

New plan puts greater water efficiency on tap

Consumption to be tightened and waste cut to protect resource and boost growth

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An action plan has been introduced to tighten water consumption as part of high-quality development moves, which aims to improve efficiency in the use of natural resources and better protect the environment while boosting economic growth.

By 2020, water consumption per 10,000 yuan (\$1,487) of GDP is expected to drop by 23 percent from that in 2015, with a 20-percent reduction in using water to produce 10,000 yuan in industrial added value, according to the plan promulgated by the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Water Resources on April 15.

In addition, China's overall water consumption will be constrained within 670 billion cubic meters by 2022, with improved conservation, the document said. Furthermore, the figure will be controlled within 700 cu m with water conservation and recycling at a world-leading level by 2035.

The 29-clause plan sets six key tasks, including control of overall water consumption, reducing agricultural, industrial and urban use and technological innovation. In the meantime, two measures will deepen reform in establishing the water price and cultivate a competitive service market. The plan encourages private capital to join and expand financing channels.

China has a water shortage, the commission said on its website. Each year, the country faces a shortfall of 50 billion cu m of fresh water. In the meantime, public awareness of conserving water and preventing waste has to be improved.

In 2017, water consumption per \$10,000 in GDP was 500 cu m, 66.6 percent more than the average number for developed economies, the commission said.

China's water resource per capita is only one-third of the world's average, according to the Zhongshang Industrial Research Institute's website chnci.com. Regional disparity has made it worse. Southwestern and southern parts of the country have rich water resources while one-fourth of provincial regions are facing severe lack of water, the institute said. In the meantime, urbanization has increased the amount of waste water by 4.2 percent annually, from 48.5 billion metric tons in 2013 to 57.1 billion tons in 2017, it said.

China lags behind leading economies in water-use efficiency, said Yuan Da, the NDRC

spokesman. Every 10,000 yuan in industrial added value consumes 45.6 cu m of water, double that for developed economies, he said.

Water conservation should be promoted from developing, using and protecting the natural resource with careful allocation, said E Jingping, minister of water resources, in an article published by People's Daily late last month. Projects that do not pass water conservation assessments will not be approved, he said.

Universities will join efforts to save water



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

50 billion cubic meters
Amount of fresh water shortfall China faces each year

500 cubic meters
Amount of water consumption per \$10,000 GDP in 2017

Environmental Affairs, said that the plan is expected to accelerate water conservation.

"The disparity in water resources among different provincial regions means we have to save more water for a sustainable development for the years to come, even centuries," Ma said.

"In industrial and agricultural production, more technologies can help save such resource. It also applies to China's urbanization process, as now only 11 percent of towns can process waste water."

POLICY RESPONSE

Regulation, medical services among key topics

By XU WEI
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Several ministry-level departments, including those for market regulation, medical security and civil affairs, have responded recently to issues of public concern.

Online shopping fraud targeted

China has introduced measures to step up oversight on infringements of intellectual property rights for online shopping and imports and exports.

A joint plan for law enforcement was issued by the State Administration for Market Supervision and another five government departments to target wrongdoing, including infringements of trademark rights and copyright as well as commercial secrets.

These cover a number of aspects including, strengthening oversight on law enforcement and sealing up punishments over IPR infringements.

Other measures include expanding sources of infringement clues, and reinforcing connectivity between administrative and criminal law enforcement.

The plan also called for efforts to enhance cooperation between government departments and companies, and improve the regulatory system.

More cancer drugs on State list

More anti-cancer drugs eligible for medical insurance reimbursement will be made available in the country's new list of medicines, according to the National Healthcare Security Administration.

The administration said in a statement on Wednesday that medicines for rare diseases,



chronic illness, children and first-aid treatment are also among the options for a lengthened reimbursement list.

According to the statement, candidates for the new list of drugs must be those that have already been launched in markets with official approval before Dec 31, 2018.

The administration also banned some medicines from the list, including those stemming from endangered wild animals and plants, contraceptives, and pharmaceuticals for slimming, cosmetology and to help quit smoking.

Medicines that have been banned from production, sales and use by national drug regulators should be removed from the list, said the statement.

The adjustment to the list is the first after the forming of the administration last year. The current list was released in 2017, which contained a total of 2,588 medicines.

Recycled items alert issued

The Ministry of Civil Affairs has issued a warning to the public over fraud in the name of recycling used items including old clothes.

The ministry said in a statement on Friday that a number of organizations have violated the charity law as they launch donation campaigns to recycle old clothes from the public in the name of charities.

Some organizations were found to use the activities to make profits, the ministry said.

The ministry noted that some nongovernmental organizations and businesses were found to collect the donations even though they are ineligible for collecting public donations.

According to China's charity law, only registered organizations that have obtained qualifications could collect donations from the public.

The ministry also reminded the public of the necessity to check the qualifications of organizations before making donations.

The information can be accessed at the national charity information platform, the ministry said, adding that reporting on illegal collection of donations is also encouraged.



Greater emphasis on water safety

The office of the education supervision commission of the State Council urged educa-



tion authorities and schools nationwide to step up efforts to protect students from drowning.

The authority issued the warning on April 16 after a number of drowning incidents across the country with rising temperatures and increasing engagement of students in outdoor activities.

Local authorities should conduct in-depth analysis of areas, locations and reasons for the drowning incidents and issue early warnings on time, the office said.

It is also important for schools to remind students of the extreme danger of going into water without permission, and telling them to stay away from dangerous water bodies.

The authority also urged schools to carry out various forms of safety education to improve student safety awareness, as well as their families' and guardians' sense of responsibility.

Meanwhile, education authorities should work with departments including public security, water resources, meteorology to set up warnings and railings near dangerous water bodies and to carry out more patrols, the office said.

Policy digest

Dispute system reform

China will improve its arbitration system, enabling a more diversified dispute settlement system, according to a guideline published on Tuesday.

The guideline, jointly issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, noted that arbitration is an internationally acknowledged means for convenient and efficient dispute resolution. It also supports the role of arbitration in ensuring social stability as it fully respects the wills of parties involved and offers a convenient and efficient way of dispute settlement.

The guideline called for strict implementation of arbitration related laws and rules to ensure that arbitral institutions work independently in accordance with the law and the implementation of the principle for the autonomy of parties involved. Acts that disturb arbitration development must be rectified.

It also made clear that arbitration commissions must serve public interests and remain non-profit. The internal governance and management of arbitration commissions will be streamlined, with the selection and management of arbitrators also set to improve.

Meanwhile, it requires reforms and innovations with the arbitration system, calling for efforts to support the introduction of the internet in arbitration.

The development of the arbitration system should serve the country's opening-up and development strategies, under the guideline, which also stresses deepening the cooperation among arbitral institutions in the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan.

It also underlines CPC leadership over relevant work, self-discipline in the sector and better support and supervision from judicial agencies.

Disclosure gets boost

The central government has published a revised regulation on government information disclosure to make it easier for the public to access administrative information. The regulation, published on April 15 after a State Council order was signed by Premier Li Keqiang, made clear 15 categories of information that government at different levels must publish on their own initiative. Government departments at the primary level must also take the initiative to make public information that is closely related to the general public. The regulation also clarified boundaries for the information disclosure. Government information that is related to State secrets, national or public security or those that can harm the legitimate interests of third parties should not be published. It also called for administrative organs to establish and improve the mechanisms for information disclosure so that government information could be made available via government websites, news conferences and media.

Elderly care in focus

China will boost the development of nursing services so that the elderly can enjoy more diversified and tiered services, according to a guideline published on April 16.

The guideline, issued by the General Office of the State Council, called for the establishment of a long-term nursing care system for the elderly people who are of advanced age or with disabilities.

The reform to streamline administration, enhance compliance oversight and improve services will be moved forward in the elderly care sector, and measures to cut taxes and fees for aged care institutions will also be rolled out. The government will step up support to the development of chained institutions in the elderly care sector, according to the guideline. It also underlined the importance of expanding funding channels for institutions that are devoted to elderly care, with more financial support set to be extended to eligible private nursing homes faced with temporary operation difficulties. Overseas investors will be offered the same treatment as their domestic counterparts when they join the sector, and they will also receive subsidies for operation if their nursing homes receive individuals covered by government security plans. The government will also encourage creation of new jobs through the elderly care sector, said the guideline.

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