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Newsletter

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China for a Global Shift

China for a Global Shift is a WWF initiative to promote development in China that sustains the planet's natural environment

Seizing China's opportunity for sustainable development in Africa

WWF has been scaling up its efforts to create dialogue for sustainable development between China and Africa - as you will read in several articles in this newsletter.

In recent years, Chinese investment in Africa has increased dramatically. Fueling this investment has been China's growth from both domestic and international demand, and the need to access natural resources such as timber, oil and minerals. The almost absolute correlation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in China and Africa in the last ten years shows that trade has also stimulated growth in Africa.

We would like to see this relation between China and Africa become a virtuous model for sustainable growth. On one hand, it is in African countries' interest to define a strategic approach and seize the opportunity of China's investment to create long-term prosperity and cause minimal harm to the environment. On the other hand, China has a unique chance to champion with Africa a new development path that is sustainable for the environment and brings positive impact to local economies.

China has learnt that aid alone is not a solution to reducing poverty and achieving growth. In this perspective Africa can draw on China's experience in at least three areas: placing the issue of domestic poverty at the center of national policies, including environmental targets in top economic development decisions and using green technologies to improve living standards in rural areas. These principles should form the basis for a dialogue on sustainable development leading to the China-Africa Summit in Beijing in 2012. We at WWF are determined to support both China and Africa learning from each other to make a positive contribution to the Millennium Development Goals.

***Dr. Li Lin, Leader of WWF's China for a Global Shift Initiative
and Deputy Country Representative at WWF China***

From Europe to Africa: Chinese financial institutions complete WWF's sustainable banking program



Participants in the WWF sustainable banking program visit the Moatize coal field in Tete, Mozambique. Photo © Melissa Makwzrimba / WWF

A series of meetings and visits to major infrastructure and extractive projects in Mozambique in May completed a sustainable banking program organized by WWF for Chinese financial institutions and regulatory agencies. The delegation met Mozambique government officials, international financial institutions and companies as well as representatives from international organizations, aid agencies, local communities and NGOs.

The dialogue focused on environmental and social challenges relating to foreign investment. For example, the visit to the Moatize coal field in Tete offered the opportunity to discuss with the company and to understand how it has managed environmental and social issues such as resettlement and biodiversity conservation.

“Seeing and touching the natural beauties of Africa, getting to know the reality on the ground, meeting and listening to people from local communities was truly inspiring for the delegation. We trust this provided new impetus for developing sustainable banking policies,” said Yiting Sun, Sustainable Banking and Finance Manager at WWF.

The tour to Mozambique was the second leg of a sustainable banking program to enhance capacity in green lending policies and help the Chinese financial sector learn from the field the investment impacts on ecosystems and people. The first part of the study program took place in November 2009 in Frankfurt and Paris.

Chinese officials on sustainable forestry tour to Africa

In April WWF invited a delegation from China's State Forestry Administration (SFA) to undertake a trip to Mozambique, Tanzania and Cameroon. Central to the purpose of the trip was to support the dissemination of official SFA and Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) guidelines on sustainable forestry to Chinese companies operating in Africa. The aim was also to better understand the forestry sector and the drivers of loss of natural forest in Africa.

In 2007 and 2009 SFA and MOFCOM issued guidelines on social and environmental sustainability with the aim to set a direction for Chinese companies operating abroad in the forestry sector. While not mandatory, these guidelines intend to regulate overseas investment in the sector and address the issue of illegal logging. The delegation found that the guidelines are considered a useful tool but would be more effective with widespread distribution, further translation into local languages as well as inclusion of specific African regulations that companies should comply with.

Increasing timber processing capacity and improving the monitoring and enforcement of forestry regulations by countries in Africa were also identified as areas that could advance both job creation and forest conservation, and which WWF will encourage as the next step.



WWF International staff monitor logging operations in Gabon, Central Africa. © Martin Harvey / WWF-Canon

Strategy needed for trade and investment in Tanzania

Over 50 senior policy makers attended a workshop organized in April 2010 by WWF and the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) in Dar es Salaam, to discuss how Tanzania can be more strategic in its trade and investment relationship with China in order to achieve sustainable development.

Parallels were drawn between the emergence of the Asian Tiger Economies in the 1950s based on trade and investment with the USA and Japan, and the opportunities now being presented by China's engagement with Africa. The need is to explore the de-coupling of economic growth from the environmental degradation that Asia also witnessed in the past. Environmental costs do not need to be a necessary price to pay for such development. This was part of a series of workshops carried out in Tanzania to engage stakeholders and develop policy recommendations for a new development paradigm.

Ecological Footprint takes center stage at WWF's Shanghai Expo Pavilion

Ecological Footprint is in the spotlight at the WWF's Shanghai Expo pavilion, where visitors are invited to calculate their impact on the planet with a customized footprint calculator. The calculator – available also on WWF websites – is based on data such as food, energy and water consumption, waste production as well as chosen means of transport. As part of this campaign, WWF is distributing a pocket guide with actions to reduce personal ecological footprint in daily life, for example taking a shower rather than a bath or unplugging unnecessary electronic appliances rather than leaving them on standby.

"Gosh, I am consuming 2.3 Earths," said a 6-year-old boy after completing the online questionnaire with the help of his mum. As a start, he committed to pay more attention to his water use in the future. On World Environment Day (5 June) WWF officially celebrated 30 years of conservation work in China with a high-level forum, a concert and a stunt staged by 100 WWF volunteers at the Shanghai Expo. The introduction of the Ecological Footprint concept in China was acknowledged as one of the main achievements of these 30 years, along with panda and tiger conservation, forest and wetland protection, promotion of low carbon cities and sustainable banking, corporate partnerships and education campaigns.

In the first two months of the Shanghai Expo over 350,000 people visited the WWF pavilion, which is in the shape of the "tai qi" to show the balance between ying and yang and represent humans living in harmony with nature. To know more about WWF activities at the World Expo: www.wwfchina.org/expo.



Visitors of the WWF pavilion at the Shanghai Expo calculate their environmental impacts with the Ecological Footprint calculator. Photo © Zhou Huaikuan / WWF-China



Chinese popstar Yu Quan (in the photo) sang at the WWF-China 30th anniversary concert in Shanghai along with Cui Jian, Zhang Xuan, Milk and Coffee, Cao Fang and New Pants. Photo © Zhang Yifei / WWF-China

What is ecological footprint?

Ecological Footprint measures the amount of biologically productive land and water area needed to meet the demands of a population (an individual, a family, a city or a country) both in terms of consumption and waste absorption. As a resource accounting tool that makes demand on biological capital visible, measurable and manageable, the Ecological Footprint allows decision makers at all levels to identify strategies for sustainable development.

New task force on Investment, Trade and Environment

The China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED), a high-level think tank under the Ministry of Environment and the National Development and Reform Commission, has set up a new task force on Investment, Trade and Environment. The task force will present a report at the 2011 CCICED Annual General Assembly as part of the policy recommendation to China's State Council. In recognition of the expertise on these issues, Dr. Li Lin, Leader of WWF's China for a Global Shift Initiative, has been invited to join the task force.

Better cities, lower carbon

WWF's Director General Jim Leape gave a speech on "Low carbon and climate resilient urbanization in China" at the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED) annual roundtable in Shanghai on March 25-26. The roundtable looked at environmental challenges of urban development with a view to present policy recommendations to local decision-makers.

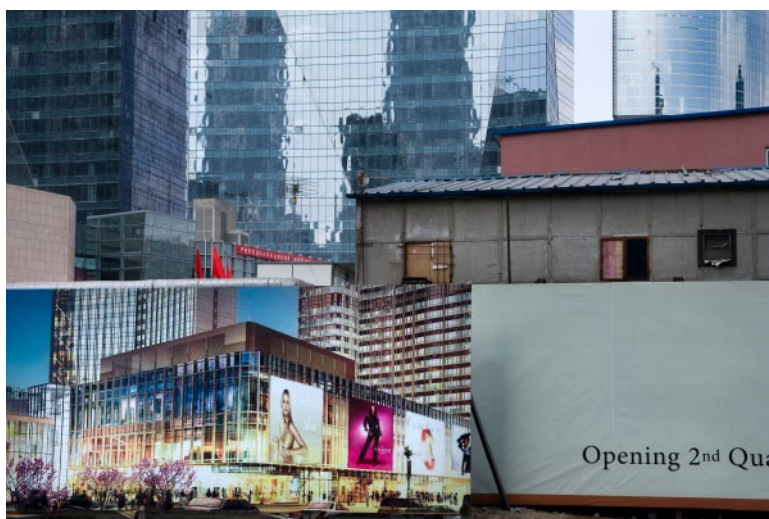
WWF's Director General pointed to the dramatic growth of urbanization in China and its consequences for greenhouse gas emissions. It is expected that in the next 15-20 years China's urban population will increase by 350 million, to nearly 1 billion people. To accommodate them, China will build new housing equal to the entire building stock of Western Europe at a pace of more than 2 billion square meters per year. How urban areas are planned and built will determine whether China will be able to meet its carbon targets. In recent years, WWF has worked with China's central and local governments to support the transition to a low-carbon economy and the successes of Baoding and Shanghai start to point to a new direction for urban development.

"Going low-carbon requires a comprehensive strategy to both reduce energy use and to decarbonize supply. But even if we are successful beyond our wildest dreams in the fight to climate change, we are still destined to suffer significant impacts such as sea level rise, devastating storms and droughts," Jim Leape said. "As we work to make sure the cities of tomorrow are climate-friendly, we must make sure they are climate-resilient as well," he concluded.



Reinvented cities could hold climate key

Urban infrastructure decisions over the next three decades will determine whether cities will be a major driver for environmental destruction or a sustainable future, the WWF Sweden report *Reinventing the City* has found. Various estimates link cities to 70-80 per cent of current carbon emissions. It is expected that an additional 1.7 billion people will become urban dwellers in Asia and Africa alone over the next three decades, posing immense challenges to surrounding environments. Directing future investment towards the development of low or zero carbon cities will be crucial to keeping average global temperature increases below the dangerous threshold of two degrees Celsius.



New office complexes in central Beijing.
Photo © Susetta Bozzi / WWF Canon

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WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature by:

- Conserving the world's biological diversity
- Ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- Promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption

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