

01/07/2008 Foreign governments, agencies to help China cope with climate change

Text of report in English by official Chinese news agency Xinhua (New China News Agency)

Beijing, 30 June - A joint initiative by foreign governments and international agencies was launched here on Monday to assist China's ecologically fragile provinces to map out plans to cope with the climate change. The "Provincial Programmes for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in China" are a joint initiative of the Chinese and foreign governments and international agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the Government of Norway and the European Union (EU).

Aimed at translating China's National Climate Change Programme into local action in priority provinces, the programme is being funded with a contribution of two million dollars from Norway and 400,000 dollars from UNDP China, while the European Union is considering a further two million dollars in contributions. "While new national policies have been enacted to set the vision and overarching direction for climate change mitigation and adaptation in China, more work is needed to translate such policies into on-the-ground action," said Kishan Khoday, assistant country director and team leader for energy and environment with UNDP China.

Fourteen provinces will be supported for development of local climate change strategies and policies to both reduce emissions and take adaptation measures, according to the NDRC. The Norwegian government will help seven provinces and autonomous regions, including Shanxi and Inner Mongolia, by improving industrial efficiency and pollution controls. The EU will assist seven provinces, including Heilongjiang and Shandong, to draw up action plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The programme, which will last till the end of 2010, will also help develop plans for crop adaptation and increase water efficiency to mitigate the effects of warming on agriculture in Ningxia and Gansu, where climate change and water shortages threaten to undermine food security.

On the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the project will help local governments to find integrated ways to adapt to the adverse effects of the melting of the Himalayan glaciers, which are the world's second largest store of freshwater and are receding at a faster rate than any glaciers on the planet, said Sun Cuihua, an official with Climate Office of NDRC.

The selected provinces all suffered from severe climate conditions and fragile ecological environments, which were prone to the adverse effects of climate change, said Su Wei, director of Climate Office with the NDRC. Dealing with the problems in priority provinces would help accelerate the spread of the actions plans nationwide, Su said.

"The risks from the future impacts of warming will vary between and within provinces. If measures are to have a real effect in the coming years, swift actions must be made at the local level to develop policies, partnerships and implementation capacities," said Khoday.

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