

[NPC deputy proposes longer fishing ban to protect ocean resources](#)



NPC Deputy Mai Kangsen, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering [Photo/China.org.cn]

NPC Deputy Mai Kangsen, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, has suggested extending the annual fishing ban among other measures to protect ocean resources.

He was speaking on the sidelines of the ongoing annual session of the National People's Congress in Beijing.

"Ocean resources are exhaustible. We have to recognize that, in order to protect ocean resources and make fishing sustainable, we have to have higher catch limits," he said.

He proposed further extending the fishing ban, slapping strict controls on the size of fish caught, and setting fishing quotas.

Based on scientific estimates, Mai said the annual catch from the shallow ocean should be set in a range between 3-6 million tonnes. However, China's current catch is more than 10 million tonnes every year, profoundly damaging the ocean ecosystem.

The fishing ban that China implements has been extended from three to four

months and was extended to the Huaihe River last year. This year, the Pearl River and Minjiang River are included for the first time.

The ban is enforced beginning June 1 every year and aimed at safeguarding fish during their breeding season and conserving fish stocks.

“Despite the extension of the fishing ban, there is still a great strain on ocean resources,” said Mai. “We should come up with stricter policies to restore resources.”

Although there will be added management costs, protecting ocean resources was a far more important consideration.

Budget Spring 2017

In the March 2016 budget the government decided to increase total public spending from £681 bn last year, to £694bn this year and to £706 bn next year. For 2017-18 we are going to need a higher total, given the pressures on social care, the NHS and schools budgets.

The argument over the budget is less about the need for some more spending on priorities than on how this will be paid for. Some of us say that as the Treasury will be able to report stronger revenues than the Autumn Statement there is no need to hike individual tax rates or find new taxes to impose. Indeed, some selective cuts in rates on enterprise would be welcome, and likely to augment the revenues. Mr Osborne’s Spring budget last year slashed property transactions with higher Stamp Duties. The revaluation of Business rates will damage some smaller businesses that face high increases with no small premises exemptions.

It is most important that the budget promotes growth, investment and more productive working, rather than taxing it more. Treasury officials are ever minded to look for new sources of income, but the Ministers are there to protect taxpayers and to be a voice of commonsense about how far we can go with increasing tax rates. The UK economy has done relatively well in 2016 and so far this year, but could do better. It will need substantial new investment in broadband, water, electricity, and transport to overcome obstacles to growth and to lift it further. Anything the budget can do to speed these ideas, the better.

With the USA planning major tax cuts and with places like Ireland and Luxembourg also offering an attractive tax package to investors and business, the UK must stay competitive.

On International Day, UN calls for women's full participation in labour force

8 March 2017 – As the rights of women and girls around the world are being reduced and restricted, the United Nations today marked International Women's Day with calls for empowering and educating women and girls to reach gender equality in the work place.

In messages for the Day and events around the world, senior UN officials reflected on the significant impact of women's participation and contribution to the global economy, and international goal of reaching 50-50 equality in employment around the world by 2030.

Secretary-General António Guterres noted that leadership positions are predominantly held by men, and "outdated attitudes and entrenched male chauvinism" are widening the economic gender gap.

"Around the world, tradition, cultural values and religion are being misused to curtail women's rights, to entrench sexism and defend misogynistic practices," the Secretary-General said.

He underscored that denying women and girls their rights "is not only wrong in itself; it has serious social and economic impacts that hold us all back."

Closing the gender gap, for example, would add \$12 trillion to global gross domestic production (GDP) by 2025.

In her message, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director, decried the lack of opportunities for women and girls, saying "too many women and girls spend too many hours on household responsibilities."

She called for construing a different world of work for women: "As they grow up, girls must be exposed to a broad range of careers, and encouraged to make choices that lead beyond the traditional service and care options to jobs in industry, art, public service, modern agriculture and science,"

This change needs to start at home and in the first days of school, and include adjustments in parenting, curricula, educational settings and cultural stereotypes propagated in entertainment and advertising.

Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka said women and girls must be ready to be part of a digital revolution and study science, technology and math if they are to compete successfully for high-paying new jobs.

In her message, the head of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) said equality lies in destroying stereotypes. It "lies in ridding the media and collective imagination of prejudice by

highlighting the women scientists, artists and politicians who are moving humanity forward in all fields,” Irina Bokova said.

She called on governments to invest in education and training, and allowing women to exercise their own choices when it comes to their bodies and their lives – just as men do.

“Everywhere, women and men are determined to change things, to denounce discrimination and demand genuine equality, and we must support and accompany them,” said Ms. Bokova.

[Raids net 10,000 liters of illegal diesel](#)

Shenzhen Customs have smashed a diesel oil smuggling operation, seizing more than 10,000 liters of illegal diesel.

Ten suspects, including some from Hong Kong, were detained in the operation, according to customs.

Officials said they received a tip off that there was an illegal diesel oil trade business being run out of a dilapidated parking lot in Shenzhen's Bao'an district and another two places nearby.

After careful investigation and preparation, customs carried out raids at 10 am Tuesday at the three sites.

According to an anti-smuggling official from customs, who declined to be named because of his work, one of the suspects who was responsible for transmitting information at the gate of the parking lot ran out, trying to escape, but was eventually caught.

"The illegal activity not only causes unfairness to oil enterprises, but also disrupts market order of the industry. More importantly, it could cause safety and environmental protection problems to the city and its citizens,"the official said.

The suspects include Hong Kong truck drivers, illegal diesel oil dealers and sellers, and others involved in the smuggling chain.

The drivers filled up the trucks with diesel oil in Hong Kong, drove them across the border to the sites where they unloaded the diesel oil and sold them to dealers at a high price.

The dealers would then resell the smuggled oil to construction sites, gas stations and vehicle owners with at an even higher price.

One of the Hong Kong truck drivers who was detained in the operation said he brought diesel oil in Hong Kong at 3 yuan (\$0.43) a liter and sold it on the mainland for 3.6 yuan a liter.

By doing this, he could make over 1000 yuan a day, he said.

[China's new spaceship to rival the best in the world](#)



Shenzhou XI manned spacecraft blasts off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Northwest China on Oct 17, 2016. [Photo by Feng Yongbin/chinadaily.com.cn]

China is making a new-generation manned spaceship which rivals that of world-leading space powers, a space mission expert said.

“Among the next generation of manned spaceships some foreign countries are developing, only the Orion spacecraft of the US can carry out a moon landing mission,” Zhang Bainan, a spaceship engineer with China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, told Science and Technology Daily on Tuesday.

China is working on a new manned spaceship that can fly both in low earth orbit, as well as a moon landing mission, Zhang said. He added that the spacecraft is recoverable and has a larger capacity than the new-generation manned spaceship of foreign countries, which can carry six people in low earth orbit and three to four in a moon landing mission.

As a late-starter in manned space flight, China has made significant advances and its newest spacecraft is set to match the capabilities of other world leaders in space exploration, Zhang said.

Last year, the re-entry module of the new spacecraft was put to the test aboard a Long March-7 rocket.

China first launched a man into space in 2003, 42 years after the former Soviet Union carried out the maiden manned space flight.

The country is projected to build a space station in 2020 and make a manned moon landing in 2030.