

enhanced public participation. The second discusses aspects of the sustainable development of society, with an emphasis on population control and family planning. The third focuses on sustainable development of the economy, including challenges in the coal-based energy sector. And the last section is concerned with resource conservation. The Priority Programme contains sixty-two projects, such as environmental water treatment in northern Jiangsu province and the conservation of dinosaur egg fossils in Xixia, under nine priority areas. It is planned that these projects will be executed in a "rolling and flexible way" and new projects will gradually be incorporated.

China's Agenda 21 contains the right rhetoric and good intentions.⁸² Like UNCED, it recognizes environmental problems, but is short on practical approaches. The objectives of China's Agenda 21 are more of a wish list, than a long-term vision to guide sustainable development. A key short-coming is the lack of real public participation. China's Agenda 21 highlights public participation in the policy process, but it is really stressing the continuation of existing mechanisms and not the development of autonomous views on environmental stewardship or sustainability. A notable absence in China Agenda 21's Chapter 20 on Public Participation in Sustainable Development, is public participation through development or environmental non-governmental organizations. Chapter 20 proposes enhanced participation through government-affiliated, arguably controlled, entities such as the All-China Women's Federation, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, the Communist Youth League of China, and the China Science and Technology Association.

In theory, China's pollution levy system provides an incentive for companies to reduce pollution. Under the system, violators pay a fine for failing to meet emission standards, and if violations continue companies may face additional fines. But in practice, fees and fines can be low, and do not provide enough incentive for firms to

⁸²An ambitious plan called the "Cross-Century Green Engineering Program" has also been approved by the State Council. The plan promises that China will not only hold the line at 1995 pollution levels, but will also invest 150 billion yuan (approx Cdn \$25 billion) in more than 1,000 projects during the five-year plan, in addition to funds China hopes to raise from donors and IFIs to implement its Agenda 21 plans.

Implementation of the "Cross-Century Green Engineering Program" will not be easy. Chinese officials have acknowledged that many of the enterprises in the rich coastal cities and towns will resist implementing pollution controls because of capital costs and its impact on profits and many provincial governments, unconvinced that environmental degradation is an issue that should concern them at their level of development, might avoid compliance either through inadequate enforcement or through slap-on-the-wrist penalties in provincial implementing regulations.