



Roadmap Unveiled for Biodiversity Conservation

Policy

By LI Linxu

China unveiled its national biodiversity conservation strategy and action plan (2023-30) to promote the effective implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework that urged all countries to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

The plan, issued by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), is a scientific guide to comprehensively improve the level of biodiversity management in China, said an official from MEE, adding that China is striving to make its contribution to global biodiversity governance, as well as the goals set by the framework.

By 2030, the country is expected to restore at least 30 percent of its degraded terrestrial, inland-water, coastal and marine ecosystems. At least 30 percent of land, inland-water, coastal and marine areas will be effectively protected



Black-faced spoonbills are seen at a wetland park in Danzhou, Hainan province. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

and managed, according to the plan.

By then, nature reserves, composed mainly of national parks, will account for 18 percent of the country's

total land area. The terrestrial ecological red lines will take up 30 percent of the country's total land area at the minimum, while the areas covered by

the marine ecological red lines will cover at least 150,000 square kilometers.

The plan also laid out the long and medium goals and visions for 2035 and 2050 respectively. To achieve these goals, the plan put forward four priority areas: mainstreaming biodiversity, addressing threats to biodiversity loss, sustainable utilization as well as fair and equitable sharing of benefits, and modernizing biodiversity governance.

Under such priority areas, there are a series of priority actions, such as policy planning, ecological space protection, ecosystem restoration, sustainable management of biological resources, sustainable utilization of germplasm resources, smart governance, and international cooperation.

In recent years, China has made significant progress in biodiversity conservation, with improved laws and regulations, as well as rising public awareness of biodiversity conservation.

Now, the country is home to over 135,000 species, including more than 65,000 animal species and over 39,000 plant species.

The Lancet's Timeless Mission: Driving Social Change via Medical Research & Science

By Kumsal Bayazit

The Lancet was founded in 1823 by Thomas Wakley with the vision to drive positive social change by advancing medical research and science for the greater good, by addressing inequities of the time with access to medical knowledge for "medical and surgical practitioners" in the UK and the British colonies (as they were referred to at the time), and by being more than a medical journal. *The Lancet* has remained true to its core mission to drive positive social change, which is as relevant today as it was groundbreaking then, through the past two centuries amid seismic changes in our world.

During the past 200 years, average life expectancy has more than doubled globally, partly thanks to better health care, hygiene and nutrition — all of which are underpinned by scientific, technological and economic progress. Two hundred years ago, about 40 percent of children worldwide perished before the age of five years; today, the under — five child mortality rate is below four percent.

Many diseases that were previously fatal are now curable or manageable thanks to antibiotics, vaccines, targeted medicines, immunotherapies and surgical advances.

The Lancet has remained steadfast in its belief that health and social progress go hand in hand, putting inclusion, equity and collaboration at the heart of scientific enquiry and policy change.

The journal has done this boldly, not shying away from uncomfortable debate, while evolving to become the world's number one medical journal with an unparalleled impact in both academic and public spheres. *The Lancet* has grown from a single journal with a hand-printed run of a few thousand copies for a privileged group in the UK to become a family of titles read by tens of millions of people around the world.

The centenary issue of *The Lancet* featured pictures of male doctors only, many of them also acting as editors. Now, half of *The Lancet's* international editorial advisory board are women. *The Lancet* has also put a spotlight on racism as a global public health emergency and published a special issue aimed at charting a path for advancing racial and ethnic equity in science, medicine and health.

Equally important is *The Lancet's* role in strengthening trust in science, including during public health emergencies. *The Lancet* team worked around the clock with researchers from across the globe during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping scientists understand and find cures for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, starting with the first research papers that came out of China in January 2020.

In an increasingly polarized world, *The Lancet's* belief in partnership continues to build bridges across borders, with



Kumsal Bayazit. (COURTESY PHOTO)

science and medicine as the unifying bonds. *The Lancet's* many commissions are strong vehicles for scientific review and enquiry into urgent and understudied health predicaments that affect people everywhere. They are multidisciplinary, global and focused on transformative change. The commissions are not led by *The Lancet*, or Elsevier as its publisher, but by science.

We are at the precipice of another pivotal moment for the world, tested by several grand challenges. As the Lancet Countdown report on climate change calls out, this existential crisis is a global health issue.

Meanwhile, populations worldwide are living longer and want access to quality health care, which comes with increased costs to systems and added pressure on doctors and nurses, many of whom are leaving their professions. Geopolitical tensions are at their highest since the end of the Cold War, challenging the spirit of global cooperation in science and health care. Long embedded inequities in society are also resulting in poor health outcomes for the most vulnerable. All these challenges require deep and profound focus and collaboration across health care communities, governments and society.

I remain confident that the future will bring even more openness, transparency, interdisciplinary research, reproducibility and more equitable and inclusive participation in the scientific endeavor. Responsible use of artificial intelligence and large language machine learning technologies, immense datasets, open channels of sharing knowledge, and greater public interest in the scientific process all present exciting opportunities.

As we look to the next 200 years, there is no doubt in my mind that *The Lancet* will continue to have a pivotal role in scientific enquiry and medical advancement, and that it will continue to boldly catalyze social and policy change that benefits people and our planet.

The progress made over the past two centuries gives me deep confidence in the positive progress to come. I thank Thomas Wakley, Richard Horton, and all the editors, authors, peer reviewers, and publishing teams past, present, and future for staying true to *The Lancet's* core mission.

The author is CEO of Elsevier, which publishes *The Lancet*.

Promoting Integration of NEVs with Grids

By ZHONG Jianli

To strengthen the role of new energy vehicles (NEVs) in the electrochemical energy storage system, and support the building of a new energy and power system, China's National Development and Reform Commission and other departments recently issued a plan to strengthen the integration and interaction of NEVs with the power grid.

NEVs are connected to the grid through charging and swapping facilities.

The interaction between NEVs and the grid mainly includes intelligent and orderly charging, as well as bi-directional charging and discharging.

The plan says that by 2025, China's technical standards for vehicle-grid interaction will be initially established. By then, the peak-valley electricity pricing mechanism for charging is expected to be fully implemented and continuously optimized.

Efforts will also be made to ensure that in pilot cities, more than 60 percent of the annual total power of NEVs is

charged during off-peak hours, while the target for private charging piles is 80 percent. Furthermore, the potential of NEVs as mobile electrochemical energy storage will be preliminarily verified.

In terms of promoting core technological breakthroughs for vehicle-grid interaction, it proposes increasing efforts in key technology research for power batteries. Without significantly increasing costs, the lifecycle of power batteries will be increased by 3,000 times or more.

To improve the interaction level of

charging and swapping facilities, uniformly intelligent and orderly charging piles will be adopted, and the intelligent transformation of existing charging piles will be promoted as needed.

This move marks a significant step for China in promoting the integration of NEVs with grids, and fostering an environment conducive to the widespread use of vehicle-grid interaction technologies, ultimately contributing to the development of a more efficient and sustainable energy ecosystem.

Silver Economy to Ameliorate Seniors' Lifestyle

By ZHONG Jianli

With the increase of its elderly population, China is taking measures to cultivate new drivers for economic growth by developing its "silver economy."

The General Office of the State Council recently released the Guideline on Developing the Silver Economy to Improve the Well-being of the Elderly. This marks the country's first specialized document supporting the development of the silver economy.

This economy primarily refers to economic activities offering services and products for the elderly. As the number of this demographic grows, the consumer base for elderly products and services continues to expand, driving the silver economy into a new phase of rapid growth.

According to data from China's National Bureau of Statistics, by the end of

2022, China's population aged 60 and above had exceeded 280 million, accounting for 19.8 percent of the total population. It is estimated that around 2035, this population will exceed 400 million, accounting for more than 30 percent of the total.

The guideline stresses the need to optimize medical and healthcare services for the elderly. Hospitals and healthcare institutions are encouraged to increase capacity to treat geriatric diseases and promote the application of R&D achievements in senior healthcare.

It proposes to plan a number of high-level silver economy industrial parks. Leveraging advantages of free trade pilot zones, various economic development zones and demonstration zones for service industries, efforts will be made to advance cross-regional and international cooperation in the silver

economy sector.

In providing standardized elderly care services and products, emphasis will be placed on prioritizing technologically-advanced, market-recognized products for the elderly, such as mobile terminals, wearable devices and service robots. The establishment of high-level, specialized third-party quality testing platforms is highlighted in the guideline.

To expand channels for consumption, e-commerce platforms and large retailers are encouraged to host themed shopping festivals and design elderly-friendly interfaces, so as to facilitate convenient online and offline shopping experiences.

In addition, the role of sci-tech innovation will be enhanced to make breakthroughs in rehabilitation aids and smart healthcare technologies. Data related to the silver economy will be shared and

used in an orderly and rational way to empower industrial development.



Seniors make paper-cuttings at the home care service center in Hexi district, Tianjin municipality in north China. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

Qinghai Elevates Wetland Conservation

Case Study

By LI Linxu

Thanks to the improving ecological environment, an ever increasing number of migratory birds are choosing the Qinghai Longbaotan Wetlands as their winter habitats.

The Qinghai Longbaotan Wetlands, located within the Longbao National Nature Reserve in Yushu city, Qinghai province, covers a total area of 9,529 hectares, with a wetland area of 3,349 hectares.

It is the first conservation area in China primarily focused on protecting

the breeding grounds of the black-necked crane, and also plays an important role as a breeding and resting site for migratory birds on the Central Asian Flyway.

In 2023, the site was listed as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The Qinghai Longbaotan Wetlands optimizes the province's continuous efforts to scientifically manage and protect its wetlands.

Last year, three wetlands in Qinghai were newly added to the list of Wetlands of National Importance by the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

The province is home to the Sanjiangyuan area, known as the country's

"water tower," containing the headwaters of the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang Rivers.

As a major wetland province, Qinghai possesses an area of 7.123 million hectares of wetlands, accounting for 12.64 percent of the country's total, according to the latest statistics.

In recent years, the province has rolled out a series of policies as well as a package of measures to advance the conservation of wetlands.

It is among the first provinces to establish a mechanism of wetland conservation and public interest judiciary at the provincial level.

Last year, the province's Bureau of Forestry and Grassland, together with 18

other provincial government bodies, launched a joint meeting mechanism to protect its wetlands.

It also released an implementation plan to carry out the country's wetland protection law, and completed the formulation of the province's wetland conservation plan (2022-2030), as well as an implementation plan to conserve and restore the wetlands in the Yellow River Basin of Qinghai Province (2022-2030). Meanwhile, it has also set up a pool of wetland experts, which numbers 68 at present.

Due to making such great strides in wetland conservation, more and more migratory birds are expected to fly to Qinghai's wetlands to spend the winter.

Development Promotes Human Rights Progress

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Suarez hailed China's work with other countries in addressing poverty, food security, malnutrition, foreign debt and climate change as a true example of promoting the protection of economic, social and cultural rights and South-South cooperation.

China has put forward the Global

Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative to promote global development, safeguard world peace and promote exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations, providing China's proposals and making China's contribution to strengthening global human rights governance.