

Chapter 1

Theory: Promoting High-Quality Development through High-Level Protection

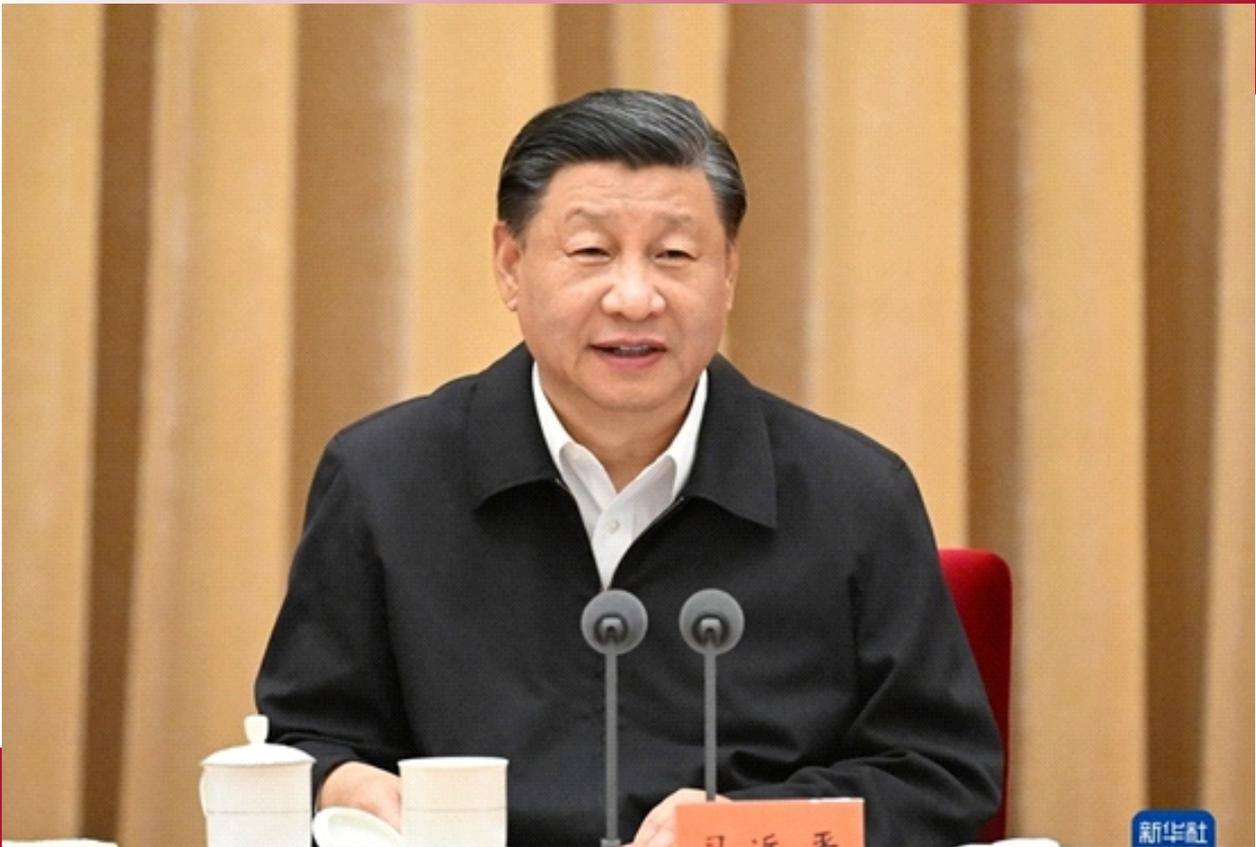
- (1) Theoretical Connotation
- (2) Importance
- (3) Specific Measures

(1) Theoretical Connotation

General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized in his important speech at the National Ecological and Environmental Protection Conference that to continue advancing ecological civilization and it is essential to correctly handle the relationships between high-quality development and high-level protection, key challenges and collaborative governance, natural restoration and artificial remediation, external constraints and internal motivation, as well as the dual carbon commitments and independent actions. The General Secretary's important speech provides fundamental guidance for comprehensively promoting the construction of a Beautiful China and accelerating the modernization of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. At the forefront of these five major relationships is the need to correctly address the relationship between high-quality development and high-level protection. We must firmly establish the concept that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets," fully recognize that green development is the distinctive backdrop of high-quality development, and ensure that development is based on efficient resource utilization and

strict ecological protection. This requires a coordinated advancement of both high-quality development and high-level protection.

Ecological protection and economic development are not a matter of choosing one over the other. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that we must correctly address the relationship between economic development and ecological environmental protection, firmly establishing the idea that protecting the ecological environment is protecting productivity, and improving the ecological environment is developing productivity. This calls for a more conscious push towards green, circular, and low-carbon development, without sacrificing the environment for temporary economic growth. High-quality development is a prerequisite for high-level protection, while high-level protection is an important support for high-quality development, enhancing its quality. High-quality development provides financial, technological, and market support for high-level protection, and high-quality development can only be achieved through high-level protection. The two are mutually reinforcing and beneficial.



From July 17 to 18, the National Ecological and Environmental Protection Conference was held in Beijing. General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, President, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission Xi Jinping attended the meeting and delivered an important speech. <https://china.huanqiu.com/article/4DINIvadW8>

Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu pointed out during the "Ministerial Channel" at the Two Sessions that "high-quality development is the undeniable truth of the new era. How to properly manage the relationship between high-quality development and high-level protection is an eternal theme in the process of economic and social development. The relationship between the two is not one of 'you without me' or 'me without you,' but one of mutual integration, mutual support, and mutual achievement. Without green and low-

carbon initiatives, high-quality development cannot be discussed. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party, our country's economic output has more than doubled, yet environmental quality has not deteriorated or declined; rather, it has continuously improved, with significant advancements in some areas. This is a true reflection of how we have effectively managed this relationship. In 2023, at the National Ecological and Environmental Protection Conference, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that the primary task in

promoting ecological civilization in the new era and on the new journey is to properly handle the relationship between high-quality development and high-level protection. He called for using high-level protection to shape new momentum and advantages for development and to build a green, low-carbon circular economy. He also emphasized

the important role of ecological and environmental protection: moving forward, we will leverage the guiding, optimizing, and driving roles of ecological and environmental protection to better establish a high-level protection system that supports green, low-carbon, and high-quality economic and social development."



Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu answered questions from reporters during the "Ministerial Channel" at the Two Sessions.
<https://news.cctv.com/2025/03/08/ARTIQYyJFtQEZK3meq7XAzHT250308.shtml>

Source: Ministry of Ecology and Environment | Minister Huang Runqiu Answers Questions from Reporters at the Two Sessions (March 8, 2025)

https://www.mee.gov.cn/ywdt/zbft/202503/t20250308_1103595.shtml

(2) Importance

This year marks the conclusion of the "14th Five-Year Plan" and is a critical year for comprehensively advancing the construction of a Beautiful China. In the new year, the national ecological and environmental system must align with the important directives from General Secretary Xi Jinping and the decisions and deployments of the Party Central Committee and the State Council. We must anchor our goals for Beautiful China, collaboratively promote carbon reduction, pollution control, greening, and growth, and continue to intensify efforts in the battles for blue skies, clear waters, and clean lands. We will push

forward the development of the national carbon market, strengthen the supervision of ecological protection and restoration, maintain the bottom line of ecological and environmental safety, deepen central ecological and environmental protection inspections, and continuously improve the modernization of ecological and environmental governance. This will support high-quality development through a high-quality ecological environment and accelerate the formation of a new pattern in Beautiful China construction that is oriented towards achieving harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.



Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu answered questions from reporters during the "Ministerial Channel" at the Two Sessions.
<https://news.cctv.com/2025/03/08/ARTIQYyJFtQEZK3meq7XAzHT250308.shtml>

Source: Ministry of Ecology and Environment | Speech by Sun Jinlong, Secretary of the Party Leadership Group of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, at the 2025 National Ecological and Environmental Protection Work Conference (January 23, 2025)
https://www.mee.gov.cn/ywdt/hjywnews/202501/t20250123_1101270.shtml

We must enhance the role of green development in promoting high-quality economic and social development. General Secretary Xi Jinping has profoundly pointed out that green development is the fundamental aspect of high-quality development, emphasizing the need for a high-quality ecological environment to support high-quality development. Currently, our country's economic and social development has entered a stage of accelerating green and low-carbon high-quality growth. We should fully leverage the optimizing, guiding, and driving roles of ecological and environmental protection,

vigorously promote the synergistic effects of pollution reduction and carbon reduction, enforce strict environmental access standards for "high energy consumption, high emissions, and low efficiency" projects, actively develop green and low-carbon industries, and cultivate and strengthen green productivity. In the process of green transformation, we aim to achieve effective qualitative improvement and reasonable quantitative growth in development, thereby laying a solid green foundation for high-quality development through high-level ecological conservation.



Source: Work Report by Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu at the 2025 National Ecological and Environmental Protection Work Conference (January 23, 2025)

https://www.mee.gov.cn/ywdt/hjywnews/202501/t20250123_1101271.shtml

We must firmly implement high-level ecological conservation to ensure high-quality green development and further prioritize ecological harmony, resource conservation and green or low-carbon development. Currently, in the process of high-quality development in a green and low-carbon mode, we should aim for effective qualitative improvement and reasonable quantitative growth in development. We need

to focus on continuously improving ecological and environmental quality, with the construction of a Beautiful China as our guiding principle. This involves fully and accurately implementing the policies of precise pollution control, scientific pollution control, and legal pollution control, while continuously advancing the battles for blue skies, clear waters, and clean lands.

(3) Specific Measures

Focusing on high-quality development as the primary task and the important deployment of developing new productive forces suited to local conditions, we will establish a "1+N" policy system in the ecological and environmental sector to promote new productive forces. We will issue and implement over ten specialized policy documents, actively fostering and strengthening new productive forces to drive high-quality development through high-level ecological conservation.

We will focus on promoting green and low-carbon development. Comprehensive implementation of ecological and environmental zoning and control will be carried out, with the issuance of the "Interim Regulations on Ecological and Environmental Zoning and Control Management" and effectiveness assessments to ensure results are realized. We will achieve nationwide coverage of the four-level network for environmental impact assessment (EIA) approval information systems and conduct "penetrating" supervision of EIA approval situations. We will strictly manage the EIA approvals for "high energy consumption" projects and enforce regional pollutant reduction measures. Enhanced service guarantees for major project EIAs will be provided. A total of 129,500 construction project EIA documents have been approved nationwide,

involving a total investment of 21.9 trillion yuan. We will implement technical guidelines for greenhouse gas control in the thermal power industry as part of EIA management. We will further advance a number of pilot projects for pollution reduction and carbon reduction in cities and industrial parks. We will jointly issue the "Opinions on Leveraging the Role of Green Finance to Serve Beautiful China Construction." Additionally, we will implement 22 measures to further promote the development of the private economy by the ecological and environmental department. Coordinated efforts will be made for major regional strategic ecological and environmental protection work, organizing the formulation of policy documents that support high-level protection for the integrated ecological and green development of the Yangtze River Delta, the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, and the rapid rise of the central region and comprehensive revitalization of the Northeast. Policies and measures supporting high-quality development in Xinjiang will be introduced, and efforts will be made for counterpart assistance in ecological and environmental systems for Tibet and Xinjiang.

We will continue to implement actions to deal with climate change. The top-level design for responding to climate change will

be improved, and we will solidly advance the compilation of the 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution target plan. We will research and formulate opinions on strengthening the construction of the national carbon market and release the total quota and allocation plan for the national carbon emissions trading power generation industry for 2023 and 2024, forming a work plan covering the cement, steel, and aluminum smelting industries. By the end of 2024, the cumulative transaction volume of the national carbon emissions trading market reached 630 million tons, with a transaction value of 43.03 billion yuan. The closing price at the end of the year was 97.49 yuan/ton, with a continuously expanding trading scale and stable price increases, and the quota clearance completion rate reached 99.98%.

We will launch a national voluntary greenhouse gas emission reduction trading market, with 63 emission reduction projects publicly announced. We will promote the implementation of the methane emission control action plan. In collaboration with 14 departments, we will issue the "Implementation Plan for Establishing a Carbon Footprint Management System," compiling and publishing product carbon footprint accounting guidelines and standards. Following the principle of prioritizing urgent needs, we will complete

the release of carbon footprint accounting standards for over 100 products, including electricity and electrolytic aluminum. A national greenhouse gas emission factor database will be built and officially launched, releasing carbon dioxide emission factors for electricity for 2021 and 2022. We will guide 39 cities in exploring paths and models for building climate-adaptive cities.

Beautiful China is the "great goal" that General Secretary Xi Jinping constantly emphasizes and is the aspiration of the Chinese people. In recent years, the ecological and environmental system has deeply implemented Xi Jinping's thought on ecological civilization, coordinating industrial structure adjustment, pollution control, ecological protection, and climate change response. The effectiveness of driving high-quality development through high-level protection is increasingly evident, with clearer skies, greener mountains, and cleaner waters across the nation, highlighting a more distinct green foundation.

We must firmly establish the concept that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets," planning development from the perspective of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. Focusing on economic construction as the central task and high-quality development as the primary goal, we should fully leverage

the guiding, optimizing, and driving roles of ecological and environmental protection. This includes vigorously promoting the synergistic effects of pollution reduction and carbon reduction, cultivating and strengthening green productivity, and achieving effective qualitative improvements and reasonable quantitative growth in development during

the green transformation.

In terms of systems, we must resolutely eliminate institutional barriers that hinder high-level protection and restrict high-quality development. We should focus on improvement, deepen our efforts, and enhance our capabilities to effectively elevate the efficiency of ecological and environmental governance.

Source: Ministry of Ecology and Environment | Article by Sun Jinlong, Secretary of the Party Leadership Group, published in "Study Times": "Accelerating the Construction of a Beautiful China for Harmonious Coexistence between Humans and Nature" (March 21, 2025)

https://www.mee.gov.cn/ywdt/hjywnews/202503/t20250321_1104430.shtml