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## High Light



### **Facing "critical" situation, Premier Wen alerts public to worsening environment**

China should be on high alert to worsening environmental pollution and ecological deterioration in some regions, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said in Beijing on April 18.

Environmental protection should be given a higher priority in the drive to national modernization, said Wen while addressing at the national conference on environmental protection held from April 17 to 18.

"We cannot just sit for discussions behind the closed door while the sandy weather has raged outside for more than ten days," Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao announced at a national conference on environmental protection. "Besides climatic factors, it mirrors the critical environmental situation we are

facing," Wen said of Beijing being enveloped in yellow dust.

While addressing the conference held in Beijing from Monday to Tuesday, Wen said China should be on high alert to fight against worsening environmental pollution and ecological deterioration in some regions, and environmental protection should be given a higher priority in the drive for national modernization.

The major targets of environmental protection during the recently ended tenth Five-Year Plan (2000-2005) were not achieved as scheduled, and new problems have emerged, he said.

China had set a target of cutting discharges of sulphur dioxide by 10 percent in 2000-2005. It set the same target for reducing emissions of carbon monoxide, but only managed a 2 percent cut, according to the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA).

"Lack of awareness, insufficient planning, and a weak legal framework can be blamed for the severe environmental pollution in the country," Wen noted.

According to the recently adopted 11th Five-Year Program (2006-2010), energy consumption in terms of per capita GDP growth should be cut by 20 percent, major pollutants should drop by 10 percent and forest coverage should rise to 20 percent from 18.2 percent, he said.

The Premier has set out four priorities for current and future environmental protection. These include strengthening water conservation, controlling atmosphere and soil pollution, enhancing protection of the national ecology, re-adjusting the economic structure and boosting the environmental technology and protection industry.

SEPA has reported 45 other pollution accidents in the two and a half months after the Songhua River spill last November which had threatened water supplies of four million residents in the city of Harbin, capital of Northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.

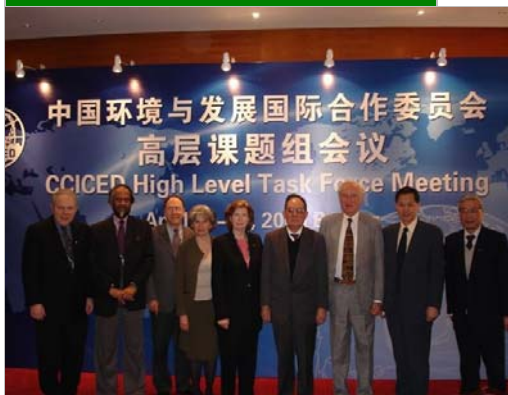
Another accident listed by the administration was a cadmium spill along the Beiji River in South China's Guangdong province that also threatened the local drinking and agricultural water supplies.

Other major water pollution incidents included chemical spills along Northeast China's Hun River, central China's Hunan's Xiangjiang River, and a diesel spill along the Yellow River in Henan Province, as well as an oil spill in Ganjiang River in central China's Jiangxi Province.

Wen ordered local governments on April 17 to release information on energy consumption and pollutant emissions every six months, set plans to control emissions and step up environmental assessment of construction projects.

Protective policies on the exploitation of resources should be carried out and legal and supervisory systems established, acknowledged Wen, who also urged localities to allocate more money and raise public awareness of environmental protection. Source: Xinhua News

## Task Forces



### **Task Force on China's Environment and Development Review and Prospect**

From April 13 to 14, 2006, CCICED Task Force on China's Environment and Development Review and Prospect held its first plenary meeting in Beijing. Dr. Song Jian, Former Vice Chairman of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the first Chairman of the Council, and Mme. Huguette Labelle, the former President of CIDA, who co-chaired this meeting, are the Chinese and International Co-chairs of the Task Force. Members of the Task Force, including Mr. Zhu Guangyao, Prof. Shen Guofang, Mr. Li Jiange, Mr. Du Ping, Prof. Earl

Drake, Dr. Arthur Hanson, Sir Crispin Tickell, Ms. Laurence Tubiana, and Dr. P. K. Pachauri, Director General of the Department of International Cooperation, SEPA and Deputy Secretary General Mr. Xu Qinghua, and Director General of the Department of China Program, CIDA Mr. Jeff Nankivell presented at the meeting.

The meeting considered and adopted the Term of Reference of the Task Force. Chinese and International experts briefed the Interim Report of each part, held in-depth exchanges and discussions on the research direction, priorities as well as the work schedule for the next stage. Both Chinese and international members recognized that CCICED mechanism provided a high-level platform for international cooperation in the fields of environment and development, that the experience of the past 15 years proved this mechanism to be unique and effective, and that the research of the high-level Task Force enabled us to sum up the successful experience of the Council, extend the Council's influence, and enhance the communications and exchanges of the Council with relevant departments of the Chinese Government, the public and the international community, so as to further disseminate the outcomes of the Council. The meeting held that while envisaging the currents and challenges on the environment and development in China by the year 2020, considerations should be given in the context of China's overall economic development trends, and that the reports submitted to the Council should not be a simple collection of facts, but highlight the policy recommendations that emphasize vision and strategic nature, and that are for the consideration of high-level governmental leaders.

Mr. Zhu Guangyao, Vice Minister of SEPA and Secretary General of the Council attended the meeting and delivered an important speech. He briefed the meeting on the progress of China's environmental protection cause in the past five years, as well as the considerations of the Chinese Government on environmental protection in the near future, especially the Outline of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan and Decision of the State Council for Environmental Protection. He also expressed that in the following 15 to 20 years Chinese Government will adopt stronger policy measures to address the environmental issues arising in the development process. As to the research work, he proposed that the Task Force should, from a pioneering prospective, put forward policy recommendations that are bearing weight to the high level Chinese leaders. It should, with a view to a potential new situation in environment and development fields along with the next 10-15 years' development, and referring to some key areas and major problems not yet concerned by Chinese Government, find out relevant problems and give prior analyses, so as to arouse the attention and concerns of Government leaders on some major issues in the future, and fully play the role of the Council as a high profile advisory mechanism of the State Council.

Also presented the meeting were invited representatives from Embassies of Canada, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Italy and France as well as from Ministry of Commerce, Chinese Academy of Engineering, and Central Party School.

## The Secretariat Activities

### **Mr. Zhu Guangyao met with Swedish Ambassador Mr. Borje Ljenggren**

On April 6, Mr. Zhu Guangyao, Vice Minister of SEPA and Secretary General of the Council met with Mr. Borje Ljenggren, Swedish Ambassador to China. Both parties exchanged views on the 4th phase of CCICED and the bilateral cooperation on environmental protection between China and Sweden. Mr. Xu Qinghua, Director General of the Department of International Cooperation, SEPA and Deputy Secretary General of the Council also attended the meeting.

### **MOFCOM and CIDA co-hosted the CCICED PCM Meeting**

On April 10, Mr. Liu Mingming from Ministry of Commerce and Mr. Kent Smith, Counselor with Embassy of Canada co-chaired the CCICED Project Coordination Mechanism (PCM) Meeting in Beijing. Mr. Jeff Nankivell, Director General of Department of Chinese Programs, CIDA; Mr. Guojing, Director of the Headquarter Secretariat of the Council; Prof. Earl Drake, Director of the Secretariat Canadian Office; Mr. Per W. Schive, Counselor with Embassy of Norway; Ms. Ping Højding, Environmental Attaché with Embassy of Sweden, and Ms. Silvia Pfanner, Attaché with Embassy of Germany presented at the meeting as well. As required by the meeting, the Secretariat reviewed the progress of the Council over the past year, and briefed the 2006 Working Plan and initial consideration for the 4th Phase of CCICED.

## Lead Experts Group

### **LEG held a working meeting**

From April 11 to 12, Prof. Shen Guofang and Dr. Arthur Hanson, the Council's Chinese and International Lead Experts, co-chaired the Working Meeting of the Lead Experts Group. The meeting reviewed and discussed the preparations for the High-level Task Force Meeting and also listened to relevant progress reports of the Task Force on Environmental Governance and Task Force on Eco-compensation Mechanism, demanding that all task forces submit the preliminary research outcomes before the end of June.