

Sustainable Development Goals for National Economy's Development in 2030: China's Experience

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ABSTRACT

Chinese growing power leads to several overall achievements that could be counted as remarkable for its economy. The first step forward Agenda 2030 was mentioned in Chinese leader's Xi Jinping Eradication of Extreme Poverty. China's Practices report. But in some cases it was closely connected with the following facts – the 100th Anniversary of Chinese Communist Party; Chinese response to the so called “wuhan virus”. It was another step to the country's regional and worldwide leadership. Mechanism for a “complete victory” was in the previously adopted eight-year plan for the mostly rural area's residents. China adopted Action Plans for all spheres of national economy and established special collaboration with different national and foreign ministries and departments to move forward the development goals.

Keywords: China, Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals, Extreme Poverty, Paris Agreement

1. INTRODUCTION

In his speech in 2020, Chinese leader Xi Jinping noted an important contribution to the achievement of the UN Millennium Goals (UN Millennium Goals and Beyond 2015), in particular, to China's fight against poverty [1, 2]. On this basis, the Eradication of Extreme Poverty: China's Practices report presented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [3] and then by the Chinese leader [4] was released. In fact, this report has become one of the main achievements of the UN for the presented period, while for the rest of the world no significant changes have been achieved on this issue, moreover, on the contrary, in some states poverty has begun to grow due to negative trends. Thus, according to the report published by the World Bank, between 88 million and 115 million people could fall back into extreme poverty as a result of pandemic changes [5]. In 2021 the total amount of new poverty could even increase. Such achievements, of course, would not have been possible without a series of considerably effective measures that eventually led to a significant reduction in the level of poverty in China. Since late 1980s Chinese government adopted a number of documents closely related to poverty eradication, such as Seven-year Program (1994-2000) [6], several Outlines for Development-Oriented Poverty Alleviation for China's Rural Areas (2001-2010, 2011-2020) etc. The

documents defined the main criteria for assessing the level of poverty, drew attention to rural areas, as well as suggested a set of measures aimed at eliminating poverty.

As for the basic principles and approaches that guided China in dealing with the issues of sustainable development, the work of various specialized groups, acting as a basis for theoretical and practical activities are of particular interest. So, since the early 1990s, models of interaction with international organizations, including with UN and its organs, have been studied at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

As the main methodology in this work, we refer to the regime theory by Stephen Krasner (or institutionalism), the sub-discipline of the International Relations (IR) theory, which argued that international institutions could affect the behaviour of the States [7]. Similar studies on the example of the concept of sustainable development were presented in China, in particular, by Zhang Xiaoling [8].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the report for 2021, presented on the specialized UN Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge

Platform, the Chinese government also noted the contribution of the PRC to the fight against poverty as the main achievement of the state during the period of active interaction with UN structures. On the other hand, this statement and introduction of the "victory over poverty" collocation during this period showed China's desire to get rid of the negativity associated with the use by Western leaders of clichés like "Chinese coronavirus", "Wuhan virus", etc., which seriously shook the international reputation of the PRC.

Among other things, China in this report noted achievements in other areas, for example, in dealing with environmental degradation. Thus, following the 2015 Paris Agreement, in China there was a significant reduction in carbon emissions by 18.8%, and clean energy mix rise up to 23.4% [9]. The new status and goals on air pollution's reduction should be considered another achievement [10]. In this regard, we can note the essential role of China's national plans, such as an Action Plan for Air Pollution and Control of 2013. However, subsequent events showed that the state only partially relates its own achievements to global projects. So, during the last UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26), which was held at the end of October 2021, China, the leader in terms of greenhouse gas emissions in the world, did not make any new commitments, as it was expected by the international community.

On the other hand, China is quite consistently promoting its own projects, built mainly around the Belt and Road Initiative, adopted under the current leader Xi Jinping in 2015 during his first term in office. Despite the large number of problems associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the actual shutdown of many projects abroad, China continues to use foreign policy rhetoric that was relevant before 2019. So, in one of the last statements of the Chinese leader during Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Regional Forum on November 19, 2021, Xi Jinping noted that the principles of international cooperation that China adheres to remain the same, Belt and Road Initiative would be a base for the development of the multilateral "green" cooperation process [11]. In addition, he used the phrase "sustainable development" (*chixu fazhan*) and referred to the UN Millennium Goals [12] adopted as a project for development. In general, the leaders of various countries of the world addressed the topic of COVID-19 consequences. During this meeting leaders also agreed to use all kinds of macroeconomical tools to achieve economic recovery.

As for China itself, the legislative framework and key areas of development are regularly updated in the country, changes and targets are adjusted. It should be noted that for a planned economy, which is the economy of China, this kind of development and implementation of tasks is a fairly convenient form of

interaction between the state and society. The basis is the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China [13]. In 2021, at least four adjustments to the core documents and the publication of new ones were officially noted [14].

In addition, several publications were devoted to various areas, as it had been planned since China joined the UN programmes. In particular, since the early 1990s, both old and new challenges that China has faced have been identified:

- shortage and decline of natural resources necessary for development;
- high population density in certain areas and increased anthropogenic load;
- uneven population distribution and shrinking labour supply;
- the problem of environmental pollution;
- environment and the promotion of ecological consciousness, etc. [15].

Each of the presented problems was identified and ways to solve them were outlined both at the national level and at the regional level, and the features of the planning system implied the responsibility of local authorities for the implementation of a comprehensive policy at their level. Thus, vertical connections were built that helped solve the problems posed more effectively.

Although some internal documents were not directly related to sustainable development goals, they indirectly helped to achieve them. For example, in 2015 China adopted national Made in China 2025 Plan for the development of the manufacturing sector (MIC 2025) as a part of a 13th and 14th Five-Year Plans [16]. Its goals are to move away from "being the world's factory" to a more innovative economic model. In particular, the document sets the goal of reducing the use of energy and resources per unit of output [17].

Also, in China the UN programs were adjusted in order to meet the country needs, for example, Healthy China 2030 Plan [18] was a Chinese Government's agenda for health and development. In many ways, it went unnoticed in the scientific community, mostly due to COVID-19, although it assumed quite important tasks for the design and development of new social systems [19]. Multisectoral collaboration and innovation plan for implementing Healthy China was set up.

China will keep on working to solve the problems of the poorest regions, mostly rural and located in rather extreme geographical conditions (mountain ranges, deserts and semi-deserts), where basic survival problems arise caused by low agricultural productivity.

The tasks that the government solves in this case are all the same tasks of sustainable development. Thus, the redistribution of resources, the creation of jobs, including those not directly related to agriculture, obtaining additional professional education, state support for small and medium-sized businesses, etc. are used to implement the state policy on the ground. However, there is still a certain, rather high level of inequality in China, for example, the Gini Index or Gini Ratio in 2019 reached the score of 46.5 (0.465) points [20]. According to the World Bank's definition of poor are those who live on less than \$1.90 a day. China has set the threshold \$1.69 a day. Under the estimated data, about 100 million of people worldwide were pushed into extreme poverty in 2020 [21].

A large number of government programs and activities are associated, among other things, with a heavy load on various social systems that China had throughout its history. This is also why efficiency was more important than openness and equal access. With the adoption of complex projects aimed externally (Belt and Road Initiative is one of them), China began to build its own system of relations and ties both on the basis of existing agreements and its own programs, bearing in mind new tasks of the national development (including access to resources and markets). It is concerned with the application of mechanisms provided within the framework of Agenda 2030 in combination with national goals. In addition, China has been and will remain one of the main beneficiaries of the processes envisaged under Agenda 2030. This is mainly due to well-thought-out national programs for individual sectors of the economy, as well as complex ones that included several industries. It was they who helped, with some support from the state, implement plans for "green development", reducing emissions, providing social support for certain segments of the population, and so on. It should also be noted that there is a fairly close interaction between government agencies and private business, which was also interested in development programs. The active participation of Chinese companies with the state support in projects abroad is also part of major international projects and development plans. That is why in many statements of the head of the Chinese state we can find plans to incorporate this or that international project into the Belt and Road Initiative in order to enhance the coordination and cooperation.

4. CONCLUSION

Major conclusions and recommendations include the following statements.

Firstly, there is insufficient attention to Chinese programs on behalf of other developing countries. Although the Chinese experience is unique (in terms of available financial resources, administrative regulation

and control, a system of planned indicators, etc.), many countries lack interest in researching the experience of China and the Chinese economy to achieve the Millennium goals and relevant national programs. However, the analysis of documents, facts, logic and sequence of steps taken by the Chinese government might help in the application of individual practices for specific countries.

Secondly, some China's statements and real steps turn out to be unrelated to each other, for example, the policy and practice of opening up to the outside world and the real practice of COVID-19 zero tolerance leads to a shortage of international communication, and entry and exit from China is significantly difficult. This also applies to the situation discussed above, when the PRC declares support for the goals of the Paris Agreement, but does not seek to make new commitments to the international community.

Thirdly, the grassroots level of interstate cooperation (person to person) has been lost, when the discussion of development tasks was transferred from the level of society to the level of a specific individual. In this case, the discussion of sustainable development issues is still held at the highest level (interstate cooperation), it is possible to work in the format of joint meetings at the levels of ministries and departments, as well as specialized associations, etc. However, it is necessary to note a significant regress in regional and interregional cooperation, including on topical issues. In the future, this may lead to significant distortions in cooperation and loss of operational management, taking into account the regional factor.

Fourthly, the partial isolation of countries and the violation of the integrity of the global economic and political space during lockdowns impaired, among other things, with the collection and processing of statistical data both for countries as a whole and for individual regions (subjects – provinces, administrative-territorial units). Making changes to the counting system also directly affects the final indicators. In particular, this may concern medical statistics, some macroeconomic indicators, which, if necessary, may be overestimated or underestimated. In addition, the macroeconomic indicators of 2021 for almost all countries will be quite high, but it is necessary to take into account the low base and the decline of the economy in 2020. This also applies to China, whose statistics were previously questioned.

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