

INSIGHTS

Voice of the World

Beautiful China, Beautiful World

Edited by TANG Zhexiao

China has unveiled a guideline to comprehensively promote the building of a "Beautiful China," detailing specific targets for the country's green and high-quality growth.

The guideline said China will accelerate the construction of a modern industrial system supported by the real economy, by vigorously boosting the development of emerging strategic industries, high-tech industries, green and environmental industries and modern service industries.

According to the guideline, the country's ecological environment is targeted to be healthy and beautiful by the middle of the century, its ecological and environmental governance system and capacity will be fully modernized, and a "Beautiful China" will be built in all respects.

Building a beautiful China

Former UN under-secretary-general and former executive director of the UN Environment Programme Erik Solheim thought the initiative of building a beautiful China is "so positive" and "inspires people."

"There is an enormous positive change in China, and it's a wonderful transformation," said Solheim, adding that creating a beautiful China has been a main driver for fighting pollution and climate change.

Work needs to be done to strive to realize a carbon peak by 2030 and lay a foundation for working hard to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2060, the guideline noted.

China has established the world's largest clean power generation system currently, with the world's largest installed capacity of hydropower, wind and solar power.



Aerial photo shows the cloud sea in She county, east China's Anhui province. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

As *The Guardian* reports, China is on track to break its wind and solar goals five years ahead of schedule.

Driven by China's rapid growth, renewable energy capacity surged globally in 2023, generating green power faster than at any time during the last few decades.

China was the major driving force behind the world's rapid expansion of renewable power generation capacity last year, which grew by 50 percent to 510 gigawatts, the International Energy Agency said.

Promoting global development

These remarkable achievements China has made in ecological civilization construction have inspired the world, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to building a global ecological civi-

lization construction and supporting developing countries in this process.

Bradley Blankenship, a Prague-based American journalist, columnist and political commentator, hailed China's success in beautifying Beijing, saying that Beijing now stands as an example for megacities around the globe, particularly those in the global south.

The concept of a "Beautiful China" has a universal appeal, extending to a Beautiful World, according to Blankenship.

Besides establishing a South-South cooperation fund on climate change and the Kunming Biodiversity Fund, China also undertook nine projects to boost Africa's green development.

As most of Africa's energy currently comes from firewood and fossil fuels, China has prioritized clean energy in its

cooperation with African countries.

According to former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, the China-financed Garissa Solar plant puts Kenya on the path to achieving green energy sufficiency and adds to Kenya's rich profile as the center of green energy generation in Africa.

China-Africa cooperation in clean energy development is part of China's commitment to greening the continent, said Melaku Mulalelem, senior international relations and diplomacy researcher at Ethiopia's Institute of Strategic Affairs.

Earth is the only planet that humanity calls home, and therefore protecting the ecological environment and promoting sustainable development are responsibilities shared by all countries.

A Major Driver of World Economic Growth

Comment

By Staff Reporters

China's overall trend of long-term growth would not change, and the country's steady economic progress can handle highs and lows and would continue to provide global impetus.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang made the comments while delivering a special address at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2024 held in Davos, Switzerland on January 16.

The theme of this year's meeting, "Rebuilding Trust," resonates well with people's concerns, Li said in the event hosted by Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the WEF. China neither walks away from agreements or pulls out of organizations, nor does it ask other countries to pick sides, and it has always been a staunch supporter of multilateralism, he said.

China's gross domestic product (GDP) posted a growth of 5.2 percent year-on-year in 2023, higher than the annual target of around five percent, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed on January 17.

The country's GDP reached a record of 126.06 trillion RMB (about 17.71 trillion USD) in 2023, the NBS data showed.

Despite external pressure and internal difficulties, China has successfully achieved the major targets set for 2023 and recorded a rebound and improvements in the economy, Kang Yi, commissioner of the NBS, told a press conference.

Some Western outlets, which have been pessimistic about the Chinese economy, have predicted that its economic growth is set to slow in 2024.

However, according to UBS analysts, there's still growth potential in China, specifically in further movement of workers from rural to urban areas, as well as investment in manufacturing, services and renewable energy. The pace of China's growth remains faster than that of developed economies.

Weijian Shan, the chairman and CEO of PAG, a leading Asia-focused private equity firm, commented in the *South China Morning Post* last November that the growth of the Chinese economy matters, not only to China but also to the rest of the world. China is now the main trading partner of more than 140 nations and regions. Its share of the world economy is about 18.5 percent, contributing about 35 percent of global growth in 2023, Shan added.

As the second-largest economy in the world, China can contribute to rebuilding trust due to its significant economic and trade left, as well as its desire to build a more peaceful world, WEF President Borge Brende said. "The steps that China takes are incredibly important for the world."

Deloitte China Chair Jiang Ying told *Xinhua* China can create more opportunities for global economic growth and employment, by further opening up its market and promoting international trade and investment. At the same time, China's large-scale infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative, also help promote economic development and employment in countries along the routes.

Achieving security and cooperation in a fractured world is one of four key themes of the Davos' annual meeting. Klaus Schwab called on the international community to rebuild trust, and take strong and effective global measures to invigorate the ailing world economy.

Reasons Behind China's Car Export Surge

Edited by GONG Qian

"There's a new king of the global auto market," said *Fortune* magazine.

China's auto exports last year surged 57.9 percent from a year prior to 4.91 million units, said the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA) on January 11, adding that China is estimated to surpass Japan to become the world's top automobile exporter for 2023.

This has the world sitting up and paying attention. Japan's NHK news agency reported that as of last November, the country's car exports stood at 3.99 million units, and it is almost certain that the figure will not exceed China's, once Japan's 12 month total is known.

The past several years saw China leapfrog from third to first place for car exports. CNN reported that Chinese car

exports took off in 2021, thanks to the country's surging EV shipments. That year, China's car shipments soared 103 percent to 2.2 million units, surpassing South Korea to become the world's third-largest exporter.

China overtook Germany in 2022 to become the world's second-largest exporter after Japan, and just one year on, it has claimed the top spot, said the *Detroit News*, adding that China's exports have jumped from one million units in 2020, to nearly five times that number in three years.

China's success is being driven by a domestic shift toward EVs, said *Fortune*. These figures represent the most recent indication that China is a global auto exporting giant, thanks in large part to its nimble automobile manufacturers and their ability to manufacture electrical vehicles, said Reuters. BYD

overtook Tesla as the world's top seller of EVs in the fourth quarter of 2023.

China's leading role in the global EV industry is also down to its market scale, cheap labor and supply chain dominance, according to analysts, CNN reported. "China is now leading in production and increasing its comparative edges, banking on its massive domestic market and the first mover advantage," CNN quoted analysts from a French investment bank as saying.

Paul Gong, an analyst at UBS, cited China's "advantage in terms of technology" and "good command of some manufacturing techniques" as reasons for the country's EV advantage, as reported by *South China Morning Post*.

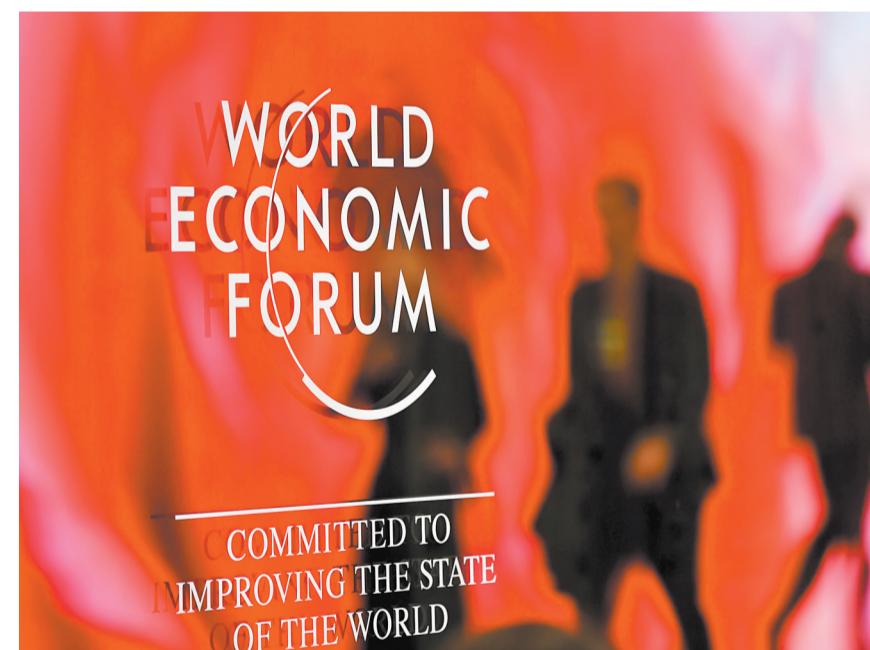
Chinese EVs are "snazzy, whizzy" and are "better-quality, particularly with respect to the smart features in EVs that

are made possible by Internet connectivity," said *The Economist*.

Reuters said that the Chinese EV manufacturers have also developed an advanced technology edge, particularly when it comes to software and the ability to design new models in a timely manner. "China's carmakers are going to be hard to overtake."

As the world decarbonizes, demand will rise further. Fitch Ratings said in a report last month that it expects the share of new energy vehicles, including hybrids, to rise to 42-45 percent of China's total sales in 2024, as reported by AP. It also projected that exports would grow 20 to 30 percent this year.

By 2030, China could double its share of the global market, to a third, ending the dominance of the West's national champions, especially in Europe, said *The Economist*.



The theme of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2024 is "Rebuilding Trust", with key topics, including achieving security and cooperation in a divided world, creating growth and jobs for a new era, artificial intelligence driving economic and social development, and implementing long-term climate, nature and energy strategies. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

'Smart Mines' Herald One-person Coal Mining

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Less labour and more efficiency

"Reducing workers by 70 percent, yet increasing efficiency by 20 percent" — this is the transformation witnessed at Shandong Energy Group, thanks to Lu's team's Smart Mine system.

Once a mining area undergoes digital transformation, a visual, transparent, and controllable smart mine emerges. Workers above ground can access real-time information from any location within the mine and make informed decisions through large screens.

Safety is both the starting point and end point of their innovation. Lu's team project utilizes advanced equipment and software to precisely and visually model the entire geological structure and concealed attributes of a mine, allowing for early prediction and prevention of geological disasters and

hazards.

In Lu's company Shandong Lionking Software, 23 patented inventions are on display, with more in the pipeline. Their focus is on Smart Mine's core technologies, ensuring that they contribute to the creation of entirely new technologies.

In 2020, the National Development and Reform Commission, and eight other ministries, jointly issued guidelines to accelerate the intelligent development of coal mines, aiming for comprehensive intelligence by 2035. Lu sees this as an encouraging sign. His current mission is to refine the technology, shape the scenarios, and promote widespread implementation.

"Given time, with the technology chain in place, the era of 'one-person coal mining' is on the horizon," he said.

'Polar Bear Sweater' Knitted from Aerogel

Hi! Tech

By QI Liming

If humans had hair like polar bears, they would be able to survive the severe cold without wearing heavy coats. Pondering on this point and inspired by the structure of polar bear hair, researchers from China's Zhejiang University have created an aerogel fibre that can be woven into clothing.

The polar bear's hair is a hollow structure that encapsulates a large amount of air, which reduces heat loss by inhibiting heat conduction and con-

vection. This principle is the same as the design of warm clothing.

Aerogel, the world's lightest solid material, has long been valued for its thermal insulation properties. By imitating the "core-shell" structure of polar bear hair, a kind of encapsulated aerogel super-warm artificial fiber was invented. The "core" is responsible for super warmth to prevent the loss of heat to some extent. The "shell" is responsible for strength and durability.

In this way, encapsulated aerogel material not only has the thermal insulation function of traditional materials, but can also block the infrared radiation from the human body. In addition,

the materials can be directly woven into fabrics with commercial textile machines.

Although the processing cost is

high at present, industrial mass production can drive further process improvements and cost reduction, making the "polar bear sweater" a reality on shelves.



Fabric made from a new type of fiber that mimics polar bear fur. (PHOTO: Zhejiang University)