



Newsletter

Vol.3 No.3-September 1997

A quarterly publication of the

CHINA COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

CCICED UPDATE

WG on Sustainable Agriculture

The WG on Sustainable Agriculture organized a workshop on China's Priorities for Sustainable Agriculture in Beijing on September 1-2. It was aimed at reviewing the work that had been done in China in the past and defining future priorities for China's sustainable agriculture development. In addition, the agenda of the workshop included discussing the WG's framework as well as ways to increase cooperation among academics, decision makers and practitioners. Encouraging relevant international organizations to participate in the process and express their views on sustainable agriculture was another objective of the workshop.

In addition to members of this WG, many others participated in the workshop, including officials from the State Council, the Ministry of Agriculture, the State Planning Commission, the State Science and Technology Commission; and experts from Nanjing Soil Research Institute of Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), Inner-Mongolia University, Science and Policy Research Institute of CAS, Chinese Academy of Meteorology, and China Water Resources Institute. Representatives from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, and the European Union were also in attendance.

Presentations made at the Workshop include *Sustainable Agriculture in China*, *Food Demand and Supply in China in the 21st Century*, *Agriculture Investment in China*, *Arable Land Reduction and Deterioration in China*, *Grassland Management*, *Development of Agriculture Economy*, *Indicators for Sustainable Agriculture*, and *Impacts of Climate Change on China's Agriculture*.

WG on Pollution Control

When this WG met in Beijing in August, consensus on the following projects was reached:

- East China Acid Rain problems. The first consultation meeting is scheduled for November 1997.
- Reduction of CO₂ emissions by reducing uncertainties in existing emission data basis, and applying reduction techniques with demonstration project.
- Combining energy/environment planning and policy implementation in urban areas.
- Prevention and control of water pollution in Zhujiang River Basin, and
- Finalizing Suzhou State of the Environment Report, developing the same for Zibo, and writing a guideline book to be used by other urban areas in China.

Other supporting activities will include working groups on emission control measurements (Nov. 1997), CO₂ emission comparison (Nov. 1997), and risk management and priority setting (Feb. 1998).

HUAI RIVER POLLUTION CONTROL TARGET AFFIRMED

The target for industries along Huai River to meet effluent standards by the end of 1997 remains unchanged, Song Jian, Chairman of the Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) under the State Council said firmly at the Commission's 11th Session. The target of cleaning up Huai River by the year 2000 was set by the State Council in its Provisional Regulation on Water Pollution Control in the Huai River Basin.

The first campaign of pollution control in this region has nearly come to an end and it has made remarkable achievements, the Commission meeting concluded. All small plants identified as heavy polluters as well as paper mills with an annual output of less than 5,000 tons were shut down. This has resulted in approximately a 25% reduction in river pollution.

Despite this achievement, the water in nearly half the river segments is still heavily contaminated and shows no sign of improvement. The main reason is that 1562 plants along the river have a daily effluent discharge of more than 100 tons, among which 689 have not taken any action to reduce pollution. Among the remaining plants, 155 have met effluent standards, 269 have completed pollution control facility construction and 357 are undertaking facility construction. Another 92 plants will be closed by the end of 1997.

The joint efforts of the State Planning Commission, the State Commission of Economy and Trade, the State Development Bank, the National Environmental Protection Agency as well as governments of Shangdong, Henan, Anhui and Jiangsu (the four provinces where Huai River runs through) has appropriated 253.9 million yuan (approximately US\$31.7 million) for use in 28 pollution control projects in the region. The State Council and other related departments have also adopted a series of economic measures to promote pollution control.

Nevertheless, the most notable problem is the lack of financial resources and of practical and feasible technologies for medium and small-sized pulp and paper mills and pharmaceutical manufacturing factories.

EPC Chairman Song Jian (also Chairman of CCICED) recently headed a State Council enforcement inspection team to the region. They visited plants, inspected water quality, and listened to reports by governmental representatives of the four provinces. A second

campaign targeting a further 30% of pollution reduction will soon be launched.

EXPERT WARNS OF PHOTOCHEMICAL SMOG

Increasing exhaust emission in Chinese cities will result in Los Angeles-style Photochemical smog, warned Chen Xueming, a toxicologist from Tongji Medical University.

The School of Public Health of Tongji Medical University and the Transportation Management Administration of Ministry of National Public Security recently completed an investigation of urban transportation pollution in 16 cities including Beijing, Tianjin and Guangzhou. The results showed that every investigated city, with the exception of Baotou in Inner Mongolia, was 1-4 times in excess of carbon monoxide emission standards, and 1-10 times in excess of hydrocarbon emissions. The study also showed that nitrogen oxide levels were higher than State standards in every city except Hefei in Anhui and Xi'an in Shannxi. Photochemical levels were higher than State standards as well, with the exception of Baotou and Xi'an.

Chen noted that the rapid increase in vehicles has resulted in frequent traffic jams in many cities. The combination of serious air pollution caused by traffic jams with other natural factors will likely lead to photochemical smog similar to that of Los Angeles in the early 1950s.

He urged that the State should issue regulations requiring mandatory installation of catalytic converters for new vehicles, establish emission standards and improve management and inspection. Measures should also be taken to phase out or ban vehicles that do not meet exhaust emission standards.

NPC CHAIRMAN URGES SPEEDING UP ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

According to Qiao Shi, Chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC), China should speed up environmental legislation, upgrade existing regulations and make environmental legislation compatible with China's socialist market economy. These remarks were made at a working conference of the Commission for Environmental and Natural Resources Protection (CENRP) of the NPC.

During the period of the Eighth National People's Congress, great progress has been made in environmental legislation, noted Wang Binqian, Vice Chairman of the NPC at the meeting. To date 6 environmental laws and 9 natural resources laws have been enacted. More than 120 regulations have been adopted by the State Council to implement these laws. In addition, there are more than 400 national environmental standards, 300 sectoral regulations and rules as well as 600 local environmental laws and regulations. Meanwhile, environmental enforcement has also been greatly enhanced.

Nevertheless, the state of the environment and natural resources in China is in a critical condition. The extensive economic growth and inefficient management have added greater pressures to the environment and natural resources.

Qu Geping, Chairman of the CENRP (also Vice Chairman of CCICED), stressed that the CENRP should expedite legislation and upgrade existing laws, and finally, within 5-10 years, establish a basic legal system in China for environment protection and natural resources conservation.

Chairpersons and representatives from people's congresses of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government attended the conference.

STATE OF ENVIRONMENT ACROSS THE COUNTRY

China's Environmental Protection Law mandates the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) to issue an annual report on the State of the Environment. In addition, provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government must issue similar reports. The following are highlights from selective reports:

Shandong. The quality of drinking water is fine in urban and coastal regions but water pollution is spreading in coastal cities. Urban air quality remained unchanged compared to the previous year. Precipitation quality improved, but acid rain was detected in some areas.

Guangxi. The most striking pollution problems are particulate pollution, sulphur dioxides pollution in some regions, acid rain, water quality deterioration in

some river segments, as well as relatively high urban noise pollution. Urban underground water quality is fairly good, but rural environmental problems have become more challenging. The use of pesticides, agricultural plastics and fertilizers increased considerably over the previous year.

Jilin. Jilin report reveals that surface water pollution and urban smoke dust pollution are the biggest problems in the province. 80% of surface water have been contaminated, with streams and rivers passing through urban areas particularly problematic. Water quality of major rivers and lakes in the geographical region is not even up to third category standards. Falling dust and total suspended particulate are two major air pollutants. Pollution caused by exhaust emission worsened over the previous year. The majority of domestic wastes were dumped without proper disposal.

Fujian. Particulate and acid rain are the two major air pollutants. Acid rain was found in all 9 cities of the province. All streams and rivers were contaminated, but improved slightly over the previous year. While air quality remained stable, underground water pollution is rather serious. Noise pollution worsened in 8 cities, and urban pollution is spreading to rural areas.

Guangdong. Water pollution of major rivers worsened. Drinking water sources were generally contaminated, particularly in Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Huizhou. Environmental pollution and ecological deterioration has affected economic development and human health.

Anhui. The water pollution of Huai River and Cao Lake remained very serious with their main tributaries badly contaminated. Total emission of industrial waste gases increased by 1.5% and pollution caused by nitrogen oxides worsened. However, the frequency of acid rain went down. The total amount of industrial waste water discharged was reduced by 9.3%.

Shanxi. Air pollution and surface water pollution have become serious; urban underground water pollution level remained unchanged from last year; urban traffic noise level did not change significantly and severe pollution of Xiaoyi City was generally under control.

NEWS BRIEF

International Cooperation on Coal Liquefaction and Cleaner Production

On May 7 in Beijing, China's Ministry of Coal Industry and Germany's State of North Rhine-Wetphalia agreed to conduct a feasibility study on a direct coal liquefaction demonstration plant. If successful, the study will lead to the construction of a direct coal liquefaction into fuel oil plant in the Province of Yunnan. The proposed plant will process 1.7 million tons of brown coal annually to outputs of diesel fuel and gasoline.

China has over 115 billion tons of coal reserves but its crude oil supply is expected to last for another couple of decades. Clean coal technology and development are being sought. China is discussing cooperative possibilities with governments and enterprises in the US and Japan.

Canadian International Development Agency has a cleaner production project in collaboration with China's State Economic and Trade Commission and National Environmental Protection Agency. The project will assist China to implement cleaner production in priority industrial sectors.
(China Daily)

Pollution at Fatal Level

According to the 1996 annual report by China's National Environment Protection Agency, China's air quality has continued to fall well below World Health Organization(WHO) standards and up to

70% of the water in waterways and lakes is at or below the lowest Chinese standards.

Chinese cities continue to suffer from an average of 309 micrograms per cubic metre of suspended particle emissions and some areas registered as high as 618mg/m³. The WHO standard is between 60 and 90 mg/m³. Daily average sulphur dioxide level has doubled that of the WHO standard, with some readings 10 times as high. Chinese industry produced 7.58 million tons of soot and 5.62 million tons of industrial fly ash. Industrial emissions of sulphur dioxide remained stable at 13.9 million tons.
(China Environment Yearbook, 1996)

Beijing Launched a New Garbage Collection System

The Municipality of Beijing produces 13,000 tons of garbage daily. The city is surrounded by 7,000 landfills and more than 500 hectares of farmland are covered by garbage. Traditionally, the residents placed garbage in public trash carts which were then hauled away to collection centres. An official from the Municipal Sanitation Department announced that two districts in Beijing plus 95% of the suburban streets will get rid of the dustbins this year. The city is also launching a pilot project to sort garbage at the source in an effort to increase recycling. A 13.5 hectare dump was opened in March 1997 and has accumulated 500,000 tons of garbage which threatens to contaminate the local drinking water supply. The Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau is investigating the situation.
(China Daily)

The China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED) was established in 1992 as a high level advisory body to strengthen cooperation and exchange between China and the international community in the field of environment and development.

The general support for the CCICED Newsletter is provided by the CCICED Canadian Secretariat. The information about CCICED and its Working Group activities is provided by CCICED Canadian Secretariat, NEPA Secretariat and Canadian International Institute for Sustainable Development.

CCICED Canadian Secretariat can be contacted at
David See-Chai Lam Centre for International Communication
Simon Fraser University, 515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B. C., Canada V6B 5K3
Tel: 604 291-5110/5162, Fax: 604 291-5230, E-Mail: cciced-info@sfu.ca

CCICED NEPA Secretariat can be contacted at
National Environmental Protection Agency, 115 Xizhimennei Nanxiaojie
Beijing, China 100035
Tel: 8610 6615-1935, Fax: 8610 6615-1762

