

INSIGHTS

Strong Support for Private Economy Hailed

Voice of the World

Edited by GONG Qian

China recently issued a list of practical measures to boost the private economy. The move was praised by the public, media and analysts, with the consensus being that it shores up confidence in the development of China's private businesses.

On July 19, China issued a 31-point plan vowing to make the private sector "bigger, better and stronger." The guidelines include cutting market access barriers for private firms, enhancing the protection of intellectual property rights, easing private companies' efforts to raise capital and supporting their overseas expansion.

According to *South China Morning Post* (SCMP), the commitment aims to shore up the private sector that plays a big role in economic growth, jobs and technological innovation, including invigorating the national economy. SCMP believes it shows the Chinese government's determination to improve the country's business environment and to solve on-the-ground difficulties.

On the day the plan was released, shares of Chinese companies traded in New York rallied, with the NASDAQ Golden Dragon China Index rising as much as



The Hangzhou-Shaoxing-Taizhou intercity railway in East China's Zhejiang province, the first Chinese high-speed railway controlled by private capital, officially opens on January 8, 2022. (PHOTO: VCG)

2.9 percent, Bloomberg reported.

Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, a non-profit organization focused on Canada's relations with Asia, said that China now offers an unprecedented support package to the private sector to revitalize its economy.

In the days following the plan's release, China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) released a plan on July 24 to stimulate private investment in several key sub-sectors, including transportation, water conservancy and clean energy. Additionally, it also has compiled a list of more than 2,900 projects from local governments that private investors can participate in. "A push as powerful as this is a positive

sign," Ding Shuang, chief economist for Greater China & North Asia at Standard Chartered Plc., told Bloomberg.

To some extent, the measures released by NDRC could boost hiring in certain industries and provide a boost of confidence among both private companies and consumers, said China Briefing website.

On August 3, China further unveiled 28 detailed measures to boost the private economy. These guidelines and measures include promoting fair market access, offering stronger financial support, boosting legal guarantees, optimizing services and creating a sound atmosphere for private companies.

The financial support could address

the short-term needs of private firms, Bruce Pang, head of research and chief economist for greater China at Jones Lang LaSalle Inc., told Bloomberg. In the long term, lifting the barriers to market entry would be key, Pang said, adding that he expected private investment to return to positive year-on-year growth in the fourth quarter.

"With this new policy and other measures likely to be taken to re-energize the economy, I expect the private sector's sentiment to improve and confidence in the government's support and the strength of the economy to come back," said Edward Tse, the founder and CEO of a strategy consultancy with roots in China, in his letter to SCMP.

China Plays Major Role in Global Environment Governance

Opinion

By TANG Zhexiao

China is often seen as a major country pursuing a global transition to cleaner energy.

In fact, China's remarkable efforts in the global green push toward renewable energy and biodiversity conservation, make it an increasingly proponent in leading actions to protect the environment.

China has raced ahead in developing renewable energy and become a major contributor to global carbon emissions reduction, said Huang Runqiu, minister of ecology and environment of China.

According to the China's National Energy Administration (NEA), the total installed capacity of renewable energy had hit 1.32 billion kilowatts by the end of June, surpassing that of coal. The installed capacities of hydropower, wind power and solar power all rank first globally.

The cost of solar photovoltaic installation dropped about 82 percent from 2010 to 2021, and that of wind power decreased from 35 percent to 40 percent. These have not only promoted China's green and low-carbon development, but also contributed to global carbon emissions reduction.

Meanwhile, since 2014, China has begun to play a key role in facilitating the conclusion of the *Paris Agreement* by reaching a *Joint Announcement on Climate Change*.

The country has also provided great support and help to other developing countries in this regard. According to the Foreign Ministry of China, the country has signed 43 South-South cooperation documents on climate response with 38 developing countries, trained some 2,000 officials and professional personnel specializing in climate response from more than 120 developing countries, and made a positive contribution to building a fair, reasonable and win-win global climate governance system.

As species worldwide are becoming extinct at an alarming rate, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation pose a major risk to human survival and development. China has therefore strengthened biodiversity conservation as a national strategy through long-range planning and top-level design.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, executive secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, commended China's measures on mainstreaming biodiver-

sity, including establishing national parks and drawing up ecological redlines.

Since 1956, when the first nature reserve was set up, China has established nearly 10,000 protected areas of all types and at all levels, accounting for about 18 percent of its total land area, according to *Biodiversity Conservation in China*.

A trial basis 10 national parks, including one at Sanjiangyuan, the cradle of the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang rivers, have been launched by the country since 2015.

In October 2021, when the *Kunming Declaration* was adopted at COP15, the country announced it would invest 1.5 billion RMB (about 214.5 million USD) to establish the Kunming Biodiversity Fund to support biodiversity protection in developing countries.

Ecological civilization is a key element of the current five-year plan (of China) and that's good, said Norway's Climate and Environment Minister Espen Barth Eide, adding that Norway and many other countries are thinking in the same direction.

Additionally, to advance green Belt and Road Initiative development, China has released and updated a guideline on environmental protection for overseas projects, calling on enterprises to implement the concept of ecological civilization and to promote the green and high-quality development of projects.

Though the recent G20 environment meeting failed to adopt a communique, due to introduction of geopolitical issues by some countries, China will continue to strengthen policy exchange and practical cooperation on environmental and climate issues with other countries in the G20 and other frameworks, to jointly promote green, low carbon and sustainable development around the world, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson remarked on August 2.



A herd of wild Asian elephants wanders in Pu'er, Yunnan province, China, on July 19, 2023. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

Hi! Tech

Smart Test-to-Treat Wound Dressing

Edited by QI Liming

A research team, from China's Northeastern University, has developed a "test-to-treat" pad for real-time visual monitoring of bacterial infection and on-site smart therapy.

Researchers said that the smart bandage can automatically detect and treat different types of bacterial infections, including potentially fatal superbugs that

can evade most antibiotics.

Skin infection is one of the major threats to human health, particularly for patients with diabetes. Timely diagnosis of skin infection strains and on-site therapy are vital in human health and safety.

The bacteria beating smart bandage has double layered hydrogel, and is able to provide the selective treatment of drug-sensitive (DS) or drug-resistant (DR) bacterial infections.

If the green pad against a wound changes to yellow within three hours, an infection is indicated. If the pad remains yellow, a DS bacterial infection is present, which can be treated by placing another hydrogel layer on top of the first pad to release a commonly used antibiotic into the wound.

However, a further colour change to red indicates the presence of DR bacteria, the so-called superbugs that are

posing an increasing challenge in the fight against infectious diseases. These can be treated by adding a hydrogel layer that generates toxic reactive oxygen species (ROS).

The smart pad possesses high potential for a low-cost and easy operation wound dressing providing rapid detection and smart treatment without extra ancillary equipment, and is convenient to use at home.

This multifunctional design effectively reduces antibiotic abuse and accelerates wound healing, providing an innovative and promising band-aid strategy in point-of-care diagnosis and therapy.

Life Detector Aids Emergency Rescue

Edited by TANG Zhexiao

A new ultra-wideband radar life detector, developed by China Coal Technology & Engineering Group (CCTEG), is capable of swiftly and accurately searching for buried survivors during times of disaster, and has passed field testing recently.

The detector, which has a reach of up to 30 meters and has a centimeter-level resolution, can be applied in rescue after earthquakes, geological disasters and landslide accidents.

The R&D team conducted life signal detection and positioning tests on subjects under various scenarios

such as high-rise building collapse, earthquake ruins, and post-earthquake slanted buildings.

According to CCTEG, its detection signal can penetrate non-metallic materials such as brick walls, wood boards, concrete and soil, detecting the survivor's life signals such as breathing and heartbeat and giving the distance information of the living body.

Field tests in large-scale and deep-buried scenarios will be conducted next, to improve the core performance indicators of this radar life detector, aiming to provide more reliable technology and equipment for post-disaster rescue.



The research team conducts tests of the ultra-wideband radar life detector. (PHOTO: CCTEG)

Makeover of Bohai Coast from Barren Land to Farmland

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Dong Xinliang, associate researcher at the Agricultural Resources Research Center of CAS's Institute of Genetics and Developmental Biology (IGDB), said, "We found that during the jointing stage of wheat, the use of saline water for irrigation does not affect the growth and yield. It can also save about 20 percent of fresh water." This technology has been promoted in over 66,000 hectares of land in the Bohai coastal area.

Developing salt-resistant varieties
With the assistance of the molecular breeding joint centers and breeding bases of the IGDB, Nanpi has developed six varieties of wheat and corn. Among them, the winter wheat varieties "Xiaoyan 60" and "Xiaoyan 155" are being grown in Hebei, Tianjin, Shandong and Xinjiang.

Today, more varieties of crops have been developed for saline-alkaline land. By the end of October 2021, the saline-alkaline-resistant rice developed by the sea rice research team in Shandong's port city Qingdao had been tested in the sea rice planting base in Weifang, a city in Shandong, with satisfactory results. The average yield has exceeded 10,000 kg per hectare.

The saline-alkaline land now not only produces grain, but also saline-tolerant herbs, grass, fruits and special crops. About 21,000 saline-tolerant germplasm resources are preserved in the Yellow River Delta agricultural high-tech industrial demonstration zone, of which 45 new lines have been selected for breeding.

The sea rice planting base culti-

vates rice and shrimp symbiotically. It is estimated that after three years of cultivation, the salinity of the soil will drop from 5.9 percent to 2.8 percent, which will play an important role in ensuring food security and alleviating the pressure on the red line policy, which dictates that no more than 120 million hectares of arable land will be cultivated.

Sustainable agriculture
The emergence of new technology and new business forms is also promoting the reclamation of saline-alkaline land, resulting in improved ecology as well as economy.

Huanghua, a city in Hebei, specializes in deep processing wheat. A wheat industry has come up with wheat being grown, processed into flour and made into food products, thus extending the in-

dustrial chain. The city produces over 130,000 tons of saline-alkaline resistant wheat and its 20 large flour processing enterprises have an annual processing capacity of nearly 500,000 tons.

Shandong boasts underground brine, an important natural resource for producing several cross-industry chemical products. Yangkou, a town in Shandong, has formed a marine ecological health industrial chain by utilizing the brine. It incorporates food, breeding, tourism, shopping and entertainment.

With sci-tech support, Shandong has transformed the formerly barren and ecologically fragile saline-alkaline land along Bohai Bay into a green and fertile area, which has boosted economic, social and ecological benefits and also become a cradle of innovation.

China Is Invaluable to Global Value Chains

Research Box

Decoupling and de-risking has significant global consequences, including the fragmentation of global value chains (GVCs), reduced efficiency, elevated production costs and higher consumer prices. International collaboration in research and development has also been hindered, stalling technological progress and innovation.

If China's access to the GVC declines, multinational enterprises would lose access to China's large market, knowledge, technological leadership and efficient industrial system-hampering their business plans and brand development.

China should be viewed as an opportunity and a driving force for worldwide economic recovery and prosperity, rather than a threat. A thriving China contributes significantly to global growth, and has account-

ed for one third of total expansion since the global financial crisis. Embracing collaboration and integration within the global value chains can lead to increased efficiency, innovation and shared knowledge.

Economic decoupling has detrimental impacts on the weakening global trading system, even with the emerging regional free trade arrangements, with long-term consequences to future cross-border flows of trade, investment and technology. Such costs will far outweigh any benefits of decoupling.

What the world needs is a new wave of global economic reintegration to offset the negative impacts of the pandemic and the global economic slowdown. Upholding the principles and practices of open trade and multilateralism is the key to achieving this.

— Ligang Song and Yixiao Zhou, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/>, 24-07-2023