

The Implementation of China's National Climate Change Policies: In A Case of Nanjing



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1. China's national commitment on reducing ghg emissions (INDCs)

- China pledged to both peak CO₂ emissions and to reduce its carbon intensity by 60 to 65 per cent of its 2005 levels by 2030.
- In addition, the government committed itself to increasing the share of non-fossil fuels in China's primary energy consumption to approximately 20 per cent, and to increasing its forest stock volume by about 4.5 billion cubic meters above its 2005 level.

- The Chinese government has pledged that China's INDCs is not only motivated by national economic interests but also by the government's 'sense of responsibility to fully engage in global governance, to forge a community of shared destiny for humankind and to promote common development for all human beings.
- Either way, China will achieve co-benefits from the INDC as it helps it to reduce the country's reliance on coal for power generation, decrease air pollution and hence to prevent 100, 000 premature deaths annually, and create an 'additional 500, 000 full-time equivalent (FTE) green jobs in the domestic renewable energy sector'

- Given China's developing country status, however, its low-carbon development plans are quite ambitious. It has incorporated climate policy into all its development plans and aims to build a low-carbon society. Notably, the State Council has elevated 'ecological civilization' to a prominent strategic guideline to be integrated into China's economic, political, cultural, and societal plans. It declares that 'green development' is important to the development of China's competitive advantage and hence it plays an important role in building national comprehensive power.

- However, there are many challenges which may make the implementation of emissions reduction very difficult in China. For example, it is questionable whether the emissions reduction targets of China's National Climate Change Plan (2014-2020) will really be implemented due to the lack of coordination and motivation of other government sectors outside of the National Development and Reform Commission.

- Another weakness of China's climate policies is that not enough attention is being paid to emissions caused by road transportation, which has turned out to be the most difficult sector in which to implement emissions reductions in the EU and the U.S. As the number of vehicles may even more than triple by the end of next decade, China's oil consumption is expected to rise sharply and therefore inhibit China from peaking emissions by 2030.

- The Chinese government, however, is aware of these difficulties. In spring 2015, the State Council published a 12, 000-character document entitled ‘Opinion on acceleration for the promotion of ecological civilization’ which not only sets objectives and instructions on how to reorganize the Chinese economy to make it greener but also addresses how to overcome obstacles to improving the environmental standards of its society.

2. China's Situation

- Because dealing with environmental degradation is one of the biggest challenges that contemporary China faces today, the Chinese government has little choice but to take climate change seriously. As China's national identity is in flux, however, it is very difficult to agree domestically on the scope of China's global responsibility. On one hand, many Chinese think that the state should take more international responsibilities; on the other hand, China's identity as the leader of the developing world has 'sometimes forced it to be more uncooperative in international environmental affairs than it would actually like to be' .

- The State Council maintains that the CCP committees and governmental officials at every level are responsible for the construction of ecological civilization. In particular, it announced that economic performance should no longer be the 'only criterion in government performance assessment' but environmental issues should have a bigger weighting in cadre evaluations. Interestingly, the State Council declared that cadres have a life-long responsibility for environmental harm caused during their period of duty, even after they have retired or changed position. This means that if they manage to promote the construction of ecological civilization, officials will be rewarded but if they fail or cause serious environmental damage, they cannot be promoted to higher positions.

- The Chinese government has encouraged central and local governments, public institutions, businesses, and individuals to practice ‘low-carbon lifestyle’ living by issuing a wide variety of policies and action plans. Many of these policies were introduced in China’ s INDC.
 - Some Chinese cities are indeed taking climate change very seriously.
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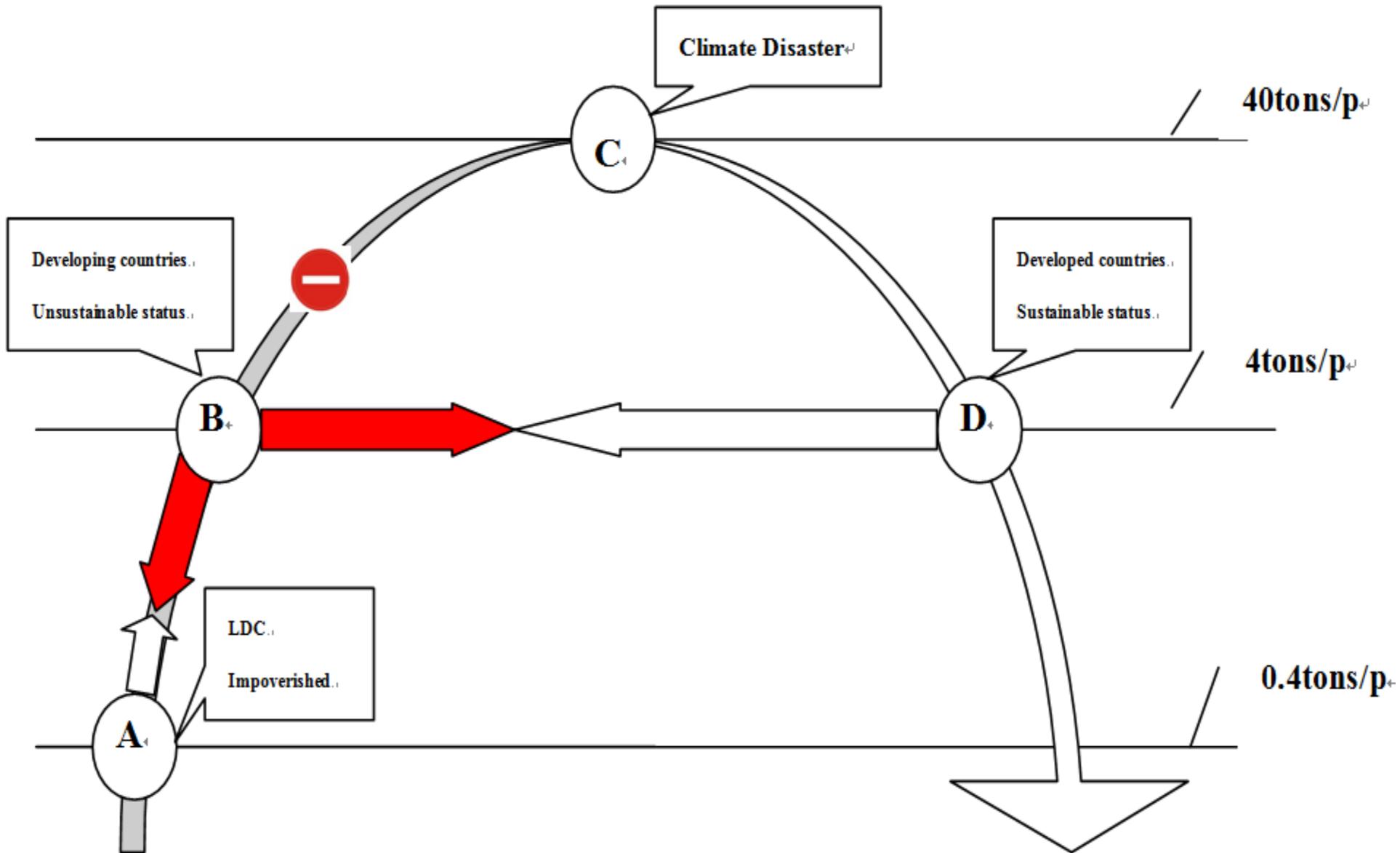
3.China' s Capability and Responsibility

- Respective capability should be the criterion to judge one' s responsibility, because with great power comes great responsibility.
- If a little boy fell into a puddle, and you were the only person who stood nearby and had the capability to give him your hand, but you did nothing to save him. Then you were a bad person, even though you were not rich and did nothing to hurt him.
- If the earth would be destroyed by other people' s wrong actions and you were the only superman who have the capability to save the earth, but you did nothing to save it. Then you were a bad person, even though you had never committed any wrong action.

- Therefore, every country and its people should try their best to tackle climate change. All countries and people have common responsibility to fight against climate change, but the countries and people who have greater power should take greater responsibility.
- As a responsible big country, China should do everything it could to combat climate change, not only for rescuing global commons of climate, but also for achieving its own green and ecological development.

- China has two kinds of responsibility according to its capability: make effort to achieve its green and sustainable development, and help itself and LCDs reducing poverty.
- Although China is not a developed country, it has pledged to provide developing countries with climate finance. It will not contribute to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) but instead has decided to establish its own South-South Cooperation Fund (Liu, 2014). In September 2015, China announced that it will “make available ¥20 billion [about 3 billion USD] for setting up the China South-South Climate Cooperation Fund to support other developing countries to combat climate change, including to enhance their capacity to access GCF funds” .

China's Capability and Responsibility



4.China' s Climate Policy

- China' s climate change policy has undergone two stages.
- The first one is the exploration period for organizational preparation from 1992 to 2008, the policy primarily aimed at “regretless reduction” by energy saving and efficiency, and a new and independent department and work system has been established then accompanied by the global process of “Bali Roadmap” and domestic initiative, while the market mechanism were actually one way (from China to EU-ETS) and project level.

- The second is the transition period for strategic decision-making from 2009 to 2015, the policy target shifted to carbon and energy intensity of GDP as efficiency and structure adjustment. The nationwide medium and long term low carbon strategy will substantial decision consultation have been introduced along with the global process of “Durban Platform” and domestic pilots, and the new goals including emission peaking time frame, share of non-fossil fuels and carbon sinks are formally proposed, and this time the market mechanism is leaded by exploratory local pilots and bottom-up innovations.

- As the Paris Agreement have been adopted in COP21 and emission peaks go into the implementation schedule, China is stepping into the third stage of the climate policy and market, and the key points of the regulations will gradually transit to cap control. The consumption of fossil fuels will appear inflection point, and the new investment in low carbon energy will exceed the traditional ones. The national emission trade system will be officially launched in 2017, and the low carbon transformation in growth pattern, energy system and consumption behaviors are expected to be accelerated with big ambitions.

5. Local Policies of Nanjing

- Nanjing is the capital of Jiangsu Province which is developed in economy in China and an important central city on the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtse River.



- (1) Local Climate Legislation
 - Jiangsu is the first provincial government in China which has its own local law on dealing with climate change. From 2012, Jiangsu began to explore its local climate legislation, and completed in 2015.
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- (2) Adjustment of Industrial Structure
 - Nanjing is traditionally one of the most biggest centers in China for heavy industry, but it changes its way of development for the recent ten years from extensive to intensive, from resource-intensive to talent-intensive, from manufacturing industry' s center to innovation center. The adjustment of industrial structure sharply reduced GHG emission.
 - One potential problem is environmental justice produced by the transfer of high emission and high pollution industries from Nanjing to poor areas in China.
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- (3) Urban Planning
 - 1)controlling the city's sprawl and protect the ecological carbon sink space in order to weaken the impact of climate change;
 - 2) ensuring the safety of ecological patterns and maintain the balance of urban cosystem in order to ensure the stability of the local micro—climate and pleasant;
 - 3) strengthening regional seismic flood level in order to weaken the climate change caused by the threat of natural disasters;
 - 4)implementing the public transport priority and reduce carbon emissions in order to reduce the impact of urban activities on the atmosphere.
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- The length of Nanjing metro is 226 kilometers in 2015, and it will reach 890 kilometers before 2030.



- Free Public Bicycle
- 80,000 free public bicycles in Nanjing city



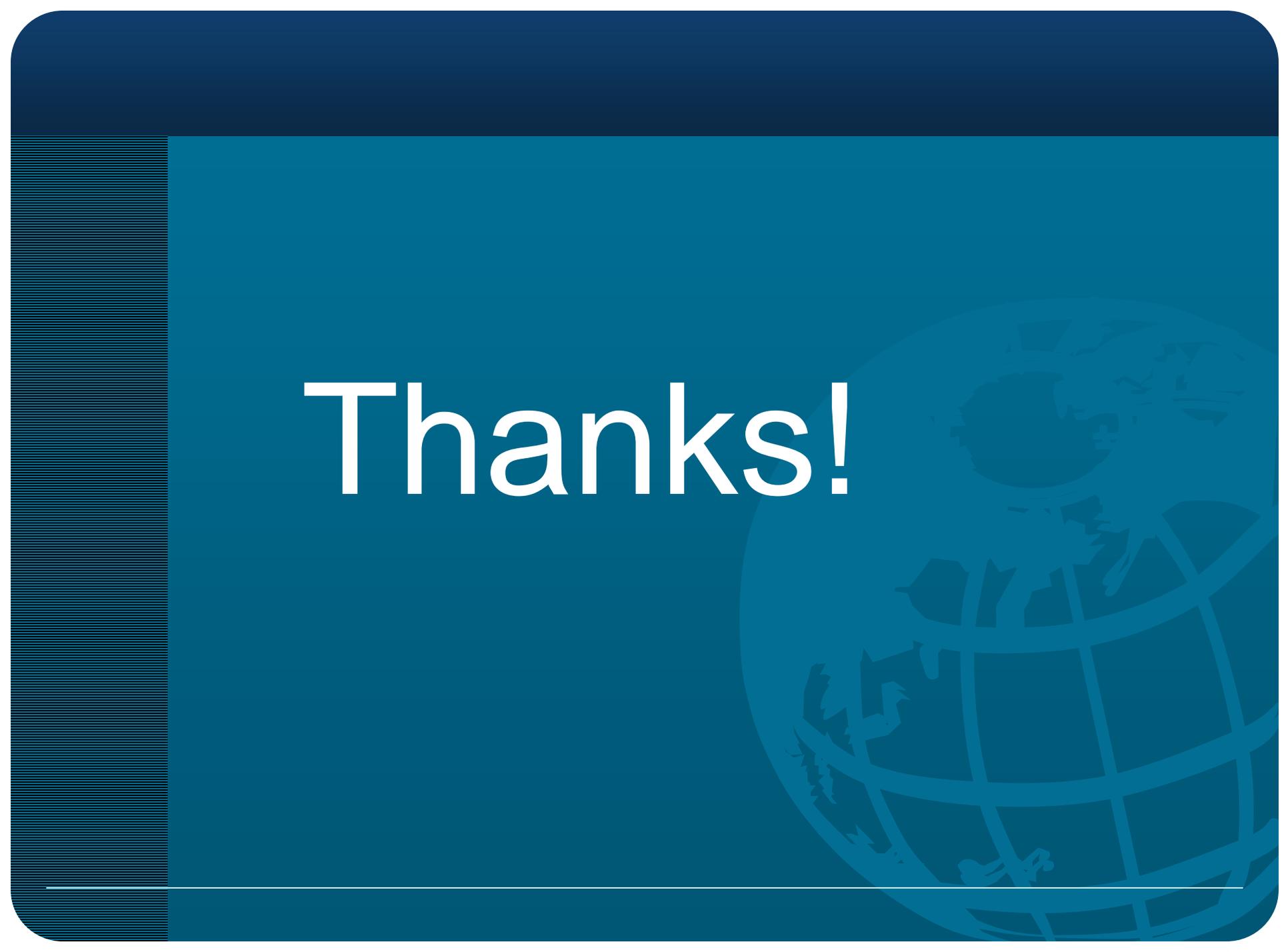
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- (4) Ecological Rural Construction and Ecological Tourism
- Tourism is one of the most important source of GHG emission. Nanjing have built many beautiful villages which could also promote low-carbon tourism.



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Thanks!

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