

# FAST FACTS

United Nations  
Development Programme



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

*China*

## Climate Change in China

### Context

China's impressive development in recent decades has been driven by a process of urbanization and industrialization, powered predominantly by coal energy. This fossil fuel consumption has carried a heavy environmental impact; in 2007 China overtook the United States as the world's largest producer of climate-changing Green House Gases (GHGs), although per capita emissions remain modest by global standards. China has taken responsibility and responded effectively; 2014 figures show a decline in coal consumption for the first time in 15 years, and China is now the world's largest investor in renewable energy.

UNDP's collaboration with China on climate change started far before it became a prominent concern worldwide. As early as the 1980s, the UNDP Country Programme (1982-1986) in China had already identified energy development and conservation as a priority area of the organization's work. This focus has continued to the present day, with 422 million USD allocated to addressing climate change from 2011-15 in China. In 2015, UNDP's work on Environment & Energy presents the largest part of the domestic-facing programme in China, with a strong emphasis on reducing and mitigating the impact of climate change, helping China contribute to Sustainable Development Goal to "take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts".

In addition to this domestic programme, UNDP China has also strongly incorporated climate change into its portfolio of South-South and Regional Cooperation projects, where UNDP and China share domestic lessons learned with other developing countries.

### Programme Themes

On the ground in China, UNDP is helping to tackle climate change with a number of projects that guide the development of policy and regulations at both national and provincial level, design demo pilots, and provide education to improve public awareness of and ability to mitigate climate change.

#### Carbon accounting

A crucial first step in reducing carbon emissions is accurately measuring them. UNDP is helping China to develop and

### MATTERS OF FACT

- **2007:** China overtakes US as world's largest emitter of Green House Gases (GHGs) in absolute terms (NEEA 2007)
- **667 million USD:** UNDP budget for climate change in China, 2006-15 (UNDP 2012)
- **50 million:** Tons of Chinese CO<sub>2</sub> emissions eliminated with UNDP's support in 2014 (UNDP 2014)
- **2.58 million:** Number of energy-efficient lamps distributed to households and schools in China to promote use (UNDP 2015)
- **300:** Enterprises engaged to shift production to energy-saving lamps (UNDP 2015)
- **3:** Decades of support from UNDP to China on environmental and climate change issues

implement fit-for-purpose industrial accounting methodologies for tracking GHG output. Using Chongqing and Guangdong as pilots, UNDP is also developing low-carbon Product Certification Implementation Rules as well as GHG accounting methodologies for motorcycles, air conditioning units and refrigerators. To further reduce the carbon intensity of the Chinese economy, UNDP is also helping establish a national voluntary emissions reductions registry system to help develop a functioning carbon market – a national objective.

#### Energy Efficiency

Through pilot projects, labelling and training, UNDP helps promote energy efficiency as well as energy-efficient products.

UNDP runs pilot projects to assist manufacturers in producing new energy-efficient bricks, demonstrating that homes made with energy-efficient bricks reduce heating costs and GHG emissions. UNDP also helped set national standards for brick making and their usage, undertaken surveys and assessments of local governments' capability to enforce energy-efficient brick production policy, and has engaged 13 provinces to transform markets to promote the sale and use of energy-efficient bricks. In addition to bricks, UNDP also helps China guide the transformation of the Chinese air conditioning market towards manufacturing and selling more energy-efficient room air conditioners.

A wide-ranging initiative to raise standards of electric products in China has also seen much success as it includes work to improve appliance labelling in China, encouraging the promotion and adoption of energy-efficient electrical goods.

Through policy studies and training, UNDP is also helping overcome technology deficiencies and promoting China's energy conservation products and industry. UNDP also pioneered a technology innovation competition for domestic energy conservation enterprises to encourage use of enhanced technologies.

UNDP is supporting the Chinese lighting industry to phase out energy-intensive incandescent light bulbs and develop supply chains for energy-saving lamps. This support includes a guideline for China's strategic planning to promote energy-saving lamps nationwide, and a business plan to develop policy recommendations for guiding incandescent lamps manufacturers' business conversion.

### Alternative Energies

In addition to reducing emissions by improving energy efficiency, UNDP also helps China adopt alternative energies.

UNDP supports China's efforts in using alternative energy sources such as biomass. In Xinjiang, UNDP is working closely with leading energy enterprises and local governments to expand the biomass fuel industry. In Guangxi, UNDP is also developing a model system for biomass material production and supply, benefiting local farmers.

With the support of UNDP and Global Environment Facility (GEF), China is also promoting the commercial domestic production of fuel-cell vehicles (FCVs). Furthermore, UNDP is engaged in smog control initiatives in Beijing. Through studies and policy recommendations, UNDP is expediting the elimination process of old vehicles, helping control air pollution and promoting the use of new energy vehicles.



Installing a biogas digester in Tangping Village, Gansu Province (Photo: UNDP China)

### Tackling Climate Change with South-South and Regional Cooperation

UNDP leverages its global reach and knowledge base to share Chinese experiences and resources with other developing countries to cooperate on climate change.

Through global initiatives such as the South-South Cooperation on Climate Change Forum in 2014, UNDP brings ministers, senior civil servants and the heads of international organizations together to identify opportunities for

cooperation to tackle climate change.

UNDP is working on projects to connect China with countries including Burundi, Zambia and Ghana to share expertise and technology for renewable energy, and Kenya and Ethiopia for drought management and desertification control.

UNDP also collaborates with Asian countries including Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, Thailand and Viet Nam to remove political, financial, institutional and technical barriers in energy efficiency of electrical products by increasing standards and providing consumers with a choice through labelling. Through these initiatives, the aim is to help reduce on average 10 per cent of residential and commercial energy use by 2030.

### Policy Research and Advocacy

#### Country-level

Alongside programming work, UNDP China is delivering high-level policy support and driving Chinese public awareness of promoting engagement with greener consumption.

UNDP is facilitating the global development of expertise on climate change, most recently with the *China India Low Carbon Report*. UNDP with GEF is also helping China fulfil its commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) by helping prepare its Third National Communication (TNC) and Biennial Update Report (BUR) in line with UNFCCC guidelines.

Publications such as the UNDP National Human Development Report (2009/10) *China and a Sustainable Future – Toward a Low-Carbon Economy and Society* contribute to the increased emphasis on low-carbon development in the national discourse.

Publicly, UNDP advocates for low carbon consumption, for instance with *Green*, a short film featuring national Goodwill Ambassador Zhou Xun that explained how to live a greener lifestyle and received over 200 million online views.

#### Global

At the corporate level UNDP has a strong voice in the global discourse on climate change, especially in its capacity as Chair of the UN Development Group. Some key publications from UNDP global are mentioned below:

UNDP Climate Change Country Reports

Readiness for Climate Finance

UNDP's Biodiversity and Ecosystems Global Framework 2012-2020

For more information, visit:

[www.cn.undp.org](http://www.cn.undp.org)

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