

Water Pollution Prevention and Control

---- China's Policies and Successful Experiences

The Government of China pays high attention to the prevention and control of water pollution. Ever since 1996, China has designated water pollution prevention as the essential work of environmental protection of the entire country. Achievements have been made in the water pollution prevention in the recent decade, with some good experiences and performances as follows:

1. The laws and regulations on water pollution prevention have been continuously improved; and the enforcement of the laws is fairly strict. Since the promulgation of the Water Pollution Prevention Law by National People's Congress, China has formulated or amended seventeen laws, administrative laws and regulations, sector norms and technical policies, such as Water Pollution Prevention, Measures of the Implementation of Water Pollution Prevention, Temporary Rules of Water Pollution Prevention in Huai River Basin, and Technical Policy of Urban Sewage Treatment and Pollution Prevention. State Environmental Protection Administration has issued 21 standards on water environmental protection such as Standards of Ambient Surface Water Quality, Standards of Ground Water Quality, and Comprehensive Standards of Sewage Discharge. The local governments have also, in line with the local situation, formulated a series of local laws, rules regulations and standards for water pollution prevention. Up till now, a legal framework for ambient water protection and water pollution prevention based on the Law of Water Pollution Prevention has been set up. Large-scale inspection on environmental enforcement is carried out in the entire country every year, including inspection on the implementation of laws and regulations on water pollution prevention. In addition, special inspection on certain areas and sectors has been conducted.
2. The program of water pollution prevention has been enhanced and the prioritized action plans have been identified. There is a large population and enormous rapid economic growth in the areas of Three Rivers (Huai River, Liao River and Hai River) and Three Lakes (Tai Lake, Dianchi Lake and Cao Lake). In the meantime, the resources consumption is highly concentrated and the environmental pollution is comparative seriously in this area, which has become a factor restricting the further economic development in this area, with serious damages on the public health, and strong complaints from the public. The central government has identified the water pollution prevention in the Three Rivers and Three Lakes as the important work of the environmental protection of the country. The 9th and 10th Plan of Water Pollution Prevention as well as the pollution treatment programs for Three Gorges Dam area and the east rout project of Water Diversion project have been formulated and implemented. Concrete stipulations on the targets, tasks, measures and deadlines of pollution treatment have been identified. Water pollution prevention has been carried out on large scale. The water pollution treatment in major river basins has promoted on full scale the water pollution prevention in the entire country. Local governments have also, in line with local situation, identified local prioritized action plan.
3. Transit of policies and measures for water pollution prevention: transit from point-source pollution to integrated treatment of river basins, from end-of-pipe treatment to head-source and entire process control, from concentration control to the combination control of total

amount and concentration, and from pollution prevention as main measure to paying attention on both pollution prevention and ecological conservation. The main measures include:

- a) To control the total amount of pollutant discharge. Local governments and various sector control the total industrial and urban domestic sewage discharge in an active way in connection with the industrial restructuring;
- b) To implement strictly the Environmental Impact Assessment and “Three-Simultaneities” regimes, and veto the new construction projects that do not fit in with the environmental requirements and industrial policies;
- c) To phase out and close down a number of production capacity, processes, products and enterprises with serious environmental pollution and waste of resources;
- d) To promote cleaner production in enterprises in connection with technology innovation. The discharge of the main pollution in industrial pollution sources have attained the standards;
- e) To devote great efforts to the development of ecological agriculture and organic agriculture, and the integrated environmental treatment in small river basins;
- f) To turn the sewage into resource. The sewage with treatment to certain standards is reused;
- g) To speed up the infrastructure construction of urban sewage treatment plants, and promote water pollution prevention with economic instruments. In order to solve the problem of urban sewage, State Environmental Protection Administration, jointly with relevant departments, has issued the Notice on Enhancing the Levy of Sewage Treatment Fee and Establishing Benign Operation Mechanism of Urban Sewage Discharge and Centralized Treatment of Urban Sewage, as well as the Notice of Levy Mechanism of Urban Sewage and Industrialization of Garbage Treatment. Relevant systems have been set up in local areas to guide the social funds to invest the construction and operation of environmental infra-structure in various forms, which has strengthened the urban environmental treatment and infra-structure construction;
- h) To increase investment in pollution prevention. Since 1998, environmental protection has been regarded as an important point of the active financial policies. Over 69 billion Yuan national bonds have been used in the key engineering projects of pollution prevention, most of which is directly or indirectly used in the treatment of pollution prevention, with effective impact on the financial investment in environmental protection by local governments and society.

In the context of per capita GDP less than 800 US dollars, China started pollution treatment in river basins on large scale, which rarely happens in the world and is the first case in the developing countries. With efforts for many years, achievements have been made in the water pollution treatment in major river basins. The industrial pollution sources have basically attained the discharge standards. A large number of enterprises with serious pollution and low profits have been phased out. A great deal of urban sewage treatment plants have been completed and put to operation. In the context of rapid economic growth and population increase in the river basin, the trend of rapid water quality degradation in the river basin is under basic control. In 2003, percentage of the sections under control in Huai River, Hai river and Liao River that have attained the water quality target of the 10th Five Year Plan is 56%, 43% and 46% respectively, among

which the water quality in Huai River Basin has been improved significantly, and the section attaining the standards has increase by 30% over 2000. The organic pollution and eutrophication in “Three Lakes” area has been improved to certain extent, and the water quality in the main lake areas of Tai Lake has been improved significantly.