

We should step up protection of the environment, ecology and resources. It is necessary to adhere to the principle of conducting overall planning, simultaneous enforcement and common development of economic construction, urban and rural construction and environmental construction. Special attention should be paid to control and treatment of industrial pollution. Efforts should be made to spread knowledge of environmental protection so as to further enhance people's awareness.

Energetic support will be given to the development of economical agriculture and protection of the ecological environment for farming. The country will speed up comprehensive treatment of soil erosion and loss of water in the concerned areas and the establishment of the shelter-forest network. The coverage rate of forest and the acreage of green space in urban areas should be increased. Natural resources such as land, water, forests, grasslands and mineral products should be protected and rationally made use of according to law. Rational overall planning should be made with regard to both urban and rural construction, and the use of land must be strictly controlled.

Monitoring and forecasting of disastrous weather, climate and earthquakes should be stepped up in order to reduce losses. By the end of the century, the country will try to reach the goal of putting environmental pollution and ecological deterioration under basic control and gaining marked results in improving environmental quality in certain cities and regions. And by 2010, an end will be basically put to the deterioration of the ecological environment and there will be a remarkable improvement in urban and rural environments.

The Plan is a guideline, rather than a detailed blueprint for China during the 1996-2000 period. The Plan contains few policy changes, but signals a desire by the leadership to moderate the reform process. The Plan stresses co-ordination: in particular co-ordination among regions to assist the interior's economic development and to lessen the income gap with the coastal areas, and coordination between the country's economic and social growth, i.e., economic growth must not lead to social or political instability. Agriculture is to be the top priority, with water conservation, energy, communications, telecommunications, science, technology and education also being emphasized. Yet there are contradictions in the summary of the plan. For example, in contrast to the quest for ecologically sound agricultural practices, it also states: