

## [China reports highest sea level in 30 years](#)

A report released Wednesday by China's State Oceanic Administration warned that sea levels monitored last year reached the highest level since 1980.

The average sea level along the Chinese coast in 2016 was 38 mm higher than that of 2015 and 82 mm higher than the average level between 1993 and 2011, the report said.

Over the period from 1980 to 2016, sea level readings at China's coastal regions rose at an average rate of 3.2 mm per year, according to the report.

The report ascribed this situation to influences of climate change as well as El Nino and La Nina events.

Sun Shuxian, vice director of the administration warned that higher sea level may result in aggravated risks of storm tides, floods, coastal erosion, salt tides and seawater encroachment.

Another report released by the administration on Wednesday stated that the marine environment in waters under China's jurisdiction was "basically stable" in 2016.

However, it also noted some "outstanding problems" such as offshore pollution, an unhealthy marine ecosystem and environmental risks such as reoccurrence of red tides.

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## [China pledges crackdown on IPR violations, counterfeits](#)

China's cabinet, the State Council, has recently issued a guideline on intensifying crackdown on counterfeiting and Intellectual Property Right (IPR) infringements.

Fighting counterfeiting and IPR violations will help ensure implementation of China's IPR strategy, protect market order and improve the business environment, the guideline says.

The document requires a better market supervision system and demands improvements to the law, regulations and standards with appropriate information technology utilized in supervision.

The document mandates cooperation among regions and government agencies,

along with international collaboration, to handle problems in production, circulation and sales.

E-commerce platforms must strengthen scrutiny of business operators.

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## [GeoSciML data standard becomes official](#)

On 15 March 2017 the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC®) announced that GeoSciML was approved and published with full documentation as an OGC Standard. The OGC GeoSciML Standard defines a model and the encoding for geological features commonly described and portrayed in geological maps, cross sections, geological reports and databases.

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## [Press release: New chair appointed to The Pensions Advisory Service](#)

The appointment was made without holding a competition and has been made in agreement with the [Commissioner for Public Appointments](#) who was content given the fact that a new body is to be created that will replace The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS).

Ann will oversee the continued delivery of free, professional and impartial guidance on pensions and support for people if they have a problem or complaint about their workplace or private pension.

The Pensions Advisory Service delivers its information and guidance service through a variety of channels including telephone, web chat, written and online enquiries, outreach events and on its website. It is also responsible for delivering Pension Wise's telephone services.

Minister of State for Pensions, Richard Harrington said:

Ann Harris brings a wealth of experience and skills to The Pensions Advisory Service which does excellent work in helping the public with pension inquiries.

With more than 178,000 customers, and more than 2.7 million visits to its website in the past year, TPAS' services are very much in

demand so it's vital it attracts a senior leader of such high calibre.

Ann Harris OBE said:

I am delighted with my new appointment as TPAS Chair.

This is an exciting time for TPAS, as it prepares for the proposed transition to a new single finance guidance body.

I am determined that it continues to deliver its core business of giving people professional, independent and impartial help with their private pensions.

## **About The Pensions Advisory Service**

The TPAS service is free to the public. It is delivered by in-house pension specialists and a nationwide network of volunteer advisers who have typically worked in the pensions industry in roles that have required a high level of technical knowledge.

## **Single finance guidance body**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Treasury have recently [consulted on a single guidance body](#) bringing together:

The consultation sets out a proposal to create a single body providing debt advice, money guidance and pensions information and guidance. The body would complement financial guidance provided by the third sector and industry, provide more targeted support for consumers and generate efficiencies.

This new body will make it easier for consumers to get the guidance they need.

## **Ann Harris OBE – Biography**

Ann previously worked for 40 years as a civil servant, latterly holding senior Civil Service roles in finance and programme management. She was awarded an OBE in 2009, for her services to DWP.

Ann's roles outside DWP include acting in a trustee role for the Civil Service Pension programme, management board and operations committee. Ann is also an audit committee member for the Gambling Commission and volunteers regularly for her local Citizens Advice Bureau, where she is a volunteer trustee. She previously served with TPAS as a non-executive director for 18 months prior to becoming chairperson.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5122

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## **Double horticulture award win**

The Oatridge Campus of SRUC has been honoured with two awards from the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society.