

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Yaxin Zheng

Commission for Integrated Survey of Natural Resources (CISNAR), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), China

Keywords: China's Agenda 21, priority projects, international cooperation programs, United Nations doctrine, System of National Accounts (SNA), Human Development Index (HDI), Environmentally Sound Technology (EST), Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), New Euro-Asia Continental Bridge, Qinghai Lake, detoxification of addiction, Chinese herbal pharmacists, toxicology, Lugu Lake, Mosuo, affluent houses.

Contents

1. China's Agenda 21
 - 1.1 China's Agenda 21 and round table meeting
 - 1.2. Priority projects
 2. Extensive institutional cooperation
 3. Index of China's sustainable development and related assessment methods
 4. State Action Plan for China's Biodiversity Protection
 5. Setting up transfer center for Environmentally Sound Technology
 6. Sustainable development of the regions along the new Euro-Asia continental bridge (China Section)
 7. Demonstration of Eco-Environment Protection and Sustainable Resource Use in the Qinghai-Lake Region
 8. Development and production of Chinese herbal medicine for Detoxification for Drug Addicts
 9. Conservation of the natural, social and ecological systems in the Lugu Lake area and the construction of the Mosuo community
 10. China's affluent housing industry development
- Bibliography
Biographical Sketch

1. China's Agenda 21

1.1 China's Agenda 21 and round table meeting

China's Agenda 21 provides an excellent example of international cooperation. In order to promote sustainable development in China, the Chinese government has adopted two strategies for long-term development, i.e. 'To prosper China by Science and Education', and 'Sustainable Development'. The government has formulated wide-range flexible policies in its international relations.

1.2. Priority projects

Under the leadership of the State Planning Committee (renamed the State Economic Development Committee) and the State Science and Technology Committee (renamed

the State Science and Technology Ministry), a Priority Program for China's Agenda 21 was established. It contains the following projects:

- Priority 1. Capacity Building for Sustainable Development;
- Priority 2. Sustainable Agriculture;
- Priority 3. Clean Production and Environmental Protection Industry;
- Priority 4. Clean Energy and Transportation;
- Priority 5. Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Natural Resources;
- Priority 6. Environmental Pollution Control;
- Priority 7. Combating Poverty and Regional Development;
- Priority 8. Population, Health and Human Settlements;
- Priority 9. Global Change and Biodiversity Conservation.

2. Extensive institutional cooperation

International cooperation programs in other fields are also carried out through various institutions or among ministries, local governments, NGOs, enterprises, etc. Many international institutions, such as UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, have made contributions in this area.

The government of the People's Republic of China has a common understanding of the present world situation: peace and development are two major issues in the international community and world politics. The Chinese government seeks world peace and development based on United Nations doctrine and principles, especially mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, and equity, mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence. China seeks all round international cooperation in environment and development issues, not only with developed countries like USA, Japan, and the European Community, but also with many developing countries of the third world, especially with surrounding countries like Russia, Korea, and the South-east Asian countries. Through various forms of multiple or bilateral cooperation, China is going to do good job in solution of many difficult problems encountered in global environment and development issues, making the cradle of human civilization a common and beautiful homeland for humanity.

It is predicated that the total investment in the first batch of PPCA21 (Priority Projects of China's Agenda 21) projects will be US\$4.3 billion. China is providing 60% and the remaining 40% will hopefully be available from the international community. It is possible to carry out international cooperation in various flexible ways, e.g. donation, technical support, credit (soft credit included), exclusive investment, joint-venture, cooperation, BOT, etc..

3. Index of China's sustainable development and related assessment methods

The project aims at establishing an index system for the overall situation of China's sustainable development in the national economy, society, natural resources and environment, to provide government and the public with a clear understanding of the situation. It is expected that the project will be based on development control and regulation mechanisms, in order to strengthen steps toward China's sustainable development and its effectiveness.

China is currently in a phase of rapid economic growth. Along with implementation of the reform and opening policy and the great success of economic development, China is under enormous pressure from population growth, environmental deterioration and depletion of natural resources. In order to counter this pressure, the government formulated the state strategy of sustainable development.

To indicate and assess the overall pattern of China's sustainable development, it is necessary to set up an index and a related system of assessment methods, that can quantify the degree of realization towards sustainable development targets, and gradually bring the system into national account auditing and statistics. This is a fundamental step toward sustainable society and economic development. The establishment of an index system is going to reform present pattern of economic growth and becomes an important milestone in execution of the principles and action plans in China's Agenda 21.

Traditionally, SNA (System of National Accounts) was the main tool for measuring economic development. As part of SNA, the Gross National Product (GNP) and other economic indices were used to measure major economic activity and to represent the extent of target realization. The shortcomings of GNP as an index for measuring the development state of a country are becoming obvious. Since the early 1980s, China's accounting system has been closer to the international accounting system. China currently uses 19 statistical indices, to indicate economic growth and social development, concentrating mainly on economic growth. Although some environmental indices of material consumption are included, they only passively represent environmental conditions and material consumption, cannot actively examine the extent of coordination between development and population, resources, environment, and economy. Therefore, an important step in implementation of the sustainable development strategy, is to improve the present indices, to make them more meaningful, while measuring development scientifically and comprehensively.

There are various international indices for measuring sustainable development. In 1990, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) initiated the Human Development Index (HDI), which is based on three basic variables: life expectancy at birth, educational level and real GDP (Gross Domestic Product). The World Bank issued the newest and most advanced index of sustainable development in 1995. This takes continuous growth of per capita social wealth as the major indicator for a country's level and realization of sustainable development. Canada, USA, the Netherlands and other countries have also put forward indices to measure sustainable development.

China's strategy for sustainable development is entering the implementation stage. China's Agenda 21 has already been incorporated into the national economy and social development planning, and it has provided a very good opportunity for sustainable development index studies and formulation. In recent years, some scholars from the Administrative Center of China's Agenda 21, the Chinese Academy of sciences, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, State Statistics Bureau and certain universities have devoted enormous effort in collecting and assessing the results of studies of international index systems. They have assimilated great quantities of results in setting

up an index system for assessing the natural environment, and the State Statistics Bureau has organized experts to study and assess China's integrated index of social and economic development. All this work has helped to lay a sound foundation for the project.

The objectives of the project are as follows:

Long-term. Establishment of an effective and applicable index system for China's sustainable development and related assessment methods, that can be brought into the national accounting system, after regional testing and necessary training, generally following international standards.

Short-term. Development of an index system for China's sustainable development through analyses on and comparison between present international and domestic statistical methods and the present index system for sustainable development, which is based on major impact assessment factors and relevant development issues.

Studies on investigation and assessment of sustainable development both in China and the world have been completed. A network of experts has been established, involving sustainable development index studies in various fields, both at home and abroad, and a project group composed of governmental departments, scientific research institutions and other organizations has been formed. Assessment is being carried out on progress of international studies related to sustainable development indices. International cooperation and exchanges are being promoted, and there is corresponding tracking between China's studies and international studies.

-
-
-

TO ACCESS ALL THE 16 PAGES OF THIS CHAPTER,
Visit: <http://www.eolss.net/Eolss-sampleAllChapter.aspx>

Bibliography

China's Agenda 21. 1994, China Environmental Science Press.

Priority Program for China's Agenda 21, Beijing. 1996, Edited by the Administrative Center for China's Agenda 21.

Biographical Sketch

Yaxin Zheng (male) is an associate professor in the Commission for Integrated Survey of Natural Resources (CISNAR), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). His research interests include geochemistry and sustainable development. His research experience is as follows:

1. Geothermal Survey in Hengduan Mountains, eastern extension of Qinghai-Xizang (Tibet) plateau,

south-west China, i.e. west Yunnan Province and Sichuan Province, 1983-1985.

2. Project of Resources Development expedition to south-west China, in charge of energy planning sub-project, 1986-1988.

3. Project of Tibet "One River and Two Tributaries (middle reach of Yarlung Zangbo river and middle and lower reaches of Lhasa river and Nyangqu river)", 1989-1990.

4. Project of Sustainable Development Overall Planning of Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve, 1991 - 1992.

5. Project of Sven Hedin's natural heritage in Tibet, preparatory stage of collecting materials in the National Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm, August to October 1993.

6. World Bank Poverty Alleviation project in South-west China, 1994-1995.

7. Project of Sino-Swedish cooperation project on Sven Hedin's natural heritage in Tibet, fieldwork stage, September to October 1995.

8. Project of Sino-Swedish cooperation project on Sven-Hedin's natural heritage in Tibet, indoor work stage 1996; Sino-Swedish seminar on groundwater protection and sustainable utilization, October to November 1996.