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LUO JIE / CHINA DAILY

Bring action plans, not empty words, to Cancun

By LI XING, CHINA DAILY

“Please consider taking the stairs if you’re going to one of the first five floors,” says a sign by the elevators in an office building of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) in Beijing. Simple and succinct, it still surprised me. Feeling a little guilty, I took the elevator to the third floor for a meeting in preparation for the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference, which will open on Monday (Nov 29) in Cancun, Mexico. On second thought, it should not be surprising.

Considered China’s small Cabinet, the NDRC’s mission is to formulate strategies for the country’s overall development in major economic and social sectors. It oversees China’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency, and ensure sustainable development.

Energy conservation is crucial to the NDRC’s mission. It is therefore natural for the commission to encourage its own staff to take the lead by taking the stairs instead of riding an elevator.

Of course, this represents only a tiny part of China’s effort to go green. As NDRC officials repeatedly stress, China will soon reach a dead end

in its development if it continues to replicate the growth model of the developed countries by squandering natural resources and fossil fuels.

China’s determination to cut its greenhouse gas emissions is by its own choice, not a response to international pressure, according to Xie Zhenhua, deputy head of the NDRC and China’s top climate official.

“We cannot sustain our growth any longer; we must go low-carbon, engage in recycling, and reduce the intensity of CO₂ emissions,” said Xie, who will lead an 80-strong-member delegation to Cancun for the climate talks.

I believe the public largely shares

Xie’s views. People I have met during my trips outside Beijing invariably tell me the time for unbridled pursuit of GDP at the expense of the environment is over.

But instead of blaming others for inaction, they talk about what they as individuals and businesses can do to reduce our carbon footprint.

When I met Peng Xiancheng in September, the chairman of Decision Chemical in Deyang, Sichuan province, talked about developing new environment-friendly chemicals that would not only reduce the amount of some heavy metals but also cut energy {Continued on page 16, action}

China makes a push for an agreement on environment

By LI JING
CHINA DAILY

BEIJING — China is calling for world leaders to work closely and make compromises toward substantial progress at the upcoming climate conference that opens in Cancun, Mexico.

Xie Zhenhua, China’s top climate negotiator who was on his way to the resort city with his delegation, said he hopes that there won’t be a great deal of disagreements at the meeting.

On Monday, environmental ministers from more than 190 countries will join the two-week negotiations. Several heads of state will also attend. Last year in Copenhagen, world leaders failed to hammer out a binding deal to tackle climate change.

China, as it did last year, is calling for funding for developing countries and access to developed countries’ clean-energy technologies.

These are the issues “developing countries watch closely so that we can lay a solid foundation for reaching a legally binding outcome in South Africa next year,” he said. “All countries need to build up a high level of consensus ... to achieve an outcome which might not satisfy everybody, but can be acceptable for all.”

Experts on environment issues say a globally binding deal is beyond reach in Cancun though agreements could be reached in some areas, such as a universal fund to battle climate change and a method of transferring technologies to developing countries.

Under an arrangement reached last year in Copenhagen, developed nations had pledged a climate fund of \$30 billion by 2012 to help developing countries adapt to climate change. They then offered a goal of \$100 billion by 2020.

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