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Policies

China releases national plan for implementation of UN sustainable development agenda

[Xinhua, 20-09-2016] China released on Monday 19 September its national plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The plan consists of five parts, including China's achievements and experience in implementing the Millennium Development Goals, and the challenges and opportunities, guiding principles, roadmap and detailed plans of implementing the SDGs.

As the first national plan that specifies various domains and goal-oriented concrete measures, the plan comprehensively expounds China's development policy and its efforts to help other developing countries to forge ahead the process of global implementation.

Click [here](#) for details

China commits real, considered effort to sustainable development: UN special adviser

[Xinhua, 18-09-2016] China has committed a real and considered effort to tackle a set of global goals for sustainable development to end poverty, inequality and combat climate change, said David Nabarro, UN special adviser on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The UN-facilitated 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by world leaders one year ago. It outlines 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), aiming to guide the world to pursue economic and social progress while protecting the environment.

Within China's national development plan, known as the 13th Five-Year Plan, the Chinese government has prioritized the environment and has decided it will pursue development through a low carbon pathway, he noted.

Click [here](#) for details

China to invigorate agriculture with information technology

[Xinhua, 01-09-2016] The government aims to further improve intelligent management in planting, cultivation and machinery and the use of Internet of Things (IOT) will cover 17 percent of the agriculture sector, according to a five-year blueprint released by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Meanwhile, China will continue to support e-commerce growth in agriculture and rural areas, and aims to lift the share of online-retail produce volume in total agricultural output to eight percent by 2020.

The government will build ten pilot provinces, one hundred pilot zones and one thousand pilot bases that will test the integration of information technology with the agriculture industrial chain, according to the blueprint.

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Chinese government decides to strengthen weak links in crucial fields

[Xinhua, 06-09-2016] The Chinese government has decided to strengthen weak links in crucial fields including poverty alleviation, infrastructure, post-disaster water conservancy control and development of new growth engines.

The decision is intended to achieve more balanced and effective development and provide driving force for the supply-side structural reform. Improving the country's weak links is one of the major tasks set for the country's 13th Five-Year Plan for national socioeconomic development (2016-2020), and was raised during the Central Economic Conference in Beijing last December.

The meeting urges all departments to come up with a clear time line.

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China to invest \$450 billion modernizing agriculture by 2020

[Reuters, 18-09-2016] The Agricultural Development Bank of China, one of the country's main policy lenders, agreed to loan at least 3 trillion yuan (\$450 billion) by 2020 for the modernization of China's agriculture industry, state media said.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the bank, which lends in line with government policy, signed an agreement to protect national food security, support the sector doing business overseas and develop China's seed industry, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

The Agricultural Development Bank of China will be responsible for managing financial services, including offering financial products and setting interest rates, said Xinhua.

Click [here](#) for details

Beijing moves to close the urban-rural gap

[Xinhua, 20-09-2016] Beijing has announced more changes to its local "hukou" (permanent residence permit) system: the rural Beijing hukou will cease to exist, ending the divide between rural and urban residents.

According to the guideline released on Monday 19 September, Beijing municipal government will no longer distinguish between urban and rural residents, but establish a unified permit system. Education, health, employment, social welfare, and housing will be equal for all Beijing residents.

Among the 31 provincial regions of Chinese mainland, Beijing is the 30th to announce a plan to terminate its hukou divide. Only Tibet Autonomous Region maintains the distinction.

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Unified work permit for foreigners on way

[China Daily, 09-09-2016] Foreigners who come to China to work will soon get a unified work permit, as the country tries to streamline the process and improve efficiency to attract more skilled foreign talent.

The reform will combine China's two current foreigner work permits into one.

A trial will get underway in Beijing and other regions beginning in October, according to the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, which is leading the reform. The reform will be implemented nationwide in April, the administration said.

Under the current system, foreigners can apply for either of two types of work permit - an employment license for foreigners issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, or a foreign expert work permit provided by the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs.

Click [here](#) for details

Science, Technology and Environment

Research collaboration a key to global partnership between China and UK

[Shanghai Daily, 21-09-2016] Racing against time to find a new antibiotic that will prevent 10 million people every year dying from common infections. Creating new strains of rice that can feed more people while cutting down on polluting fertilisers. Finding commercial, scalable applications for a new material a single atom in thickness. Pinning down exactly how and how badly air pollution harms human health so we can take the best measures to protect ourselves. Crunching huge amounts of data to predict in much more detail what climate change will mean for specific communities and how they can best adapt.

What do all these have in common? They are just a few of the many areas where UK and Chinese scientists, innovators and businesses are working together. It is why research collaboration is one of the most important parts of the global partnership with the UK that President Xi Jinping announced during his state visit last year.

Click [here](#) for details

Closing yield gaps in China by empowering smallholder farmers

[Nature, 07-09-2016] Sustainably feeding the world's growing population is a challenge, and closing yield gaps (that is, differences between farmers' yields and what are attainable for a given region) is a vital strategy to address this challenge. The magnitude of yield gaps is particularly large in developing countries where smallholder farming dominates the agricultural landscape. Many factors and constraints interact to limit yields, and progress in problem-solving to bring about changes at the ground level is rare. Published in Nature, Weifeng Zhang and Fusuo Zhang and their colleagues of China Agricultural University presented an innovative approach for enabling smallholders to achieve yield and economic gains sustainably via the Science and Technology Backyard (STB) platform. STB involves agricultural scientists living in villages among farmers, advancing participatory innovation and technology transfer, and garnering public and private support. The authors identified multifaceted yield-limiting factors involving agronomic, infrastructural, and socioeconomic conditions. When these limitations and farmers' concerns were addressed, the farmers adopted recommended management practices, thereby improving production outcomes. In one region in China, the five-year average yield increased from 67.9% of the attainable level to 97.0% among 71 leading farmers, and from 62.8% to 79.6% countywide (93,074 households); this was accompanied by resource and economic benefits.

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Scientists' discover genetic basis for rice hybrid performance

[China Daily, 10-09-2016] Chinese scientists have found the genetic basis of what makes rice hybrids perform better than their inbred parents, offering a potential boon for breeding by precise molecular design to meet global food demands.

They have discovered how the more than 400 genetic locations that determine the traits of rice are expressed in hybrid rice varieties, which will serve as navigators to produce new rice products of high yield and quality, said Han Bin, leading researcher of the team and director of the Institute of Plant Physiology and Ecology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The discovery, made after eight years of study, was published on the website of the scientific journal [Nature](#) online 07 September 2016.

Click [here](#) for details

Chinese scientists map genome sequence of mustard

[Xinhua, 13-09-2016] Chinese scientists have mapped the genome sequence of allopolyploid *Brassica juncea*, or mustard, a vegetable commonly used in Chinese cooking.

Zhejiang University's Zhang Mingfang, who is a member of the research program, said that the sequencing would help scientists understand and improve the agriculturally important vegetable.

The research paper was published in the *Nature Genetics* journal.

Brassica juncea, known as "jei cai" in its native China, contains a diverse range of oilseed and vegetable crops important for human nutrition. It mainly grows south of the Yangtze River.

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National gene bank to improve health, preserve biodiversity

[Xinhua, 22-09-2016] The China National GeneBank (CNGB), located in Shenzhen, was officially opened Thursday, aiming to promote human health research and the conservation of global bio-diversity.

Initiated by China's National Development and Reform Commission in 2011, the project was established by Shenzhen-based BGI, one of the world's leading genomics organizations.

Covering an area of over 47,500 square meters, the gene bank has saved more than 10 million bio-samples and established cooperation and research with over 100 organizations in areas such as human health, bio-diversity, and biological evolution.

The CNGB also aims to create a network to foster global collaboration and communication, and to promote innovation in the community.

The gene bank has established guidelines to enable the exchange and sharing of data and genetic resources with the world's major databases.

The establishment of the CNGB has been applauded by the international community.

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China likely to set new hybrid rice production record earlier

[Xinhua, 13-09-2016] Yuan Longping, renowned Chinese developer of hybrid rice, expressed his confidence Tuesday 13 September that a hybrid rice yield target projected for 2018 will be met this year.

He said that several demonstration plots had showed potential to produce 16 tonnes of rice per ha.

Known as China's "father of hybrid rice", Yuan started theoretical research about 50 years ago and kept setting new records in the average yields of hybrid rice plots.

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Beijing speeds up high-tech center role

[China Daily, 07-09-2016] China is accelerating efforts to make its capital a national high-tech innovation hub, as a leading example of the country's innovation drive, by achieving breakthroughs in key technologies and easing permanent residence procedures for overseas experts.

The decision was announced on Sept 1 after an executive meeting of the State Council.

The meeting's promotional efforts focused on developing fundamental research frontiers in Beijing by taking advantage of its large number of universities and other higher educational institutes, according to a statement released after the meeting.

The meeting also called on the capital to speed up breakthroughs in key technology and cultivate an innovative system for research and development with international competitiveness in priority sectors such as smart manufacturing, biological medicine, clean energy and environmental protection.

Click [here](#) for details

Villages reap benefits of ecological planning

[China Daily, 06-09-2016] When President Xi Jinping was serving in Zhejiang province 11 years ago, he once said: "Lucid water and lush mountains are invaluable assets." He was suggesting that a green environment would help people become wealthy.

That statement has been turning into a reality in recent years in Xianju County, in southeast Zhejiang, as the county's efforts in protecting the environment have become a major driver for the development of local agriculture and tourism.

From 2013 to 2015, the number of tourists to Xianju grew at an average of 42.8 percent annually. Last year, around 20 million people visited the county and revenue from tourism reached 10.3 billion yuan (\$1.5 billion), according to Zhejiang Daily report in July.

Influenced by the county government's advocacy for green agriculture, individual farmers have also been actively exploring new methods in their own businesses.

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Shandong rural co-ops help ag sector grow

[Caixin, 05-09-2016] China's fragmented farm sector — characterized by tiny family plots and a declining number of farmers — has long resisted modernization.

However, at least in Shandong province, a once-lumbering rural co-op is reinventing itself — trying to help farmers increase yields and incomes in what historically has been a highly inefficient agricultural sector.

Beijing in recent years has encouraged rural residents, especially those who have left rural areas, to sell their land-use rights to others. Rural land in China is under collective ownership, and farmers control only the land-use right. But such pilot programs have had only limited success, as many farmers are reluctant to give up their land rights.

By offering large-scale farming services, SMCs' (Supply and Marketing Cooperative) service centers offer a way to realize massive, modernized agricultural production on land that previously was overseen by hundreds of scattered family farmers.

However, an employee of the Shandong SMC said that more challenges are expected as SMCs expand further into rural life due to the complex land ownership in rural China and entangled interests among different parties. For SMCs to play a greater role in China's rural reform efforts, more policy support and better coordination among agricultural departments will be needed, the employee said.

Click [here](#) for details

China corn crop to fall 2.3 pct in 2016

[Reuters, 08-09-2016] China's 2016 corn harvest will drop 2.3 percent from the year before to 201.5 million tonnes, said an official think-tank, with farmers planting less of the grain following a change in government support.

Planted acreage in the world's No.2 corn producer will fall almost 5 percent to 36.3 million hectares, said the China National Grain and Oils Information Centre, but yields are expected to increase to 6 tonnes per hectare, up by 162 kg from last year.

China's corn output is closely watched by overseas markets, with U.S. prices hitting multi-year lows last week under pressure from expectations of a record U.S. crop.

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Big data lens on China's economy (mostly) affirms official stats

[Bloomberg, 20-09-2016] A growing universe of big data offers an increasingly complete alternative view on China's economy, and it's not massively different than the official statistics.

That's according to a new report by Bloomberg Intelligence economists Tom Orlik and Justin Jimenez, who compared National Bureau of Statistics numbers with those generated from the vast amounts of data and information collected by businesses and governments.

The new gauges affirm that manufacturing is weak, real estate is better, auto sales and online consumption are robust, but malls and tourism are suffering and employment is slipping as old industries shed workers, Orlik and Jimenez wrote. For industrial, property, autos and employment, they said the picture is similar to official data, while for some aspects of consumption, big data are more negative.

Click [here](#) for details

1st China-ASEAN Agricultural Cooperation Forum held in Nanning

[MOA, 18-09-2016] Jointly organized by Chinese Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the Guangxi government, the 1st China-ASEAN Agricultural Cooperation Forum was held in Nanning, the capital city of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on Sept. 12th, 2016.

To further deepen China-ASEAN agricultural cooperation, Vice Minister Qu Dongyu suggested:

- (1) Enhancing policy communication and alignment of agricultural development strategy.
- (2) Promoting integration of production, education and research and cooperation in innovation.
- (3) Promoting cooperation in the development of international agricultural parks.

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Why the British tea industry is booming in China

[Blasting news, 07-09-2016] Tea originates from China and to think that a foreign blend would take over its already booming industry is something that really boggles the mind. That's exactly what's been happening in China. The British industry is seeing a sudden rise in demand for its world-famous afternoon tea blend in China: a country that has been exporting tea to Britain for centuries is now depending on British products instead.

In the first five months of 2016, British tea export to the Chinese mainland has doubled.

It could be argued that drinking British tea in China has become a new trend, a fashion among the well-off Chinese community.

Click [here](#) for details

New Zealand extends successful scholarship program with China on food safety cooperation

[Xinhua, 13-09-2016] The New Zealand government has extended a scholarship program aimed at deepening collaboration on food safety with China.

The scholarship, developed by New Zealand's Ministry for Primary Industries and the China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA), covered practice regulation, risk management, food processing and design, and the development and implementation of food standards.

It had an academic component led by New Zealand's Massey University, which was supported by applied learning through study tours and internships.

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Mexico, China sign MOU on aquacultural cooperation

[Xinhua, 06-09-2016] The governments of Mexico and China have signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on aquaculture, in order to deepen technical, scientific and commercial know-how in the field, according to the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture.

The agreement would lead to the exchange of personnel and the sharing of information on freshwater aquaculture, sanitary standards, and the conservation of fishery resources.

This agreement would also lead to the development of genetic improvements, the prevention and eradication of diseases, aquaculture production methods, equipment and processing and the development of rural aquaculture.

Click [here](#) for details

Expanded economic ties with China can reduce Mexico's reliance on U.S., says expert

[Xinhua, 11-09-2016] Mexico should expand economic ties with China as a counterbalance to its heavy reliance on the United States, according to a leading academic.

Attracting more investment from China would both help spur development in Mexico and reduce the dependence on its northern neighbor, said Cutberto Hernandez, a specialist in Asian and African affairs at the Faculty of Law of La Salle University in Mexico City.

Mexico would benefit from a more balanced situation and from the potential for economic expansion with China, he said.

In Latin America, Argentina and Brazil are reaping the benefits of closer ties with the Asian giant, said the academic, adding both countries today "are essential to China's food supply and food development."

Click [here](#) for details

China lifts ban on U.S. beef imports

[Xinhua, 22-09-2016] China on Thursday 22 September lifted a decade-plus ban on some beef products from the United States, according to agriculture and quarantine regulators.

The ban on bone-in and boneless beef from cattle under 30 months old from the United States was removed effective immediately, said a statement released by the Ministry of Agriculture and General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine.

Authorities will formulate rules on traceability and quarantine for the beef products, said the statement.

China halted beef imports from the United States in 2003 to prevent the spread of mad cow disease. But due to surging demand, some Chinese consumers started to purchase smuggled beef via online stores.

Click [here](#) for details

Bulgaria, China sign protocol on export of Bulgarian dairy products

[China daily, 18-09-2016] Chinese and Bulgarian officials have signed a deal on export of Bulgarian dairy products to China.

The Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) signed the protocol here on Friday, officials confirmed Saturday.

"The protocol on veterinary and health requirements for dairy products creates conditions for the export of Bulgarian dairy products," the Bulgarian ministry said in a statement on its website.

Click [here](#) for details

China-Mongolia-Russia economic corridor focuses on 7 areas

[Xinhua, 16-09-2016] China, Mongolia and Russia will cooperate in seven areas to build a trilateral economic corridor.

The three neighbors will improve transport facilities by expanding land, air and sea connections. The three countries vowed closer cooperation in energy and mineral resources, high tech, manufacturing, agriculture and forestry.

They agreed to expand trade at border regions and widen services trade, and eyed more cooperation in education, science and technology, culture, tourism, medical care and intellectual property.

Click [here](#) for details

China-funded biotech research facility completed in Kenya

[Xinhua, 26-09-2016] A state-of-the-art facility funded by the Chinese government to promote collaborative research with African countries in the field of agriculture and biodiversity conservation was officially handed over to a Kenyan university on 26 September.

A hand-over ceremony was held on the campus of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) where the Sino-Africa Joint Research Center is situated.

The Sino-Africa Joint Research Center focuses on biodiversity protection, resources remote sensing, microbiology and the promotion of modern agricultural practices.

The Sino-Africa Joint Research Centre will be a hub for training and knowledge transfer on biodiversity conservation. It will also focus on critical areas like agricultural science, molecular biology, remote sensing and natural products development.

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Event Announcement

UK-China Yangling Agritech Innovation Event, 5-6 November 2016

The China Rural Technology Development Centre of the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) and the Foreign Affairs Office of the International Cooperation Bureau of Yangling Agricultural Hi-tech Industries Demonstration Zone, China's largest agritech science park have invited the Science and Innovation Section of British Embassy Beijing and the Agritech Centres of Innovate UK to organise with them a series of events to facilitate UK China collaborations on agri-tech innovations at 23rd China Yangling Agricultural Hi-Tech Fair (CAF) on 5-6 Nov 2016. This fair normally attracts an audience of 1.5 million visitors and hosts over 1700 industry exhibitors.

The purpose of these events is to showcase the UK science and innovation capabilities in agri-tech and to map out the key areas for future collaboration while providing partnering opportunities for the industrial and academic stakeholders in both the UK and China. The UK China Sustainable Agriculture Innovation Network (SAIN) will also carry out public consultation on the development of the first UK-China Knowledge Sharing and Mutual Learning Platform on Agriculture, Food and Environment. The events are expected to have a large audience of Chinese industry leaders, academics and government officials.

The key activities will include:

- UK China Policy Roundtable on Agritech Innovation (5 November)
- UK China Agritech Innovation Forum (6 November 2016)
- China-UK Agritech Business Partnering Event (6 November 2016)
- UK Themed Exhibition (5 - 9 November 2016)

Please contact Helena Ou (Helena.Ou@fco.gov.uk) at British Embassy for further information.

ATCNN call for proposals

The Agri-Tech in China: Newton Network+ (ATCNN) will support a range of activities to develop innovative solutions for some of the critical challenges impacting China's agri-tech and agri-food sectors. We particularly seek to enable translation of UK excellence in satellite imaging, remote sensing, smart sensors, robotics and data-intensive science into new solutions for productivity and sustainability in rural China.

Applications are currently invited for: **Pathfinder** and **Proof of Concept Awards**. The next application **deadline** is: **12:00 (GMT), 31 October 2016**.

The call is open to applications from UK partners only, but we encourage Chinese organisations interested in this to make contact with their UK networks and be proactive in jointly developing concepts for proposals.

Further information regarding each scheme can be found under the Call Documents section on the website: www.rothamsted.ac.uk/china/ATCNN

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