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the Renewable Energy Transition**

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Going Multilateral: China-Latin America Cooperation in the Renewable Energy Transition

Jessica Lu*

Introduction

In recent years, China has carved out a leading role in the world's transition toward renewable energy. As the world's biggest polluter, China has acknowledged the need to limit its own carbon footprint, pledging last year to decrease greenhouse gas emissions from peak levels for the first time (Patel & Evans, 2025). At the same time, China has vigorously exported its models and technologies abroad, promoting green cooperation as a critical multilateral issue, especially among the Global South. In today's geopolitical context, in which the United States has largely abdicated leadership on climate change, China sees a growing opportunity to not only dominate global markets in renewable energy but also increase its normative influence. In official discourse, China emphasizes the value of South-South green cooperation and posits itself as a responsible leader in these efforts.

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Within this pattern, Latin America has emerged as a strategic partner. On one side, Latin America is endowed with significant geographical resources of land with stable sunlight suitable for solar power, extensive river systems and coastlines ideal for hydro and wind power, and a major share of the world's critical minerals used in green technologies, such as copper and lithium (Cao, 2024, pp. 88-89). On the other hand, China serves as an enormous market for Latin America's primary resources, an exporter of manufactured products to the region's emerging markets, and a provider of green technology, infrastructure, and financing. Over two decades, economic exchange between the two has skyrocketed, with China now ranking as South America's largest trading partner. Chinese trade and investment have notably grown in emerging industries such as renewable energy, centered on the "New Three" of electric vehicles, lithium batteries, and photovoltaic products (Economic Daily, 2025). Geopolitically, the two also portray themselves as important actors of the Global South, working jointly to promote the interests of developing countries in a changing world order.

While many examples of China-Latin America green cooperation involve bilateral and private-led deals, they are increasingly placed under the umbrella of China's multilateralism, helping form a more cohesive narrative of China's sustainable development leadership in the region. China's principal multilateral forum with Latin America is the China-CELAC Forum, established in 2014 between China and the 33 countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Other relevant forums to green cooperation include the Global Development Initiative, officially presented by President Xi Jinping to the United Nations in 2021, China's Belt and

Road Initiative (BRI), the G20, and BRICS, which provide additional material and rhetorical support. This growing use of multilateral forums has been subject to much analysis and, at times, criticism. Scholars have argued that such forums lack concrete impact and do not operate on a basis of equality; instead, China continues to engage in asymmetrical bilateral relationships, in which its incentives to dominate supply chains in critical minerals and green technology contribute to keeping Latin American countries in lower value stages as primary exporters (Ratzlaff, 2024; Bull, 2024; Gao, 2025). Thus, while the region experiences some growth through green project-related trade and employment, it may become trapped in new structural dependencies that impede further development.

This paper acknowledges the shortcomings in China's multilateralism as driven largely by China's geoeconomic interests; nonetheless, it also presents this growing multilateralism as an opportunity, not only for China to set the terms of engagement but for Latin American countries to pursue more effective and equitable sustainable development. While previous scholarship has often focused on the geopolitical implications of this relationship to competing players such as the United States and the European Union (Jütten, 2025; Webster & Tobin, 2025), this paper will focus more on processes, implications, and areas of improvement specific to the region. First, this paper will present the main channels of multilateral cooperation, how they function, and how they have changed or impacted China-Latin America green cooperation. Second, it will examine the principal criticisms of such channels, focusing on the economic and structural dimensions. While environmental impacts are also significant in certain cases, they

tend to reflect broader mining and infrastructure practices across multiple external actors rather than pertaining specifically to Chinese initiatives, and fall outside the scope of this paper. Lastly, the paper will conclude with a brief overview of directions for growth based on the problems identified, consolidating invaluable research conducted by other analysts and regional organizations and presenting recommendations on a regional, national, or multilateral level.

1. Primary multilateral channels of sustainable development cooperation

1.1. China-CELAC Forum

The China-CELAC Forum is acknowledged by both sides as the primary channel of multilateral engagement, holding its first official meeting in 2015. Since then, the Forum has held Ministerial Meetings every three to four years to lay out cooperation priorities in Joint Action Plans for the period, with an expressed purpose of setting roadmaps for mutually beneficial, South-South cooperation. Following its Fourth Ministerial Meeting in May of 2025, the Forum laid out the Joint Action Plan for 2025-27, promoting the sustainable energy transition as an important area and continuing similar priorities in green development from past plans (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China [MFA], 2021; MFA, 2025b).

While China-CELAC issuances are non-binding and subject to bilateral agreements and national law, they have provided a centralized forum for dialogue. China-Latin American su-

forums that had existed prior have been brought under a new umbrella, resulting in greater ease of organization and publicity of select efforts. For instance, provincial and departmental representatives in fields such as agriculture, trade, and science and technology are able to engage with their counterparts more easily outside of formal Foreign Ministry meetings, developing more extensive subnational relations (Ratzlaff, 2024). The Forum also allows for closer coordination with developmental banks and financing mechanisms, such as the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), United Nations agencies, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), facilitating the sharing of multilateral standards and expertise as well as triangular cooperation.

Additionally, on a less official but no less critical basis, the forum fosters exchange within the private sector and civil society. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (2025) in a formal report contribution to the latest China-CELAC Ministerial Meeting (the ECLAC Report), the business sector has met every year since 2007 at summits that have been “attended by tens of thousands of businesspeople, officials, members of employers’ organizations and representatives of specialized agencies,” with their scale and influence continuing to grow after being brought under the China-CELAC aegis (p. 48). Academic institutions and think tanks have also fortified interregional dialogue at the CELAC-China High-level Academic Forum. Though these sectors are not solely dedicated to sustainable development, they often coordinate on such topics. The 2025 High-level Academic Forum, for instance, focused on green technology, involving not only universities but also representatives from regional organizations such as the ECLAC

and the Latin American Economic System (SELA) to help define the future direction of research and collaboration (Fung, 2025). This centralization poses a contrast to the more ad hoc engagement with Latin America from competing powers such as the United States and European Union, prompting both internal and external observations of a lack of effective, integrated visions for foreign policy and strategy within the region (Jütten, 2025; Salazar- Xirinachs, 2024).

Here, it is important to note that a major weakness of the China-CELAC Forum is that there is still no formal system of documentation for projects and achievements, as there is no established secretariat or headquarters. In addition, while the Forum works with various funds, such as the \$5 billion China-LAC Cooperation Fund that focuses on energy and resources, among other sectors, and China's recent pledge of a \$9 billion credit line to the region, there is little publicly available information on how the funding lands in specific projects. Indeed, while China-CELAC acts as a facilitating channel, projects are often managed by lower-level actors and are not then updated in an official database.

This is not to say, however, that the Forum has not resulted in any verifiable impact. The ECLAC Report draws attention to the depth and breadth of regional cooperation that has resulted from the Forum, with its regular meetings leading to project planning and “[laying] the groundwork for future proposals” (ECLAC, 2025, p. 47). For instance, the 2015 Joint Action Plan resulted in “the training of experts in renewable energy development and specific programmes, and likewise the provision of government scholarships (6,000 places for training in China and 400 places for vocational master’s de-

grees), [reflecting] the interest of both sides in pursuing close cooperation in this area in the short, medium and long term” (ECLAC, 2025, p. 48). In a similar vein, the latest Joint Action Plan makes specific pledges of China’s provision of government scholarships, training opportunities, and 300 “small but beautiful” livelihood development projects in the next three years (MFA, 2025b), reflecting further coordination and associated outcomes in sustainable development.

Finally, outside of the Joint Action Plans, official declarations following each Ministerial Meeting provide political legitimacy for certain fundamental interests and narratives. The 2025 Beijing Declaration, for example, denounces trends towards unilateralism and hegemony, seen as targeted statements leveled at the United States for its recent trade policies, while affirming core interests such as the one-China principle, increasing representation of developing countries in international governance, and promoting the election of a UN Secretary General from Latin America (MFA, 2025a). The Declaration also affirms joint implementation of China’s BRI and GDI, as well as the shared aim of working towards a “just, green, inclusive, and sustainable future” (MFA, 2025a). Such declarations, in addition to boosting formal cooperation, create a politically advantageous image of South-South solidarity.

1.2. Global Development Initiative

The GDI, while not specific to Latin America, has been formally approved by the China-CELAC Forum in its Ministerial Meetings. The GDI’s primary stated purpose is to aid in the accelerated implementation of the United Nations 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development, seeking to work closely with UN Development Agencies and its Group of Friends, over 80 countries that are more closely involved in the initiative (Center for International Knowledge on Development [CIKD], 2025b). In annual progress reports, China publishes updates on the 8 Priority Areas of the GDI, including Food Security, Climate Change and Green Development, and Industrialization. In the 2023 report, for instance, China highlights the implementation of “52 South-South cooperation training sessions on climate change for about 2,300 officials and technicians from more than 120 developing countries” (CIKD, 2023, p. 27). In the same document, China affirms the GDI as a “project-led and action-oriented initiative” with a specific project pool, publicizing both new multilateral frameworks and projects in specific countries (p. 6).

Financially, the GDI principally operates through the China-UN Peace and Development Trust Fund, established in 2016, and the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, which China upgraded in 2022 by increasing its capital to \$4 billion (CIKD, 2025b). In order to support the GDI Priority Areas, state institutions such as the China Development Bank (CDB) have also committed to increasing financing in the region. Through the China-Latin America Development Finance Cooperation Mechanism, also capitalized at US\$4 billion, the CDB collaborates with various Latin American financial institutions, from Panama’s National Bank to Chile’s BancoEstado, to finance both green development and traditional infrastructure (Xinhua, 2023).

Like with the China-CELAC Forum, it is hard to find public documentation of specific funding and project breakdowns

in the GDI. In fact, more reported projects using GDI-related funds seem to be based in Africa and Asia (CIKD, 2025a), though China indicates close cooperation with its Group of Friends, which include at least Peru and Colombia within Latin America (Cao, 2024). Ultimately, the GDI is another vehicle that advances the aims and language of South-South solidarity and development, often cross-referencing relevant initiatives in China-CELAC, BRICS, the G20, and the BRI.

1.3. Other Channels

Though significant, the China-CELAC Forum and the GDI are not exclusive domains for China-Latin America green cooperation. Numerous green projects have been sponsored through other channels, such as the BRI. For instance, the flagship 316 MW Cauchari Solar Park in Argentina, the largest solar park in Latin America, commenced operations in 2020 as a project designated under the BRI (PowerChina, 2023). But in contrast with the growing sway of China-CELAC, China's overall BRI investment in Latin America has notably dropped in recent years (Nedopil Wang, 2025), signifying that state-led BRI engagement is no longer the main multilateral forum in the region.

Other organizations in which China has a strong presence, such as the AIIB and BRICS, which has recently expanded to include more Latin American members, also invest substantial amounts in green cooperation in the region. The BRICS grouping, which has China leading in the renewable energy transition and Brazil anchoring Latin America as the regional power, may have greater ambitions in influencing the global energy governance system. China and Brazil have especially

augmented their cooperation through joint projects and investments in clean energy technologies, boosting in turn the leadership and competitiveness of BRICS in green development. Nonetheless, in terms of broader China and Latin America engagement, such institutions do not present the most direct channels.

Most importantly, even as China continues growing its multilateral reach and rhetoric, bilateral deals often remain the most concrete manifestations of green energy cooperation. Such projects reflect different national contexts within the region, ranging from copper mining and electricity transmission in Peru and Chile, to lithium extraction in the “Lithium Triangle” of Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile, to EV manufacturing in Brazil and Mexico. Since 2018, China has invested \$11 billion in lithium extraction in Latin America (Jütten, 2025), and just in Argentina between 2020–23, China was involved in developing 7 lithium mines worth \$3.2 billion in investment (Cardozo, 2024). In Brazil, major Chinese companies such as Great Wall Motors and BYD recently committed to large-scale manufacturing of EVs and batteries (Gao, 2025), with President Xi Jinping and President Lula da Silva also entering agreements to deepen cooperation on issues such as solar and wind energy development (Xinhua, 2024). Overall, Chinese investment has shifted from large-scale government-sponsored projects to more strategic, “small but beautiful” projects led by private companies in emerging industries, with actors on multiple levels driving green cooperation.

Status ● Exploration ● Announced ● Under Construction ● Operating



Status ● Announced ● Under Construction ● Operating



Figure 1: Major Chinese investments in Latin America as of 2024, in (top) lithium extraction and processing, and (bottom) EV Manufacturing. Source: Mazzocco, Berg, Murray, Sanderson, & Gregor (2024).

Ultimately, the expanding influence of multilateral forums both facilitates and supplements bilateral ties. Analyst Adam Ratzlaff (2024) explains that the China- CELAC Forum bodies “allow for policy dialogue and agreements... [and] for more technical meetings that can help establish rules and regulations” at various levels (p. 15). A patchwork of relationships has therefore emerged that reflects both lower-level commercial interests and higher-level geopolitical aims. Still, the overall impact of China’s growing control in renewable energy and green technology has created certain asymmetrical dependencies within the region, which have become the target of studious critique.

2. Principal weaknesses in the multilateral approach

2.1. Regional division and passivity

As China uses multilateralism to further its economic interests and pursue strategic dominance in the renewable energy transition, Latin American countries are not always capturing benefits at the same rate. To begin, the region is prone to fragmentation and division, especially due to frequent changes in political administrations and exacerbated by the lack of a formal governance structure in the China-CELAC Forum. Professor Benedicte Bull (2024) argues that while Latin America experiences a lack of cohesion, China is able to use the platform to “[write] Latin America into a global, Chinese-led multilateralism based on Chinese principles” (p. 54). In terms of the strategic direction of green cooperation, China is seen as the predominant driver, with Latin American countries taking more passive roles and not fully utilizing collec-

tive bargaining power through coordination of priorities and positions.

Relatedly, some contend that the multilateral trend is more a rhetorical tool than a concrete mechanism that promotes mutual development. Parsifal D'Sola Alvarado (2025), Director of the research institution Fundación Andrés Bello, writes that the 2025 China-CELAC Ministerial Forum presented a lack of tangible outcomes, and that “multilateral symbolism [is] no [substitute] for an effective foreign policy”. He notes first the vagueness in language of the official documents, which provide little guarantee of concrete outcomes, then the fact that countries without effective national strategies are more subject to unwittingly following Chinese priorities. Such critiques illuminate some of the limitations of China’s multilateralism—though the Forum has facilitated exchanges across industries at various levels, it does not by itself lead to specific projects or equitable distribution of benefits; much still depends on country-specific bilateral dynamics.

2.2. Economic and structural imbalance

Critical analysis has then focused on the economic and developmental consequences of this imbalance, centering on the fact that Latin America risks falling into a trap of path dependency following the rapid expansion of Chinese green industries. Indeed, while the ECLAC recognizes China’s role as an engine of growth for the region, it also points out worrying trends. In the past 5 years, Latin America’s external trade deficit with China has risen notably, with a growing technological gap as well: while medium and high- technology exports from Latin America to China are decreasing, with exports hi-

ghly concentrated in just a few primary products, high-technology imports from China are increasing (ECLAC, 2025, pp. 26-28). In comparison, Latin American exports of medium to high-technology to the United States have stayed at a much higher level (ECLAC, 2025, p. 28). Hence, despite growing trade volumes, resource-rich countries in Latin America experience significant challenges in diversifying their exports to the Chinese market and climbing in global supply chains. These asymmetries are apparent in the sector of renewables and green technology as well.

Even as China increases its investment in the renewable energy industry in Latin America, the region faces certain structural limitations to its continued development. Though China's overall strategy has shifted from a state-led to a more market-oriented model, drawing less concern now than previously of running up unsustainable debts through megaprojects, this new approach has led to significant concentration of critical resources under Chinese firms and their dominance of supply chains in the renewable industry (Gao, 2025; Myers, Melguizo, & Wang, 2024). Researchers show that Chinese firms are targeting both direct control over mineral supply, accounting for 67.6% of Argentina's Lithium exports by 2024, for instance, and vertical integration with Chinese processing and manufacturing of batteries and EVs (Gao, 2025). Latin American countries, especially those with weaker industrial infrastructure and capacity, risk becoming stuck at the bottom of the global value chain and becoming "reliant on Chinese capital, technology, governance practices, and control over strategic resources" (Gao, 2025). Of course, such risk varies depending on each country's regulatory and economic

base, with more diversified and developed countries such as Brazil benefiting at higher levels from Chinese investment.

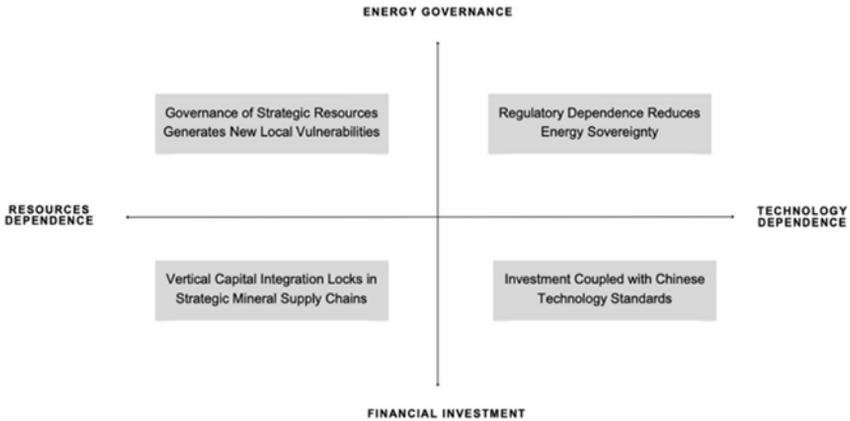


Figure 2: Structural dependencies created by Chinese dominance of renewable energy. Source: Gao (2025).

Still, the economic relationship is not wholly trending towards asymmetric dependency in the extractive sector; studies have also shown that China is investing more in innovation. An Inter-American Dialogue report shows that since 2018, China has focused much of its FDI and trade in Latin America in “new infrastructure,” emerging high-technology industries (Myers et al., 2024). Indeed, recent official Chinese documents, such as the 2025 China-CELAC Joint Action Plan, recognize the importance of innovation and technological cooperation. The Center of Technology Transfer, established in Guangzhou, China, in 2023, under China-CELAC, already has branches in Cuba, Chile, and Uruguay, designated to support the sustainable development of both sides. Commercial and official delegations from the Center have conducted several working visits to Latin American countries, going to Peru and Mexico

in October of 2025 to advance technological collaboration in agriculture, climate change, and other fields (China-LAC Technology Transfer Center, 2025). Ultimately, however, such actions are insufficient to correct structural imbalances between the two sides; those asymmetries may be addressed to some extent by improvements to multilateral channels, but more immediately through targeted corrections of regional and national frameworks.

3. Directions for growth

3.1. Regional cohesion and national frameworks

Many weaknesses associated with China-Latin American green cooperation require changes outside of the specific relationship with China, starting with tools that target region-wide development. ECLAC published in 2024 an in-depth analysis of structural challenges facing the region as a whole, pointing to its low capacity for growth, high inequality and low social mobility, and low institutional capacity and ineffective governance as the primary development traps. It then proposes detailed recommendations to help bridge the gap, intended for the consideration of governments and stakeholders in the region. On regional cohesion, the document highlights the need to improve economic integration and raise the low levels of investment and trade between countries in the region, as well as to share best practices on strategic issues such as the energy transition and engage in joint training programs and projects (ECLAC, 2024, p. 76). Such actions would address both general development deficiencies, such as opening up larger markets with greater competition and lower costs, and

ameliorate imbalances within the China-Latin America green cooperation dynamic. The ECLAC Report therefore provides this prior analysis as essential context to guide the discussion of China's potential contributions to future regional development.

Specifically, more collaboration on capacity development in strategic industries such as critical minerals, interregional financing, and energy interconnection and policy coordination would put countries in better positions prior to dealing with China. Regional actors already have the intention to develop such networks; in October of 2025, the Organización Latinoamericana de Energía (OLADE) published a technical report detailing opportunities, challenges, and proposed solutions to facilitate the region's clean energy transition, emphasizing the need to develop closer market and regulatory coordination. CAF, the designated green bank of the region, also announced at the 2025 COP30 a historic investment of US\$40 billion over five years to finance sustainable growth and promote climate action (Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean [CAF], 2025b). These organizations recognize the importance of defining shared priorities to facilitate funding flows and strengthen norms on green cooperation regionally, which would then attract and bolster international cooperation.

Along with the strengthening of regional links, however, the crux of positive green development rests with individual countries. During its G20 presidency, Brazil pushed an initiative to increase investment in clean energy in developing countries, describing significant gaps between countries such as Brazil, Chile, and Mexico, which have attracted much higher levels of

investment into clean energy projects through effective policies and regulations, and others that have not developed such frameworks (Brazil G20 Presidency & International Energy Agency, 2024). For example, Chile's well-prepared national strategies and extensive political and public support for the renewable energy transition allow it to engage productively with a variety of international partners. In recent years, Chile has deployed a national green hydrogen plan, cooperating regularly with countries such as Germany to advance green technology in the industry (Conley, 2023). In 2023, the Chilean Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications undertook a project funded by both state-owned banks and the IDB and IFC to deploy a fleet of 1000 electric buses, set to become the largest in the world after China (Brazil G20 Presidency & International Energy Agency, 2024). Starting a few years ago, Chile also became one of China's top investment destinations in the region, especially in lithium and electricity transmission (Myers et al., 2024). While Chinese corporations and actors are still incentivized to capture market share in renewable resources and technology, countries like Chile are not at as much risk of overreliance or path dependency.

In comparison, despite Argentina being the world's fourth largest lithium producer due to its significant reserves, its lack of advanced technical capabilities and inadequate coordination between national and subnational governments put it at risk of remaining structurally dependent. In a study of Chinese investment in Argentina's lithium sector, academic Juliana Gonzalez Jauregui (2024) argues that while Argentina's decentralized regulatory framework of provincial control over the exploitation of natural resources encourages foreign investment, these provincial actors fail to coordinate on requi-

rements to add local value, such as through raising royalties and reinvesting project proceeds into R&D. Additionally, even though China has increased its technology sharing efforts, the fact that many of its agreements with Argentina still operate on turnkey contracts means that less opportunities are available for Argentina's industrial advancement (Jauregui, 2024). Ultimately, in order to achieve more sustained and equitable green development, countries such as Argentina must start with structural changes to their regulatory systems, which would then enable stricter value-sharing requirements, better bargaining positions, and integration into higher-value stages of the supply chains.

3.2. Multilateral corrections

As comprehensive studies such as the ECLAC Report show, specific actions could also be taken to improve the efficacy of the China-CELAC Forum. As discussed previously, the institution could be made more robust with more formalized accounting of relevant activity. Separately, analysts have also observed that through the Forum, Latin American countries have the opportunity to take greater initiative over priority initiatives through the CELAC Pro Tempore Presidency (PPT), which rotates on a yearly basis.

Chinese sources suggest regular engagement between China and the Latin American countries holding the PPT. Indeed, the country currently holding the PPT, the previous PPT, and the incoming PPT compose a troika with whom China engages on a more frequent basis than through official Ministerial Meetings, with there being eight rounds of dialogue between the four parties since the formation of China-CELAC so far

(Xinhua, 2025a). Individual countries hosting the presidency also have the ability to emphasize specific priorities. For example, during its 2022 PPT, Argentina helped lead 5 specialized meetings within China-CELAC, from development to digital technology, suggesting that Latin American countries have the power to drive discussion through this mechanism (Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños. CELAC Argentina, 2022). During Colombia's PPT in 2025, it has focused heavily on the energy transition, climate adaptation, and electricity connectivity, also prioritizing the fortification of CELAC-China and CELAC-EU relations (Cancillería de Colombia, 2025). In 2025, Colombia hosted CELAC-wide summits in energy, green financing, and the environment at the ministerial, technical, and commercial levels, promoting cooperation among member states and involving regional institutions such as OLADE. In fact, the ECLAC Report (2025) suggests that the PPT "would be strengthened by the support of a specialized technical team responsible for identifying new opportunities for cooperation with China and following up on initiatives already under way" (p. 53). Such support would bolster the informal governance structure, involve more stakeholder perspectives, provide leadership opportunities at a regional and international level, and contribute to the two sides' joint agenda.

Furthermore, to constructively advocate for Latin America's needs and interests in its relationship with China, regional organizations like the CAF should continue strengthening cooperation with China. Such efforts already exist and can be built upon. In 2022, for example, the CAF and the AIIB signed a Memorandum of Understanding to deepen collaboration and mobilize more funding toward renewable energy and green

projects. Since then, the CAF has pursued further opportunities within this relationship, presenting at the AIIB's Annual Meeting in Beijing in 2025 potential projects for co-financing and mechanisms for deeper financial cooperation (CAF, 2025a). While the AIIB is a multilateral development bank, China carries significant influence as its founder and largest shareholder. Additionally, CAF has recently engaged directly with Chinese banks such as the Export-Import Bank, with the two recognizing a mutually beneficial partnership to mobilize China's financial resources in sustainable development under CAF's provision of regional knowledge and experience (CAF, 2024). As CAF enacts ambitious targets for Latin America's green transformation, its continued actions to collaborate with China will boost the efficacy and depth of the multilateral relationship and drive the direction of investment.

Conclusion

As China's drive to dominate renewable energies and green technologies continues to pick up steam, China seeks to both expand access to resources and markets abroad as well as bolster cooperation mechanisms with its global partners. As evidenced by the growing economic relationship and recent normative rhetoric, Latin America has become an important part of China's global strategy due to its natural resources, emerging markets, and Global South identity. Nonetheless, the region also faces pressing concerns of structural imbalance, as it resists reinforcing a trend of mainly exporting primary products while importing Chinese manufactured EVs and technology, which causes it to remain stuck at the lower rungs of green supply chains.

Yet, with China's turn towards multilateralism in the region, Latin America has the opportunity to change and influence its direction of development. By first strengthening regional and national frameworks, Latin American countries would become better placed to attract higher-level investment and move up in the global value chain. Then, through more cohesive and effective multilateral engagement, Latin American countries could ensure that their priorities are better met in future projects. Neither party should overlook the existing strengths of the China-CELAC Forum and continue engagement through both official channels and the various subforums in businesses, academic research, and technology, fostering interregional connections that eventually bring about change at the higher level.

Looking ahead, Colombia should continue advancing cooperation with China on the renewable energy transition during the rest of its CELAC PPT, and when Uruguay starts its PPT in March of 2026, it will have the opportunity to further define priorities in green cooperation. Uruguay has already emphasized the importance of clean energy development, sustainable agriculture, and expansion of green value chains in cooperation with China, suggesting a targeted approach when it assumes the PPT (Xinhua, 2025b). The increasing buy-in of countries with ambitions of being regional leaders, along with their collaboration with organizations such as OLADE and CAF, is an encouraging development that would effect positive change in Latin America's multilateral standing in green development.

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