

GENERVISION CAPE



FEATURED ARTICLES

- 1** Taxing the hidden culprit of obesity
- 2** United Nations E-Government Survey 2020
- 3** UAE's active exploration of sustainability
- 4** Poverty Alleviation: China's Experience and Contribution
- 5** 3 ways Singapore's urban farms are improving food security
- 6** Quarterly Original Article – Seven Decades of Mutual Aid and Support

WORLD HEALTH DAY 2021: BUILDING A FAIRER, HEALTHIER WORLD

As COVID-19 has highlighted, some people are able to live healthier lives and have better access to health services than others - entirely due to the conditions in which they are born, grow, live, work and age.

Work together: Work hand in hand with affected communities and individuals to address the root causes of inequities and to implement solutions – within and beyond the health sector – to address them. The impact will be greatest when governments and communities work together, in a coordinated approach.

Collect reliable data: Ensure collection and use of timely and reliable health data disaggregated by gender, age, income, education, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant to the national context. Only then is it possible to assess inequities across population subgroups and take actions that have impact.

Tackle inequities: Adopt a whole-of-government approach to tackling the root causes of inequities and increase investment in primary health care. This is key to meeting today's challenges of ensuring Health for All and to building the resilience of tomorrow.

Act beyond borders: Act beyond national borders. For example, only when we can protect, test and treat the whole global population can we end the COVID-19 pandemic. As well as assuring an equitable supply of vaccines, tests and treatments, we must strengthen national and international mechanisms and build community trust and participation into their delivery and uptake to ensure access for all globally.

we agree that health is a right not a privilege

it's time to build a fairer healthier world for everyone everywhere

Taxing the hidden culprit of obesity

Overconsumption of sugar contributes to health issues such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. Increasingly, sugary drink has become a major source of sugar intake in people's diet, especially the popular bubble teas. While WHO suggests that adults should consume no more than 12 teaspoons of table sugar each day, sipping a 500ml full-sugar bubble milk tea can exceed that by as much as 1.7 times.



To discourage people from over-consuming sugar, many governments around the world have introduced a sugar tax on sweetened beverages. For example, research shows that South Africa's tax on sugar-sweetened beverages has resulted in large reductions in the purchase of such beverages, which can lead to positive public health gains.

However, when introducing a levy that targets the consumption of unhealthy foods, policy-makers should also consider the access to healthy foods by consumers from different socio-economic backgrounds. For example, rural migrants in the city across Asia may only be able to access high-calorie but nutrient-poor foods due to time and financial constraints. Therefore, such policy should be coupled with other measures that increase the accessibility and affordability of a healthy diet for everyone.

UN: the Asia Pacific must accelerate progress "in any area" to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

The Asia-Pacific region must accelerate progress in any area to achieve the 2030 Agenda and immediately reverse its regression on many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), according to the Progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific 2021 released by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

The report alarmingly points out that the Asia Pacific region is regressing in achieving climate action (Goal 13) and underwater life (Goal 14). The Asia-Pacific region accounts for more than half of global greenhouse gas emissions and the adverse impacts of natural disasters on people and economies are increasing every year. The report recommends that efforts must be focused on more equitable and greener growth as we seek a way out of the new crown pandemic.

United Nations E-Government Survey 2020

The survey points out the inseparable relations between digital government and sustainable development. According to the survey:

- Many more countries and municipalities are pursuing digital government strategies. The global average EGDI value increasing from 0.55 in 2018 to 0.60 in 2020.
- All regions are making progress in e-government development, as evidenced by their higher average EGDI values.
- Attention has been focused primarily on digital government transformation at the national level. Local e-government merits attention as well.
- The countries at the most advanced levels of e-government development have assigned priority to develop capacities and mindsets that fully support an integrated, whole-of-government approach to digital government transformation.

The way forward Digital government is not an end. It is a means to improving public service delivery, increasing people's engagement, enhancing transparency, accountability and inclusion, and ultimately making life better for all.

The UAE's active exploration of sustainability

In the UAE Vision 2021 National Agenda, the UAE Government has set out the goal of diversifying energy sources and reducing the use of fossil fuels. "The UAE Energy Strategy 2050 further states that by 2050, the share of clean energy in the UAE's energy mix will increase from the current 25% to 50%, carbon emissions from power generation will be reduced by 70%, energy efficiency will be increased by 40%, and the UAE will save approximately 700 billion AED (1 MOP = 0.46 AED).

While strolling through the intertwined roots of a dense forest and wandering the depths of the ocean, one is greeted by piles of plastic bottles, floating rubbish bags and discarded electronic equipment...this is the first themed venue of Dubai World Expo 2020 (postponed to this year), which recently opened to the public. "The Terra Sustainability Pavilion, which means 'earth' in Latin, is an immersive experience that illustrates to visitors the importance of living in harmony with nature and serves as a reminder to actively explore sustainability.

Poverty Alleviation: China's Experience and Contribution

The State Council Information Office of China released the white paper “China's Practice in Human Poverty Reduction”. In addition to the Preface and Conclusion, the white paper includes five parts.

According to the white paper, China is home to nearly one fifth of the world's population. Its complete eradication of extreme poverty – the first target of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – 10 years ahead of schedule, is a milestone in the history of the Chinese nation and the history of humankind, making an important contribution to the cause of global poverty alleviation.

China's experience in poverty alleviation indicates that courage, vision, sense of responsibility, and the eagerness to take on challenges are the most essential. With strong will and determination, as well as practical action, one can make steady progress towards overcoming poverty and realizing common prosperity.



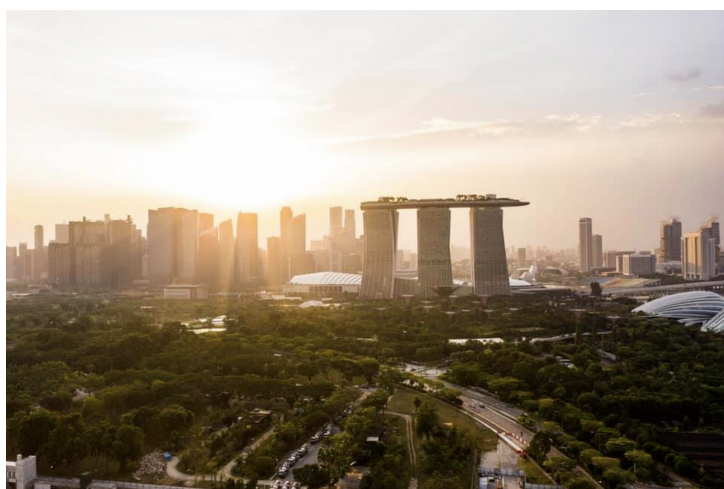
Photo: ©News.cn

3 ways Singapore's urban farms are improving food security

As a small city-state with a large population, Singapore lacks natural resources and is highly dependent on imported food. In recent years, Singapore has been actively developing renovating urban agriculture.

Singapore is aiming to produce 30% of its own food by 2030, a number that is currently closer to 10%. To achieve this, emphasis has been put on citizens to help grow what they can. Growing food in urban farms on carpark rooftops to reused outdoor spaces and retrofitted building interiors is also key to the '30 by 30' goal.

The plan requires everyone in the city to grow what they can, and government funding will go to those who can use the technology to produce more. The following are the three main ways in which urban agriculture is being developed in Singapore:



1. Urban farms using hydroponics on parking structure roofs

Citiponics is one of Singapore's first rooftop farms. The hydroponic farm is on top of a carpark, a structure that services almost every neighborhood in Singapore.

2. Installing urban farms into existing buildings

Sustenir Agriculture has created an indoor vertical farm that can retrofit into existing buildings (including office buildings). The company grows foods that can't be produced locally, displacing imports and cutting carbon emissions.

3. Building a better greenhouse for urban farms in tropical climates

Natsuki's Garden is a greenhouse in the center of the city, occupying reused space in a former schoolyard. The greenhouse is custom designed for the tropical climate to allow for better air circulation. Yielding 60-80 kg of food per square meter, the greenhouse caters to a small local market.

Quarterly Original Article — Seven Decades of Mutual Aid and Support

On April 26, 2021, the China International Development Cooperation Agency hosted the opening ceremony of the Exhibition of Achievements on China International Development Cooperation in Beijing. The exhibition showcased, through photos, the historical engagement and scale of China's foreign aid and international development cooperation in various parts of the world since 1950. An online version of the exhibition is also already available on the official website of China International Development Cooperation Agency. To our friends who are interested in Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), international cooperation and multilateralism, this exhibition is worth a digital walk-through. Let us experience the way our country has understood and interpreted the term 'mutual aid and support' throughout the past 70 years.

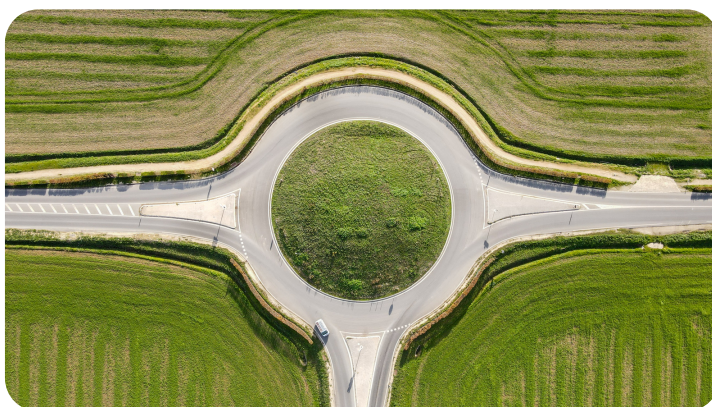
Although it is only in the recent years that mainland citizens have grown to be aware of topics on development aid or cooperation, China has already engaged itself in this field as early as 70 years ago. From offering support to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to building the TAZARA Railway, to proactively participating in peacekeeping missions, and providing humanitarian assistance, China has treaded this path in silence for a very long period. By helping numerous developing countries in various infrastructure construction projects, and implementing projects ranging from educational and gender equality to agricultural technology transfer and digital communications, China has been going into places that are unimaginable to many. Informed by its own development trajectory, China has gradually established an approach that follows the philosophy 'to teach someone how to fish is better than to just give him a fish'. Unlike the conventional ways of Western development aid, Chinese international development cooperation does not hope to merely 'transfuse blood' to developing countries but hopes to help them to 'generate blood'. Through plenty of trade cooperation and technology transfer, China aspires to enable these countries to have better autonomy over their development and improve the sustainability of such development.



Quarterly Original Article — Seven Decades of Mutual Aid and Support

Transitioning from an aid recipient to a country providing foreign aid, China has simultaneously experienced viewing development in two perspectives. While observing and learning the functioning of the mature system of development aid from the West, the country has also formed a deep understanding of the challenges and pain points from its experience in development. As a result, in the process of implementing development cooperation, China always relates to some of the hardships of developing countries, provides fair treatment and shares its experience with generosity at a deeper level. Of course, under these two-way engagement and cooperation, there are different types of challenges, such as cultural differences, poor quality projects that are not meeting the local needs, information asymmetry, the intricate balance between green growth and development. Yet, these stories show that exchanges between different cultures and systems deepen over time, and the necessity of a country's improved adaptability and continuous learning.

In the eyes of the writer, action is the best language. In various corners of the world, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, the writer is fortunate to have experienced and witnessed how different Chinese projects have weaved their ways through this



vast continent and integrated into local living. From hearing people from Mozambique passionately awaiting the completion of the Chinese-built Maputo-Katembe Bridge to gearing up to save money and buy a house on the opposite coast, to appreciating the steady and tranquil drive along the highway constructed by Chinese workers that heads towards South Africa, the writer saw the large-scale dormitories inhabited by Chinese construction workers. Standing inside the advanced, clean and spacious Chinese-built airport in Zimbabwe's Victoria Falls City, the writer could feel how much hope these simple concretes and rebars have brought to the local community. The scale of Chinese development cooperation projects is massive – they include roadworks, bridges, hydropower stations, airports. Also, the scale of the projects could be as small as schools, hospitals, stadiums, libraries, technology training centers, wells.

Quarterly Original Article — Seven Decades of Mutual Aid and Support

Behind these seemingly tough and cold terms, there are hopes for economic development, poverty eradication, betterment of health, access to water and electricity, and improved living from citizens from one region to another. Regardless of what the purpose for development cooperation is, China has, in the past few decades, taken countless risks and employed solid actions turning a lot of hope into reality, instead of not doing anything. Many people have forgotten to recognize this, and there are more people not aware of these developments. However, the outcomes of these actions, without exception, speak a language that everyone can understand – we have been here, we have given.

Witnessing many Chinese workers living and working in an extremely difficult environment, eating simple self-grown meals, and risking malicious mosquito bites and contracting typhoid fever and cholera, only then did I understand the meaning of ‘mutual aid and support’. Seeing the excitement of children from Mozambique when they looked at the newly arrived StarTimes Cable TV, and the joy of Tanzanian women who had been struggling with cataracts for many years and subsequently regained their vision under the treatment of the Chinese medical team, only then did I understand the value of ‘mutual aid and support’. There are numerous challenges awaiting humans to address in a world under and after the pandemic. Yet, keeping such original intention for providing mutual aid and support will lead humans to overcome one hurdle after another.