

Tech for Better Life in China

Human Rights Protection in Digital Age

By ZHONG Jianli

"Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," a seminar in remembrance of the world's first comprehensive international statement on human rights, was held in Beijing on December 4.

The declaration, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, contributed significantly to the progress and development of global human rights.

Over 70 experts and scholars discussed the spirit and significance of the declaration, China's concept of human rights and safeguarding them, as well as the new human rights protection issues in the digital age.

Padma Choling, president of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, said the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established the basic consensus on respecting and protecting human rights. China has always been a contributor, advocator and practitioner of the spirit of the declaration.

Zhang Wenxian, director of the Academic Committee of China Law Society, said the Global Development Initiative,



A seminar on "Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" is held in Beijing on December 4. (PHOTO: ZHONG Jianli/S&T Daily)

Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative are based on common human values. They not only reflect China's human rights concepts, but also express the common aspirations of people around the world and are of great significance for building a

fair, reasonable and inclusive international human rights governance system.

In today's world, with the rapid development of digital technology, the protection of digital human rights has become a global issue.

Han Xiutao, director of the Center

for Sci & Tech and Human Rights Studies at the Beijing Institute of Technology, said the new technologies represented by generative AI, while facilitating people's life, were also leading to ethical risks such as privacy leakage, fake information and digital divide.

As a major country with a rapidly developing digital economy, China has always adhered to the principle of attaching equal importance to security and development in the ethical governance of digital technologies such as AI.

In 2019, China issued its new-generation AI governance principles with eight points, including respect for privacy. In July 2023, the Interim Measures for the Management of Generative AI Services was released, the world's first regulation for generative AI.

Han said China has always followed the humanistic concept of "science and technology for good" and developed AI technologies responsibly to enable a better life for people. Its solutions for human rights protection have contributed substantially to global human rights governance in today's smart digital era.

IUSTC International Union for Science & Technology Communication

The International Union for Science & Technology Communication (IUSTC), initiated by Science and Technology Daily, is a unified platform for the global publications to exchange the latest sci-tech news, aiming to promote global sci-tech innovation and cooperation, and improve the efficiency of sci-tech information dissemination. Therefore, this column is specifically for publishing news from members of IUSTC.

Science and Technology Daily Signs MOU with IOL

By Robin-Lee Francke

Independent Online (IOL) and Science and Technology Daily (S&T Daily) are set to break the boundaries and expand audiences after signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

During a sit-down in Cape Town, the delegation who flew in from China and IOL, along with representatives from Independent Newspapers discussed the prospects of a fruitful relationship between the publications and countries.

Zhang Biyong, president of S&T Daily, said the publication is a Chinese mainstream media and sees South Africa as important for collaboration, adding that the prospects of sharing content on both ends from the publications as well as learning from each other is key as technology advancements are made daily.

Wang Junming, assistant editor-in-chief of S&T Daily said this newly formed relationship could lead to dialogues, forums, and innovations which would be beneficial for both countries.

S&T Daily, founded in 1986, serves

Source: IOL

as its nation's primary platform for the dissemination of information within the field of science and technology.

Editor-in-chief for IOL, Lance Witten said he was pleased with the MOU with one of the most respected media titles and groups in the Chinese publishing landscape.

"This paves the way for greater collaboration in the future on both the content and skills-sharing fronts. It allows our South African-based storytelling to reach a broader international and Chinese audience and exposes our audience to their storytelling," Witten said.

"There is much we as a country can learn from China, especially in terms of the plethora of technological advancements in all fields, such as engineering, medtech, fintech and manufacturing, and the fact that over just four decades they have managed to lift their population out of poverty," he added.

"This partnership is a huge step forward for IOL and our audiences, and I can't wait to continue along this journey with our new partners," Witten said.



IOL signs an MOU with S&T Daily. From left to right: Aziz Hartley, Lance Witten, Zhang Biyong and Wang Junming. (PHOTO: IOL)

Pooling Financial Resources to Spur Sci-tech Innovation

Policy

By LI Linxu

In its latest move to spur sci-tech innovation, China is stepping up efforts to pool more financial resources to support the innovation-oriented sectors.

A specialized campaign focusing on boosting the capabilities of sci-tech financial services will be launched, according to a meeting jointly held by four government bodies, including the People's Bank of China (PBC) and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST).

Priorities will be given to the key ar-

reas such as national major sci-tech tasks and sci-tech SMEs, so as to bolster the quality and efficiency of finance serving the real economy.

The meeting called for improving and perfecting of an all-round and multi-level sci-tech financial service system, including credit and loans, bonds, equity, insurance, venture capital, and financing guarantees.

In recent years, China has rolled out a series of policies to strengthen the sci-tech financial service system, with significant achievements made in supporting sci-tech innovation.

Loans to high-tech manufacturing enterprises, SRDI enterprises, and sci-tech SMEs, have maintained a relatively rapid pace.

Meanwhile, the issuance scale of sci-tech innovation bonds and sci-tech innovation corporate bonds continues to expand.

Of particular note is that the construction of Science and Technology Innovation Board (STAR), Beijing Stock Exchange (BSE) and ChiNext is gaining momentum, while the reform of registration-based IPO system is going deeper.

ChiNext and STAR will continue to rank top by number of deals and proceeds in 2023, according to a report recently released by Ernst & Young, forecasting that listing on the BSE is expected to become a new trend for high-growth SDRI companies, thanks to supportive policies.

Besides the meeting, PBC, together

with seven government bodies, have recently unveiled 25 measures to strengthen financial services for private companies, particularly for SMEs, as well as those in high-tech, innovation-driven, green and low-carbon sectors.

The measures focus on the facilitation of the private companies' access to diverse financing channels such as credits, bonds and stock options.

The policies encourage eligible companies to fully leverage both the domestic and overseas capital market, Jane Yang, managing partner of Ernst & Young Beijing Office, told S&T Daily. She advises eligible companies to choose their listing spots in light of their own conditions, as well as the capital markets' preferences.

Safeguarding Blue Sky Gains Momentum

By LI Linxu

The State Council executive meeting reviewed and approved an action plan to continuously improve air quality on November 24.

Efforts will be made to coordinate the high-level environment protection and high-quality development, according to the meeting, calling for people from all walks of life to take an active part in curbing air pollution.

It emphasized developing a green and low-carbon circular economy system, and accelerating the green and low-carbon transformation of industries, energy and transport.

In recent years, China has rolled out a series of policies to combat air pollution, which has significantly improved the air quality.

Ten years ago, an action plan for prevention and control of air pollution was implemented, setting specific

goals of lowering the particulate matter (PM) level.

In 2018, a three-year action plan to win the battle for a blue sky was released.

Thanks to these efforts, China has seen the fastest improvement in air quality across the world.

From 2013 to 2022, China's average PM2.5 concentration decreased by 57 percent, and the number of heavy pollution days reduced by 93 percent, accord-

ing to the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE).

The country will stringently control the increase in emissions, reduce existing emissions, and strengthen supervision and support efforts, said Huang Runqiu, minister of MEE, in an earlier press briefing, vowing to make relentless efforts to control air pollution and protect the blue sky for the people.

The low-carbon transformation of energy will be speeded up, and new and clean energy sources will be vigorously developed, while the development of a green transportation system will be advanced, according to Huang.

clinics in Beijing. International cooperation in stem cell and gene R&D will also be supported.

In addition, Beijing will be assisted to strengthen cooperation and exchanges with members of the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement in digital identity, digital inclusiveness, cybersecurity, fintech and logistics.

Trade and investment institutional arrangements will be optimized with rules that are in line with the innovative development of trade in services. Trade costs and barriers will be reduced and cross-border trade supervision improved. Cross-border capital flows will be facilitated and enterprises going global will be supported.

Beijing will get help to build a professional organization for the construction of the Green Silk Road. It will be encouraged to import and export environmental products and services, and carry out bilateral and multilateral cooperation projects in this sector.

New Plan to Open Up Service Sector Further

By CHEN Chunyou

The State Council announced a new plan on November 23 to open up the service sector wider. Plan 2.0 is a follow-up on a policy released in 2020, when Beijing became China's first integrated national demonstration zone for opening up the service sector.

Ling Ji, vice minister of commerce, said at a recent news briefing that the service industry, characterized by a wide range of categories, is an important area for building a higher-level, open economic system. The launch of a new round of pilot initiatives in the demonstration zone will help it align with international economic and trade rules, and promote a high-standard system for opening up the service industry.

Since 2015, China has selected 11 provinces and cities for comprehensive pilot programs to open up the service industry. Zhu Bing, director of the department of foreign investment administration at the Ministry of Commerce, said in the first three quarters of 2023, the added value of the service industry in these 11 provinces and cities reached 13.2 trillion RMB, accounting for 69.7 percent of the regional GDP.

Plan 2.0 will launch 170 pilot initiatives, notably more than before, and with greater openness and innovation, Ling said.

The objective is to construct a modern industrial system and optimize the overall ecosystem of industrial development. It will also deepen reform and opening up of the whole industrial chain

in key areas such as telecommunications, healthcare, finance, culture and education, and professional services.

Specifically, Beijing will be supported to build an international information industry and digital trade port. It is expected to strengthen international cooperation in the digital field, promote the formulation of relevant international rules, and seek mutual benefits and win-win cooperation in cross-border transmission of data, security testing and certification of digital products.

In healthcare and medical services, Beijing will further the Belt and Road international cooperation project on health and WHO Collaborating Centre brand projects. Doctors from foreign countries, as well as Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan will be supported to set up

Agricultural Data Revolution Empowers Food Security in Developing Countries

From Page 1

The "soybean crisis" in 2004 made us realize that relying on foreign information alone is actually very risky, so we have to have our own sources of information," Wu told S&T Daily. CropWatch has offered a new data option for many user countries to obtain agricultural information in the Western-dominated food world.

Wu said it is similar to a consumer shopping around when buying things, comparing the pros and cons and then making an informed decision.

"One should not impose on others what he himself does not desire" is Confucian wisdom that Wu holds close to his heart. "In the process of cooperating with different countries, I found that the country, no matter big or small, rich or poor, has a very strong sense of data sovereignty," said Wu, adding that this was the reason CropWatch was moved to the cloud, in order to enhance the ownership of crop monitoring and improving information transparency for countries.

"The CropWatch program is a model of South-South cooperation," Shamika Sirimanne, director of technology and logistics for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, said during her opening remarks at a workshop in August. "Its focus on long-term sustainable implementation by participating countries and the fact that it represents a true transfer of knowledge and technology make it stand out," she said, adding that "This will enable [countries] to make data-driven policy decisions."

The increase of international im-

past of CropWatch is attributed to the long-term support of the National Remote Sensing Center of China. "Data transparency and long-term monitoring are key for users to receive and use the system. Our 25 years of continuous monitoring and 11 years of foreign service for the agricultural economy have led us to this point," said Wu. The project has been sustained by the long-term support of different departments in the country, such as the National Remote Sensing Center of China, according to Wu.

Securing food futures

Another move for the CropWatch team is to make more thematic analysis to show the successful cases of our agricultural practice. With less than seven percent of the world's arable land, China feeds about 20 percent of the world's population. What's the secret behind it?

For example, irrigation accounts for over 50 percent of China's arable land and more than 70 percent of our total food production. Despite this significant contribution of irrigation, only about 24 percent of the world's arable land is irrigated, which is one of the major reasons for the volatility of global food production, according to Wu.

"Why do China and India prioritize irrigation while many other countries invest significantly less in this crucial practice? It's a query often overlooked, yet its impact on global food security is paramount. We must articulate the critical factors steering global food security and generously impart China's insights to our global counterparts," said Wu.