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Economy Report: China – Progress on Ocean-Related Issues

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China Report - Progress on Ocean-related Issues

Since the second half of 2014, China has been making unremitting efforts to implement the instructions of Xiamen Declaration, mainly focused on the four priorities of 4th APEC Ocean Ministerial Meeting (AOMM4): 1) Coastal and marine ecosystem conservation and disaster resilience; 2) The role of the ocean on food security and food-related trade; 3) Marine Science, Technology and Innovation and 4) blue economy, the main achievements are summarized below:

1. Coastal and marine ecosystem conservation and disaster resilience

In 2014, State Oceanic Administration (SOA) conducted monitoring on marine ecological environment, the pollution sources, marine function zone, marine environmental disasters and etc. 8,700 oceanic monitor spots laid for the monitoring, which obtained more than 2 million data. It showed that the ecosystem condition of marine protected areas has been remained roughly stable and the environment quality in marine aquaculture zones and tourist zones was good in general.

The major marine disasters attacked China are storm surge, sea wave, sea-ice and red tide, whilst green tide, bank corruption, seawater intrusion, soil salinization and saltwater intrusion occur to varying degrees. Both the direct economic loss and death toll caused by marine disasters are lower than the average of recent decade. In order to build comprehensive capacity of disaster reduction, SOA has developed demonstration areas of comprehensive marine disaster reduction in Shouguang of Shandong Province, Wenzhou of Zhejiang Province, Lianjiang of Fujian Province and Daya Bay of Guangzhou Province.

2. The role of the ocean on food security and food-related trade

To ensure the sustainability and health of marine fisheries resources, China persists in the strategy of coordinated development of continental sea, open sea and pelagic fishery, and promoting rational distribution. Also, actively bettering industry structure of pelagic fishery, changing operations from single fishing activities to capture, processing and marketing. Jan 1st, 2015, the Circular of the Ministry of Agriculture on Implementing the System of the Minimum Mesh Size for Marine Fishing nets and Gears and Catalog for Banned Fishing Gears came into force. During last 4 years, 7 national protection areas of water plants and animals, 244 national protection areas of fisheries genetic resources have been built. Meanwhile, China promotes the construction of fishery-related engineering to put the eco-compensation mechanisms in place, and settled 5.531 billion RMB eco-compensation payments in total. The scope of breeding and releasing has been expanded constantly, with 34.34 billion fries released in 2014.

In order to maintain food security and to build up Granary at Sea, Shandong Province issued Implementation Opinions on Promoting Granary at Sea, stating the goal “10 million ton total production, with protein equivalent to 20 billion kilograms of grain. While in Zhejiang province, a series of undertakings has been organized to restore and revive Zhejiang Fishing Ground, aiming at recover the resources to the level of the 1980s. Fujian Province has taken marine ecosystem and fisheries resources protection as long-term measures, conducting reproduction and releasing projects, combating IUU fishing while promoting the sustainable development of marine fisheries economy.

3. Marine Science, Technology and Innovation

The year of 2014 was vital for transformation to innovation-driven marine technology. SOA steadily advanced relevant work of strengthening the ocean by science and technology. 8 cities including Guangzhou Zhanjiang, Xiamen, Zhoushan, Qingdao, Yantai, Weihai, Tianjian have been affirmed as national marine high-tech pilot bases, under the joint efforts by SOA and the National Development and Reform Commission. Qingdao, Guangzhou and Xiamen have been approved to be national marine S&T demonstration bases; “Digital Ocean” project and ocean satellites have been entirely taken into national development strategy. China has been engaged in marine investigation and completed the compilation of Guiding Opinions on Enhancing Marine Investigation, started to revise Measures of Ocean Standardization and Regulation on Ocean Metrology, drafted framework of 13th five-year-plan of quality supervision of ocean standards and metrology and a research report of marine S&T innovation overall strategic plan is currently being compiled.

4. Blue economy

All levels of marine administrative departments are carrying out the national strategic plan of establishing 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The upgrading and transformation of marine industry has seen in good momentum and marine economy kept developing stably with 5993.6 billion gross ocean production, and 2432.5 billion added value of marine industries. According to estimates, 35.54 million people are employed for ocean related jobs in 2014.

SOA is making efforts to accelerate the construction of marine ecological civilization demonstration areas, boost the transformation of development mode of marine economy, improving the capacity of marine resources exploitation, environmental protection and integrated management, in order to promote the harmonious, sustainable and healthy social-economic development of coastal areas.

The vision of “Road and Belt” initiated by China links countries along the route and thus they will benefit from cooperation on blue economy through the projects such as economic demonstration zones, port-vicinity industrial parks, marine science-technology parks and marine talents training bases. Authorized by National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vision and Action Plan of Promoting Silk Road Economic Belt and 21 Maritime Silk Road was published to support Fujian in building the core area of 21 Century Maritime Silk Road, promote marine economic development demonstration zone in Zhejiang Province, blue economy demonstration zone in Fujian Strait, and constructing of Zhoushan islands new district, to further the openness of Hainan international tourist’s island and enhance the construction of port facilities of coastal cities such as Shanghai Tianjin, Ningbo-Zhoushan, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhanjiang, Qingdao, Yantai, Dalian, Fuzhou, Quanzhou, Haikou, Sanya and intensify international airports in Shanghai and Guangzhou as transportation hubs.