

China to ban all logging of forests in distinctly green new five-year plan

Keira Lu Huang (Keira.huang@scmp.com) | Wednesday, 04 November, 2015

The Communist Party has vowed to completely ban logging in natural forests for commercial purposes in the next five years. In March, authorities announced plans to outlaw commercial logging in certain key zones around the country after the ban was piloted in Heilongjiang province last April.

The 13th five-year plan will now extend the ban nationwide, according to a communiqué on the party's recent policymaking session in Beijing was released by Xinhua yesterday afternoon.

China's new five-year plan aims to make the nation faster, better and stronger

Meanwhile, the "strictest water resource management system" to control water usage and prevent pollution was also written into the plan, Xinhua reported. Nationwide monitoring of groundwater will be established in the next five years, including the "comprehensive governance of over-pumping of groundwater" and the introduction of more water recycling schemes.

The price of water will be adjusted as well to encourage residents to conserve water. Beijing will introduce real-time environmental monitoring, and make certain data available for public scrutiny.

To avoid interference by local governments - many of which have conflicting interests - authorities hope to build a "cross-regional and vertically reported law enforcement system" to control pollution. Over the next five years, "green" would be a key governing concept across the country, Xu Shaoshi, head of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), said yesterday.

Analysts said the move signalled the urgency the government now attached to environmental improvement and protection, and would help kill the myth that they pose obstacles to economic development.

"You can see now that environmental protection can exist alongside economic growth to create financial opportunities and help transform traditional industries," said Ma Jun, founder of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs.

Source: <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/1875479/china-ban-all-logging-forests-distinctly-green-new-five>