Climate Change and Sustainability in China

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Abstract

China is a third world country. The drinking water has to be boiled. Sanitation is a problem. The utilities are expensive and flying over China at night, all is in darkness other than Shanghai and Beijing. Heat and air conditioning are available but usually not switched on due to the cost. In Suzhou, all new buildings have to have a solar hot heater on the roof, designed by students from Tsinghua University. In 2015 China became the largest producer of photovoltaics in the world, followed by Germany, Japan, USA, Italy and the UK.

"President Xi called for an energy revolution, and put energy conservation as the first priority to contain the energy growth in China," said Deputy Director General Feng Liang of the NDRC's Environment Protection and Resource Conservation Department. The Chinese government set a mandatory target to cut energy intensity per unit of GDP by 20 percent in the 11th Five-Year Plan (2006-2010), and renewed its commitment with a targeted 16 percent reduction during the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015). Strong regulatory policies and financial incentives were provided, to ensure the targets are met. In addition, the government has also pledged to reduce China's carbon intensity (carbon emissions per unit of GDP) by 40-45 percent from 2005 to 2020. Energy efficiency will make the single largest contribution to achieving this target.

"Transforming China's energy sector towards a low-carbon path is the most important climate change mitigation action in the world. We commend Chinese government's strong commitment and effective policies to promote energy conservation and emission reduction," said Marianne Fay, Chief Economist, Climate Change Group of the World Bank.