

TOP NEWS

Xi emphasizes efforts to cut food wastage

Calls for G20 members to bring about anti-hunger efforts amid COVID-19

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan and XU WEI in Beijing

President Xi Jinping highlighted on Friday the need for countries across the world to adopt quicker and more concrete actions to reduce food loss and waste, with global food security being under threat in the face of the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

In a letter to congratulate the opening of the International Conference on Food Loss and Waste, Xi underscored cutting food losses and waste as an important gateway to ensuring food security — a fundamental issue that matters to the existence of humanity.

The conference, proposed by China during the 15th G20 Leaders' Summit last year, should serve as an opportunity for all parties to work together in carrying out the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and contribute to the zero-poverty target, he said.

The president also urged all parties to make greater contributions to global food security and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Xi has long given priority to food security and on many occasions emphasized the need to stop food waste. He issued a special instruction in August 2020 saying that food waste was distressing and effective measures must be adopted to curb it.

The conference, under the theme of "reducing food loss and waste and promoting global food security", opened in Jinan, Shandong province, on Friday.

Qu Dongyu, director-general of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, said in a video speech that the organization estimates that up to 14 percent of food produced globally goes to

waste between the post-harvest and retail stages of the supply chain.

"Furthermore, 17 percent of total global food production may be wasted at the retail, food-service and consumer stages," Qu said. "These high levels of food loss and waste, valued at \$400 billion annually, could feed around 1.26 billion more people per year."

He said that the loss and waste is taking place against a backdrop of severe global challenges in terms of food insecurity and malnutrition as "up to 811 million people in the world are undernourished, while 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet".

"We cannot end hunger and all forms of malnutrition if we do not address the high levels of food loss and waste," he said, adding that innovations in business models, institutional arrangements, technologies and digital solutions such as artificial intelligence can all contribute to reducing food loss and waste.

Tang Renjian, minister of agriculture and rural affairs, said China will make parallel efforts in increasing agricultural output and reducing food loss, with steps to curb loss and waste present in all procedures.

The nation will support the establishment of an international dialogue mechanism for reducing food loss to acquire more experience and exchanges in policies and regulations, Tang said.

China will also provide necessary technological support to countries and regions in need and support international organizations, including the FAO, to enhance their role in shoring up grain production and cutting food loss, he added.

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An online business matching campaign is held at the Malaysia pavilion during the 2021 China-ASEAN Expo in Nanning, the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Friday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

ASEAN: Great potential for cooperation

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Encouraged by Xi's congratulatory letter, analysts and business leaders feel increasingly confident about the prospects for China-ASEAN economic and trade cooperation.

Zhang Jianping, director-general of the China Center for Regional Economic Cooperation, which operates under the Ministry of Commerce, said ASEAN will continue to be China's largest trading partner, and its contribution to the nation's inbound foreign direct investment and outbound direct investment will also increase rapidly.

"The two sides have even greater cooperation potential in areas such as infrastructure, energy and resources, agriculture, manufacturing and the modern services industry," Zhang said.

China and ASEAN will become the largest and most energetic emerging markets in the Asia-Pacific region, and the integration of the regional economy will be accelerated, driven by the continuously strengthening bilateral economic and trade cooperation, he added.

Zhu Jianhe, chairman of Nanning-based Guangxi Beibu Gulf Investment Group Co Ltd, said the company will invest more in the

construction of transportation infrastructure at Chinese border ports, as well as in improving the capabilities of road transportation and border port customs clearance.

As a result, the company aims to contribute more to the growing connectivity between China and ASEAN member countries, Zhu said. The State-owned company is the largest investment and operation services company involved in inland road and border ports in Guangxi.

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Diplomat: President's speech shows China a responsible global player

By MO JINGXI in Beijing

President Xi Jinping's speech at the 13th BRICS Summit showed China is taking up its responsibilities as a major global player by promoting international cooperation to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and taking practical actions to ensure accessibility and affordability of vaccines, a senior Chinese diplomat said.

Vice-Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu made the remark at a news briefing on Thursday after Xi addressed the summit via video link in Beijing. Xi announced that China will donate an additional 100 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to developing countries this year to contribute further to global anti-pandemic cooperation.

BRICS is a bloc that consists of five developing countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

At a crucial time when the world

is faced with the pandemic and changes unseen in a century, Ma said that Xi's participation in the meeting helped draw a blueprint for BRICS cooperation and gave directions for global efforts to fight the virus and promote global economic recovery.

As the pandemic accelerated the evolution of the international landscape, some countries have played small clique politics and practiced unilateralism disguised as multilateralism, Ma said.

However, Xi's call for true multilateralism, which includes adhering to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and safeguarding the UN-centered international system, added more stability to a world full of uncertainties.

In the New Delhi Declaration adopted by the summit, leaders also reiterated their belief that effective and representative multilateralism is essential for enhancing resilience against current and future global challenges, promoting

people's well-being and building a sustainable future for the planet.

Speaking of the approach of promoting common development proposed by the Chinese president, Ma said it not only indicated directions for the world to realize stronger, greener and healthier development after the pandemic, but also boosted the confidence of all countries, especially emerging economies and developing countries, to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The vice-minister also said that as the bellwether among emerging market countries, BRICS plays a vital role in facilitating global recovery and narrowing the development divide.

Xi's proposition of strengthening unity and further enhancing the cooperation of all aspects among BRICS countries will help ensure the long-term and stable development of BRICS cooperation, Ma added.

10 firms to better tend to rights of workers

By WANG XIAOYU in Beijing

Ten leading companies in China's thriving platform-based economy, including food delivery giant Meituan and ride-hailing company Didi, have been urged to "play an exemplary role" in protecting the rights of their flexibly employed workers, authorities said on Friday.

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security said during a meeting that it will give administrative guidance to 10 major companies involved in the new form of employment in order to address prominent problems in the protection of workers' lawful rights and interests.

Transport authorities, market regulators and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions will also participate, the ministry said in a statement released on its website.

The 10 companies are food delivery groups Meituan and Ele.me, ride-hailing service provider Didi, instant delivery companies Dada and Shansong, truck-hailing companies Huolala and Manbang, homemaking service provider Swan Daojia, and e-commerce and internet conglomerates Alibaba and Tencent.

These companies are being highlighted in a nationwide campaign to strengthen protection of flexibly employed workers who often lack well-defined labor contracts, health insurance and social benefits.

On July 22, eight government departments issued a guideline aimed at resolving the issue.

During the meeting, the ministry requested these companies to thoroughly survey the conditions of such employees they have hired, and promptly remedy potential problems.

They should also formulate rectification plans, and set clear timelines and road maps.

They are requested to sign labor contracts or written agreements with all employees, and guarantee their rights to receive pay, take breaks and ensure their safety at workplaces.

It is also important for them to hear suggestions from employees and improve communication. Complaints filed by workers should receive timely replies and fair treatment, the ministry added.

In addition, these companies are urged to upgrade algorithms and improve income distribution systems, guarantee time off, as well as enhance labor safety and sanitation regulations.

The ministry stressed that as leading companies in the sector, they should also play a leading role in caring for employees and fulfilling their social responsibilities.

Countdown begins



People in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, take photos with a countdown clock on Friday — one year ahead of the 19th Asian Games to be held in the city. DONG XUMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Elephants: Journey boosts knowledge about species

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journey is "very meaningful," said a notice released by the headquarters on Friday. "It provides us with a chance to know more about the elephants and also shows China's resolve in building an environmentally friendly country."

The Asian elephant is listed as an endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The animal, which can be found in the areas of Yunnan bordering Myanmar and Laos, is also under first-class State protection in China.

Due to ongoing wildlife protection efforts, the number of wild Asian elephants in the province has increased from 170 in 1980 to 300 today. Their major habitats are in Yunnan's Pu'er city, Mojiang city and the Xishuangbanna Dai

autonomous prefecture.

Shen Qingzhong, a senior engineer from the Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve, said it's inevitable that the elephants will make another journey in the future as migration is a normal activity for elephants.

"Historically, Asian elephants used to live in many parts of the country. Migration is in their nature. It helps the species expand its territory and have more chances to improve its gene pool by mating with different groups," he said.

The forestry department and the provincial government plan to develop a national park, which aims to provide habitat protection for the elephants and a balanced relationship with residents.

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Guangdong zones key to regional development

By LI WENFANG in Guangzhou

Guangdong provincial authorities will work to position major industrial and innovative projects in Hengqin and Qianhai to lift the competitiveness of the two cooperation zones involving the two areas in the province along with the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macao.

Two plans were released by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council earlier this week to further develop the Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone and build the new Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

Guangdong is planning to introduce research, development and design centers of large enterprises in sectors such as integrated circuits, new energy vehicles and biopharmaceuticals into Hengqin in Zhuhai,

said Guangdong Governor Ma Xingrui at a news conference in Guangzhou on Friday.

Guangdong will support Shenzhen's Qianhai to deepen opening-up and cooperation with Hong Kong in modern service sectors, using Qianhai's port, airport and bonded zone with an aim to double commodity foreign trade of Qianhai in five years.

Efforts are being made by research institutions such as the Chinese Academy of Sciences and universities to introduce major innovation platforms into Hengqin to draw more scientific and technological institutions, professionals and enterprises.

Study is going on for establishing a provincial aeronautic industrial fund in Hengqin, Ma said.

The Zhuhai government is participating in a number of industrial funds in the city, including the 12 billion yuan (\$1.86 billion) Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area semiconductor industrial

investment fund, said Huang Zhihao, mayor of Zhuhai.

Guangdong and Macao will jointly establish a development investment company and a product innovation investment fund to promote industrial diversification, said Zheng Renhao, director of the provincial development and reform commission.

Integrated development of the Qianhai area and the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park in the Lok Ma Chau Loop will be promoted, with reform of the mechanism in scientific and technological development to be deepened, Ma said.

In the field of people's well-being, he said, greater convenience will be extended to people from Hong Kong and Macao in the two cooperation zones in schooling, living, employment and starting businesses.

Thirteen employment and entrepreneurship bases for young people

have been jointly set up in Guangdong with the two SARs, with nearly 600 startup teams from Hong Kong and Macao operating, employing 4,000 people.

The development of the Macao New Neighborhood project has been launched and is expected to be completed in 2023, providing 4,000 housing units in Hengqin to Macao residents.

Guangdong provincial authorities place great emphasis on implementation of plans for the two cooperation zones and have established two respective leading teams headed by Li Xi, Party secretary of Guangdong, Ma said.

Guangdong is wasting no time in formulating the regulation on the cooperation zone concerning Hengqin and amending the regulation on the cooperation zone involving Qianhai, said Lin Keqing, executive vice-governor of the province, adding that related policies will be issued as soon as possible.