

Policy

Reinforcing Ecological Protection

By CHEN Chunyou

With a large population of more than 1.4 billion, China needs an immense volume of resources and a vast green environment. It is therefore inevitable that the country chooses a development path of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, said Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu, who made the remarks after the opening meeting of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress in Beijing.

Over the past decade, China has attached great importance to environmental protection. According to statistics from the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), China's PM2.5 density, a key indicator of air pollution, fell by 57 percent, and the carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP declined by 34.4 percent from 2012 to 2021.

China has established the national park system to better protect wildlife species and their habitats, and taken a comprehensive approach to the governance of mountains, waters, forests, and farmlands, in order to preserve ecological balance by strengthening the ability of ecosystems to circulate.

Economic development and environmental protection complement each other, and a good ecological environment will lead to high-quality development, said Huang, citing China's annual GDP growth of more than 6.5 percent on average over the past 10



People fly kites at Zhonghu wetland park in Huaibei, Anhui province. (PHOTO: VCG)

years, while polluting emissions have been sharply reduced.

Some measures have been taken by MEE to promote enterprises' high-quality development. In 2022, MEE instructed small and medium-sized enterprises to improve their environmental management ability to reduce potential impact on the environment.

To date, black and malodorous water bodies in cities at and above the prefecture level have been generally cleaned up. People enjoy taking a trip along the country's rivers or lakes during their leisure time, which

exemplifies the concept of the harmonious existence between humans and nature, said Huang.

In addition, Huang highlighted a funding mechanism that demands financial flows from developed countries to support biodiversity conservation in developing countries, especially the least developed countries, adopted at the second phase of COP15 in Montreal, Canada in 2022, when China assumed the COP15 presidency, aimed at reversing biodiversity loss.

From this year onwards, MEE will continue to advance the green

transformation in industry, energy and transport sectors, reinforce nationwide efforts to prevent and control pollution in urban and rural areas, and implement a coordinated control of PM2.5 and ozone, said Huang.

Meanwhile, the supervision over ecological protection and restoration is to be strengthened, and the introduction of major biodiversity conservation projects is planned, so as to maintain and enhance the diversity, stability and sustainability of the ecosystem, added Huang.

Budget Boost for Sci-tech in 2023

By LI Linxu

China's fiscal policy in 2023 will focus on expanding consumption, advancing sci-tech self-reliance and self-strengthening at higher levels, invigorating enterprises, and promoting green and low-carbon development, according to this year's draft budget report submitted to the National People's Congress.

Over the past five years, China continued to improve the structure of government spending, and ensured suffi-

cient funding in key areas such as education, sci-tech, environmental protection, and efforts to meet people's living needs, according to this year's government work report.

Of particular note is that in 2022, the national general public budgetary expenditure on sci-tech surpassed 1 trillion RMB, up 3.8 percent year-on-year, said Liu Kun, minister of finance, at a recent press conference, adding that the spending provides a strong guarantee to meet the funding needs of basic research and breakthroughs on key

core technologies.

Among the total, the central government's spending on sci-tech reached about 320 billion RMB in 2022, while the amount of 2023 is projected to be higher.

The increase reflects the importance of sci-tech in the country's future development. More efforts will be made to elevate the country's sci-tech innovation capabilities, said the draft budget report, pledging that the central government's spending on basic research will rise further.

Meanwhile, it vowed to further reform the allocation and utilization mechanisms of government funding for sci-tech research, and would grant scientists a greater say in determining technological roadmaps and how funds are spent.

International sci-tech cooperation will also be strengthened, according to the draft budget report, adding that a fund management mechanism will be explored to suit the characteristics of international big science programs and projects.

Pooling Resources to Build High-quality, Open Innovation Ecosystem

By ZHANG Jiaxin & LI Linxu

As China is promoting high-level opening-up, the country is gaining momentum in sci-tech development, as well as in international sci-tech cooperation.

Of particular note is that in the 20th CPC National Congress report, China vowed to expand sci-tech exchanges and cooperation with other countries, cultivate an internationalized environment for research, and create an open and globally competitive innovation ecosystem.

This fully demonstrates China's commitment to integrating into global innovation networks, as well as the country's resolve to deeply engage in global sci-tech governance, said Jiang Pengju, member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), also Vice Mayor of Changzhou City.

Jiang noted that innovation is a long and arduous road, full of unknown difficulties and risks. Thus, it is necessary to pool all resources, both from home and abroad, to create a favorable environment for innovation.

In this year's Two Sessions, Jiang submitted a proposal concerning the construction of international innovation cooperation parks.

Up until now, more than 300 international cooperation parks of all types have been established across the country, according to incomplete statistics. These parks, especially the innovation cooperation parks featured with

opening-up, innovation and co-integration, have made valuable exploration in promoting the combination of high-level sci-tech self-improvement and open innovation cooperation.

However, there are still some issues to be addressed in the development of these parks, such as the imperfection of innovation ecosystems, the lack of innovation resources, and the insufficiency of the internationalization level of talent.

In response to these pain points, Jiang offered his suggestions, such as strengthening the top-level design and coordination in the principle of effective competition and cooperation, encouraging top-performing parks to build opening-up and innovation pilot zones, and optimizing the policies and services for foreign experts.

In his proposal, Jiang also laid great importance on drawing the international successful experiences in light of local conditions and setting up model parks in creating an open innovation ecosystem.

Citing Israel as an example in building an innovation ecosystem with financial support, Jiang believes that some of our parks can also pilot innovative financial instruments, such as the mode of investment and loan linkage. If successful, then these measures can be promoted more broadly.

Local cities should roll out more targeted policies in creating an open innovation ecosystem, so as to achieve an economic and social development with higher quality, said Jiang.



The China Israel Changzhou Innovation Park. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

Exploring and Protecting Our Oceans

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Hainiu II, China's self-developed deep-water drilling rig system, managed to dig a world record of 231 meters into the seabed at a depth of over 2,000 meters in the South China Sea on April 7, 2021. The success of Hainiu II made it much easier to explore methane hydrate, while preserving the proper temperature and pressure deep under the sea.

Resources above the sea should not be ignored. The sea wind is extremely powerful and making good use of it could bring an enormous amount of clean electricity.

The world's largest 16-megawatt offshore wind turbine rolled off the production line in Fujian province on November 23, 2022. When operated under standard running conditions, the turbine could generate clean energy of over 66 million kWh per year, satisfying the electrical need of 36,000 three-person households, saving standard coal usage of nearly 22,000 tons and reducing CO₂ emissions by 54,000 tons.

Protecting the oceanic environment
Oceans have already been severely damaged through human negligence. Marine development will not be sustainable if the oceans are not strictly

preserved and protected.

Clearing the vast quantities of ocean garbage, especially plastics, is one of the key tasks in improving the oceanic environment.

In 2021, researchers from the Institute of Oceanology at Chinese Academy of Sciences discovered a marine bacterial community capable of efficiently degrading plastic wastes. After cultivation, the bacteria could degrade plastic waste into pieces within only two weeks.

A pilot program focusing on plastic ocean garbage was conducted in Taizhou, Zhejiang province last year. More than 20 international environmental protection organizations, universities and leading global enterprises are cooperating to drive the program.

For only three months, the program had collected 1,560 tons of ocean garbage, of which 1,270 tons was plastic, cutting carbon emissions of nearly 5,000 tons. If the program was to include ocean water off the entire Zhejiang province coastline, there would be 18,000 tons of sea plastic garbage collected per year, reducing carbon emissions by 72,000 tons.

Development and protection of the ocean are both important, and require equal effort from humanity as a whole.

Livestreaming Recruitment Trends in China

Case Study

By ZHONG Jianli & MA Aiping

Livestreaming recruitment is becoming an important way for enterprises to source employees in China.

During the recently concluded Two Sessions, Liang Qianjuan, a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC) from northwest China's Gansu province, proposed the introduction of the "Kunshan mode" of livestreaming recruitment on a larger scale to western China.

As the first county-level city whose GDP exceeded 500 billion RMB, Kunshan in east China's Jiangsu province, has explored a new mode of recruitment via livestreaming on digital platforms.

Under this mode, government, enterprises and platforms collaborate with each other to bridge information gaps between job seekers and recruiters. Through digital platforms, traditional local labor markets are connected nationally, and are accessible to job seekers across the country.



NPC deputy Liang Qianjuan proposes the introduction of livestreaming recruitment to western China. (PHOTO: S&T Daily)

Liang believed that it is necessary to make use of new channels such as short video and livestreaming, to solve the enterprises' difficulty in recruiting workers and the job seekers' difficulty in finding work. This will not only help encourage young people to return home to start businesses, but also promote the labor

flow between east and west.

In 2022, the proportion of blue-collar workers who used short video or live broadcast to obtain jobs increased by 12.4 percent, according to the Report on Employment of Blue-collar Groups in China, published by a research center of the Capital University

of Economics and Business.

Liang thus suggested that more local governments should cooperate with platform enterprises to promote the "Kunshan mode," and provide policy support to make labor flow and employment services in the central and western regions more efficient, through digital means.

Local governments, industry associations and platform enterprises should cooperate closely to increase the coverage of digital training in rural areas, and build classrooms and learning bases for young people returning to rural areas to master livestreaming skills when starting their businesses, added Liang.

Regarding developing rural e-commerce, Liang said it is vital to standardize and improve the e-commerce ecology and supply chain level in rural areas.

Local governments should further support and encourage specialized, wide-range, and industrialized development of rural e-commerce, so that high-quality agricultural products and proficient livestreaming anchors can get more attention on social media platforms.