

Governor Brown's Global Climate Action Summit came to a close this past Friday in San Francisco. A large delegation of Chinese government officials, researchers, business leaders and civil society representatives were on hand for the proceedings. Xie Zhenhua, China's special representative on climate change, reaffirmed China's commitment to action on climate change. While Xie had no [SB100](#) or '[launching our own damn satellite](#)' moments at the Summit, he told reporters that most countries (China included) would not "[backtrack or renegotiate](#)" environmental targets set at Paris in 2015. His plenary remarks outlined what has over the last decade become an increasingly well-articulated climate change strategy for China. It's worth hearing the official line on Chinese climate action. Here is a rough translation of some of Xie Zhenhua's remarks at the plenary session on September 13th.

Chairman Xi Jinping has emphasized many times, addressing climate change is not something others want us to do. It is something we ourselves want to do. It is an intrinsic requirement of China's sustainable development. It is also the proper task of a responsible major nation. We will diligently travel a green, low-carbon, circular development road that accords with Chinese national circumstances. We've adopted a series of measures such as optimization of industrial structure, energy conservation and improvement of energy efficiency, development of non-fossil energy, increasing forest carbon sinks, creating a carbon trading market, etc. These have already had marked results.

In 2017, China's [carbon intensity](#) was 46 percent below 2005 levels, avoiding 4 billion tons of carbon. We have already surpassed our 2020 target to reduce carbon intensity by 40-45 percent. That is, we've met our carbon reduction obligation 3 years in advance. Non-fossil energy is now [13.8%](#) of total energy consumption. At the end of 2017, China's renewable energy installed capacity reached [650 million kilowatts](#). In 2017, we invested [\\$126.7 billion](#) for renewable energy development. For 6 years in a row, we have been the largest investor in renewables... Coal as a percentage of total energy consumption has fallen from [72](#) to [60](#) percent. In 2015, forest stock volume reached [15 billion cubic meters](#), meeting our 2020 target in advance.

Our national carbon market, based on pilot experience, started at the end of 2017. Initially, it includes the power sector - [encompassing 1,700 firms and 3 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions](#). This is the world's largest carbon market.

We are deepening South-South climate change cooperation, having signed

agreements of cooperation with 29 developing countries...

Next, we will work hard with the nations of the world to ensure that the Katowice, Poland climate conference is a success. At home, we will increase pressure on implementation of current policies, and take further measures on technological innovation, carbon markets, green finance, climate legislation, co-regulation of climate and environmental pollution, and South-South cooperation.

We will 100 percent meet our climate promises. We will do our best to peak our emissions by 2030 or sooner... China's local governments, enterprises, public interest organizations, and research institutes will continue to adopt effective and timely measures. About 100 cities have announced peaking targets. Some companies have formed low-carbon alliances.

China's foundations, public interest organizations, and research institutes have already announced a Global Climate Action Initiative. They will bring together funding, technology, and knowledge to support the Chinese government in meeting its climate goals, building South-South cooperation, creating a green Belt and Road..."

China's Ministry of Ecology & Environmental Protection organized three days of programming at a "China Pavillion" in partnership with the State of California (and the Energy Foundation) to reinforce these messages, with sessions on climate finance, local climate action in China, carbon markets, electric vehicles, renewable energy, and air pollution regulation. Befitting the importance of China to global climate action, the Pavilion saw speeches from Xie Zhenhua, Governor Brown, Nicholas Stern, Al Gore, former Secretary of Energy Steve Chu, and many others.

As a symbolic matter, the comprehensive nature of China's climate program and its commitment to explaining this action to the world could not stand in starker contrast to the Trump administration's aggressive retreat from domestic and global climate change leadership. Ann Carlson and I have noted in the past how this has only helped to "[make China great again](#)."

But the challenge of controlling China's climate change impacts remains enormous. China accounts for nearly one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions, more than emissions in the U.S and E.U. combined. Growing Chinese consumption and the export of carbon-intensive industries to other developing countries promise to extend China's global

environmental impact in ways not fully appreciated today. Xie's remarks identify some of the deep challenges in implementation, technology development, and global cooperation (particularly with developing countries). Environmental justice issues will also need to garner much greater attention (domestically in China and abroad as Chinese outbound investment and trade expand). It is also increasingly clear current pledges by China and the other major emitting nations are simply insufficient to meet internationally agreed upon climate change policy objectives, such as the goal to limit average global temperature increase to 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels.

Last week's Global Climate Action Summit was an important step in continuing momentum toward a solution to climate change, but much more remains to be done.