

● Hot Topics

■ Li Keqiang emphasizes the importance of ecological improvement and vigorous development of the energy-conserving environmental protection industry

On the afternoon of June 7th, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of CPC Central Committee, Vice Premier of the State Council Li Keqiang visited the “11th Five-Year Plan” Environmental Achievement Exhibition and the China’s International Environment Exhibition. During the visit, Li Keqiang emphasized the importance of ecological improvement and the development of the energy-efficient industry.



Li Keqiang commented, during the “11th Five-Year-Plan” period, China has made remarkable progress in environmental protection. However, the current environmental situation is still grim, with heavy loads of tasks, great pressure and

difficulties. Therefore, based on scientific development, it is necessary to act and accelerate the transformation of the economic development mode, successfully establish and carry out the environmental plan for the “12th Five-Year Plan” period, quicken the building of a resource-conserving and environmentally-friendly society.

Li said, China is very likely to become the world’s largest market for energy-conserving and environment-friendly products. As an emerging strategic-based market, the industry for energy-conserving and environmentally friendly products has a bright future. It will benefit not only the economy, but also the public. We must adapt to the world’s developing trends, develop a market with cleaner products, cultivate new economical growth points, and to give a new quality and meaning to life. At the same time, China’s protection of the ecological environment asks for enormous demands, which means new opportunities for foreign enterprises.

To further develop the energy-conserving and environmental protection industry, there is a need to combine technological innovation with the institutional one, to guide and encourage all types of enterprises into displaying their strengths, promoting mutual beneficial cooperation to achieve collaborative development, to then enter the world stage, Li stated.

Li continued to point out, the frequent droughts and floods was a wake-up call, we must obey the laws of nature, and pay great attention to effectively protect and rationally utilize water resources, to further strengthen

the treatment of water, air, and soil pollution, while taking severe means of remediation for heavy metal pollution and ensuring the safety of water and food for the public.

Li also said, the existing environmental technology can help better protect the earth, but the concept of environmental protection still needs to be instilled into people's minds. To be able to see the beautiful scene of green mountains and clean water, blue skies and white clouds, everybody needs to act, especially the young generation. We need to learn from all humankind's achievements, to seize the commanding point of having the world's best environmental technology, to win the race between the global industries, and step onto the frontier of sustainability. (Source: CENews)

■ Zhou Shengxian stresses the importance of exploring new dimensions for environmental protection of the “12th Five-Year Plan”

On June 7th, the “11th Five-Year Plan” Environmental Achievement Exhibition and the 12th China's International Environmental Protection Achievement Exhibition opened in Beijing. Mr. Zhou Shengxian, Minister of Environmental Protection made a speech at the opening ceremony.

Zhou Shengxian stated, the “11th Five-Year Plan” period was a extraordinary five years in the history of China's development, it was also a great five years for the cause of environmental protection. Within these five years, the Chinese government has put environmental protection in a more important and strategic position, putting forward the following important strategic ideas: building of an ecological culture; promoting a historical transformation in environmental protection; restoring the rivers and lakes; making environmental protection an important issue of livelihood; and exploring a new path for environmental protection. Apart from making emissions reduction of primary pollutants as a main constrained indicator for the national economy and the

development of the society, efforts have been made to solve outstanding environmental issues that affect scientific development and damage the well-being of the public. Great progress has been made in this regard, especially the following four aspects:

Firstly, the task of emissions reduction of primary pollutants was accomplished. During the “11th Five-Year Plan” period, SO₂ and COD emissions lowered by 14.29% and 12.45% respectively, exceeding 10% of the targets set.

Secondly, there is a growing impact of optimizing the economical growth and ensuring improvement of people's livelihood by environmental protection. Since 2006, the State Environmental Protection Administration (the Ministry of Environmental Protection since march 2008) rejected, disapproved and suspended the environmental impact assessment of 822 projects that did not comply with regulations, which involved a investment of RMB 3.2 trillion. Up to 11 million people/times of environmental law enforcement were involved, and about 20,000 firms that were illegally emitting pollutants were closed.

Thirdly, pollution prevention and control in major river basins has been intensified. The assessment systems for key trans-provincial cross-section water quality were established. The results show that, by the end of 2010, 80.9% of the cross-section water met the standard. Work related to explore and establish new mechanisms of joint prevention and control against regional air pollution was carried out. Following the success of the 2008 Green Olympics, the task to ensure clean air carried onto the successful completion of the 2010 Shanghai World Expo along with the Guangzhou Asian Games.

Fourthly, the quality of the environment continued to improve. The concentration of permanganate within controlled sections of the national surface water fell by 31.9% compared to 2005. Key environmentally protected cities had a lower average concentration of SO₂ compared to 2005, by 26.3%. Water quality of the state controlled sections of the 7 main rivers were better than

level III compared to 2005, raised from 41% (in 2005) to 59.9%.

Zhou pointed out, the "11th Five-Year Plan" Environmental Achievement Exhibition is a satisfactory answer to the State Council and the people. The exhibition mainly showed the experiences and staff on the front line in environmental protection, from cadres to workers in all departments, as well as all the industries that thoroughly implemented the scientific development approach, actively building an ecological culture, truly accelerating the historical transformation of environmental protection, striving to explore a new path for environmental protection in China, which is of low cost, low emissions, high efficiency and sustainability. Held in conjunction was the China's International Environmental Protection Exhibition, the largest and most influential platform of exchanging technology and displaying cooperation. Eleven of such exhibition was successfully held since the first one in 1986. Nearly 500 Chinese and foreign firms of 20 countries and regions joined the exhibition, bringing the world's leading environmental technologies and appliances. This will definitely play an active role in helping controlling the pollution and promoting the environmental protection industry.

Zhou commented, this is the first year for the "12th Five-Year Plan". The upcoming five years will be full of hope in terms of environmental protection, but it will also be a tough and important five-year. According to the requirements of the "12th Five-Year Plan", the general considerations of environmental protection work would be: focusing on the theme of scientific development, shift of economic development mode and improvement of ecological culture, to identify the connections among emission reduction of pollutants, improving the quality of the environment, risk prevention, and the balanced development between the urban and rural areas. There is a need to explore a low cost, low emission, high efficient and sustainable path for China's environment with a focus on solving the outstanding environmental issues that affect scientific development and damage the well-being of the public. By 2015, the energy

consumption and CO₂ emission per unit of GDP will fall by 16% and 17% respectively, SO₂ and COD by 8%, ammonia and nitrogen oxide by 10%, compared to 2010. The environment will definitely take a turn for the better.

Zhou stated, it is important to focus on four issues to explore new dimensions for the environmental protection during the "12th Five-Year Plan" period.

First is to further develop the environment cause from a new starting point. For the "12th Five-Year Plan", China's environmental protection is at a new starting point, a historical one, stepping onto the new path of scientific development, expediting the transformation of economic development mode, and improving the public's livelihood. It is necessary to plan, review and deploy the work of environmental protection from the standpoint of overall development of the social economy along with a macro-strategic level.

Second is to identify the difficulties, and promote the coordinated integration between environmental protection and economic development. To mainstream the requirements of environmental protection into the whole process of social and economical development, making all aspects of economical development benefit and improve the environment. There is a need to let the environmental protection actively take part in macroeconomic control, to fully play the role of optimizing economic development and promote the shift of economic development pattern as well as economic restructuring.

Third is to break through the important points to ensure a remarkable progress in the scientific development and the improvement of the public's livelihood. The key tasks in environmental protection in the "12th Five-Year Plan" period's are as follows: focusing on resolving the outstanding environmental issues that affect scientific development and damage the well-being of the public, there is need to strictly suppress the construction projects with high energy consumption, high emissions, over-use of resources, low-level

repeat, and overcapacity. Priority should be given to resolving the issue of heavy metal pollution, POPs (persistent organic pollutants), and soil pollution.

Lastly is to deal with the hot spots, further increase the effort of reducing pollution emission. Pollution reduction is a highlight of the “11th Five-Year Plan”, and also one in the “12th Five-Year Plan”. With higher objectives, more stringent measures, and more intensive requirements as goals, we need to put structural emission reduction in a more prominent position, and to continue to enhance the emission reduction through project and management. To further promote the emission reduction of SO₂ and COD, we need to actively use innovative measures, starting from the reduction of nitrates of coal-fired power plants, purification of vehicle exhaust gas, as well as the control of agricultural non-point source pollution. Efforts will be made to accelerate the emission reduction of nitrogen oxides and ammonia, and strive to put the work of emissions reduction as the highlight of the environmental work for the “12th Five-Year Plan”. (Source: CENews)

■ The Ministry of Environmental Protection releases the 2010 Report on the state of the environment in China

On the morning of June 3rd, the State Council Information Office hosted a press conference, where they released the “2010 Report on the state of the environment in China”. Mr. Li Ganjie, Vice Minister of Environmental Protection attended the press conference and answered questions from Chinese and foreign reporters.

According to Li Ganjie, in 2010, parts of China’s environmental quality index continue to take a turn for the better. Monitoring result of the national surface water shows that permanganate levels has an average concentration of 4.9 milligrams/litre in 2010, 3.9% lower than that of last year, 31.9% lower than the year 2005. In urban areas, the SO₂ levels within the air has an average concentration of 0.034 milligrams/cubic metres in 2010, which

reached level II of the national air quality, 2.8% lower than that of last year, and 19.0% lower than the year 2005. However, the overall situation of China’s environment is still quite grim, facing many problems and challenges.

First of all, the surface water in the country is still heavily polluted. Secondly, the coastal water quality is still slightly polluted. Thirdly, the national urban air quality is generally good, but some cities are rather heavily polluted. The areas suffered from acid rain remain stable, but acid rain pollution is rather heavy. Fourthly, the urban acoustical environment are relatively well. Fifthly, the national radiation level is well in general, ionizing radiation and electromagnetic radiation levels remained stable. Sixthly, parts of the country’s ecological function improved, but the ecological environment is still a primary concern. The trend of decreasing biodiversity was not controlled effectively, resulting in continued loss of genetic resources. Last, the rural environmental issue is becoming increasingly apparent, the aggregated emissions of agricultural pollutants are rather high, the situation in some areas took a turn for the better, but in general the situation remains serious.

Li pointed out, in the year 2010, the Ministry of Environmental Protection performed solid work and finished each task assigned.

Firstly, the target of emission reduction of primary pollutants was completed by surpassing the targets set. In comparison to 2005, SO₂ and COD emissions lowered by 14.29% and 12.45% respectively. Secondly, the combined effect of optimizing economic development and environmental protection is becoming increasingly apparent. Thirdly, efforts to prevent pollution in the key river basin has been intensified. Fourthly, great efforts were made in resolving outstanding environmental issues that damage the well-being of the public. In 2010, a special fund of RMB 1.5 billion was allocated for the prevention and control of heavy metal pollution. Fifthly, to continuously strengthen the protection of the rural environment and the ecosystems. Sixthly, the basic and

strategic environmental protection project made productive results. Seventhly, the work of policies and regulations, environmental protection planning, monitoring system, international co-operation and environmental education were steadily progressed. Eighthly, supervision and management on the safety of nuclear energy and radiation improved. Finally, the capacity building of environmental protection has taken another step forward. (Source: CENews)

■ The Ministry of Environmental Protection announces the theme for China for the World Environment Day 2011

On May 27th, the Ministry of Environment Protection announced the theme for China for the World Environment Day on June 5th - “Together we build an ecological culture, together we share a green future”. The theme aims to: raising public awareness on the connection between the environment and development, taking conscious actions in this regard, emphasizing the importance of an ecological culture, the idea of green development, and the significance of the public’s participation, calling upon the whole society to act together to contribute for the sake of sustainability.

The UNEP identified the theme of 2011’s World Environment Day as “Forests: Nature at your service”, for 2011 is the International Year of Forests. This theme stresses the ecological value of forests, striving for increasing the awareness amongst the public regarding forest protection. China echoed the UN’s theme and at the same time strongly emphasized the significance and urgent issue of establishing an ecological culture, to call on everyone to act together, and to establish an environmentally-friendly idea of development, creating a green future together. (Source: CENews)

■ 2010 Report on the state of the environment in China shows improvement of environmental quality seen in parts of China

On the morning of June 3rd, the State Council Information Office hosted a press conference, where they released the “2010 Report on the state of the Environment in China”. The report states, in 2010, China’s environmental quality indicators continued to improve, the targets of pollution reduction and emission reduction has been accomplished, public’s awareness on protecting the environment was growing. The urban air quality was generally well, areas with acid rain were kept relatively stable in terms of times of occurrence. The urban acoustical environment was also generally well. At the same time, however, the report also shows that the national surface water pollution was still quite heavy; the 7 main rivers of China were slightly polluted; the problem of eutrophication in the lakes (resevoirs) were outstanding; and the coastal water quality was still considered slightly polluted.

The report states, in 2010, China discharged 12,381,000 tons of COD, 3.09% lower than the previous year; 21,851,000 tons of SO₂ was emitted, 1.32% lower than the previous year. Compared to 2005, the emission of both COD and SO₂ lowered by 12.45% and 14.29% respectively, exceeding the targets by 10%. In 2010, there was a increase of new de-sulphurized coal-fueled power generation sets with a total capacity of 107 million KW, making the de-sulphurized thermoelectric power generation sets reaching a total capacity of 578 million KW; the urban sewage treatment systems with a capacity of 19 million cubic metres were set up, making a total of 124 million cubic metres. Small thermal-powered units with a total capacity of 72.1 million KW were shutted down, which means that the task of closing 50 million KW of units was finished a year and a half in advance.

The report reveals, in 2010, the 7 main rivers of China were slightly polluted, water quality of rivers in Zhemin Region and the southwest was relatively better, rivers from the northwest had the best quality of all.

The report shows, national urban air quality was generally better than last year. Air quality of 113 key environmentally protected cities mostly improved, cities in

compliance with the standard increased by 6.2% compared to last year.

According to the report, by the end of 2010, China has built 2588 nature reserves of different ranks and types. With a total area of 149,440,000 hectares, the land nature reserves account for 14.9% of China's total land territory. In 2010, a Central Financial Wetland Protection Fund was set up, with RMB 200 million used to subsidize wetlands of international importance, wetland nature reserves, the National Wetland Park as well as wetland supervision and monitoring and ecological restoration.

The report also points out, the current rural environmental problems have become increasingly apparent, the aggregated emissions of agricultural pollutants were rather high. Even though in some areas the situation took a turn for the better, but overall this was still serious issue. In 2010, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Finance organized 8 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities), including Liaoning and Jiangsu, and to carry out a joint treatment demonstration on the rural environment, which involved 800 million people of 4000 villages and 181 counties. The demonstration made great progress, and the results are starting to stand out. (Source: CENews)

■ The National Development and Reform Commission will soon publish the National Major Function Zoning Plans

On June 8th, the National Development and Reform Commission announced during a State Council Information Office press conference that the “National Major Function Zoning Plans” (the Plan) will be published soon. The Plan, on the basis of the development mode, will divide the country's territories into four areas: the optimized development area, the key development area, the limited development area, and the non-development area. This is the first plan of territorial spatial development since the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

According to the authority, the Plan is a strategic, fundamental and binding plan. Carrying out the Plan and promoting the construction of these areas demonstrate China's great change in the way of thinking for development and development mode. It is great innovation of the methods and concepts of regional control. All these have significant meaning for promoting China's science and technology development as well as speeding up the transformation of the economical development mode.

According to the content of development, the country's territory will be divided into three main categories: the urban area, the rural area, and the ecological area. The optimized development areas are urban areas that economically advanced, densely populated and with great development intensity, and where the problem of resources and the environment is more prominent. Therefore, the process of industrialization and urbanization should be optimized for development. For key development areas, they must have a strong environmental carrying capacity for resources, great potential for development, and a rather condensed population with a good economic conditions. These areas should focus mainly on the development of urban areas through industrialization and urbanization. The limited development areas are agricultural areas and key ecological function areas. Non-development areas are places established in accordance with the law to act as different types of protected areas of nature and culture, and key ecological areas that need special protection, prohibiting any form of industrialization and urbanization.

Promoting the formation of primary function areas are conducive to the followings: promoting a coordinated regional development in line with the people-oriented concept; reducing the gap of basic public services and living standards between different regions; turning around the worsening trends of the ecological environment at the source of its problems, on the way to achieve sustainable development; holding back the malpractice of destroying the environment first, and then restore, preventing the development of current generation from compromising the ability of

the future generations to develop; formulating and implementing a more focused regional policies and a performance evaluation system to make the regional control more targeted, effective, and fair. (Source: Xinhuanet)

