

1st national park gets strong legal and financial support



A shepherd takes his flock to graze on a grass-covered slope in the Yushu Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Qinghai province.[Photo/Xinhua]

China's first national park will develop rapidly this year, with stronger legal and financial support from Qinghai province, the top provincial official said on Wednesday.

The plan for Sanjiangyuan National Park will set specific targets for environmental protection, Wang Guosheng, Party chief of Qinghai province, said on Wednesday at a group discussion of the ongoing session of the national legislature.

"Both are important legal measures: To build the national park and support environmental protection in this key regions," said Wang, adding that they will also make special plans for major natural resources in the region.

The province plans to allocate 1 billion yuan (US\$144.8 million) in 2017 for infrastructure construction, said Li Xiaonan, head of the park's administration bureau.

Under management of the national park, herders and farmers will be major forces behind environmental protection, said the provincial Party chief.

The work is expected to provide jobs, boost farmers' incomes and give them an incentive to protect the environment, he said.

Sanjiangyuan National Park, covering 123,100 square kilometers in Qinghai, is home to the headwaters of the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang (Mekong) rivers,

which run through more than 20 provincial regions in China, making the region critical for water resources in the country.

[UN experts call for sensitive and timely response to online gender-based abuse](#)

8 March 2017 – Urgent attention, creativity and cooperation are needed to address online gender-based abuse, but authorities should be careful to avoid curtailing freedom of expression in doing so, two United Nations human rights experts said today.

“Online gender-based abuse and violence are undeniably a scourge, and governments and companies should be taking action against it”, David Kaye, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of freedom of expression, said in a news releases that coincides with worldwide commemoration of International Women’s Day.

However, Mr Kaye added that poorly formulated laws prohibiting nudity or obscenity could have an adverse impact on conversations about gender, sexuality and reproductive health. “Censorship and undue restrictions on content could end up undermining the rights of the very women for whom governments and corporate actors may seek to provide redress.”

Significant numbers of women have experienced gender-based abuse online, according to surveys and reports. These attacks include blackmail, intimidation, stalking and dissemination of private content without consent.

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Dubravka Simonovic said: “Women victims and survivors need transparent and fast responses and effective remedies which can only be achieved if both States and private actors work together and exercise due diligence to eliminate online violence against women.”

The experts called on governments and private actors to provide training on the problems related to online abuse and violence, in addition to greater transparency in the private sector in regards to reports of abuse and the steps taken to address them.

Research into the scope, manifestations and impact of the abuse, as well as a strengthened emphasis on protection of privacy by online platforms, is also required.

“Ensuring an internet free from gender-based violence enhances freedom of expression,” Ms. Simonovic said, “as it allows women to fully participate in all areas of life and is integral to women’s empowerment.”

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

[Viet Nam: UN experts urge Government to release blogger ‘Mother Mushroom’](#)

8 March 2017 – A group of UN human rights experts has urged the Government of Viet Nam to immediately release a popular blogger, known as Mother Mushroom, who has been detained since October last year.

Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh, a 37-year-old environmental human rights defender, is accused of spreading propaganda against the Government. The charges are linked to her online activities that were critical of the Government.

“We are deeply concerned that Ms. Quynh is being detained because of the exercise of her right to freedom of opinion and expression on a matter of public interest,” the experts emphasized in a news release issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

“We fear for her physical and psychological integrity, and denounce the violations of her fundamental right to due process, in particular her being detained incommunicado, the denial of her right to legal counsel and the banning of visits from her family,” they added.

Among the issues she tackled was an incident involving the dumping of toxic chemicals in April 2016, which polluted local waters and killed a large number of fish.

“As an environmental human rights defender, Mother Mushroom should be honoured for her courage and perseverance in defending the environment and human rights for years without fear,” the experts stressed.

The experts are Special Rapporteurs: John H. Knox, on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment; Maina Kiai, on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; David Kaye, on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Michel Forst, on the situation of human rights defenders, and Baskut Tuncak, on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes.

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[In Nairobi, UN chief Guterres marks International Women's Day, hails Kenya's role in multilateralism](#)

8 March 2017 – The richness, welfare and prosperity of countries depend on the full integration of women in the development process, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said today, commemorating International Women's Day at a ceremony in Nairobi as part of his visit to Kenya.

Speaking at an event alongside the First Lady of Kenya, Mr. Guterres told the hundreds of assembled women leaders at the Government's official celebration of the International Day, that every effort had to be made to finally defeat male-dominated culture if we are to be able to achieve gender equality.

"The truth is that north and south, east and west [...] everywhere, we still have a male-dominated culture," he said, recalling that he had pushed hard for women's empowerment when he was the Prime Minister of Portugal and, as the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, he had met women who suffered the worst possible abuse.

Against this background, and the enduring male-dominated culture and violation of women's human rights, "we need to have [...] policies of gender equality [and] policies of protection of women in vulnerable situations, but the key [...] is our strong commitment to women and girls' empowerment in our societies," he stated.

Noting the three pillars of the UN – human rights, peace and security and development – he also underlined that "it is better to prevent conflict when we have women fully empowered in societies and it's better to solve conflicts when fully participate in conflict resolution."

Mr. Guterres also had the opportunity to visit a number of field projects in the Mathare slums, including a women's empowerment program run by UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) as part of its slum upgrading initiative and a UN WOMEN project designed to encourage the political participation of women. He was able to listen to a group of women who had decided to run for office, often against great odds.

VIDEO: Wrapping up his three day-visit to the Horn of Africa, Secretary-

General António Guterres attends the commemoration of International Women's Day in Nairobi, Kenya in the company of First Lady of Kenya, Margaret Kenyatta.

Earlier in the day, the Secretary-General met with Kenya President Uhuru Kenyatta at State House.

Speaking to the press following the meeting, Mr. Guterres expressed his belief that the "narrative of the UN about Africa has not always been the right one," being sometimes "too much concentrated on crisis."

And while it is true that there are crises in Africa – as there are crises in Europe, Asia and elsewhere – Africa must be seen more and more as a land of achievements and opportunity. "And [...] Kenya is the symbol of that achievement and that opportunity," he said, going on to express solidarity with the Kenyan Government and people regarding the drought that is affecting the country.

"I hope that the international community will be able to match the generosity that Kenyans have always shown, namely in relation to refugees, and support the country now that the drought has been prolonged in such a way that, of course, the resources of the country are themselves in difficulty to face this enormous challenge," he underscored.

Turning next to his visit yesterday to neighbouring Somalia, he reiterated his concern for ongoing drought there, saying: "People are dying. This must stop." The "international community must act now and mobilize to support the Somali people in this very difficult situation."

Mr. Guterres visited a settlement for people displaced by the drought. For over an hour, he walked through the camp, asked questions and listened to the stories of men, women and children who had come to Baidoa to seek food and water. Some had recently resettled from the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya only to be forced to move again because of the drought.



Secretary-General António Guterres and First Lady Margaret Kenyatta of Kenya commemorating International Women's Day at a ceremony in the capital Nairobi. Photo: UNIC Nairobi

International Women's Day around the UN system

Meanwhile in New York, the official UN commemoration of International Women's Day took place at Headquarters and featured statements from Peter Thomson, the President, 71st Session of the UN General Assembly; Bjarni Benediktsson, the Prime Minister of Iceland; Amina Mohammad, UN Deputy Secretary-General; Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Chair of the upcoming 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women; Lana Nusseibeh, President, UN Women Executive Board; Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women; Casar Jacobson, Disability Activist and Youth Champion; and Anne Hathaway, UN Women

Global Goodwill Ambassador.

“As we meet today to celebrate the positive developments that have taken place over the years in the promotion and protection of women and girls’ human rights, let us pause to recognize that this progress has often been slow, fragile and uneven,” said Mr. Thomson.

He called on the even to recall that “if we are to achieve a future in which all women and men enjoy equal rights, empowerment, and opportunity, then we must commit to decisive action to overcome the entrenched obstacles still preventing progress.”

Noting the theme of this year’s International Day – ‘Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030’ – brings focused attention to a critical driver of gender equality, he said that if governments and other stakeholders are serious about achieving a ‘Planet 50-50 by 2030,’ specific action must be taken now to accelerate the realization of gender equality.

Also today, the Organization’s Rome-based agencies – the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) – reminded the world that women and girls play a crucial role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular, the goal of eradicating hunger and extreme poverty.

Leaders from the three agencies reinforced their commitments to step up efforts to invest in the capacities of rural women as key agents of change in building a world without hunger.

Speech: British High Commissioner’s speech marking International Women’s Day 2017

Honorable Minister for Aviation Mrs. Cecilia Dapaah, Chairman of the Electoral Commission Charlotte Osei, distinguished guests, Colleagues from the diplomatic community, the media, ladies and gentlemen, all protocols observed.

Last year, organizations and individuals around the world, including myself supported the #PledgeForParity campaign, pledging to help women and girls achieve their ambitions, through commitments which included, but are not limited to; challenging conscious and unconscious bias; calling for gender-balanced leadership; valuing women and men’s contributions equally; and creating inclusive flexible cultures. From awareness raising to demonstrations of concrete action, organizations rallied their people to

pledge support to help forge gender parity on International Women's Day (IWD) 2016.

But the World Economic Forum predicts the gender gap won't close entirely until 2186. This is too long to wait. Around the world, IWD can be an important catalyst and vehicle for driving greater change for women and moving closer to gender parity.

In this light, this year's theme "Be bold for change- Women in the changing world of work," calls us all here today to help forge a better working world – a more gender inclusive world. A world where female voices and leaderships are heard and seen in sectors traditionally dominated by men.

The British High Commission is delighted to be partnering with the Canadian and the Australian High Commission today bringing together successful industry professionals to mentor female students selected from senior high schools. Indeed, we know that women and girls typically make up just over half of most national populations, including here on the African continent.

The UK's Gender Equality Act 2014 puts existing commitment to gender equality on a statutory footing and ensures that gender equality remains at the heart of our development assistance. Through our Department for International Development -DFID, we work closely with the Government of Ghana and other stakeholders to address key barriers to the attainment of gender parity.

In 2016, the UK's DFID launched a new initiative: 'Leave No Girl Behind,' an initiative committed to delivering quality education to disadvantaged girls. We believe that access to a good education, in a safe environment, significantly improves the life chances of girls. In Ghana, DFID programming provides over £100m every year, much of which is focussed on women and girls, helping those who are at significant risk of dropping out of school complete their secondary education. Our Complementary Basic Education programme targets out of school children, including girls, and provides them with a second chance at education.

In health, the UK remains a key partner in promoting, protecting and supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights. Our Adolescent Reproductive Health programme worth £17 million works with vulnerable girls in the Brong Ahafo region to improve their knowledge and behaviour around reproductive health.

I hope students alongside mentors here today will continue to be inspired to take up professions in various industries, but more importantly to be bold; successfully taking up the study and or training and thereafter excelling in professions that have typically in the past, been associated with male dominance.

I wish you all a successful and insightful evening.

Thank you