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Original Paper

Building a "Digital Silk Road" between China and Spanish-speaking American countries: Current Situation, Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

China's efforts to build a "Digital Silk Road" with Spanish-speaking American countries have achieved remarkable results, which are mainly manifested in the initial completion of the Asia-Latin America Trade Corridor, the continuous expansion of 5G network coverage, and the rapid development of e-commerce platforms. However, China and Spanish-speaking American countries are still facing multiple obstacles in building the "Digital Silk Road", including backward digital infrastructure, insufficient digital talents, weak internal economic development, and interference from external forces. Looking to the future, China and Spanish-speaking American countries should seize the strategic opportunity of the "Five Major Projects", make full use of multilateral mechanisms such as the China-CELAC Forum, and deepen the cooperation in the digital economy under the guidance of the principles of equality, mutual benefit and common development with Asia-Latin America Trade Corridor as a link. This will not only promote the realization of digital transformation and sustainable development of Spanish-speaking American countries, but also inject a new era of connotation into the construction of the China-LAC Community with a Shared Future.

Keywords

Spanish-speaking American countries, "Digital Silk Road", China-Latin America digital economic cooperation

1. Introduction

At the intersection of the wave of global digital economy and "the Belt and Road Initiative", the construction of the "Digital Silk Road" between China and Spanish-speaking American countries has not only become a new engine to promote the transformation and upgrading of economic and trade cooperation between the two sides, but also injected strong momentum into the construction of the China-LAC Community with a Shared Future. As an important part of emerging markets and developing economies, Spanish-speaking American countries have huge demand for Internet infrastructure and broad application scenarios of digital technology, while China, as a pole of digital economy, has accumulated technology and industrial advantages in the field of digital economy, which provides a solid foundation for cooperation between the two sides.

At present, the construction of the "Digital Silk Road" between China and Spanish-speaking American countries has achieved milestones in the fields of construction of Asia-Latin America Trade Corridor, cross-border e commerce, 5G communications and etc., which has significantly improved the level of regional connectivity and economic efficiency. However, the cooperation process still faces multiple challenges, such as the weak foundation of digital economy in Latin America, external geopolitical interference, and structural difficulties in China-Latin America digital economy cooperation. In this context, it is of great theoretical value and practical significance to explore the achievements, challenges and opportunities of the "Digital Silk Road" between China and Spanish-speaking American countries. It will be helpful to deepen digital economic cooperation, promote inclusive development in Latin America, and advance the transformation of the global digital governance system.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: the second part introduces the achievements of China and Spanish-speaking American countries in jointly building the "Digital Silk Road", the third part reveals the challenges, the fourth part summarizes the opportunities, and the fifth part summarizes.

2. Achievements of the "Digital Silk Road" Jointly Built by China and Spanish-Speaking American Countries

2.1 Port Construction

Chinese enterprises have brought their experience in digital port construction to Latin America, the most typical of which is Chancay Port in Peru, which is undertaken and operated by COSCO Shipping Group. Chancay Port is a landmark project of high-quality joint construction of "the Belt and Road Initiative" in Latin America. It opened on November 14, 2024.

The opening of Chancay Port is of great significance. First, logistics costs are reduced. With the opening of the two-way direct flights from Port Chancay to Shanghai, the export voyage from South America to Asia is shortened from 35 days to about 25 days, with cost savings of 20%-50%.

Second, the need for trans-oceanic shipping between South America and Asia to transit through North America has become a thing of the past. Chancay port not only benefits Peru, but also radiates throughout Latin America. After the opening of Chancay Port, all South American countries have found a new route that is safer and more affordable.

Third, Chancay Port is the first "5G + AI" smart port in South America. Digital technologies such as Beidou Navigation Satellite System, pure electric intelligent container trucks, and automated terminal operating systems have been introduced to Chancay Port, so that Chancay Port has realized 24-hour, all-weather, fully automated operation. The automation level has been on par with that of the world's leading smart ports.

2.2 Communication Infrastructure

ZTE is an in-depth participant in the Latin American digital economy. Since entering the Latin American market in 1998, it has established cooperation with more than 20 government and enterprise customers in more than 20 countries and regions in Latin America, successfully delivering more than 2,000 projects. The network covers 350 million users, accounting for nearly 60% of the total population of Latin America.

In terms of digital infrastructure, ZTE Corporation has cumulatively laid more than 40,000 kilometers of in-home optical fiber, deployed more than 10 million home terminals, and constructed a digital base covering 8.2 million households. In terms of mobile terminals, ZTE's mobile terminals have achieved

rapid growth in Latin America, and their market share in key countries such as Mexico and Peru has exceeded 10%, which is very popular with local consumers.

2.3 Cross-Border E-Commerce

In 2020, Alibaba's Global Digital Economy Talent Project Team, with the support of the Mexican state government, launched the Mexican Digital Village Project, trying to copy "Taobao Village" to Mexico. By taking excellent samples such as "Lin'an Bainiu Village" as "teaching materials", the project provides systematic training for more than 400 teachers and more than 8,000 students to become the link of digital transformation of local enterprises.

Andre, a young Mexican, after learning about the successful case of "Taobao Village", returned to his hometown of Volcanic Stone Village, where he taught local people how to run an online shop which opened up sales for the local specialty of stone mortars polished from volcanic rock. This is very helpful for raising local people's income and improve their living quality.

3. Challenges of Building the "Digital Silk Road" between China and Spanish-Speaking American Countries

China and Spanish-speaking American countries have achieved milestones under the overall plan of jointly building the "Digital Silk Road". However, this cooperation faces multiple challenges from many aspects. This part will conduct a detailed analysis from the following three dimensions.

3.1 The Development of Digital Economy Faces Bottlenecks

The scale and competitiveness of the digital economy in Spanish-speaking American countries are insufficient, which are mainly caused by factors such as weak digital economic foundation, insufficient digital talent reserve, weak economic growth, and political instability.

3.1.1 Digital Infrastructure Lagging Behind

Insufficient communication network coverage. Digital infrastructure is an important physical capital for the development of digital economy, but most Spanish-speaking American countries are lower than the world average in terms of digital access. As of now, among the Spanish-speaking American countries, only Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru are countries with commercial 5G. Bolivia and Ecuador's 5G is still in the start-up phase, and the rest of the Spanish-speaking American countries have not yet proposed a clear 5G deployment plan.

The article uses ubiquitous connections, a component of Global Digitalization Index (GDI) (Note 1) released by Huawei, to compare the level of digital infrastructure construction in Spanish-speaking American countries. Ubiquitous links are the basic indicators to measure the level of network connectivity and the foundation for the inclusive development of the digital economy. This indicator includes fixed broadband/mobile broadband affordability and number of users, 4G/5G coverage and broadband speed. Figure 1 also shows the GDI scores of China, the United States and the world as a reference. It can be found that only Chile is higher than the world average in terms of ubiquitous connection, and the rest are below the world average. However, Chile's ubiquitous connectivity level is as much as 15 points behind that of leading countries such as China and the United States. In addition, Spanish-speaking American countries have great differences in ubiquitous connectivity. The difference between Chile, the highest score, and Bolivia, the lowest score, is as much as 32 points. The digital divide is prominent, which greatly limits the development of regional digital economy.

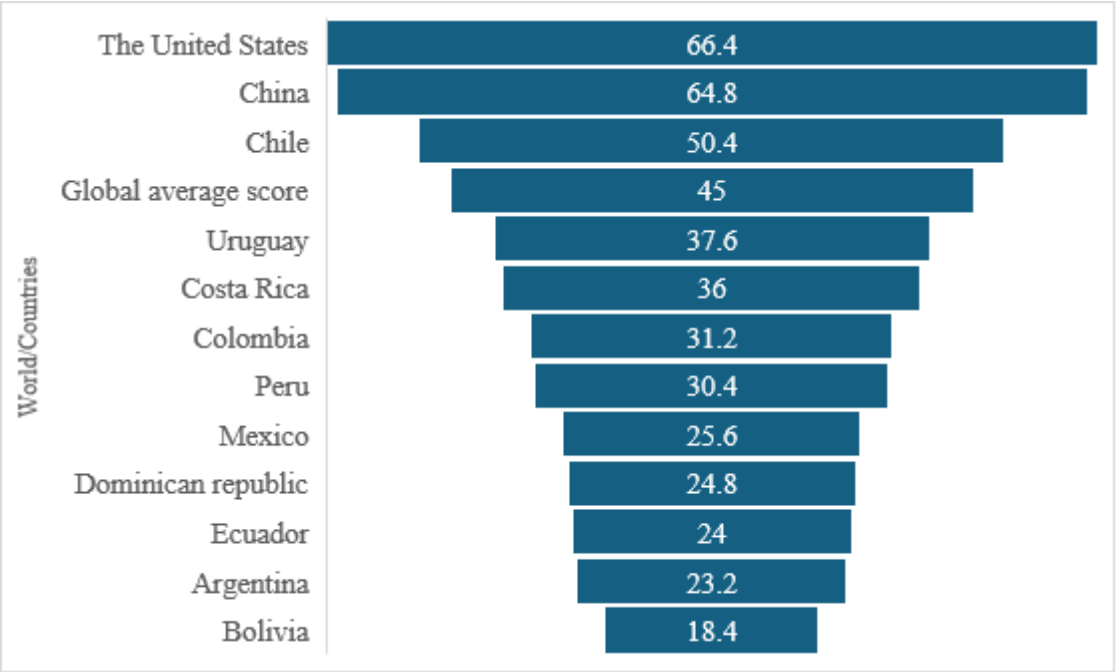


Figure 1. Ubiquitous Connection Scores of Major Spanish-Speaking American Countries (2024)
Data source: https://www.huawei.com/cn/gdi.

3.1.2 Shortage of Digital Talent

International consultancy IDC predicts that the region will need to add 2.5 million ICT professionals to its current talent pool of 6.3 million by 2026. However, the level of digital (Note 2) education in Spanish-speaking American countries is backward and the digital training system is weak. Only countries such as Mexico, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay provide targeted digital technology training courses. Generally speaking, there is a shortage of digital economy professionals in Spanish-speaking American countries.

The main source of digital economy talents (or ICT talents) is graduates of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines. Spanish-speaking American countries pay attention to the cultivation of STEM talents, but the conversion rate of ICT practitioners is not high. As we can be seen from Figure 2, the STEM graduation rate in some Spanish-speaking American countries (Note 3) is close to 25%, and even higher than 25% in Chile and Peru. But the size of ICT practitioners is only equal to or less than the world average. This is due to the large differences in the development level of ICT industry among countries, which leads to the large differences in the employment opportunities provided to STEM graduates. At the same time, countries with developed ICT industries have more complete talent introduction, certification and matching mechanisms, which can better transform STEM graduates into ICT practitioners. In Chile, Colombia, Peru, Uruguay and other countries, 50% of STEM graduates can find ICT and related employment opportunities, while in Argentina, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Bolivia and other countries (Note 4), this proportion is only 15%. In the United States, China, and Europe, it is as high as 95%.

The developed ICT industries and more employment opportunities in the United States have attracted a large number of talents from American countries. Figure 2 also gives evidence that the proportion of STEM graduates in the United States is the same as the world average, but ICT practitioners are much higher than the world average. A large number of ICT talents trained by Spanish-speaking American countries flow to the United States, expanding the regional talent gap.

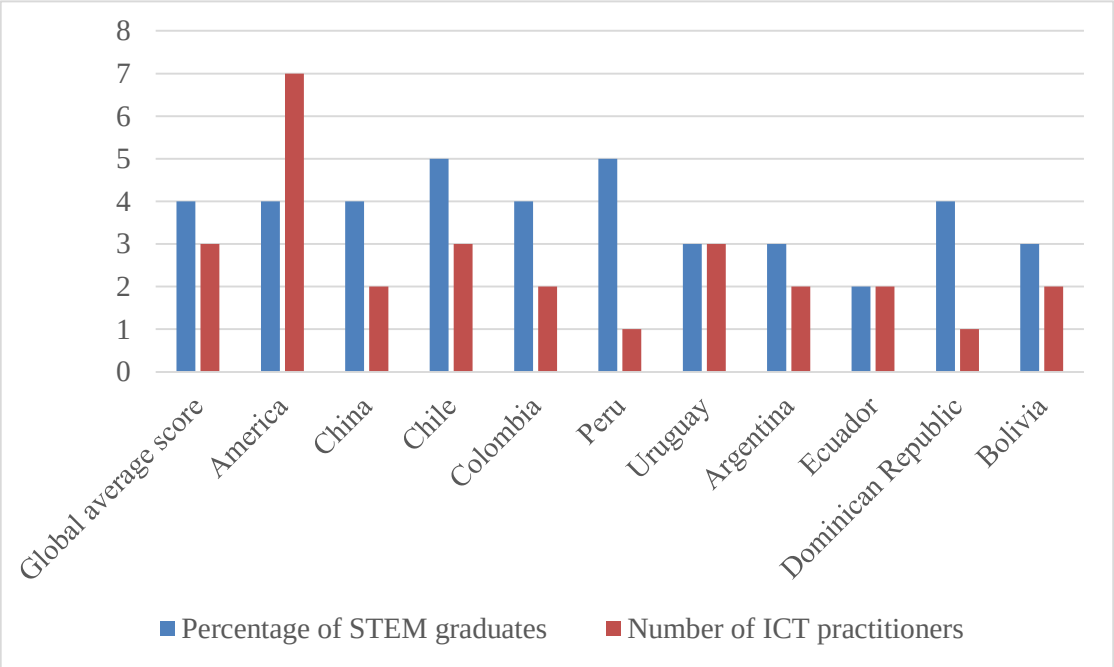
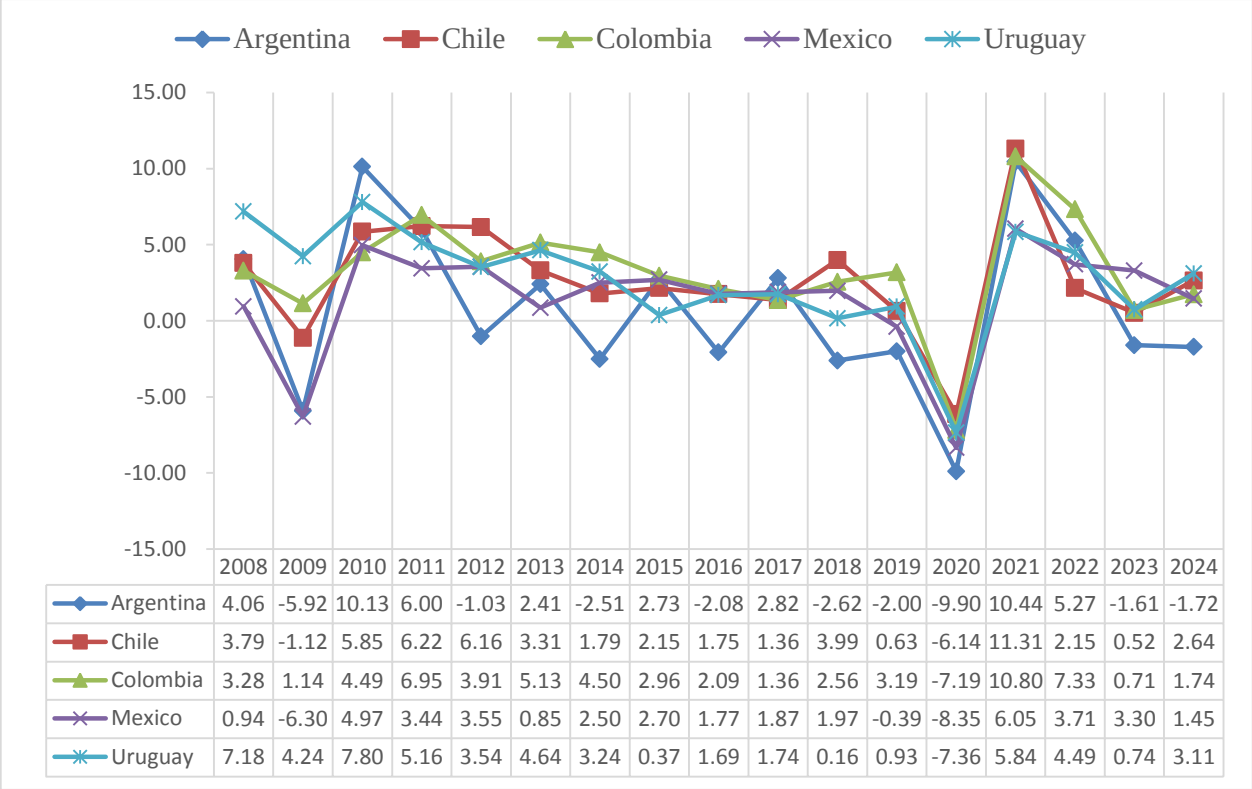


Figure 2. Proportion of STEM Graduates and Number of ICT Practitioners Scores in Major Spanish-Speaking American Countries in 2024

Data source: https://www.huawei.com/cn/gdi.

3.1.3 Long-term Stagnation of Economic Development

After the global financial crisis, the economies of Spanish-speaking American countries entered a downward cycle, and the economic growth rate dropped from 5.26% in 2010 to 1.35% in 2019. During the epidemic, the economy gradually recovered after the downturn, and the economic growth rates in 2020, 2021, and 2022 were-7.68%, 9.41%, and 4.27% respectively. However, growth in 2023 and 2024 is still weak, with growth rates of only 2.42% and 2.48%.



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Argentina	4.06	-5.92	10.13	6.00	-1.03	2.41	-2.51	2.73	-2.08	2.82	-2.62	-2.00	-9.90	10.44	5.27	-1.61	-1.72
Chile	3.79	-1.12	5.85	6.22	6.16	3.31	1.79	2.15	1.75	1.36	3.99	0.63	-6.14	11.31	2.15	0.52	2.64
Colombia	3.28	1.14	4.49	6.95	3.91	5.13	4.50	2.96	2.09	1.36	2.56	3.19	-7.19	10.80	7.33	0.71	1.74
Mexico	0.94	-6.30	4.97	3.44	3.55	0.85	2.50	2.70	1.77	1.87	1.97	-0.39	-8.35	6.05	3.71	3.30	1.45
Uruguay	7.18	4.24	7.80	5.16	3.54	4.64	3.24	0.37	1.69	1.74	0.16	0.93	-7.36	5.84	4.49	0.74	3.11

Figure 3. GDP Growth Rate of Major Spanish-Speaking American Countries

In April 2025, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) lowered its forecast for Latin America's economic growth in 2025 to 2% from the previous 2.4%. The reason is that under the background of the tariff war launched by the United States, Latin America is facing a very complicated international situation, full of uncertainty. Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, which are highly dependent on U.S. technology and commodities, are more affected by this. In June 2025, the World Bank released a new "Global Economic Outlook" report, which also lowered its economic growth forecast for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2025 to 2.3% (the January forecast was 2.5%). In the ECLAC report, this state is defined as the "low growth capacity trap" state for the first time. Economic stagnation has directly weakened domestic investment demand for digital infrastructure, technological innovation and digital services. For the government, continued financial pressure makes it difficult to invest funds to support the construction of digital infrastructure such as 5G networks and data centers. For enterprises, uncertain market prospects also make them lack the motivation for digital transformation.

3.1.4 The Political Environment Is Turbulent

Spanish-speaking Latin American countries generally adopt presidential or parliamentary systems of government, and frequent regime changes lead to the lack of long-term continuity of economic policies and weaken investor confidence and the stability of policy expectations.

In the infrastructure sector, policy instability and institutional weaknesses have combined to make it difficult to move projects forward. On the one hand, games between different political parties often lead to deadlocks in approving large infrastructure projects. On the other hand, most countries lack a high-level authority specialized in coordinating infrastructure construction, and the cross-sectoral

coordination mechanism is weak, leading to a lengthy project approval process and inefficient implementation.

3.2 The United States' Continued Intervention in the Field Digital Economy

3.2.1 Historical Intervention Tradition

The United States has always regarded Latin America as its sphere of influence. For more than 200 years, the United States has adhered to the "Monroe Doctrine" and launched invasions, coups, economic infiltration, and military intervention (Note 5) in Latin America again and again, plundering resources, seized benefits, and taken control of the lifeblood. Although U.S. Secretary of State Kerry said in 2013 that the era of Monroe Doctrine has ended, in fact, the United States still regards Latin America as the basic support and geopolitical guarantee for implementing global strategy, and adopts a "carrot and stick" policy towards Latin America. For China's greater integration into the economic and social development process in Latin America, the U.S. has always held a stifling attitude.

3.2.2 Intervention Measures in the Field of Digital Economy

The first is to stigmatize China-Latin America digital cooperation through public opinion. This year, Washington has repeatedly called China "espionage activities" by using digital infrastructure and 5G networks. For example, in 2019, ZTE signed a surveillance contract worth nearly $30 million with the government of the province of Jujuy in Argentina. The province is one of the poorest areas in Argentina, with a high incidence of crime. This is to help reduce the crime rate in the area and is very popular among local residents. But even such a small project can attract Washington's "concern". The United States constantly warns its allies not to buy China's security technology, discrediting China's technology as "hidden dangers", especially surveillance. In fact, it is the United States that uses surveillance to engage in 'espionage activities' in Latin America. The digital services provided by China, with their high quality and price advantages, promote the modernization of digital infrastructure in Spanish-speaking American countries.

The second is to suppress China-Latin America cooperation through economic or technical means. On May 14, 2025, China and Colombia signed the "Belt and Road Initiative". In the past day, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs of the U.S. State Department issued a statement, says that the United States strongly opposes the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and other international financial institutions to provide project loans to Chinese state-owned enterprises in Colombia. At this time, Xi'an Metro and China Harbor, as a joint venture, are still participating in the rail transit project in Bogota, the capital of Colombia. The Inter-American Development Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development of the World Bank and the European Investment Bank are providing funds for the project. The U.S. is intended to punish Colombia for signing the "the Belt and Road Initiative".

3.3 Structural Difficulties in China-Latin America Digital Economic Cooperation

Differences in development concepts, technical standards, legal norms, cultural customs and social organizations between China and Spanish-speaking American countries constitute structural obstacles to China-Latin America cooperation in the field of digital economy.

3.3.1 Differences in Economic Development Concepts

First, focus on short-term interests. For cooperative projects, Chinese enterprises usually value the sustained economic benefits and the improvement of social welfare after their completion. However, in Spanish-speaking American countries, local governments, communities and residents are most concerned about the direct jobs and direct economic benefits brought by the process of infrastructure construction. Sometimes, local enterprises will try to extend the construction period to ensure

employment, and local governments try to impose fines on projects for various reasons, which brings difficulties to the cooperation of Chinese enterprises.

Second, high requirements for environmental protection. Spanish-speaking American countries are not all high-income countries, but they all have very strict requirements on environmental protection, even at the expense of economic growth to safeguard marine ecology, forest resources and biodiversity. This "environmental priority" policy orientation has created significant compliance pressure and economic risks for enterprises investing and operating locally.

3.3.2 Technology Adaptation Risk and Legal Compliance Risk

In terms of technology adaptation, there are differences between China and Spanish-speaking American countries in technical standards such as communication protocols, which increase the complexity of technology docking. At the same time, in addition, Spanish-speaking American countries' digital technology standard construction capabilities are relatively weak, which may combine internationally accepted standards with local standards, exacerbating technical complexity.

In terms of legal compliance, one is data security threats. Spanish-speaking American countries vary in their laws and regulations regarding data security and privacy protection. Since 2010, Mexico has promulgated laws to protect personal data many times, established a legal framework for personal data protection, and had strict regulations on data localization and cross-border circulation. Some Spanish-speaking American countries lack special data protection laws and rely on international standards or industry self-discipline.

3.3.3 Cultural and Social Adaptability Problems

One is language differences. Spanish is the official language of Spanish-speaking American countries. The current mainstream artificial intelligence model has weak support for Spanish, and the digital economy involves a large number of technical terms. Special attention needs to be paid to possible deviations in translation between different languages, and more work needs to be done manually. Therefore, language differences may bring higher employment costs and communication costs.

Second, the culture is rich and diverse. Spanish speaking American countries are mostly composed of diverse races including white, Indo European, and black people. The richness and diversity of cultural traditions have formed the open and inclusive social and cultural background of Spanish-speaking American countries, and also created people's values of pursuing freedom and advocating individualism. Religious beliefs, community ties and family concepts occupy a position that cannot be ignored in the hearts of the people.

4. Opportunities for China and Spanish-speaking American Countries to Jointly Build the "Digital Silk Road"

Although the joint construction of the "Digital Silk Road" between China and Spanish-speaking American countries has encountered certain challenges, opportunities also exist. In 2024, Spanish-speaking American countries have promoted economic growth by accelerating the transformation of industrial structure and regional integration. The regional poverty rate dropped to the lowest level since 1990, and problems such as high inflation and liquidity shortages phased out. At the same time, the economic and trade cooperation between China and Spanish-speaking American countries has continuously improved quality and efficiency. This part will elaborate on the opportunities for China and Spanish-speaking American countries to jointly build the "Digital Silk Road" from the basis, motivation and prospect of cooperation.

4.1 Institutional Guarantees and the Cornerstone of Connection

4.1.1 "Heads of State Diplomacy" and China-CELAC Forum

Head of state diplomacy is the highest form of China's diplomacy. In 2014, China put forward the initiative of China-LAC Community with a Shared Future for the first time. In 2017, it formally put forward jointly building the "the Belt and Road Initiative", and the joint construction of the "Digital Silk Road" as an important cooperation direction. Heads of state diplomacy has laid a solid foundation for deepening China-Latin America cooperation in various fields, and laid a tone for equality, mutual benefit and common development for China-Latin America relations.

China-CELAC Forum (CCF), is a political consensus between China and Latin America (Note 6) to promote overall cooperation from the highest level. The Forum has established 21 cooperation mechanisms, including ministerial meetings, Meeting of National Coordinators, Dialogue of Foreign Ministers of China and the "Quartet" of CELAC and Subforums in Specific Fields (Note 7).

The China-Latin American and Caribbean Countries Digital Technology Cooperation Forum is a mature regional digital technology cooperation mechanism between China and Latin American and Caribbean countries. The second forum was held in Chongqing in 2024, attracting more than 160 representatives from 16 Latin American and Caribbean countries. The meeting released the "Chongqing Initiative", proposing four major cooperation directions: promoting the construction of new infrastructure such as 5G and data centers, deepening multi-field application cooperation of digital technology benefiting education, medical care and agriculture, strengthening international cooperation in digital governance and jointly building a talent training mechanism. The forum has become an important carrier for China and Latin America to jointly build the "Digital Silk Road".

4.1.2 The Asia-Latin America Trade Corridor

The opening of Chancay Port leads the opening of the Asia-Latin America Trade Corridor in the new era. The Asia-Latin America Trade Corridor is an important infrastructure connecting Latin America and China. It not only provides a safe and stable trade route for goods and services, but also paves a road for the common prosperity and development of the vast number of Spanish-speaking American countries. Through "corridor to drive logistics", "logistics to drive economy and trade", and "economy and trade to drive industries", mutual benefits can be achieved in a wider space.

4.2 Common Needs and Consistent Goals

4.2.1 Consistent Strategic Goals

A new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation has created favorable opportunities for countries in the "Global South", including China and Spanish-speaking American countries, to seize opportunities and seek common development. China is committed to comprehensively promoting national development and national rejuvenation through Chinese-style modernization, and Spanish-speaking American countries are also actively exploring development paths and governance models suitable for their own national conditions. China's digital economy ranks second in the world, and it supports Spanish-speaking American countries in opposing "technological blockade" and technological hegemony. Spanish-speaking American countries has a young population structure and strong demand in the digital market. China and Spanish-speaking American countries are both in an important period of national development. The digital economy plays a positive role in improving production efficiency and management level, reducing supply chain costs, promoting the upgrading of demand structure, and realizing green and low-carbon transformation. China and Spanish-speaking

American countries have achieved complementary technological advantages through the "Digital Silk Road", which can meet the common needs of both sides at this stage of structural reform.

4.2.2 Common Consensus on Cooperation

China and Spanish-speaking American countries agree that developing digital economy is in the common interests of all parties. In September 2023, at the China-Latin American and Caribbean Countries Digital Technology Cooperation Forum, government representatives from participating countries agreed that digital technology is a key engine to promote economic recovery and sustainable development, and policy coordination and standard docking need to be strengthened. As the first sub-forum after the fourth ministerial meeting of the China-Latin America Forum, the China-Latin America Internet Development and Cooperation Forum was held in Xi'an in May 2025. More than 400 representatives from 13 Latin American and Caribbean countries spoke highly of China's innovative practices in the ICT field and actively responded to China's cooperation initiatives. Participants reached a consensus on deepening cooperation in the fields of information and communication technology, digital economic cooperation, and network security, and promoting the integration of artificial intelligence technology with local industrial need.

4.3 Huge Potential and the Concept of "Five Major Projects"

4.3.1 Huge Potential for Cooperation in the Digital Field

In terms of digital infrastructure, the digital infrastructure in Latin America is relatively weak, and 40% of households still do not have fixed broadband access. Spanish-speaking American countries have a young population structure and a strong demand for digital infrastructure. All countries are vigorously improving their digital infrastructure levels. China has mature technology and rich experience in digital infrastructure. At the same time, the 5G penetration rate in Spanish-speaking American countries is lower than the world average. In terms of 5G standard formulation and commercialization, Chinese companies have attracted more and more attention from Spanish-speaking American countries for their leading international technology and cost-effective services.

In terms of e-commerce, data released by the Latin American Economic Commission shows that the sales of the Latin American e-commerce industry increased by nearly 30% in 2023, and Latin America is known as the last blue ocean of e-commerce. Among the top 10 e-commerce platform apps in the world, 7 seats are invested by Chinese companies or Chinese companies, and the number of visitors to cross-border e-commerce platforms is increasing rapidly year by year.

In terms of industrial digital transformation, digital technology has been widely used in agriculture, transportation, education, medical care, security and other fields in Spanish-speaking American countries. Chinese enterprises provide a complete set of digital infrastructure solutions from hardware to software, promote the upgrading of the digital industry chain, and enable more and more local enterprises to invest in the transformation of industrial digitalization and modernization. For Spanish-speaking American countries, digital transformation is mainly reflected in the digital finance and e-commerce markets, and it is still in the stage of transformation from the consumer Internet stage to the industrial Internet. The demand for industrial digital transformation is very large, and the future digital infrastructure cooperation between China and Latin America is promising.

4.3.2 "Five Major Projects" Build China-LAC Community with a Shared Future

At the fourth ministerial meeting of the China-CELAC Forum, Chinese president Xi Jinping announced that China is willing to join hands with Latin America to launch the "Five major projects", including the unity project, the development project, the civilization project, the peace project and the popularity

project, and put forward ideas and measures for how to deepen cooperation in China-Latin America relations and build China-LAC Community with a Shared Future. It is an opportunity of the times for China and Spanish-speaking American countries to jointly build the "Digital Silk Road".

The unity project emphasizes deepening exchanges with cadres of political parties in Latin America on the basis of high-level visits between China and Latin America. It is the foundation for improving strategic mutual trust between the two sides, and is also the political foundation and necessary condition for jointly building the "Digital Silk Road". The development project emphasizes expanding China-Latin America economic and trade cooperation from traditional cooperation areas to emerging industries and emerging technologies. The civilization project and the popularity project emphasize that cultural exchanges between China and Latin America should be raised to the level of civilization exchanges, and digital economic cooperation will innovate and empower civilization exchange activities such as joint archaeology, civilization dialogue, and protection and restoration of historic sites. The peace project is the first time that China and Latin America have incorporated security cooperation into an important area of future cooperation. In terms of disaster management, network security, anti-terrorism, anti-corruption, drug control and combating transnational organized crime, the combination of digital technology and traditional means will enable China and Spanish-speaking American countries to more calmly cope with security challenges from all sides, maintain regional stability and create a stable environment for development.

5. Conclusion

China and Spanish-speaking American countries have jointly built the "Digital Silk Road" and made remarkable progress in digital infrastructure construction and cross-border e-commerce platform construction. These achievements have not only created new opportunities for Spanish-speaking American countries to achieve economic growth, industrial upgrading and global value upgrading. It has also provided an important platform for China to share the dividends of digital transformation and expand international market. However, the construction process still faces challenges from both internal and external. Nevertheless, the goal of "mutual benefit, win-win and common development" cooperation between China and Spanish-speaking American countries will not change.

China-Latin America relations have been upgraded from the traditional buying and selling relationship and investment relationship to the development partnership. This change not only marks the profound evolution of the cooperation model between the two sides, but also is a vivid practice of the concept of China-LAC Community with a Shared Future in the era of digital economy. Under the framework of "the Belt and Road Initiative", China and Spanish-speaking American countries are no longer simple suppliers and demanders or capital exporters and recipients, but strategic partners to jointly explore development paths, respond to global challenges and share development.

Facing the future, China and Spanish-speaking American countries should seize the strategic opportunity of the "Five major projects", make full use of multilateral mechanisms such as the China-CELAC Forum, strengthen policy coordination, technology docking and humanities exchanges with the Asia-Latin America Land-Sea Trade Corridor as a link, focus on high value-added and high-tech cooperation areas, go hand in hand on the road of promoting common development and prosperity, and write a new chapter of the era for building China-LAC Community with a Shared Future.

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Notes

Note 1. The 2024 GDI index counts a total of 77 countries, including 10 Spanish-speaking Latin American countries.

Note 2. Source: https://www.huawei.com/cn/news/2022/11/latin-america-lactalent-summit

Note 3. Proportion of STEM Graduates The average 2024 score represents 25% of graduates from STEM majors as a percentage of total graduates.

Note 4. Huawei's Global Digitalization Index (gdi) 2024 report: https://www.huawei.com/cn/gdi.

Note 5. According to a research report by Tufts University in the United States, from the independence of the United States in 1776 to 2019, the United States launched nearly 400 military interventions around the world, 34% of which were aimed at countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Note 6. China-CELAC Forum official website: http://www.chinacelacforum.org/chn/zyjz/bjzhy/

Note 7. Professional sub-forums include 35 forums and conferences, including China-Latin America Digital Technology Cooperation Forum, China-Latin America Internet Development and Cooperation Forum, China-Latin America Science and Technology Innovation Forum, China-Latin America Infrastructure Cooperation Forum, China-Latin America Agriculture Ministers Forum, China-Latin America Think Tank Forum and China-Latin America Youth Development Forum. New sub-forums will also be established in other fields as appropriate.