

## *Original Paper*

# The Current Situation and Optimized path of Higher Education Development in the China and the Republic of Sudan under the Belt and Road Initiative

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### **Abstract**

*Since the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed in 2013, receiving abundantly enthusiastic as well as positive responses within the international community, especially the Arab countries along the Belt and Road, and including the Republic of Sudan in north-eastern Africa. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the Sudan 58 years ago, the two countries have achieved a series of achievements in the field of higher education. The mutual visits and exchanges between them are also gradually increasing. With the development of the times and the continuous deepening of bilateral relations, the cooperation and exchanges of higher education between the two countries are facing some new difficulties. The purpose of this article is to analyze these dilemmas and propose the optimized path for the development of Sino-Sudan higher education cooperation under the “Belt and Road” initiative.*

### **Keywords**

*the Belt and Road Initiative, Sudan, higher education*

### **1. Introduction**

During his visit to Kazakhstan and Indonesia in 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” (hereinafter referred to as Belt and Road). The “Belt and Road” is a major initiative. “The Belt and Road spans Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia, North Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. The Republic of Sudan in Africa (hereinafter referred to as Sudan) has an important geographical position in the construction of “the Belt and Road Initiative”. “Sudan can take full advantage of its excellent geographical position to

establish a land transport link with China to the Mediterranean Sea in the north and Cape Town in the south within the framework of the ‘One Belt One Road’, and through Sudan, China can be connected to the entire African continent” (Xinhua net, 2017). This indicates that the relationship between China and the Sudan will reach a new historical stage in this new era, led by the Belt and Road Initiative. There is a close relationship between the education level and structure of the labor force and economic growth in BRI countries, and the contribution of education to economic growth at all levels in different regions and countries with different income levels is also significantly different. The situation is different in Western Asia and North Africa, and in Eastern and Central Europe, where the highly educated workforce contributes more significantly to economic growth (Su Lifeng & Li Junjie, 2017). In this process, education, especially higher education, plays a pivotal role. In order to promote the deepening and development of higher education in the two countries, it is always necessary to move steadily and far-reaching in the general direction of “the Belt and Road”. “Promote the establishment of a multi-level humanities cooperation mechanism, build more cooperation platforms, and open up more cooperation channels.” Promote educational cooperation, expand the scale of mutual assignment of international students, and improve the level of cooperative schooling (Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the Belt and Road Initiative, 2019). “In this way, we can give full play to the mission of education between China and the Sudan—educational exchanges build bridges for the hearts and minds of all countries along the Belt and Road, and talent training provides support for policy communication, facility connectivity, unimpeded trade, and financial integration among countries along the Belt and Road (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2019).

## **2. Progress of Sino-Sudan Higher Education Cooperation in the Context of “the Belt and Road initiative”**

Since the Western Han Dynasty, Sudan has had close political, economic, cultural, technical and other fields from the personal to the official. The friendly relations between China and the Sudan since ancient times laid a deep foundation for the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the Sudan in 1959, and in terms of education, the two countries signed the Regulations on the Work of Mutual Assignment of Study Abroad between China and the Sudan in 1960, and since then they have been sending students to each other; Especially since “the Belt and Road initiative” was proposed in 2013, the relationship between the two countries has become closer. There is also a vibrant picture in education: at the 2015 FOCAC Johannesburg Summit, China pledged to provide Africa with 2,000 diploma or degree education opportunities and 30,000 scholarships. At the 2018 FOCAC summit, China pledged to provide 50,000 scholarships for African students (China Daily, 2022). Under the influence of “Seek Knowledge, Even Far Away in China”, China has become one of the preferred countries for Sudanese students to study abroad, and after the return of Sudanese students sponsored by the Chinese side, they have gradually become the leaders and backbone of Sudanese economic and social development.

### *2.1 Extensive Establishment of Education Platform Mechanisms*

In recent years, the two countries have continuously established exchange and cooperation mechanisms, which have provided a good platform for exchanges and cooperation in higher education between the two countries, mainly including the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, the China-Arab States University Presidents Forum, and the China-Africa 20+20 Colleges Cooperation Program, etc.

As of 2021, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation has been held for eight times, and the 8th Ministerial Conference adopted the Vision 2035 of China-Africa Cooperation, which states that China is willing to support the development of education in Africa, improve the education level of all Africans, especially women, children and adolescents, and cultivate young leaders and high-quality technical and skilled personnel in various fields, making China become one of the important study places in Africa (Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, 2021). The continuous promotion of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation has built a bridge of communication between China and the Sudan in higher education.

As an important member of the Arab world, the establishment of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum has also promoted exchanges and cooperation in higher education between the two countries. As of 2021, the Forum has held 9 ministerial meetings, 17 senior officials' meetings, and held 6 high-level strategic and political dialogues between China and Arab States, including the signing of the Execution Plan 2020-2022 of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum at the 9th Ministerial Meeting of the CASCF in July 2020 (CASCF), Article 12 of which focuses on the content of education and scientific research: 1) Continue to strengthen cooperation in the field of education and scientific research, encourage exchanges between educational and research institutions of the two sides, strengthen and support exchanges between Chinese and Arab universities, gradually increase the number of scholarships between the two sides, including public master's and doctoral degrees, promote the active establishment of inter-university ties between Chinese and Arab universities, and encourage the universities of the two sides to carry out the application of history, culture and science and technology. 2) Support the training programs of Chinese teachers in Arab countries by increasing the number of scholarships and opening Confucius Institutes in Arab countries. 3) Encourage cooperation between Chinese and Arab research institutions through holding seminars, conferences, lectures, and exchanging academic and think tank journals and magazines (Republic of the Sudan Federal Ministry of Education, 2019).

In addition, the China-Arab University Presidents' Forum and the 20+20 Cooperation Program for China-Africa Universities also provide important platforms for exchanges between universities of the two countries. The Presidents' Forum has been successfully held for four sessions, mainly focusing on three major topics: the exchange of cooperation achievements between China-Arab universities, the new mission of humanities exchanges and cooperation between China-Arab universities, and the cultivation and cooperation of talents in China-Arab higher vocational education. At the same time,

in-depth exchanges were also carried out in the construction of think tanks, student exchanges, expansion of the scale of international students, and the construction of higher vocational education. In the 20+20 cooperation program between China and Africa universities, Yangzhou University and the University of Khartoum have been twinned, and the “Center for African Studies (Sudan Institute) of Yangzhou University” and the “Yangzhou University China-Sudan Modern Agricultural Technology Joint Research and Exchange Center” have been established, effectively integrating the development resources of higher education between China and the Sudan and providing intellectual support for China and the Sudan in the construction of “the Belt and Road”.

### *2.2 Expanded the Field of Cooperation between Institutions*

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the cooperation between China and Sudanese universities has not only become closer, but also gradually expanded in the field. First, in the field of humanities and social sciences, exchanges between Chinese and Sudanese universities focused on Confucius Institutes, Sudanese Chinese departments, and the construction and development of languages. First of all, in the construction of Confucius Institutes. Since the University of Khartoum and Northwest Normal University launched the Confucius Institute project, Northwest Normal University has taken the Confucius Institute at the University of Khartoum as the base point to establish a number of Chinese training courses and organize Chinese proficiency tests in Sudan, successfully held the “Chinese Bridge” Chinese Competition for World University Students and other colorful Chinese activities, and won the global final championship in the 16th “Chinese Bridge” World University Chinese Competition in 2017. In addition, the University of Jinan went to Sudan for a cultural tour in 2018, and the Sudan side praised the important role of Confucius Institutes in Sino-Sudan educational exchanges, and hoped to establish more extensive academic exchanges with Chinese universities. In the same year, Sudan Gezira University visited Shandong Normal University, and the two sides conducted a series of exchanges on cooperation in the construction of Confucius Institutes. Secondly, in the construction of Sudanese Chinese department, only the University of Khartoum has previously incorporated Chinese into the higher education system, which is far from enough to meet the increasingly close exchanges between China and the Sudan. Therefore, in 2013 and 2015, the Confucius Institute at the University of Khartoum signed agreements with Karary University and Red Sea University in Sudan to establish Chinese departments, and universities in Sudan began to establish Chinese departments, such as Karari, Bahali College and Red Sea Chinese University. In addition, in order to reduce the communication barriers brought about by language, universities of the two countries have further strengthened cooperation in bilingual exchanges, teacher exchanges, student visits, bilateral academic visits, and joint student training. For example, in 2015, Ningxia Normal University and Sudan Gezira University Cooperation and Exchange Symposium, and in 2019, Sudan Khartoum University visited Northwest Normal University, etc., the above universities discussed relevant matters during the visit.

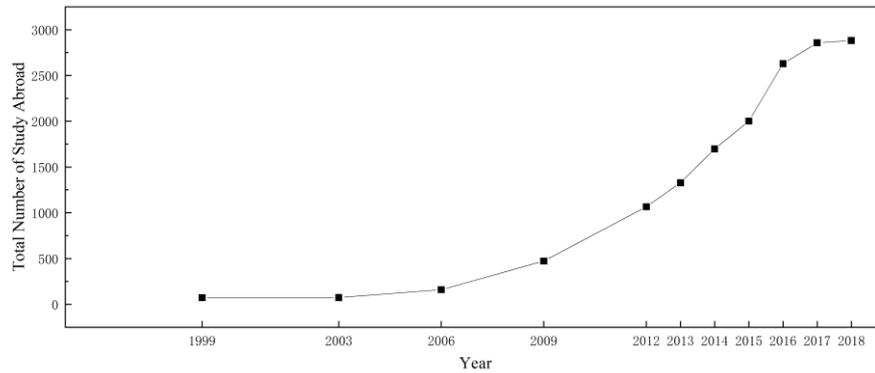
Second, in the field of natural sciences, exchanges between Chinese and Sudanese universities mainly involve agriculture, medicine and mechanical engineering. In agriculture, Chinese and Sudanese

universities reached an agreement on agriculture-related professional exchanges, built agricultural laboratories of demonstration sites of cooperative universities, State Key Laboratory of Crop Improvement and Key Laboratory of Horticultural Plant Biology of the Ministry of Education, and carried out exchanges and cooperation between agricultural technologies between the two countries, such as the signing of a memorandum of understanding on cooperation and exchanges involving agriculture between the University of Khartoum and Jiangsu University in 2013, and the delegation of the University of Baheli in Sudan in 2014. Gansu Agricultural University and the National Information Agriculture Engineering Technology Center conducted in-depth exchanges on agricultural technology. In terms of medicine, the main areas of cooperation and exchange between the two sides are basic medicine, clinical medicine and traditional Chinese medicine related majors, and these specialties are identified as priority development majors, such as Sudan Gezira University's visit and simulation study on clinical education of China Pharmaceutical University. In terms of mechanical engineering and petroleum, Sudan Red Sea University and Sudan Gezira University visited Harbin Engineering School and Shandong University to conduct in-depth discussions on mechanical manufacturing and environmental related professional exchanges and exchange of international students.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Sudan is dominated by a traditional economy, with most citizens living on agriculture, which accounts for 1/3 of GDP and provides livelihoods for 2/3 of the employed (China Daily, 2022), and in recent years has become more dependent on the Corona Virus Disease 2019, is raging all over the world, so the exchanges between universities of the two countries in agriculture and medicine are becoming more and more frequent, and the universities of the two countries learn from each other and exchange their advanced experience and technology in agriculture and medicine.

### *2.3 Expanded the Scale of Study Abroad, and Increased the Exchange between Teachers and Students*

The number of international students between China and the Sudan gradually expanded. As shown in Figure 1, the number of African students studying in China has increased at an annual rate of nearly 2% since 2003 to 815,600 in 2019, accounting for 59.95% of the total number of international students studying in China. Among them, Sudanese students in China have shown a pattern of annual growth since 1999, especially since the implementation of "the Belt and Road" initiative, the growth rate of Sudanese students in China has been more significant, from 2013 to 2018 alone, the number of Sudanese students in China increased from 1329 to 2883 (Department of International Cooperation and Exchange, Ministry of Education, 2019).



**Figure 1. Changes in the Number of Sudanese Students Studying in China**

At the same time, with the deepening of “the Belt and Road” initiative, the interaction and exchanges between teachers and students of the two countries are increasing. Since the launch of the 20+20 cooperation project between Chinese and African universities, Yangzhou University in China has used this as a framework to cooperate with the University of Khartoum, and has held 10 sessions and 22 training courses for more than 10 universities in Sudan in the past ten years, trained 736 Sudanese university management and scientific research personnel, and trained 61 doctors and 14 masters (College for Overseas Education, Yangzhou University, 2019). In March 2021, in order to strengthen the comparative study of geoscience and mineral resources, China and the Sudan held the “China-Sudan Geoscience Cooperation Project Results Promotion Conference”. The Silk Road College of China University of Geosciences sent faculty representatives to visit the Republic of Sudan. In parallel with the cooperation in geoscience, a preliminary investigation of education and geoscience research in Sudan was carried out. China has cooperated with Sudan and other Arab countries to carry out 1:50,000-1:250,000 geological and geochemical mappings, compiled more than 500 related thematic maps, delineated more than 300 geochemical anomalies such as copper, gold, chromium and platinum group elements, and discovered 2 gold mineralization points, 1 copper mineralization point and 2 iron mineralization points, realizing a good start in the promotion and application of high-resolution remote sensing technology in countries along “the Belt and Road”, and training a number of management and technical personnel for Sudan and other Arab countries. In June and July of the same year, the “World Bank-Sudan-Shanghai Teacher Education Project” was held in Shanghai, and the relevant officials of the University of Khartoum and the Faculty of Education of the University of Arudar in Bakht expressed the hope that the project could provide workshops on teacher capacity building, curriculum construction, ICT and distance teaching skills, school governance and quality assurance for their colleges, and hope to carry out in-depth cooperation in scientific research cooperation, curriculum development, and joint training of graduate students in the future. The Chinese representative said that he has rich experience in international exchanges in the field of teacher education and will make every effort to prepare and implement relevant workshops according to the specific needs put forward by Sudan at the meeting, so as to help the Faculty of Education of the

University of Khartoum and the University of Arruda, Bakht improve the quality and modernize the Faculty of Education.

### **3. The Dilemma of Sino-Sudan Higher Education Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative**

By combing the development process of higher education cooperation and exchanges between the two countries, it is found that the cooperation between universities of the two countries in higher education still faces the dilemma of imperfect cooperation mechanism and exchange, little substantive progress between institutions and schools and enterprises, single cooperation fields, small scale and low level of interaction between universities.

#### *3.1 The Higher Education Platform Mechanism of the Two Countries Is not Specialized, and there Are Language Barriers in Communication*

First of all, from the perspective of the number of exchange platforms between the two countries, although the exchange platforms between China and the Sudan have been continuously established, the mechanism of inter-university exchange and cooperation platforms has not yet been specialized. At present, under the “Belt and Road” initiative, the higher education cooperation and exchange platforms between China and the Sudan Union are mainly divided into the following three types: first, the cooperation and exchange platforms established by China and African countries including Sudan, such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation; The second is the cooperation and exchange platforms established by China and Arab countries including Sudan, such as the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, the China-Arab University Presidents Cooperation Forum, and the China-Arab (10+1) Higher Education Cooperation Seminar; The third is the extensive cooperation and exchange platform established by China and Sudan, such as the Sino-Sudan Joint Commission on Economic and Trade Cooperation and the China-Sudan Energy Cooperation Commission. The first two Sino-Sudan higher education cooperation and exchange platforms mainly lead educational cooperation and exchanges between China and African countries and between China and Arab countries; The latter platform is the cooperation and exchange platform mechanism established between China and Sudan in the economic, political and energy fields. Although exchanges and cooperation platforms between China and the Sudan have been continuously established, the two countries have not established a national-level exchange and cooperation platform specifically for the field of higher education. In addition, China has established educational cooperation and exchange relations in 188 countries and regions, 46 important international organizations, signed agreements on mutual recognition of higher education qualifications, among African countries, China has only signed the “Mutual Recognition Agreement on Academic Qualifications” with Algeria (1991) and Egypt (1997), and has not yet achieved mutual certification of academic qualifications with Sudan, and the two sides lack mutual trust between higher education.

“Language is the most common barrier, and foreign students only need one year to master the language before attending classes with Chinese students.” (World Education News+Reviews, 2017) However, Chinese and Arabic are difficult languages to master in a short period of time, so it is difficult to meet

the common exchanges between the two sides, and among the many universities in Sudan, only a few universities with Chinese majors are the University of Khartoum, Kalari University, Bahali University and Red Sea University Chinese. In China, as of 2020, there are only 39 colleges and universities in the country that offer Arabic majors. Although the number of colleges and universities offering minor language majors is increasing, Arabic majors are less publicized than English, and the number of students learning Arabic is not large.

### *3.2 The Process of Cooperation between Institutions of the Two Countries in Running Schools Is slow and the Field of Cooperation Is Single*

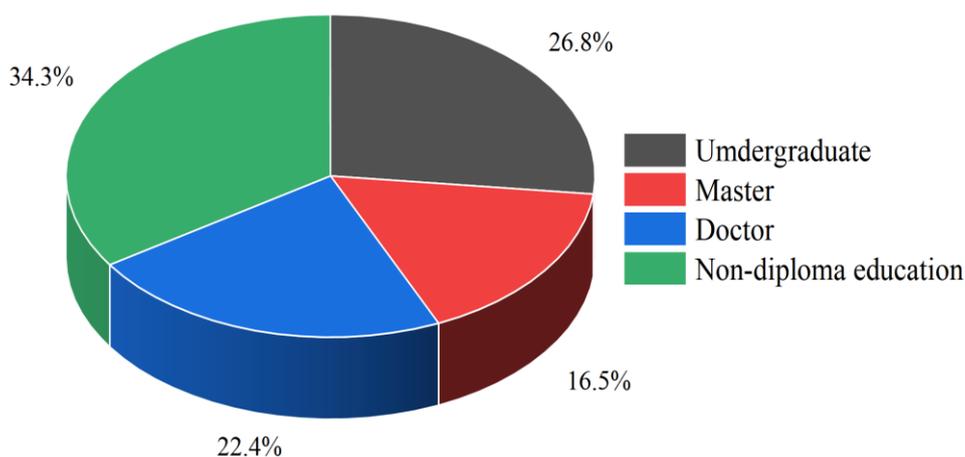
Under the Belt and Road initiative, the frequency of cooperation and mutual visits between universities of the two sides has been increasing, but there has been no substantial progress in important aspects such as the construction of Confucius Institutes and cooperation in running schools. At present, there are very few Confucius Institutes in Sudan, and there is only one Confucius Institute established by the University of Khartoum and Northwest Normal University. In addition, according to the relevant data of the Sino-foreign cooperative school-running information management platform, China and Sudan have not started in cooperative school-running, and they are still in a blank stage.

Since China and the Sudan have a single of participation, and the universities that cooperate with the two sides are mainly teachers, agricultural and medical universities, the areas of frequent cooperation between the two countries are mainly concentrated in a few other disciplines such as Chinese, Arabic, agriculture, and medicine. In December 2020, when the delegation of Dr. Gafar Karar Ahmed K., Ambassador of the Sudanese Embassy to China, visited the University of Science and Technology of China, he also had in-depth discussions on cooperation in public health, science and technology to help agriculture, and clean energy, and did not carry out substantive cooperation on the training of urgently needed professionals in industry, construction, and chemistry. Many Sudanese are influenced by African stereotypes and do not encourage their children to study technical education (AlameenL, Asmaa Mohamed, 2021)), preferring humanities majors (Republic of Sudan Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific). Therefore, although Sudan has relatively rich natural resources, its hard power resources such as professional talents and technology are relatively lacking (Zhangshuai, 2022).

### *3.3 The Scale of Interaction between Universities in the Two Countries Is Small and the Level Is Low*

From 1999 to 2017, the growth rate of the number of international students in the world in China is: Central Asia, South Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia and North Africa, of which the number of international students from Central Asian countries increased from 96 in 1999 to 16,700 in 2017, an increase of more than 173 times, with an average annual growth rate of 33.15%, the largest growth rate in all regions; The number of international students from West Asia and North Africa increased from 508 in 1999 to 10,558 in 2017, an increase of about 21 times, with an average growth rate of 18.43% (Zong Xizohua & LI Tingsong, 2020). However, although the number of North African students studying in China including Sudan is rising, it is still relatively small compared with countries such as Central Asia, South Asia, Central and Eastern Europe.

From the perspective of the level of studying abroad, the academic level of Sudanese students studying in China is mainly concentrated in the non-diploma education stage and the undergraduate level. As shown in Figure 2, from 2013 to 2018, 34.3% of Sudanese students with non-diploma education qualifications came to China; undergraduate students account for 26.8%, which is close to about 2/3 of the total number of international students coming to China. In 2018, there were a total of 2,883 Sudanese students studying in China, including 1,088 non-degree students and 687 undergraduates (Department of International Cooperation and Exchange, Ministry of Education, 2019), on the one hand, due to the overall economic downturn in Sudan and insufficient funds for colleges and universities (The World Bank, 2020), but the number of people is still expanding (Republic of the Sudan Federal Ministry of Education, 2019), resulting in a serious shortage of teaching facilities and equipment in individual universities in Sudan, on the other hand, due to the shortage of professionally trained teachers in Sudan (United Nations Educational, 2018), the source of excellent teachers is seriously insufficient (Gamal Gasim, 2010), and the quality of teaching is difficult to guarantee. Therefore, the overall level of students studying abroad is still at a low level.



**Figure 2. Proportion of International Students Coming to China**

#### **4. The Optimized Path for the Development of Sino-Sudan Higher Education Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative**

With the deepening of the Belt and Road initiative, the development of higher education in China and the Sudan has also shown a vigorous image. In the future, the two countries should continue to improve specialized education platforms and strengthen the cultivation of language talents on both sides. At the same time, it is necessary to continuously deepen the exchanges between teachers and students of the two countries and promote the joint running of schools between institutions. In addition, in order to promote the high-quality development of higher education in the two countries, it is necessary to continuously establish and improve the education quality evaluation system and improve the quality of

international students, in order to cultivate high-quality talents for the construction of the Belt and Road.

#### *4.1 Improve the Development Plan of the Higher Education Platform of the Two Countries and Strengthen the Training of Language Talents*

First of all, China and the Sudan need to improve the development plan of the higher education platforms of the two countries, pay attention to the development of higher education between China and the Sudan, give priority to the development of urgently needed professional talents and advantageous disciplines of both sides, actively and effectively play the role of the platform, and further strengthen the close cooperative relationship between China and the Sudan in higher education. Secondly, China and the Sudan should establish special higher education regulatory departments, such as the Sino-Sudan Higher Education Management Committee, to manage and supervise the specific matters of higher education between China and the Sudan Union, not only directly and effectively docking the cooperation platform between China and Sudan higher education, but also the relevant educational resources that China assists the Sudan side can be effectively managed and utilized. At the same time, in the context of the global pandemic, Sudan's education sector has not taken timely remedial measures, with 50% of households not attending school due to COVID-19 lockdown (The World Bank, 2020), and many students have no corresponding learning activities during the pandemic, making it difficult for universities to provide high-quality teaching (SAWAHEL W.Universities, 2021). The two countries should make full use of platform exchanges, improve online communication and education models, and ensure the quality of teaching.

In addition, the language barrier has become one of the important factors restricting the further in-depth exchanges between China and Sudan higher education, and the cultivation of language talents should be strengthened. In 2019, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates announced the inclusion of Chinese into the national education system, and in 2020, Chinese officially entered the Egyptian primary and secondary education system. By the end of 2018, 16 Confucius Institutes and 3 independent Confucius Classrooms had been established in 11 Arab countries. In the cultivation of Chinese talents in Sudan, it is also necessary to seize the continuous heating up of the "Chinese fever" in Arab countries, further promote the Chinese language to Sudan, accelerate the establishment of Chinese language training in China and the Sudan, and the construction of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms. In the cultivation of Arabic talents, China should expand the scale of training of Arabic-speaking talents, improve the level of Arabic-speaking teachers, and add Sudanese national culture and other related courses to the elective courses of Arabic majors, so as to promote the construction of a Sino-Sudan higher education exchange platform while strengthening cultural exchanges. At the same time, considering that Chinese and Arabic cannot meet the supply and demand in a short period of time and the current situation of the official language used in Sudan, English can be used as the intermediary language of Chinese and Sudan exchanges in higher education, and after the scale and quality of Chinese training in China and Chinese reach a certain level in Sudan, Chinese and

Arabic will be used as the official communication languages of the Sino-Sudan higher education platform, and gradually replace the main position of English.

#### *4.2 Deepen Exchanges between Teachers and Students and Promote Joint Research*

Sudan is a developing country and is in a critical period of development. In order to achieve sustainable development, it is very important to improve social infrastructure, and the importance of talent development and training cannot be ignored, and in order to respond to the Belt and Road initiative, achieve common development and reflect the responsibility of a major country, China should increase assistance to Sudanese infrastructure construction through the Belt and Road, and the cultivation of science and engineering talents is essential in the construction of infrastructure. Therefore, it is necessary to enrich the content of teacher-student exchanges, strengthen cooperation in science and engineering, and increase the training of technical talents. China can increase the number of international students in Sudanese science and engineering, lower the enrollment threshold, and increase training, and secondly, China can send more Chinese science and engineering students to Sudan, form a mutual help learning group with Sudanese students, and promote exchanges in science and engineering between the two countries. At the same time, teachers are the leaders and important components of education, and exchanges between higher education teachers in China and the Sudan are also particularly important, but the shortage of professionally trained teachers and the unreasonable distribution of teachers in Sudan have exacerbated the gap in education inequality (Wang Yi-xian, & Shang Yi-xiao, 2022). Therefore, on the one hand, Chinese teachers can visit Sudanese schools or carry out online classes and exchanges to enhance the close academic ties between the two sides, on the other hand, they can form one-to-one or peer-to-peer teacher exchange programs, so as to improve the quality of teachers in Sudanese universities and cultivate the builders of the “Belt and Road” between China and the Sudan.

In addition, most of the exchanges and learning between Chinese and Sudan universities are one-way, but the important thing is two-way joint research. When there is a joint program, Chinese university professors come to Sudan to teach specific subjects, and the same Sudanese university professors come to China to teach related subjects, thereby increasing inter-university exchanges, allowing the visitors to understand the different educational content and cultures of the two countries, and they gain experience and transfer them to their own countries (United Nations Educational, 2018). Therefore, Chinese and Sudanese universities should speed up the pace of joint education, and on this basis, establish strict rules and regulations in university management, enrollment and teacher selection, and strictly control the quality of Sino-Sudan joint education. At the same time, the joint operation of schools between China and the Sudan must reflect the characteristics of the two countries, which will not only attract more students, but also help publicize the culture of the two countries, bring the feelings between the two peoples closer, and lay a cultural foundation for strengthening exchanges and cooperation between China and the Sudan. In order to promote the friendly connection between Chinese and Sudanese schools and enterprises, we should also accelerate the pace of cooperation

between Chinese and Sudanese enterprises and universities, and establish special professional classes for Sudan's Belt and Road projects, so that Sudanese students can connect with Chinese enterprises, so that Sudanese students can directly visit and practice in enterprises, and outstanding people can also enter enterprises and dedicate their learning to the construction of the Sino-Sudan Belt and Road. Strengthening school-enterprise cooperation not only enhances the practicality of students' knowledge and promotes employment, but also helps to deepen exchanges between the Chinese and Sudanese peoples.

#### *4.3 Improve the Quality of International Students and Improve the Evaluation System*

Although the number of international students in China has continued to grow in recent years, the number of Sudanese students studying in China is still at a low scale, so in the Sudanese market, we should strengthen the promotion and publicity of "studying in China" through consulates in China, overseas Confucius Institutes, cultural festivals, etc., further strengthen the efficiency of the use of Belt and Road scholarships and other scholarships for studying abroad, and further stimulate students' enthusiasm and enthusiasm for studying in China. While expanding the scale of enrollment, we should also pay attention to the level of international students, Chinese universities should vigorously play their own advantages and characteristic disciplines, on the one hand, continue to increase efforts to attract Sudanese undergraduate and other students with lower diploma qualifications to upgrade their academic qualifications in China, and on the other hand, encourage Sudanese master's and doctoral students to continue their studies in China. In terms of improving the quality of training, on the one hand, colleges and universities should add types of courses, improve course passing conditions, strictly supervise course quality, pay attention to course practice, and improve graduation requirements, on the other hand, introduce a third-party quality assessment platform to establish a quality assessment, certification and supervision mechanism for international students in China, and gradually improve the training system for international students in China. The establishment of a third-party quality assessment platform can not only track the status of international student training at all times, but also provide a scientific basis for improving the quality of international students.

## **5. Conclusion**

Since the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed, China and the Sudan have achieved a series of achievements in the field of higher education. It mainly includes the continuous establishment of the platform mechanism of the forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and the China-Arab States University Presidents Forum, as well as the increasingly close cooperation between institutions in the field of humanities and science and technology, the scale of interaction between students from the two countries, and the scale of interaction between teachers and students of the two countries. However, two countries also face new challenges, such as the imperfect platform for higher education cooperation and exchange between the two countries, the single field of cooperation between the two universities, small scale and low level in the interaction between the two

universities. In order to alleviate and further effectively solve these dilemmas, the development of higher education in China and Sudan needs to further improve the cooperation and exchange platform between the two countries, strengthen inter-school exchanges, enrich the content of cooperation, and expand the scale of international students and improve the level and quality of international students, with a view to promoting the “Belt and Road Initiative” Under the initiative, the two countries have laid a solid foundation for deepening cooperation.

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