

[China to start 15 new major water conservation projects](#)

China will start 15 new major water conservation projects in 2017 amid efforts to boost investment and stabilize growth, the country's top economic planner said Monday.

Total investment in major water projects under construction should exceed 900 billion yuan (\$131.3 billion) by the end of this year, compared with the current level of 800 billion yuan, said Wu Xiao, an official with the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), at a conference.

In 2016, 21 major water projects were started.

With its economy slowing, China views infrastructure investment as significant in boosting growth.

China's fixed-asset investment continued to cool in 2016, growing 8.1 percent year on year, down from 10 percent in 2015 and 15.7 percent in 2014.

However, investment in infrastructure construction accelerated by 0.2 percentage points, growing 17.4 percent year on year in 2016, official data showed.

[China beats target by creating 13m urban jobs](#)

China created 13.14 million new jobs for urban residents last year, exceeding the official target, but the country faces challenges this year to create jobs for a historic high of almost 8 million university graduates.



University graduates attend a job fair in Shanghai early this month. [Photo/Xinhua]

The registered unemployment rate in Chinese cities stood at 4.02 percent at the end of last year, down from 4.04 percent three months earlier, Lu Aihong, an official with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, told a news conference on Monday.

He said the country has “obtained obvious achievements” in promoting entrepreneurs to create jobs through the construction of incubation bases, and the government has also encouraged migrant workers to start businesses in their hometowns.

The government pledged to keep the whole-year registered unemployment rate below 4.5 percent and create at least 10 million jobs last year.

According to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, China created 13.12 million jobs in 2015, and the registered unemployment rate in cities stood at 4.05 percent.

“The employment situation this year is stable, but there is also something to be worried about,” Lu said.

Though the Chinese laboring population has been declining since 2012, some laborers entered the market comparatively late due to educational reasons, which will keep the demand for jobs high in cities this year, and the rural laborers who are entering cities for work also increase the demand, he said.

He said employment pressure also comes from the task of re-employing workers

laid off from a reduction in capacity and the downward pressure on the economy.

Meanwhile, Lu said he is expecting more jobs to be created as the country reforms its economy amid the acceleration of urbanization and the promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative.

This year, there will be 7.95 million university graduates—300,000 more than last year.

Lu said the ministry will encourage graduates to work in grassroots organizations and encourage them to start their own businesses.

Chen Yang, 27, a senior postgraduate at the School of Government, Nanjing University, said he thinks the employment situation this year will be “not that bad”.

“As far as I am concerned, one-third of the 2017 graduates have guaranteed themselves a job, though they are still several months away from graduating,” he said.

Chen, who hasn’t found a job yet, doesn’t show much interest in working for grassroots organizations, though it’s “possible” that there might be good opportunities there, he said.

[China’s hi-res SAR imaging satellite put into use](#)

China’s first high-resolution Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellite has passed all its in-orbit tests and is now operational, according to the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense on Monday.

高分三号卫星洪泽湖影像



Released photo shows the image of east China's Hongze Lake, which is received from China's first high-resolution synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellite on Aug. 15, 2016. (Xinhua/State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense)

The Gaofen-3 satellite, which is accurate to one meter in distance, was launched in August 2016.

Tong Xudong, a senior engineer with the administration, said the satellite covers the globe with an all-weather, 24-hour observation service and will be used for disaster prevention and reduction, ocean monitoring, and the protection of maritime rights.

Gaofen-3 is China's first low orbit remote sensing satellite to have a long lifespan.

With 12 imaging modes, Gaofen-3 has the most imaging modes in the SAR imaging satellite family. The high-definition observation satellite is capable of switching freely between various imaging modes, taking wide pictures of both earth and bodies of water, and detailed photographs of specific areas.

Gaofen-3's spatial resolution ranges from one meter to 500 meters and its largest viewing swath is 650 kilometers.

According to the administration, Gaofen-5 hyperspectral satellite is planned to be launched in September 2017.

More than words, ending Yemen crisis needs results, UN envoy says, concluding mission in capital

23 January 2017 – The United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, today concluded a mission to Yemen with a call for a comprehensive political settlement of the crisis and the restoration of the cessation of hostilities, and underlined the need allow access of civilian commercial aircrafts to and from Sana'a airport.

“It is mandatory that the parties end the violence to ease the suffering of the Yemeni people and pave the way for a peacefully negotiated settlement,” said Mr. Cheikh Ahmed.

In his meetings, Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed urged his interlocutors to enter into detailed discussions on the withdrawal of forces and handover of medium and heavy weapons.

“There is an urgent need for Ansar Allah and the General People's congress to provide a well elaborated plan on security, withdrawal and handover of medium and heavy weapons,” he said, noting that the plan constitutes an essential part of the comprehensive peace agreement which is the UN is aiming to implement.

“What we need at this stage is more than words, what we need is commitment and results. Delays in providing the plan will result in delays to achieving peace and allow for more deaths and further economic and humanitarian deterioration,” he added.

Further, the UN Special Envoy called on all relevant actors to take necessary measures to lift restrictions on civilian commercial aircrafts to access Sana'a International Airport.

Restrictions on travel in and out of Sana'a airport have prevented scores of Yemenis from receiving badly-needed medical treatment and have also left many others stranded outside the country.

“This cannot continue,” he stressed, calling on the Government of Yemen to “allow the resumption of commercial flights to Sana'a without further delay and for all parties to ensure the safety of the airport and air traffic.”

Religious leaders deserve full support in quest for peace, says UN adviser on genocide prevention

23 January 2017 – Religious leaders and faith-based organizations have a responsibility to contribute to peaceful societies and the international community must support these grassroots peacemakers in their daily activities, the United Nations official mandated to fight genocide today told an international meeting on religion.

Addressing the third annual symposium on ‘The Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations in International Affairs,’ now under way at UN Headquarters in New York, Adama Dieng, the UN Special Adviser for Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, said that religious leaders “have a responsibility to contribute to the building of peaceful, inclusive and cohesive societies that are resilient to conflict, violent extremism and atrocity crimes.”

The Office of Mr. Dieng is one of the sponsors of the symposium, along with the UN Inter-agency Task Force for Engagement with Faith-based Organizations and the Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN. This year’s thematic focus is on just, inclusive and sustainable peace.

Mr. Dieng, who is currently in Doha participating in a meeting on the responsibility to protect, delivered his address via a video message. He said the primary responsibility for creating sustained peace lies with States, who must promote the values of diversity and manage diversity constructively – however, “collaboration” with religious leaders remains vital.

“They can reach out to and influence large numbers of people,” Mr. Dieng. He added that religious leaders “provide support during emergencies, respond to the needs of marginalized communities, as well as address grievances as soon as they emerge and advocate for the rights of their communities.”

Last year, the UN Security Council passed resolution 2282 (2016) , which calls for a comprehensive approach to transitional justice and accountability to consolidate peace, reduce poverty and prevent countries from relapsing into conflict.

In his video message, Mr. Dieng discussed his recent work with religious leaders on the Fez Plan of Action on the role of religious leaders and actors in preventing incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes. The Plan was named after the Moroccan city where the first steps on a strategy on the role of religious leaders were taken in 2015.

According to Mr. Dieng, the Plan will be launched in New York during the first quarter of this year, followed by meetings on its implementation.

“Implementing the Fez Plan of Action will be a good starting point in enhancing religious actors’ engagement in the prevention of atrocity crimes, as well as enhancing collaboration among religious leaders, Member States and civil society to prevent incitement to violence,” he said.