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## GREEN DEVELOPMENT: CHINA'S UPPERMOST PRIORITY

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China's top advisory committee for environment and development said it is pursuing a fresh consensus on green advancement to improve the country's quality development for the next five-year plan, which commences in 2021.<sup>1</sup> The 2019 annual general meeting (AGM) of China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED) assembled on 2- 5 June in Hangzhou, China weighed on consequences from the eight Special Policy Studies (SPS) organized during 2018. The eight draft proposals of SPS urge the Chinese government to understand the need to foster green development. Since the notion of green growth has been expanded from the acceptance of environmental protection to a green economic set-up, including innovation, green consumption, finance, and manufacturing, chief Chinese adviser of CCICED, Liu Shijin observed that "the idea of green development should be given priority before addressing the issue of high-quality development".<sup>2</sup> The chief adviser made further additions on the clarification of crucial elements

such as upgrading the flow of green products and initiating a countrywide creative lifestyle goal on green development which Chinese government can consider before framing a policy on green consumption.<sup>3</sup>

On the green development of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and green urbanization, delegates to the AGM pressed China to assist BRI partner nations to abstain from becoming jammed into obsolete, polluting technologies and to support them to meet their various responsibilities under the Paris Accord on climate change and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>4</sup> The keynote address shared by Shi Yulong, Director General, China Center for Urban Development, National Development and Reform Commission of China (NDRC) stressed on the importance to develop the capacity of all firms associated in BRI partnerships, and that BRI route cities are incredibly diverse which requires a detailed understanding of a particular country.<sup>5</sup> Urbanization becomes urgent in

determining if green development can be practicable or not in China.

'Beat Air Pollution' themed World Environment Day hosted by China and UNEP on June 5 marked the achievements that China made in fixing air quality. Han Zheng, Vice Premier China remarked the attempts of Zhejiang province, where Hangzhou is based, in completing a rural village restoration programme which won a UN Champions of the Earth Award in 2018. A newly-released Air Quality Development Report 2013-18 presented the improvement of air quality in China managed through government control, people involvement, and business cooperation. While substantial progress has been achieved in reducing air pollution by the Chinese government, there is still a massive challenge ahead.<sup>6</sup> In 2018, 33 of 39 northern Chinese cities covered with smog did not reach their carbon reduction targets for the winter. Handling China's constant pollution problem will depend upon three fronts: awareness, innovation, and policy.<sup>7</sup>

CCICED dialogues on policy research in the AGM 2019 further urged the Chinese government to take the lead in global climate governance which requires acceleration in the de-carbonization of the economy of China, energy transition, climate protection, addressing air pollution, and expanding funding sources for climate finance. Opening the first session on joint development, green, low carbon, Wang Tianyi,

China Everbright International, talked about the possibilities for gaining zero waste cities in China which also consisted of promoting solar power, and cooperation to stop marine plastic litter. The forecasting of environmental risks provided by CEOs and investors can help China to lead in climate governance.

The AGM closing session concluded with the remarks of Han Zheng, reflecting on the constructive significance of the theme of the AGM, 'A New Era: Towards a New World of Green Prosperity.' He underlined that green development had become a global trend and that China adds significant influence in creating an ecological civilization, which is currently in a fast -pace mode established on the perception of 'Beautiful China'. Lastly, Han confirmed China's full acceptance of the SDGs and conveyed support for the aspect of CCICED in establishing policies for the government.<sup>8</sup> Since China is changing from rapid economic growth into quality development, the focus on the quality of green consumption ingrained in the commercial systems becomes extremely important.

*(Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Centre for Air Power Studies [CAPS])*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Delia Paul, "CCICED Urges China to Help Belt and Road Countries Meet Paris Agreement, SDGs", *International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)*, June 6, 2019 Available on <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/cciced-urges-china-to-help-belt-and-road-countries-meet-paris-agreement-sdgs/> Accessed on June 15, 2019

<sup>2</sup> Chen Hong, "Eco advisory body seeks consensus on green growth", *China Daily. Com. Cn*, June 4, 2019 Available on [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2019-06/04/content\\_37476932.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2019-06/04/content_37476932.htm) Accessed on June 15, 2019

<sup>3</sup> 2019 Annual General Meeting, Experts Give Suggestions on Green Development, *Secretariat of China for International Cooperation on Environment and Development*, June 6, 2019 Available on [http://www.cciced.net/cciceden/Events/AGM/2017\\_5065/news/201906/t20190610\\_100045.html](http://www.cciced.net/cciceden/Events/AGM/2017_5065/news/201906/t20190610_100045.html) Accessed on June 15, 2019

<sup>4</sup> Delia Paul, "World Environment Day 2019 Seeks to 'Beat Air Pollution'", *International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)*, June 6, 2019 Available at <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/world-environment-day-2019-seeks-to-beat-air-pollution/> Accessed on June 16, 2019

<sup>5</sup> 2019 Annual General Meeting, Eco- Friendly BRI Moves Emphasized at Forum, *Secretariat of China for International Cooperation on Environment and Development*, June 6, 2019 Available on [http://www.cciced.net/cciceden/Events/AGM/2017\\_5065/news/201906/t20190610\\_100046.html](http://www.cciced.net/cciceden/Events/AGM/2017_5065/news/201906/t20190610_100046.html) Accessed on June 16, 2019

<sup>6</sup> CCICED Bulletin, Summary of the 2019 Annual General Meeting of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development, *IISD Reportin Services*, June 8, 2019 Available on <https://enb.iisd.org/cciced/agm/2019/html/enbplus208num35e.html> Accessd on June 16, 2019

<sup>7</sup> Asit K Biswas, Kris Hartley, "China Should Lead on Air Pollution", *Project Syndicate*, June 6, 2019, Available on <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/urbanization-air-pollution-china-by-asit-k-biswas-and-kris-hartley-2019-06> Accessed on June 16, 2019

<sup>8</sup> CCICED Bulletin, Summary of the 2019 Annual General Meeting of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development, *IISD Reportin Services*, June 8, 2019 Available on <https://enb.iisd.org/cciced/agm/2019/html/enbplus208num35e.html> Accessd on June 17, 2019