

Ministry of Ecology and Environment
of the People's Republic of China

2018 Press Conference Records of Ministry of Ecology and Environment, the People's Republic of China



 Springer

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Preface

In 2018, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment made great efforts to improve the ministry's news releases. Over the past year, it worked hard to promote Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization and the guidelines of the National Working Conference on Environmental Protection, provided the general public with timely, authoritative and accurate information concerning environmental policies, measures and latest developments, and made prompt responses to matters of public concern. In this way, it boosted the public's and the media's understanding and support of environmental protection.

During the Two Sessions (annual meetings of China's top legislature and its top political advisory body) in 2018, Minister of Ecology and Environment Li Ganjie attended the press conferences as well as the Ministers-Meet-the-Media event at the "Ministers' Corridor," in which he briefed the media on China's environmental protection and answered questions from Chinese and foreign journalists. In June, Vice Minister Zhao Yingmin attended the State Council's policy briefing conference, in which he briefed journalists on China's three-year plan for preventing and controlling air pollution. In November, China's special representative for climate change affairs Xie Zhenhua attended the State Council's press conference, in which he briefed the media on China's measures to deal with climate change.

In the whole year, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment held 12 press conferences to release information on the ministry's major work and to respond to matters of public concern. These conferences explored such topics as environmental quality monitoring, prevention and control of air pollution, the second national census on the sources of pollution, prevention and control of water pollution, China's ecological and environmental situation, environment-related law enforcement and supervision, cleaning up black and odorous water bodies, reforms of delegating power, improving regulation, and upgrading services, ecological and environmental protection, climate change, marine ecology protection and central environmental protection inspection. These conferences better informed the public of national policies and measures, raised their awareness of ecological and environmental protection and encouraged greater public participation in the cause.

This book consists of three parts. The content of each part is organized in a chronological order. The first part includes Minister Li Ganjie's remarks in the press conference during the Two Sessions and interviews he received in the "Ministers' Corridor." The second part includes Mr. Xie Zhenhua's talks in the press conference on the release of *China's Policies and Actions for Addressing Climate Change* (2018), and Vice Minister Zhao Yingmin's talks in the policy briefing conference on the *Three-year Action Plan for Keeping Our Skies Blue*. The third part includes the transcripts of the 12 regular press conferences of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment in the year. We hope this book could be of help for environmental protection professionals, journalists and all those who care about and support the work of environmental protection.

We apologize for any possible mistake that might occur in the book. Suggestions for improvement will be gratefully received.

January 2019

The Editorial Team

The original version of the book was revised: The institution name "Ministry of Ecology and Environment" has been changed to "Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China". The correction to the book is available at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4806-6_16.

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**Correction to: 2018 Press Conference Records of Ministry of Ecology
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Records of Press Conference During the Two Sessions

Records of the Press Conference on Ensuring Success in the Critical Battle Against Pollution



March 17, 2018



Li Ganjie, Secretary of Leading Party Members' Group of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Minister of Environmental Protection



Press conference

Moderator: Good afternoon, friends from the press. Welcome to the press conference for the First Session of the 13th National People's Congress. The main theme of today's press conference is "ensuring success in the critical battle against pollution." We are glad that Minister of Environmental Protection, Mr. Li Ganjie, will answer your questions on this issue. Let's welcome Minister Li Ganjie.

Li Ganjie: Good afternoon, friends from the press. First, on behalf of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, I wish to thank you for your long-term attention, understanding, support and help for the work of environmental protection. Your efforts and contributions can be seen in every progress and every achievement that we have made in our work.

From the Party's 18th National Congress on, under the strong leadership of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core and under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, China has made unprecedented decisions, efforts and achievements in environmental protection, and in the building of the ecological system. We have indeed made historical achievements and gone through historical transformations. Yet we are clearly aware that we are still faced with a serious situation and that there is a long way to go in the years to come. We are determined to go all out to overcome all difficulties and make the best efforts to improve the environmental quality, to provide more quality ecological products and to meet the people's growing need for a beautiful environment. In this process, we hope our friends from the press will continue to give us your attention, understanding, support and help as before. Let's join together to build a beautiful China where the sky is blue, the land is green and the water is clear.

Today is a good day that can be described with the Chinese sayings "a good rain after a long drought" and "seasonable snow promising a fruitful year." The snow in Beijing ended the long period without effective precipitation, which lasted 145 days, close to five months. This morning, General Secretary Xi Jinping was unanimously elected President of the People's Republic of China and Chairman of the Central

Military Commission. We believe, with a leader like General Secretary Xi Jinping piloting at the helm, our goals will be fully achieved, and our dreams will be realized. Now, I'm happy to answer your questions.

Moderator: Thank you, Minister Li Ganjie. Now you can start asking questions.

The Xinhua Agency: The Central Committee has stressed the necessity to ensure success in the three critical battles. The *Report on the Work of the Government* has further demanded that targeted approaches and specific features should be adopted, that timetables and roadmaps should be drawn up and that well-defined priorities should be decided. My question is what specific measures the Ministry of Environmental Protection will take in the battle against pollution? Do you have an estimation of the progress of the task? How do you make the estimation? Thank you.

Li Ganjie: Thank you for your question. As you all know, the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020 is a solemn promise that our Party made to the people. In the overall progress of building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, the ecological environment is obviously a weak point. That's why General Secretary Xi Jinping said, whether the society is prosperous in all respects depends on the improvement of the ecological environment. To fix this weak point as soon as possible, the 19th National Congress of the Party listed pollution control as one of the three critical battles to ensure the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects. The Central Economic Work Conference held last December mapped out a plan and made requirements on this issue. In this year's *Report on the Work of the Government*, Premier Li Keqiang particularly stressed the importance of ensuring the success in the battle against pollution and pushing forward with pollution control for greater achievements.

I see this as a strategic arrangement of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, which focuses on the overall situation of the party and the state and complies with the people's need and wish for a better life. I also see this as a glorious and arduous task in which the Party Central Committee lets us take the lead. To accomplish this task, we started a series of studies, investigations and researches soon after the Party's 19th National Congress. I can say we now have some basic considerations and ideas on how to plan and how to act in this critical battle. In your words, we have an "account book." It is still a preliminary and cursory estimation, and we need to do further research and to improve our plan.

Our basic strategy can be summarized as "three Three's." The first "Three" is aiming at "Three Goals": The first goal is improving the environment quality. In the area of air quality, this mainly includes increasing the proportion of days with good air quality in a year and reducing the rate of PM 2.5. In the area of water quality, this mainly includes increasing the proportion of water above Grade III, and reducing the proportion of water below Grade V. The second goal is reducing the total emission of major pollutants, which mainly includes sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides in the air and chemical oxygen demand and ammonia in water. The third goal is controlling environmental risks, including those in farmland and those in urban construction land. This is the first "Three," the Three Goals.

The second "Three" is focusing on Three Areas, which you are familiar with and care about: air, water and soil. We will lose no time to issue an action plan

for prevention and control of air pollution for the next stage, to ensure success in the battle to defend the blue sky. In the area of water, we will intensify efforts to implement the *Water Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan* (commonly known as *10-Chapter Water Pollution Action Plan*), which was issued in April 2015 and is still effective, to ensure success in the battle to defend clear water. We will fully implement the *Soil Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan* (commonly known as *10-Chapter Soil Pollution Action Plan*) made and issued in May 2016, to ensure success in the battle to defend clean soil. This is the second “Three,” focusing on Three Areas.

The third “Three” is strengthening the Three Foundations, which are important tasks in environmental protection in general, and essential measures to safeguard the prevention and control of pollution. The first safeguard is to actively promote environment-friendly ways of development and life. This is fundamental, because if our ways of development and our way of life are not environment-friendly, it is difficult, if not impossible, to ensure success in the critical battle against pollution. The second safeguard is to make great efforts to protect and restore the ecological system, because ecosystem services are vital in the prevention and control of pollution. The third safeguard is to speed up the modernization of the system and abilities of environment management. We will further reform and improve the system of environment management. The reform will bring about more motivations and benefits to support the critical battle against pollution, and will safeguard more and greater achievements in the battle.

Our general plan is the “three Three’s”: aiming at Three Goals, focusing on Three Areas and strengthening Three Foundations. Here I would like to tell you that we are working hard to improve the idea and make the estimation. At the same time, we are carrying out the project at an accelerated pace. In other words, we have never stopped our fight against pollution. We have sped up our work based on what we have achieved. Three years is a very short period of time. We cannot afford to slow down or wait. That’s why we are working on the top-level design at the same time while we are taking specific measures. We are doing this on a solid ground and we have the condition to do this.

After the 18th National Congress of the CPC, the Central Committee successively issued three action plans: *Air Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan* (commonly known as *10-Chapter Air Pollution Action Plan*), *10-Chapter Water Pollution Action Plan*, and *10-Chapter Soil Pollution Action Plan*, which you all know very well. In the past five years, it has been proved in practice that the directions, approaches, measures, goals, and missions in the three Action Plans are scientific and practicable. The Action Plans are directed at specific goals and are very effective, which explains why we have made such good achievements in the last five years. To ensure success in the critical battle in the next three years, the key is to hold on to the strategy of the last five years and take measures in accordance with the plans. These measures are painstaking, but “bitter medicine has effective results.” We must persist in them.

In short, in the days to come, we must work in accordance with the Central Committee's demand to further improve the quality of our environment at an accelerated pace, with increased efforts, and with conscientious implementation, so that the people will have a stronger sense of gain, of happiness and of security.

In short, in the days to come, we must work in accordance with the Central Committee's demand to further improve the quality of our environment at an accelerated pace, with increased efforts, and with conscientious implementation, so that the people will have a stronger sense of gain, of happiness and of security.

China Daily: I would like to ask a question that might interest many people. This morning, the NPC approved by vote the State Council Institutional Reform Proposal. In the proposal, one change that has attracted many people's attention is the establishment of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment. Mr. Minister, my questions are: how is the new Ministry different from the Ministry of Environmental Protection in function, and what role will it play in future?

Li Ganjie: Thank you for your question. Furthering reform of the party and government institutions is necessary and important. It is a necessary requirement for upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, for strengthening the Party's long-term governance capacity, for self-improvement and development of the socialist system, and for achieving the "Two Centenary Goals," developing a modern socialist country, and realizing national rejuvenation.

As you just mentioned, this morning the NPC reviewed and approved the State Council institutional reform proposal. The proposal clearly indicates that a new Ministry of Ecology and Environment will be established, which will perform all functions of the former Ministry of Environmental Protection and relevant functions of six other departments, and will perform the duties supervising the environment, controlling the emission of all kinds of pollution in the urban and rural areas, and enforcing relevant administrative laws. I take this reform as a major move of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core to achieve the general goal of deepening the reform and a specific action in the continued commitment to the people-centered philosophy of development, as well as a profound transformation and great progress that will propel the improvement of the environment, the building of eco-civilization, the modernization of the environment protection system, and capacity building in this area. I see a great realistic and historical significance in it. I think the reform fully embodies and fully conforms to Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, especially General Secretary Xi Jinping's strategic idea on ecological progress.

Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, General Secretary Xi Jinping have given many instructions, made many comments and made many speeches on the protection of the environment and on the building of the eco-civilization. In our studies of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important strategic thoughts on the building of the eco-civilization, we must pay great attention to several important views, which are pertinent to our work and are guidelines for our work: (1) the in-depth historical view that the rise or fall of a civilization is closely tied to its relationship with nature; (2) the scientific view of nature that man and nature form a community of life; (3) the view of green development that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable

assets”; (4) the view of basic livelihood that there is no welfare more universally beneficial than a sound natural environment; (5) the systematic view that mountains, forests, farmland, rivers, lakes and grasslands should be managed in a systematic manner; (6) the view of rule of law that the strictest regulations and laws must be applied in protecting the environment; (7) the view of public participation that the protection and management of the environment need the joint action of the whole society; (8) the view of a global win-win situation, in which we actively participate in global management to jointly build a clean and beautiful world.

In my opinion, this reform fully embodies these ideas of General Secretary Xi Jinping, especially the systematic view that mountains, forests, farmland, rivers, lakes and grasslands should be managed in a systematic manner, which was emphasized for another time by General Secretary Xi Jinping when he participated in the discussion of the Inner Mongolia Delegation in the NPC and the CPPCC, on March 5. General Secretary Xi Jinping said that we must strengthen the protection and building of the environment and systematically manage mountains, forests, farmland, rivers, lakes and grasslands. Five years ago, when the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee reviewed and approved the decision to deepen the reform, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized in the explanatory notes that the promotion of ecological progress must be based on the understanding of the environment as a system, and on the idea that man and nature form a community of life. Just as humans need the fields for food, the fields need the rivers, the rivers need the mountains, the mountains need the soils, and the soils need the forests. If afforestation, water management and farmland protection are isolated from each other, it is impossible to attend everything at once and the environment will be systematically damaged. In the conference, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized another opinion, which I also find important, that is, the administrators and the owners should be independent from each other, although they must work together and supervise each other. I think this reform effectively meets General Secretary Xi Jinping’s demand.

For a long time, there were two major problems in the system and institution of ecological and environmental protection in China. One is the overlapped and redundant functions of multiple governmental departments. When the same field is managed by different administrators, the responsibility is ambiguous. The other is the unclear distinction of administrators and owners. Many organs were the player and the referee at the same time. Some “referees” were independent, but they did not have much authority or effectiveness. This reform has effectively solved the two problems. From the perspective of the owners, mountains, forests, farmland, rivers, lakes and grasslands are completely unified. You can see that the establishment of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment made the unification possible from the perspective of the administrator. I have summarized the unification of the functions of pollution prevention and ecological and environmental protection in five fields: the unification of the land and the air, of the land and the water, of the continent and the ocean, of the urban and rural areas, and of the carbon monoxide and the carbon dioxide, that is, the unification of the treatment of air pollution and climate change. Therefore, in this sense, the new Ministry of Ecology and Environment has

maintained the function and duties of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, but there are also some great changes.

In the next stage, we will cautiously implement the reform in accordance with the plan and demand of the Central Committee. The reform will create better condition for us to ensure success in the critical battle against pollution and to improve ecological and environmental protection. We have the responsibility, the duty as well as the confidence and motivation to better fulfill our tasks in future. In the current reform, we need to maintain a clear mind, a united team, an enduring effort, and a boosted-up morale. In addition, through the reform, we will further increase our teamwork, effectiveness and executive abilities; we will also further improve our performance, capability and working style, so that we can better fulfill all kinds of duties in ecological and environmental protection and ensure success in critical battles in future.

Reuters: Mr. Minister, I hear that today you come with satisfactory accomplishment of the *10-Chapter Air Pollution Action Plan*. We have also noted that a serious smog appeared recently. Would you please tell us about our goal in the new three-year plan for prevention and control of air pollution in the next stage? To what extent will we reduce the PM 2.5 concentration by 2020? How are the specific measures different from the previous *10-Chapter Air Pollution Action Plan*?

Li Ganjie: the *10-Chapter Air Pollution Action Plan* was officially issued in September 2013. It is a very important document in the history of China's environmental protection. As far as I remember, this was the first major document on environmental protection reviewed and approved by the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China and the executive meeting of the State Council. It was the first action plan in the Central Committee's inexorable effort to launch a campaign against pollution and to systematically manage pollution.

As I said earlier, the directions, approaches, measures, goals, and missions in the Action Plan are scientific and practicable. It is directed at specific goals and are very practicable. In five years, it indeed proved effective. I noticed media coverage of the effects of the *10-Chapter Air Pollution Action Plan* since the end of 2017. Generally it is fully approved by the public. Many ordinary people believe that they have indeed seen good results. I will update you from the following aspects:

First, in the last five years, the air quality has been obviously improved. The Action Plan has five goals. People were uncertain about the result when these five goals were set, thinking that it would be very difficult or even impossible to achieve the goal. Yet in the end, when the results came out, all the five goals were not only achieved but also exceeded our expectations. The first goal was to reduce the average PM 10 density by 10% in 338 prefecture-level cities. The second goal was to reduce the average PM 2.5 concentration in the area of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei by 25%. The third goal was to reduce the average PM 2.5 concentration in the Yangtze River Delta by 20%. The fourth goal was to reduce the average PM 2.5 concentration in the Pearl River Delta by 15%. The fifth goal was to reduce the average PM 2.5 concentration in Beijing to 60 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. In five years all these five goals were achieved and exceeded. In 338 prefecture-level cities, the average PM 10 concentration was reduced by 22.7%. The average PM 2.5 concentration was reduced by 39.6% in the area of Beijing, Tianjin

and Hebei, by 34.3% in the Yangtze River Delta, and by 27.7% in the Pearl River Delta. The average PM 2.5 concentration in Beijing was reduced to 58 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, lower than the goal of 60 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Here we think two achievements are of iconic significance. First, in the whole Pearl River Delta, which is a region of great importance, the air quality has reached the standard. For three years in a row, the PM 2.5 concentration is lower than 35 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Second, the PM 2.5 concentration in Beijing is reduced to 58 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, lower than the goal of 60 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. These are very significant.

Second, the structure of key industries has been optimized, especially in three fields, the manufacturing industry, the energy industry and transportation. The last five years saw great progress and great achievements in the steel and coal industries in eliminating backward production capabilities and resolving superfluous production capabilities. Premier Li Keqiang gave us the specific data in the *Report on the Work of the Government*: The production capabilities of steel and coal are reduced respectively by over 170 million tons and by over 800 million tons. And 71% of the coal-fired thermal power units, which has a total generating capability of 700 million kilowatts, have been upgraded to achieve ultra-low emissions. In these five years, we eliminated over 200,000 coal-fired small boilers, and over 20 million heavy-polluting and old vehicles. Besides, our special measures in some key regions were effective. For example, in the “2 + 26” cities which include Beijing, Tianjin, and cities in Hebei and some neighboring provinces, the coal-to-gas and coal-to-electricity projects were accomplished in over 4.7 million households. All these goals, which we wanted to but couldn’t achieve in the past, were achieved in five years. They indeed played a leading role in improving environmental quality.

Third, a new mechanism of the prevention and control of air pollution has been generally established. Firstly, we established environment supervision, special supervision, special supervision, and the mechanism of data-based strict accountability to ensure that both Party committees and governments are held accountable and that officials take responsibility for environment in performing their duties. By this means, everyone is doing his or her part. Secondly, in key regions, we established the mechanism of coordinated prevention and control to jointly deal with heavily polluted weather, which proved effective. In addition, we also established the mechanism to strengthen the technological support. For example, last year the research project on the cause and control of heavily polluted weather was officially launched. The mechanism of research was officially established and played a significant role. We also established a mechanism of investment with the joint effort and participation of the government, enterprises and the public. In the last five years, the investment in the prevention and control of air pollution from the central budget alone exceeded RMB 60 billion and reached RMB 63.3 billion.

The last five years saw obvious effects and remarkable achievements of the *10-Chapter Air Pollution Action Plan*. Yet we have no reason to feel complacent because we are still faced with serious situations and have a long and tough way to go. It’s a long and tough way for environmental protection in general. So are the tasks of the *10-Chapter Air Pollution Action Plan*. The several rounds of heavily polluted weather in Beijing before and during the NPC and the CPPCC are a warning for us. There were two rounds of such weather before the NPC and the CPPCC, one from

February 26th to 28th, another one from March 2nd to 4th, and then another one from March 9th to 14th, which lasted 6 days and just ended. In a short of period of less than 20 days, Beijing was hit by several rounds of heavily polluted weather. In general, we are still at the mercy of the weather. When the weather is fine, we will have less smog and live more comfortably. We will have a very long way to go before we go through this stage. Therefore, departing from our previous achievements, we must make greater efforts to strictly enforce the standards. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to achieve our goals.

At the same time, I must emphasize that we must have the confidence. As I said earlier, we have made significant achievements, and in this process we have experimented with some good methods and have gained valuable experience. Such methods and experience are completely suited to China's national conditions and to our institutional characteristics, and are in accordance with the inherent laws of things. If we persevere in using and improving these good methods and in learning from the good experience, we will see greater and better effects.

In our original estimation, during the period between March 9th and 14th, there would be two days of moderate pollution and four days of heavy pollution, including one day of severe pollution. With our effort, it was improved to one day of good air quality, one day of light pollution, two days of moderate pollution, and two days of heavy pollution. This was not ideal, but our efforts proved effective. The atmospheric conditions of those days were not ideal, especially with the strong temperature inversion. Experts' analysis shows that it was the greatest temperature inversion in the last twenty years, and in the 21st Century, lasting a long period of time and covering a large area. During a temperature inversion, warmer air is held above cooler air. The temperature was 15–18 °C degrees or even higher at an altitude of 1500 m above, while the temperature below was not so high, especially during night time. As a result, pollutants could not spread out easily. The boundary layer was constantly lowered, like a compressed cookie. Despite this unfavorable atmospheric condition, we successfully reduced the PM 2.5 concentration. This is because our measures to control the cause and symptoms of pollution in the last few years, especially from last year on, have been effective. According to experts' estimation, among the measures to control the cause of pollution, the adjustment of the structures of the manufacturing, energy and transportation industries contributed to over 20, even 30%, of the result. Our measures to control the symptoms of pollution, the emergency response to heavily polluted weather in different areas, contributed to 15% of the result. Altogether, the pollution in these days, which could have been worse, was reduced by over one third. These methods have proved effective in practice. If we continue with the work, we will see better results. Of course, to achieve better results, we all must do our parts. As we have often said, the prevention and control of air pollution is a long-lasting campaign with many critical battles. Pollution was not formed in a couple of days and could not be solved overnight. It takes a lot of arduous work and painstaking efforts. It's not a problem that can be solved once and for all with one or two charges. We must work with perseverance for a long time. If we keep working, I believe our goals will be achieved.

As for your question about the goal to reduce PM 2.5 concentration and improve air quality by 2020, we are working on a three-year plan, called the *Three-year Action Plan for Keeping Our Skies Blue*. I think it will be finished soon. Some general goals were already set in the *13th Five-Year Plan for Ecological and Environmental Protection*. Based on these goals, we will work out the details. Some of the goals will be maintained. Some of them might be moderately raised. For example, one goal is to ensure good air quality in 80% of the days in a year. We think the goal is challenging, and to achieve it, we will need to make great efforts. Originally a five-year target was set for the rate of PM 2.5 concentration reduction in cities that had not reached the standards. In the original plan, the concentration should be reduced by 18% in 262 cities. With our intensive work in the last two years, which had good effects, now we are ahead of schedule. In two years the PM 2.5 concentration was reduced by 15.8%, and it won't be long before we achieve the planned goal. Therefore, based on this, we will set a higher goal. We are still doing research for the new goal. As soon as we come to a conclusion, we will report it to the public.

CNR: I have a question about the central environmental protection inspection. Last year, such inspection was conducted in all provinces. Its achievements and effects were recognized. Yet the public are worried about two things: that the supervision wouldn't last long and that, in fear of the supervision, some local government might treat enterprises in a one-fits-for-all approach. How would you respond to such worries? The plan of institutional reform has clearly stated that the central environmental protection inspection is an important function of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment in future. What is the plan for the next stage?

Li Ganjie: I remember I introduced the basic information, especially the effects, of the central environmental protection inspection in the press conference of the 19th National Congress of the Party, in response to a journalist's question. At the time, I introduced it with a summary of four verbs. The summary was not my own. It was made by the leaders of our inspection teams, and I completely agreed with it. The effects were summarized as: "the inspection was praised by the people, approved by the Central Committee, and supported by local governments, and it solved problems." In two years, we organized four missions and the effects were good. The most obvious and outstanding effect is that serious environmental problems in many people's life were solved through the central environmental protection inspection. Last time I gave you the number of around 80,000 cases. The 80,000 cases happened in the life of ordinary people, and caused many problems and disputes. Through the environmental protection supervision, they were properly handled. This also sped up the solution of many other problems.

You asked whether the effects of the rectification would last. There might be more concerns about whether the demands in the supervision reports could be met. Our supervision reports include lists of problems. The problems, no matter how hard or how complex they are, must be addressed and fixed. The problems that could make to the list are serious and complex. Will the central environmental protection inspection be carried out in future with long-lasting vitality? I am concerned as much as you are. The key to the question is whether the demands can be treated seriously. Not only the

Ministry of Environmental Protection is concerned about it, leaders in the Central Committee, especially General Secretary Xi Jinping are also concerned about it.

The central environmental protection inspection constitutes a major institutional reform in the building of eco-civilization initiated and promoted by General Secretary Xi Jinping himself. We must remember this when we design the system. We should always finish what we have started and be committed to the mission till the end with great persistence. The supervision has proved effective as seen in the following aspects.

First, the Party committees and governments in different regions have great emphasis on this mission. Supervision and rectification leading groups are established in 31 provinces. In 18 provinces of the 31 provinces, these groups are headed by top leaders of both the Party committee and the government. In other provinces, the groups are headed by the top leaders of either the Party committee or the government. The top leaders' direct management firmly safeguarded and supported the effective implementation of our supervision and rectification.

Second, many dominant problems were solved. Our review of the lists in the supervision report shows that we had 2147 rectification tasks. So far, 998 are accomplished, accounting for close to 47% of the total. The rest of the rectification is being carried out in an orderly manner.

Third, in the process of the rectification, we strictly ensured that those who failed to do their duties and those who caused damages were held accountable. In the whole process of environmental protection supervision, responsible people were held accountable at three levels. At the first level, responsible people were held accountable in the process of supervision and rectification when the inspection teams were working in their stationed cities. The results were published by all local governments, and we have added the number up. In the four supervision missions, a total of 18,000 people were held accountable, which was a remarkable number. At the second level, our demand to hold responsible officials in relevant Party committees and governmental departments accountable was passed on to local governments and Party committees along with our supervision reports. So far, the treatment of those found responsible in the first and second supervisions is completed. The treatment of those found responsible in the third and fourth supervisions are still in process. The result of the first supervision of accountability has been released to the media. A total of 1100 officials were held accountable, including 130 officials at the bureau level and 24 officials at the bureau-director level. The result of the second supervision of accountability will be released soon. The treatment in the second supervision was stricter, with a total of 1048 officials held accountable (the total number is smaller than that of the first supervision because the second supervision covered seven provinces while the first one covered eight). Among these officials, 162 were officials at the bureau-level and above, including 3 officials at the provincial-department level and 56 at the bureau-director level. At the third level, responsible people accountable were held accountable immediately when new problems were discovered in the process of rectification. Not long ago we briefed the media on a case in Nantong City of Jiangsu Province. In the process of rectification we discovered dereliction of duty and abuse of power, and we immediately activated the accountability mechanism.

The provincial government of Jiangsu held relevant people accountable. Our work in the rectification was intensified and effective, which promoted people's awareness and gave impetus to the implementation of our missions.

Fourth, the mechanism of long-term effectiveness has been improved. After the launch of the central environmental protection inspection, different local governments established rules and regulations in relevant fields, in line with the specific local situations. According to our statistics, over 330 sets of regulations were established, which is averagely more than ten in each province. The mechanism of local environmental protection supervision was also established by different local governments. So far provincial environmental protection supervision has been established in 26 provinces. The system in which the central government supervises provincial governments and provincial governments supervise local government at the city and county levels proved effective.

You also asked a question about "indiscriminate orders." Since many people are concerned about this issue, I would like to respond to it first. What is an "indiscriminate order"? In my understanding, a so-called "indiscriminate order" is to order an enterprise to shut down or to halt production in an oversimplified manner, without considering the specific situations, without considering the law. An enterprise's illegal polluting behaviors must be handled properly. Yet indiscriminate orders without considering specific situations, I can say responsibly, are rare and are not a serious issue. We are firmly against such orders from the very beginning, too.

Of course, in the process of the four supervisions, there were such problems in a few places. When such problems were discovered, we corrected them promptly. As for what could happen in future, our attitude is very clear. We will by no means tolerate such behavior. We will by no means allow such misconducts to undermine the overall situation of the central environmental protection inspection. In future, not only will we correct such misconducts, but we will also hold relevant people accountable, and we will do so seriously and severely. Any such misconduct will be punished severely. We will keep our promise. We strongly oppose those who do not perform their duties regularly, but act indiscriminately at the time of supervision. Such behaviors must be stopped.

The central environmental protection inspection truly has good effects. Please rest assured. We will persevere in the mission and keep improving it. As you have noticed, a clearly indicated function of the new Ministry of Ecology and Environment is to carry out the central environmental protection inspection. Recently we have been considering ways to carry out and further develop the central environmental protection inspection this year and in the years to come. Let me report some specific plans of the work for this year.

First, we are preparing for the first round of "follow-up" inspection of the central environmental protection inspection. The public is concerned about the rectification of the issues on the list. We must review the result of the rectification.

Second, in line with the review, we will launch some special supervisions that are targeted at some dominant environmental problems in some regions and some provinces. We will integrate the review with the special supervisions. For example, if a province has serious air pollution, we will carry out a special supervision on the

prevention and control of air pollution while we work on the review. If a province has problems with water, we will carry out a special supervision on water. Some provinces might have serious issues in ecological protection, or the building and management of natural reserves, and we will carry out special supervisions in the ecological areas.

Third, we are trying to find ways to perfect the regulations and systems relevant to the central environmental protection inspection, and to make the inspection a law-based and standardized mechanism with long-term effectiveness, which will continue to develop in a stable and sound manner.

Fourth, we are strengthening our guidance and supervision of the environmental supervision at the provincial level. The province-level supervision, as I said earlier, has been established in 26 provinces. Our goal is that the mechanism of local environmental protection supervision will be established in all provinces by 2018, and that the mechanism will cover all environmental protection supervision at the prefecture level. We are planning about these tasks right now. I believe, with our joint effort, this good mechanism will play a greater part in future.

Legal Daily: I have a question about the implementation of the *Environment Protection Law* (amended in 2014). The *Environment Protection Law* (amended in 2014) has been effective for three years. The specific stipulations on “fines accumulating by the day, detention, public interests litigation,” etc. in the amendment have played a significant role in practice. I would like to ask Minister Li, since the implementation of the *Environment Protection Law* (amended in 2014), what development has been achieved in environmental protection? What problems have been encountered? What work can be done to make new contributions to the critical battle against pollution?

Li Ganjie: The *Environment Protection Law* (amended in 2014) was reviewed and passed by the standing committee of the NPC in April 2014 and was put into effect in January 1, 2015. It's been a little bit more than three years since its implementation. The law is considered “the most strict environment protection law in history,” which is proved true by three years of practice. It is indeed the strictest environment protection law, a law “with teeth.” The implementation of this law has great effects. In 2016 and 2017, we respectively invited Renmin University of China, China University of Political Science and Law and the Development Research Center of the State Council to give an independent third-party assessment of the implementation of the *Environment Protection Law* (amended in 2014). They basically came to the same conclusion that the enforcement, observance and influence of the law were the best in the history of environmental protection. This is seen in the following specific ways:

First, the enforcement has been continuously strengthened. The *Environment Protection Law* (amended in 2014) provides more enforcement tools and stipulations, including what you just mentioned, “closing down or distraining facilities, fines accumulating by the day, production restriction and halts, administrative detention,” and so on, which has supported and strengthened our enforcement. In 2017, 233,000 cases of violations were investigated and prosecuted in China, which was an increase by 180% in comparison with 2014. Last year the sum of fines was RMB

11.58 billion, which was an increase of 265% in comparison with 2014. From these numbers you can see the enforcement has been greatly strengthened.

Second, the variety of the law enforcement has been greatly improved. We have more varied administrative measures to supervise both enterprises and governmental departments. The tools for supervising enterprises include strengthened supervision and inspection. The tools for supervising governmental departments include environment protection supervision, special supervision, arranged talks, budget limitation, circulated notice of criticism, rectification with a time limit, etc. There are only the administrative measures. The legal measures have also become more convenient. By taking all kinds of legal means provided by criminal and civil laws, the enforcement has become more effective. This process is greatly supported by the Ministry of Public Security, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate. In 2017 we transferred two types of cases to the public security departments, one for administrative detention, and the other for criminal charges of environment pollution. The number of the transferred cases of the two type is respectively 8600 and 2700. In comparison with the numbers in 2016, the number of the first type was almost doubled, and that of the second type was increased by 35%. Besides, in 2017, we supported relevant social welfare organizations in 5 cases of environment-related public interests litigation. The variety of our mechanism has indeed been increased.

Third, the enforcement has been continuously innovated. In the process of enforcement, we have widely employed technological means, including remote sensing, online monitoring, big data analysis, etc., to support our actions. Our actions in the critical battle against air pollution in "2 + 26" cities were supported by the technology of hot spot grids. This technology divides a region into 3 km × 3 km grids. Monitoring devices are installed in each grid. As soon as unusual increase of pollutants is detected in a grid, we will send law enforcement officers to deal with it. Our enforcement is greatly improved with the help of new instruments like this.

Fourth the degree of public participation has been continuously increased. Public participation plays a vital part in environment-related law enforcement and environmental protection. The last few years saw a great progress in this field. In 2017, the Ministry of Environmental Protection received 170,000 reports of offenses through telephone, WeChat, and the Internet. This is twice the number of the year before last year and 3.5 times the number of 2014. The increase of reports from tens of thousands, such as 300,000, 380,000, in the past to 170,000 last year shows the increase of public participation due to the increase of the public enthusiasm and the increase of the channels for participation. We took all the received reports seriously, and urged that the local government to deal with them. We paid close attention to some major cases and major issues, for example, all air-pollution-related reports in the campaign against air pollution in "2 + 26" cities last autumn and winter, until they were finally solved. First, the treatment of the cases was transparent to the public; second, we kept an eye on the 13,000 cases transferred to local governments; and third, we urged relevant departments to handle the issues until they were solved.

Fifth, there has been continuous increased effects of the enforcement. We don't need to say more. You can see enough in the improvement of the environmental quality, as well as the effects of enterprises' law-abiding practice. In this sense, the

effects of the implementation of the *Environment Protection Law* (amended in 2014) in the three years are indeed obvious. I believe we will see more effects of the law in the years to come. Yet we also must see the problems. For example, some enterprises do not have enough law-abiding awareness. Excessive discharge of pollutants still exist, and in some regions, it is a serious issue. Besides, some governmental duties are not fully performed.

That being said, if all enterprises were law abiding, all discharges were controlled in accordance with the standards, all promise of the local governments were kept and all their plans were carried out, our environmental quality would have been much better than what it actually is now. In this sense, there is a lot of space for improvement in future. We have a lot of tasks to accomplish in future. In future, we will enforce the law in a strict, regulated, accurate and civilized manner. We will further implement the *Environment Protection Law* (amended in 2014) and other laws. The last five years saw intensified efforts in the amendment of laws relevant to environmental protection. Many of our laws, such as the *Air Pollution Prevention and Control Law*, the *Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law*, and the *Environmental Impact Assessment Law*, have been amended. The *Soil Pollution Prevention and Control Law* is being made. More new laws, such as the *Environmental Protection Tax Law* and the *Nuclear Safety Law* will be issued. These amended or new laws reflect General Secretary Xi Jinping's new thoughts, the Central Committee's new demands, as well as the characteristics of the new era. Therefore, we must ensure the enforcement of these laws, and make the laws powerful support for the improvement of environmental quality.

The Multi-media News Center of Jiangsu Broadcasting Corporation: In the *Report on the Work of the Government*, Premier Li Keqiang set up the goal to build a beautiful China where the sky is blue, the land is green, and the water is clear. We know we have done a lot of work the make the sky blue. What have we done to make the water clear? Jiangsu is an important province in the reach of the Yangtze River. In this year's "Two Sessions," over 30 members of the Jiangsu Delegation jointly proposed making a law to protection the water environment of the Yangtze River. What will be the measures for water management in the next stage? What will be the key mission?

Li Ganjie: The Central Committee has always attached as much importance to the prevention and control of water pollution as the prevention and control of air pollution. Of course, the people are also very concerned about this issue. In the past five years, in addition to the work related with the *10-Chapter Air Pollution Action Plan*, the making and implementation of the *10-Chapter Water Pollution Action Plan* was also our focus. With the joint efforts of the governmental departments at all levels and all sectors of society, great achievements have been made since the *10-Chapter Water Pollution Action Plan* was issued in April 2015. We had made great efforts and made some progress even before the Action Plan was issued.

Li Ganjie: In comparison with 2012, in 2017, the proportion of water above Grade III was increased by 6.3%. The proportion of water below Grade V was reduced by 4.1%. You mentioned that the delegates from Jiangsu are concerned about the water of the Yangtze River. Actually, the situation in the Yangtze River Economic Belt is better than other regions of China. In the Yangtze River Economic Belt, the proportion

of water above Grade III was increased by 9.1% in comparison with 2013, and the proportion of water below Grade V was reduced by 6.2%. There is a contained tendency of this improvement. In the last two years, in 2017, the proportion of water above Grade III was increased by 1.9% in comparison with 2015; the proportion of water below Grade V was reduced by 1.4%, from 9.7 to 8.3%. It is difficult to solve problem of air pollution, but it is even harder to solve the problem of water pollution. We have a tougher task. In the critical campaign against pollution, how do we ensure success in the battle to defend clear water, while we fight to defend the blue sky? Our preliminary idea is to carry out our work in accordance with the following strategies, at least in the next few years:

First, we will center on one goal, which is doubtlessly to improve the quality of our water environment.

Second, we will persist in making efforts on two ends: reduction in pollutant emission and reduction in the sum of pollutants. On the other hand, we will make efforts to increase the capacity, that is, to protect and restore the eco-system, to enhance the serving functions of the eco-system, especially the water eco-system, so that it has greater receiving and purifying capabilities.

Third, we will focus on four types of water body. We must take care of a lot of things. Among them, the people and the whole society are more concerned about four types of water body. They should be the focus and starting point of our work. The first type of water body is the source of centralized drinking water, which is people's water dispenser, and should be taken care of with the greatest care. The second type is black and odorous water body, which is the greatest concern of the people. The third type of water body is water below Grade V. The fourth type of water body is the water connected with rivers, lakes and the sea with sewage outlets below the standards. There are many sewage on rivers, lakes and the sea. Some of these outlets have reached the standards and some have not. We will pay special attention to the water body that has not reached the standard. With our focus on these four types of water body, we will urge the improvement of pollution control and environmental protection.

Fourth, we will speed up the rectification in four areas. The first area is the industrial parks, where we will regulate the poorly managed polluting enterprises. Some of them will be rebuilt, some moved and some closed down. Besides, the emission standards of some enterprises in key industries, and enterprises should be urged to reach the standards within the time limitation. The second area is the source of domestic pollution. We will mainly speed up the construction of pollution treatment facilities in urban and rural areas. In general, we have made good progress in this area, but the development is not well balanced. In some areas, the construction is fast and good. In some other areas, it is not so fast or so good; besides, after the operation of the constructed facilities is not ideal. In addition to the urban area, the building of water treatment in the rural areas should be put on the agenda. The third area is the prevention and control of agricultural non-point source pollution. Above all, the use of pesticide and chemical fertilizer in farming should be reduced. In the last few years, we had a good control of the use of the pesticide and chemical fertilizer, and we achieved zero growth in the use of the pesticide and chemical fertilizer. There

is space for further improvement in this area. There is also space for improvement in the breeding industry, especially in large-scale breeding of domestic animals, poultry, and aquatic products, which seriously pollutes the water environment. The fourth area is the protection and restoration of the water eco-system. Above all, we must further protect and restore relevant wetlands. Next, we will safeguard the basic ecological flow of rivers, which was ignored by us in the past. It should be put on the agenda as a priority. No development project should threaten the basic ecological flower of any river. No one can recklessly destroy a community of life. This is what I mean by speeding up the rectification in four areas.

Fifth, we should strengthen the four supports. First, we should strengthen the supervision of law enforcement, so that our instructions in the prevention and control of pollution will be carried out and the stipulations of laws will be implemented. Second, we should strengthen the coordination in the river basin, unifying the upper reaches and the lower reaches, and unifying both banks. In the control of air pollution, we call it the coordinated prevention and control. Different regions along the same river have influence on each other. They must be well coordinated. It's impossible to solve all the problems if they work in isolation. Third, we must strengthen the technological support. We have made great progress in this area in the prevention and control of air pollution. Yet there is a lot of space for improvement in water management. Fourth, we must further strengthen the work of publicity and guidance.

In the implementation of the *10-Chapter Water Pollution Action Plan*, we should center on one goal, persist in making efforts on two ends, focus on four types of water body, speed up the rectification in four areas, and strengthen four supports. In accordance with this strategy, we will effectively prevent and control water pollution in the next few years. The Yangtze River Economic Belt is a region of ultimate significance. We all know that General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly said that in the Yangtze River Economic Belt we should insist on the top priority of ecological concerns, and that we should develop in a green way. We will make great efforts to protect the environment and will not have any large-scale projects of development. On March 10th, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized this opinion again when he joined the discussion of the delegation from Chongqing. He said that we should not launch large-scale development projects in the Yangtze River Economic Belt; that we should work together to protect the environment in all respects; that we should stop the orderless development and realize scientific, green and sustainable development. In this field, we must implement General Secretary Xi Jinping's demand. The Ministry of Environmental Protection has carried out a series of projects in the Yangtze River Economic Belt, in response to General Secretary Xi Jinping's demands and in line with the plan of environmental protection in the Yangtze River Economic Belt approved by the Central Committee. I have reported the relevant plan to the public last time. Here are the specific tasks: The first step is to strengthen the environmental supervision in the Yangtze River Economic Belt. The next step is to speed up determining the standards. In fact, we have basically completed the work concerning the red lines for ecological conservation, the threshold for environmental quality, a ceiling on resource utilization, and a negative list of environmental standards for market access (collectively known as the "three lines and one list") in the

Yangtze River Economic Belt. Next, we will focus on the source of drinking water in the Yangtze River Economic Belt and take good care of it. We have basically fulfilled this task. In two years' time, we paid close attention to 126 cities above the prefecture level, 319 location of water source, and 490 issues, with an updated record of the situation. Now the rectification is basically completed.

In the next stage, we will focus on cleaning up black and odorous water bodies in the Yangtze River Economic Belt. At the same time, we will collaborate with relevant departments, such as the financial departments, to promote and implement the ecological compensation mechanisms. By fulfilling these tasks, we will protect Yangtze River, one of the mother rivers of the Chinese people. Jiangsu is duty-bound in these tasks. In the past, it took the lead in many missions. We hope Jiangsu will continue to take the lead and set a good example in the protection of the water environment of the Yangtze River and of the country.

CGTN: We know the "Belt and Road Initiative" as an important initiative has brought opportunities of development to countries along the "Belt and Road," but it is also questioned by the foreign media on the threat to the local environment. My question is: what measures will the Ministry of Environmental Protection take to promote the development of a green "Belt and Road"?

In the report at the 19th National Congress of the CPC, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed that we should build a community with a shared future for mankind, build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity, be friendly to the environment, and protect our planet for the sake of human survival. General Secretary Xi Jinping made multiple instructions and emphasized this opinion repeatedly, especially in his talks on the building of the "Belt and Road." In the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in May last year, General Secretary Xi Jinping clearly announced, "we should pursue the new vision of green development and a way of life and work that is green, low-carbon, circular and sustainable. Efforts should be made to strengthen cooperation in ecological and environmental protection and build a sound ecosystem so as to realize the goals set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." In this conference, he also said, "China will set up a big data service platform on ecological and environmental protection. We propose the establishment of an international coalition for green development on the 'Belt and Road.'"

Doubtlessly, in the construction of the "Belt and Road." The Ministry of Ecology and Environment will implement these ideas and demands that General Secretary Xi Jinping put forward. In fact, only green development is sustainable and stable for the "Belt and Road." In general, our enterprises and institutions will pursue the vision of green development not only in the construction of the "Belt and Road" but also in other overseas projects.

In general, enterprises and departments pay great attention to the national and local policies on ecological and environmental protection, and follow them strictly. This can be seen in many typical examples, which had great effects and positive influences. For example, in 2015 we handed a coal-fired power plant called Cuddalore Coal-Fired Power Plant to India. At that time Indian government was making efforts to greatly reduce the emission limit of coal-fired power plants, because India, like

China, was continuously optimizing the emission limits. Our project was finished at the time of a new adjustment in 2015. In addition, Indian government had some other new demands. Despite this, our project was awarded India's gold prize for environmental protection and gold prize for social responsibility in 2016. This is a typical example. Our enterprises pay great attention to environmental protection when they have projects overseas, which had great effects and positive influences.

We attach great importance to the "Belt and Road Initiative," and we made great efforts to support and serve the green construction of the "Belt and Road" with multiple measures. Last year, our Ministry and some other departments, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Commerce, jointly issued a very important document, the *Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Green Belt and Road*, which clearly indicates the general idea and requirements of the green development of the "Belt and Road." Based on the requirement of this document, we later drew up and issued the *Belt and Road Ecological and Environmental Cooperation Plan*. The plan includes more specific plans on some goals, projects and missions, which will further promote the communication and cooperation of environment protection policies, laws, regulations, standards, technologies and industries.

At the same time, we actively urged enterprises in relevant industries to sign the corresponding agreements to establish a corresponding mechanism, which proved very effective. We gave impetus to the establishment of the Belt and Road Environmental Technology Exchange and Trans Center, carried out the *Plan of the Envoys of the Green Silk Road*, and organized trainings, exchanges, and forums to help countries, especially some developing countries, along the "Belt and Road" improve their abilities to administer and supervise environmental protection. Our work has good effects and responses in some Southeast Asian and African countries.

In the next stage, we will focus on accomplish two tasks put forward by General Secretary Xi Jinping: One is the construction of the Belt and Road Big Data Service Platform on Ecological and Environmental Protection. The other is the building of the International Coalition for Green Development on the Belt and Road. We will work with relevant countries and international organization, such as the United Nations Environment Program, which is very enthusiastic in helping us establish these platforms and mechanisms. We will make joint effort to promote the environmental protection in countries along the "Belt and Road," and to safeguard the major strategy of the "Belt and Road." Our achievements will benefit not only the Chinese people, but all the countries in the world. We invite all of you to share the benefits of the green development of the "Belt and Road."

Phoenix Television: Mr. Minister, last July introduced a tightened ban on solid waste imports. How is the ban implemented? Will there be following-up measures? We see some countries, especially developed ones that depend on Chinese market, have difficulties in waste treatment. According to some analyses, this is caused by China's sudden ban, which caught them off guard. What's your response to this opinion?

Li Ganjie: I must start by emphasizing that banning waste import and promoting the reform of the solid waste import system are Chinese government's major measures

to pursue the new notion of development, to improve the ecological and environmental quality, and to safeguard the country's ecological safety and the people's health. Chinese government has the right to do so.

In the late 1980s, the international community issued the *Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal* (hereafter to be referred to as the Basel Convention). We have all state parties of the convention. The Basel Convention fully recognizes each country's right to refuse the entry of dangerous waste and other waste from other countries. We have this right, and we have performed our duties. The Basel Convention provides that each country has the duty to reduce and treat its own dangerous waste and other waste in nearby areas, and that when shipping waste across the borders, each country has the duty to ensure their waste should not threaten the environment and the public health of the countries it enters. China started importing solid waste around the 1980s. At first, the increase of the import was not very fast. From the 1990s on, the increase was sped up. About 20 years ago, our total import was between 4 million and 4.5 million tons. In 20 years, it was increased by 10 times, to 45 million tons. The rate of increase was remarkable.

More importantly, as time went by, we found out more and more problems with solid waste important. Some of the problems are serious and influential. To be more specific, one major problem is that the import includes many forbidden types of waste. China has a solid waste management system based on the Basel Convention. We have relevant laws and regulations, which divide waste into unrestricted, restricted and forbidden waste. China allows the import of unrestricted and restricted solid waste. Yet due to ineffective management, a lot of forbidden waste, even "foreign garbage," has been smuggled in.

Another major problem is: the process and use of imported waste caused serious pollution and damage to the environment. Last July we launched a "Special Action on the Imported Waste Processing Industry." We organized a staff of 1700 members, and spent one month screening 1792 enterprises throughout the country without a single one unattended. The result showed that 1074, exactly 60% of the total, had various kinds of violation of the law. We decided to investigate and prosecute 1072 enterprises, and so far 1,057 have been dealt with. This shows how serious and common violation of laws exists in this industry. Their illegal behavior in the processing had serious impact on our environment and on people's health.

It is because of these major and serious problems that Chinese government decided to start adjusting and optimizing the import list this year, with a great reduction of solid waste import. In the first round, four types of waste were adjusted. There will be more, progressive, adjustment in future. Banning the import of "foreign garbage" and reforming the solid waste import management system are very important and necessary; they are also reasonable and rightful. As an environment protection department, we made an all-out effort to implement the demands of Chinese government and the effects were quite good.

You asked about the effects. The effects were influenced by many elements, including the market improvement. Also, some enterprises heard about the news and tried to take the "opportunity" to import a large amount before the adjustment.