

China EnviroData Weekly

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Sino-Norwegian Cooperation in Expertise Concerning Water Resources

China and Norway have agreed to promote exchanges and cooperation in expertise concerning water resources.

The two countries have signed a framework agreement to co-operate in water resource management and monitoring, flood control methods, disposal of sand at river mouths, and construction of tunnels to channel rivers, and construction of small hydropower plants.

The agreement takes a step further from the letter of intent the two countries signed in 1997 to improve the co-operation in this area.

The cooperation will also include the exchange of hydrologists and water resource managers and knowledge and experience in integrated water resources management, said Brit Skjelbred, state secretary of the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy of Norway.

Skjelbred visited Beijing and cities along the Yantze River last week, meeting Zhai Haohui, vice-minister of the Ministry of Water Resources, and local officials.

"We can learn much from each other," said Skjelbred in the interview.

One of the most important things that Norway can learn from China is how to manage the integration of rivers and their basins, she said.

China has much experience in this regard and Norway can share the experience to help set up similar management structures, she added.

Skjelbred said China can also benefit from the cooperation, taking advantage of the hydrological knowledge and expertise of Norway.

Although the cooperation is mainly on the institutional level,

Skjelbred said, many Norwegian companies have expressed interest in investing in Chinese water resource industries.

(China Daily September 30, 2003)

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SPECIAL REPORT

Acid Rain Costs China Annual Loss of 110 Billion Yuan

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Sulfur dioxide-caused acid rain has cost China an annual economic loss of over 110 billion yuan (US\$13.3 billion), and atmospheric pollution results in an annual loss equivalent to two or three percent of China's GDP, according to joint research by the Chinese Institute of Environmental Science and the prestigious Qinghua University.

Environmental experts said the estimate was lower than actual loss because atmospheric pollution's impact on water and its erosive effect on buildings were not calculated in this research.

The territory of China's south and southwest has become the third largest acid rain-prone region in the world after northern Europe and North America, according to experts. In this region, 61.8 percent of cities have suffered from acid rain and acid rain-hit areas accounted for 30 percent of the whole Chinese territory.

According to officials of the State Environmental Protection Administration, China's sulfur dioxide emission has greatly exceeded its environmental capacity. In 338 cities put under monitoring for atmospheric quality, 63.5 percent were rated as at medium and serious levels of atmospheric pollution.

Experts said that reducing sulfur dioxide emissions by coal-burning power plants is key to controlling acid rain because the research found that chimney discharge of sulfur dioxide by such plants is the major cause of acid rain.

In 2002, sulfur dioxide emissions by coal-burning power plants reached 6.66 million tons, accounting for 34.6 percent of the

country's total. And the figure is expected to rise to 12.86 million tons by 2005 if emissions increase at the current rate.

(Xinhua News Agency October 10, 2003)

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BUSINESS INFORMATION

World's Largest Doline 'Museum' Open to Tourists

A group of "dolines", ancient sink holes, in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, opened as a tourist attraction.

The doline group, the oldest and largest in the world, is located in Leye County, 460 km from Nanning, capital of the autonomous region. It was formed some 65 million years ago.

"Dashawei", the largest hole of the group, is 613 meters deep and 420 wide. The virgin forest on the bottom of the doline covers an area of more than 10,000 sq meters, about one and half footballgrounds. It is inhabited by more than 1,000 varieties of plants, including many rare species, such as blind fish, crabs, shrimp, and flying squirrels.

Dolines, a special geological landscape found in karst regions, were formed by repeated cave-ins of the tops of underground caves. They are mainly seen in China, Mexico and Papua New Guinea.

Hong Zongdao, Party chief of Leye County, said that Guangxi has invested several hundred million yuan in building local infrastructure, improving security and service systems. The doline "museum" is capable of receiving 3,000 tourists daily.

The doline group was not found until 1998 when the Ministry of Land and Resources surveyed in Leye county.

An expedition consisting of experts from nine countries traversed the doline group last year. Zhu Xuwen, the initiator of the exploration, has participated in exploration operations into the dolines in Leye since 1999.

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Zhu, also a research fellow with the Institute of Karst and Geology of the Chinese Academy of Geology, hoped that effective measures would be developed to protect the dolines from destruction in the wake of increased human activities.

The world's single biggest doline, Xiaozhai Doline, with a depth of 660 meters and area of 119 million cubic meters, is located in the Chongqing Municipality on the upper reaches of the Yangtze River.

(People's Daily October 02, 2003)

DYNAMICS

Natural Disasters Cost 100 Billion Yuan A Year

Natural disasters have affected on average 200 million people and cost 100 billion yuan (US\$12.05 billion) a year in China over the last 10 years, figures from the Ministry of Civil Affairs show.

And the government says the damage and tragedy caused by natural misfortunes are "snowballing."

The warning came as China marked the International Day for Disaster Reduction on Oct. 8, which this year has the theme of "Turning the tide on disasters towards sustainable development".

"Along with the development of the national economy, losses caused by natural catastrophes have been snowballing year after year," said Li Xueju, Minister of Civil Affairs, adding that China suffered a high incidence of natural calamities.

China had historically been frequently hit by natural hazards, said Li, citing recent disasters such as the flooding of the Yangtze River, northeast China's Songhua River and its major tributary, the Nenjiang River, in 1998, flooding in south China's Taihu Lake in 1999 and continual droughts, hurricanes and earthquakes across the nation from 1999 to 2001.

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In February this year, a devastating earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter Scale struck the Kashi region of western Xinjiang, including Bachu and Jiashi, killing 268 people and affecting more than 650,000 people.

Also this year, earthquakes hit Dayao County, southwest China's Yunnan Province, droughts occurred in northern areas in spring and in southern areas in summer, the worst flooding since 1954 affected the Huaihe River in July, and flooding, forest fires, landslides, mud-rock flows and agricultural pests were widespread.

"The government has been making arduous efforts to reduce losses caused by natural disasters and investing more in disaster prevention and environment protection," Li said.

Most of this year's disaster-affected areas were still under reconstruction, but social stability had been maintained, said the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

(Xinhua News Agency October 9, 2003)

LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE NEWS

Chinese Cities Awarded 'International Garden City'

Three more Chinese cities including Suzhou have been awarded the title of "Garden City" at an international contest.

These have brought the total number of winning Chinese cities to seven.

Previous winners include Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Hangzhou.

Starting from 1997, the annual contest is sponsored by the UK-based International Federation of Parks and Recreation Administration.

It covers areas such as improvement in city's scenery, the management of relics and the practice of environmental protection.

(CRI October 10, 2003)

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about 60 are kept in zoos.

The two cubs, a female named Cathay and a male named Hope, will be trained in a 500-hectare base in Makopani to the north of Pretoria, the capital of South Africa.

However, they will first be restricted to a two-hectare area and their territory will be later expanded to 20 hectares and finally to the whole base as they grow up and become more accustomed to life in the wild, said Quan Li, the head of SCT.

The little tigers arrived in Pretoria on Sept. 2 and then were sent to the National Zoo in the capital city for medical examination and quarantine.

Another three to seven Chinese Tigers will join them for training during the next five years.

Zoologists and ecologists, both from China and South Africa, will start working to set up a home for the tigers covering over 100 square kilometers in China this month, where natural vegetation and other animal groups will be introduced.

All the Chinese Tigers that "graduate" from the training program will be sent to the reserve, which is expected to be completed within five years.

China's experience in training tigers to live in the wild has not been very successful, an official with SFA said. "Tigers trained in zoos don't know how to hunt, but this is an essential skill they need to survive in the wild."

(Xinhua News Agency October 11, 2003)

Shanghai to Build China's Largest Artificial Bay

Shanghai in east China is planning to construct a 30-square-kilometer artificial bay to improve its coastal view.

The project, called "golden beach and blue sea," is expected to start in 2005 in the Fengxian Bay Tourism Zone in southern Shanghai, according to Fang Tongmeng, director of administration committee of the tourism zone.

Fang said plan had been presented to the local government

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China, Japan Renew Project to Improve Ecology at Yellow River

A Japanese government-financed project to curb soil erosion at the middle reaches of China's second largest river was launched.

The project is the follow-up to a similar program carried out since the 1990s previously at the middle reaches valley of the Yellow River.

A total of 4,900 hectares of trees will be planted within five years in four counties in the northern province of Shanxi. The counties are located on the Loess Plateau where soil erosion is serious and worsening, resulting in massive sands washed and carried away into the Yellow River each year, making the river the muddiest one in the world.

The project also involves the construction of flood containment dams, reservoirs, management offices, meteorological facilities and soil erosion monitoring stations.

In addition, training programs on how to plant trees will be offered to forestry officials and farmer technicians in 1,968 villages.

Under the plan, the project area will become a model region to show achievements in comprehensive management of the ecological environment at the middle reaches of the Yellow River.

Since the 1990s, China and Japan have carried out a wide range of cooperative projects in ecological improvement and management. Some projects like planting trees with Japanese loans in Shanxi have proved successful and effective.

(Xinhua News Agency October 8, 2003)

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Sino-Norway Environmental Co-op Underlined

China and Norway have great co-operation potential in the field of environmental protection in addition to the more traditional sectors of trade and economics, according to a senior Norwegian diplomat.

Beijing's successful bid for the 2008 Olympics, Shanghai's hosting of the World Expo in 2010 and the country's unswerving efforts to protect and improve its environment are creating abundant opportunities for overseas investment and co-operation.

"Norway would like to work in co-operation with China in the areas of the Olympics in 2008, and related investments in environmental protection, infrastructure, intelligent traffic systems, surveillance systems, security systems and management systems," said Eivind Homme, minister counselor and deputy chief of mission of the Norwegian Embassy in Beijing.

As the host of the Winter Olympics in 1994, Norway focused on providing an environmentally sound event.

"We are a high-tech country with the background and experience of developing a successful Olympics," Homme told China Daily recently.

"Norway could be useful to its Chinese friends for the Olympics in Beijing."

The embassy believes there are many fields of possible environmental protection co-operation between the research and development organizations and universities of the two countries.

"Currently, we are encouraging our universities to establish stronger co-operative relations with their Chinese counterparts." Homme said.

Both countries face significant global environmental challenges.

"Norway wants to work closely with China and other countries to achieve environmental progress on a global level," Homme said.

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In 1995, the then Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Bruntland initiated the links between the two nations in the sector. The environment ministers from both countries have met several times, resulting in continuous dialogue about caring for the environment.

Norwegian companies and research institutions are at the forefront of environmental protection. Norwegian companies are working in China in the fields of air and water pollution surveillance and monitoring, the protection of cultural heritage and waste water treatment.

"Norwegian companies possess strong competence in the fields of hydro power, new and renewable energy, energy efficiency, cleaner production, recycling and solid waste incineration," Homme said, adding more Sino-Norwegian co-operation will only create positive outcomes.

Currently, Norway is arranging several in-country seminars focusing on such areas as water treatment and water quality monitoring.

Norway and China are also collaborating on climate research. A Chinese research base was recently established at Spitsbergen, in Norway, to study how air pollution is spreading globally in the different atmospheric layers.

"For the last 20 years, Norway has put a high priority on environmental protection," Homme said.

"We would like to offer our knowledge and experience to China with the hope of increasing industrial, scientific and governmental co-operation in the coming years."

(China Daily October 8, 2003)

AIR QUALITY THIS WEEK

Monitoring data from China Environmental Quality Supervision Station indicates that from Oct 12 to Oct 18, most of the 47 major monitoring cities were 'good' in air quality.

About Us:

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