, regional and global levels, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. We hope you will join us in greening the Belt and Road!