

Legislature takes urgent action in climate change fight

China's top legislature yesterday approved a resolution on climate change - which was originally not on its work plan for the year - speeding up the country's effort to fight global warming.

The move was taken ahead of next month's UN climate summit, which is expected to provide high-level political impetus to the negotiating process for an international climate treaty.

The resolution was endorsed by lawmakers at the closing of a four-day session of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress (NPC).

It said the country should "strengthen energy-saving and emission reduction", and "strive to control greenhouse gas emissions", while including such efforts in national development plans.

The resolution, not originally listed for legislators' deliberation this year, was proposed by NPC deputies earlier this year, said Pu Haiqing, a deputy director of NPC's environment and resource protection committee.

"Fighting climate change has become an urgent task, with the country facing an increased frequency of extreme weather and climate disasters," Pu said.

The proactive attitude of the country's parliament shows China is "strengthening and speeding up" its domestic efforts in combating climate change, He Jiankun, deputy head of the State Council's expert panel on Climate change policies, told China Daily yesterday.

"The country is already carrying out pilot projects on low-carbon economy in some provinces, where the carbon intensity is listed as one of the major assessment indicators," said He. "Also, the country will carry out pilot carbon trading projects in some designated areas and industries."

"The lawmakers have expressed a very active attitude, and, obviously, China is taking bigger steps in dealing with the climate change," He said.

Wu Changhua, Greater China director of the London-based Climate Group, said that with the resolution, China has determined to take the "green economy" as its path for future development.

"Taking mitigation and adaptation actions are now viewed as a necessity for China's own development, not out of consideration for international climate negotiations," Wu said.

The resolution said China will draft laws and regulations to provide more vigorous legal backing for fighting climate change.

Armed police law passed

The top legislature yesterday also, unsurprisingly, passed the country's first law on the armed police, giving the force new duties and statutory authority to respond to security emergencies.

The Armed Police Law, which received 153 votes out of 155, authorizes the force to handle "riots, unrests, large-scale violent crimes, terrorist attacks and other emergencies".

The law also regulates the behavior of armed police officers by stipulating armed police will be disciplined or receive criminal punishment if they illegally search people or places, illegally use weapons or abuse power.

Experts said the law comes at a delicate time - two months after the deadly unrest in Xinjiang and one month ahead of the National Day.

The draft of the law only received two readings by the top legislature, compared with previous laws that usually got at least three readings.

Wang Shangxin, director of the criminal law office of the NPC Standing Committee's legislative affairs committee, denied the shortened legislative procedures was due to heavy security tasks of the force.

He said the draft was passed after only two readings because it is well-written, and legislators are satisfied with it.

Source: China Daily