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Establecerán nuevos acuerdos de intercambio sobre las mejores prácticas ambientales a través del Servicio Geológico minero de ambos países, según se estableció en una reunión realizada en Beijing.

Agencia Télam - 20/9/2016

”Esta tarde, a las 17, hora de China nos recibió todo el staff del Servicio Geológico Chino, una de las más poderosas entidades sectoriales a nivel mundial, y fue una oportunidad única de poder hablar con su presidente y todos sus directores”, informó a Télam Julio César Ríos Gómez, titular del Servicio Geológico Minero Argentino (Segemar).

”Como conclusiones de este encuentro hay que remarcar que se continuará con el convenio (bilateral), se incorporarán nuevas líneas de trabajo y cooperación, y se trabajará en conjunto para implementar rápidamente estas nuevas líneas de trabajo. Nada se hará si no está bien especificado con un programa de actividades, fechas y los aportes que hará cada instituto”, explicó Ríos Gómez desde Beijing.

”Pero también hoy mismo hay una comisión del Servicio Geológico Chino trabajando con personal del Segemar en la provincia de Salta, en Argentina”, añadió el funcionario.

En esta semana, se encuentra en China una misión oficial de la Secretaría de Minería, encabezada por el Subsecretario de Desarrollo Minero, Mario Capello.

El equipo técnico minero argentino ya participó en Beijing del Seminario de Negocios y Oportunidades de Inversión, donde presentaron, junto al embajador Diego Guelar, más de 30 proyectos que reflejan a la Argentina como un destino con gran potencial para inversiones mineras sustentables.

Los funcionarios participaron del seminario y de un road show del que participaron 55 empresas interesadas en potenciales inversiones en la minería argentina.

El Segemar ya realizó visitas similares a los organismos equivalentes de Canadá y Estados Unidos, y luego de estas visitas para establecer acuerdos básicos, se trabaja a través de la Cancillería argentina para actualizar la información sobre las mejores prácticas de la minería mundial.

También integra estas misiones técnicas el Instituto de Tecnología Minera (Intemin), que junto al Segemar buscan identificar las mejores prácticas ambientales mineras.

Valoran la potencialidad de China como mercado importador de carnes

Las posibilidades de exportación de carne vacuna argentina a China “son una realidad y, que ocupen el primer lugar, pese al poco volumen que se envía, es un gran logro, porque tenemos falta de competitividad con países como Uruguay o Brasil, que entran con mejores precios”, afirmó el consejero por CONINAGRO en el Instituto de Promoción de la Carne Vacuna Argentina (IPCVA), Gonzalo Álvarez Maldonado, quien viajó invitado por la Asociación de la Carne de China (CMA) y la secretaria Internacional de la Carne (IMS) a la 14th China International Meat Industry Exhibition (CIMIE 2016), que se llevó a cabo en Beijing.

Urgente 24 - 05/10/2016

PARANÁ. Argentina participó en la 14th China International Meat Industry Exhibition (CIMIE 2016) y allí estuvo el entrerriano Gonzalo Álvarez Maldonado, consejero de CONINAGRO, quien fue acompañado por el jefe de Promoción Externa del Instituto de Promoción de la Carne Vacuna (IPCVA), Sergio Rey; con quién realizó una presentación sobre la situación de la industria de la carne vacuna en la Argentina en la Conferencia mundial del desarrollo de la industria de la carne que se realizó el 26 de septiembre en Beijing.

En diálogo con la Agencia AIM Digital, Álvarez Maldonado explicó que participó de una de las ferias más importantes de China, “donde tuvimos la oportunidad ante los importadores chinos de resaltar lo que es la carne argentina, y las posibilidades de ésta para ese mercado”.

El antecedente

Cuando Álvarez Maldonado fue presidente del Ipcva, el organismo había realizado importantes avances en la posibilidad de abrir un mercado como China. “En 2012 se realizó la apertura del mercado argentino para la carne congelada. En 2014, en la feria Sial China que se llevó a cabo en la ciudad de Shanghai, el Ipcva estuvo acompañado por 12 empresas exportadoras cuyos referentes remarcaron el creciente interés por parte de los importadores asiáticos, con un promedio de 35 contactos comerciales por día, muchos de ellos potenciales clientes y también clientes activos”.

El entrerriano recordó que durante esa feria hubo un sostenido interés por la carne argentina dado que Australia, el principal proveedor de ese país con un 55 por ciento del negocio (seguido

por Nueva Zelanda y Uruguay), estaba con problemas de exportación hacia ese destino por la detección de hormonas en los controles sanitarios.

Aquí y ahora

“A partir de ahí empezamos a participar de ferias en el país asiático junto con varias empresas y fundamentalmente, buscamos la apertura para las carnes enfriadas (Premium), como también para menudencia. En ese aspecto está el reconocimiento, pero todavía no está abierto para carnes congeladas”.

Sin embargo, aclaró que en un futuro cercano se realizará la apertura. “Mientras estábamos en el país asiático Argentina fue habilitada por el servicio sanitario chino para exportar carne a ese país. Así que las posibilidades de exportación de carnes argentinas son hoy ya una realidad y que en las exportaciones argentinas a China ocupen el primer lugar después Australia, es una excelente noticia”.

Que no haya promesas incumplidas

Álvarez Maldonado pidió al gobierno nacional que “no ocurra como en la agricultura, y que no haya promesas incumplidas para que el mercado de las carnes pueda tener un nivel competitivo y poder competir con los países hermanos del Uruguay y Brasil pero también con el mercado australiano. En resumen, reclamamos que haya políticas activas para el sector ganadero, porque el país necesita exportar para traer las divisas que necesita”.

El ganadero recordó que el año pasado Argentina exportó un poco más de 200.000 toneladas de carne, pero anheló que este “año podamos cumplir y aumentar este volumen. Hay que tener en cuenta que el mercado chino tiene casi 1.300 millones de habitantes, que están cambiando sus hábitos alimenticios, como consecuencia de un mayor poder adquisitivo. La carne es un alimento valorado, y en la alimentación para el asiático está siendo más que bienvenida”.

El creciente apetito de China promueve las exportaciones latinoamericanas de carne

Debido a la creciente demanda, China se convirtió en un mercado fundamental para las exportaciones de carne latinoamericanas, especialmente para Brasil y Argentina.

[China's growing appetite boosts Latin America's meat exports](#)

The Financial Express – 30/9/2016

China's growing appetite for beef and pork has boosted meat exports in Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, with more potential to be tapped in the Chinese market, reports Xinhua.

China, one of the main markets for Brazilian beef, bought 906 million US dollars' worth of Brazilian beef from June 2015 to January 2016, or 28 per cent of the sector's total revenue, said a report by Brazil's Ministry of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade earlier this year.

Despite China's rising demand for beef, there is still a great potential for growth in the Chinese market, with only 6 kg of beef bought per capita each year at present, compared with 35-40 kg in Brazil and around 60 kg in Argentina.

China imposed a three-year embargo on Brazilian beef imports in May last year following an atypical epidemic of mad cow disease in 2012. The embargo was then lifted after Brazil imposed stricter controls.

In the past two years, Brazil has become China's main source of beef and pork.

Mexico's first ever shipment of pork to China marked a milestone in trade, said Mexican industry officials.

China's meat market is a tough one to break into, given the strict sanitary requirements, but once the market has been cracked open, it promises to provide Mexican meat industry with brisk business, they said.

Claudio Freixes Catalan, the CEO of a leading pork and meat producer in Mexico named Keken, said his company secured the sale of 22 tons of pork to China following seven years of negotiations, and the shipment sailed in July.

"The Chinese market is very selective, and it doesn't want meat from countries that have had any kind of sanitary problem," he told Xinhua, adding that "Mexico is free of any kind of virus related to swine."

To Mexican Agriculture Minister Jose Calzada Roviroso, exporting meat to China reflects Mexico's progress in this sector.

Throughout history, "it is the first time Mexico shipped pork to China," he said, describing the day the shipment went out as "special."

Mexico also exports avocado, berries, tequila, and other products to China, but opening up China's market to Mexican pork is expected to boost trade significantly, he said.

China will surely keep purchasing Mexican pork in the future, as "we will continue to use specific lines of production" that meet the country's sanitary standards, he said.

In the next five years, Keken expects to see 350 million US dollars in investment, which it will largely earmark to promote its exports, said the CEO.

China is also Argentina's biggest beef market, importing more than 40,000 tons in 2015, or 36 per cent of Argentina's annual beef exports.

The two countries reached a "landmark beef deal" in July that will secure Argentina's beef exports to China in the future, said an industrial trade website Global Meat News.

Apostando a la granja: la modernización del sector agrícola de China

El gobierno chino invierte para mejorar la productividad del sector agrícola, considerado como estratégico y también garantizar la seguridad alimentaria.

[Betting the Farm: Modernizing China's Agriculture Sector](#)

By Winnie Jin

China Briefing - 30/9/2016

China continues to build on what it hopes will be the path to a more efficient, modern agricultural industry. On September 18, the Chinese government announced plans to invest RMB three trillion into modernizing the country's agriculture by the year 2020. A loan from the state-owned policy lender Agricultural Development Bank of China will be used to develop the industry, protect national food security, and support overseas business, as well as to increase efficiency with modern equipment and improve incomes in rural areas.

China's Agricultural Industry

The push for agricultural modernization in China is not a new phenomenon. The CPC Central Committee and State Council have made agriculture the main focus of the annual Number One Central Document for thirteen consecutive years. A proposal for the "professionalization and

modernization” of China’s agriculture industry was also a key focal point of China’s 13th Five Year Plan, released earlier this year.

While urbanization continues to rise, 45 percent of China’s population still depends on agriculture as their primary source of income. Farmers are given collective land ownership rights by the state, resulting in fragmented land plots that make large-scale agribusiness difficult to execute without land transfers. Additionally, China suffers from an arable land shortage, with only seven percent of the world’s arable land but nearly 20 percent of the world’s population. The concern over national food security arises from the problem of whether to rely on global markets for staple items or to keep production domestic, which requires heavy subsidization. By 2011, China had already become the world’s largest importer of agricultural products, and today consumer demand continues to outpace domestic supply.

In response to these pressures on the industry, China has promised to shape policy and funnel resources toward agricultural modernization. By 2020, the government is aiming to create over 53 million hectares of farmland and invest in technology and training for farmers. The rural land transfer process has also been accelerated, and large-scale landholders are currently granted higher subsidies. Because it is obvious that the global market is integral to meeting the country’s agricultural demand, the government is also directing some attention overseas. On September 20, the Ministry of Agriculture signed a memorandum of understanding with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, solidifying their strategy of increasing overseas agricultural investment and trade.

Implications for Foreign Investors

Agriculture is designated as a strategic industry in China and certain sectors are thus protected from foreign investment. In particular, foreign investment in businesses such as genetically modified crop seeds is prohibited or restricted.

However, opportunities are still abundant in equipment or permitted agricultural products. Along with other industrializing nations, China will account for two-thirds of the global market for new agricultural machinery over the next three years. With the government’s support, farmers are experimenting with technology, using drones to distribute pesticides and tractors to harvest crops.

While some agricultural businesses have been heavily restricted for foreign investment, other activities such as coffee cultivation and fertilizer production are encouraged. Consumer preferences for foreign and imported products also remain strong. For foreign investors, China’s long-term trend of subsidizing the development and modernization of its agricultural industry promises fresh opportunities in the coming years.

El mercado de productos orgánicos de China, rodeado de obstáculos, está todavía despegando

La demanda de productos orgánicos crece con el incremento de los ingresos y la desconfianza de los consumidores sobre los productos industrializados. Pero las regulaciones y los altos precios dificultan la expansión.

[China's Organics Market, Beset by Obstacles, Is Still Taking Off](#)

Chinese people want safe, scandal-free food. Easier said than done.

By Michelle Winglee

Foreign Policy – 21/9/2016

Wan Li, a young Beijing professional in her late 20's, is at her desk when her cell phone rings. She picks up. "North entrance?" She confirms. "I'll be right out." An electric delivery scooter has just pulled up to Wan's office with her order of tomatoes and Chinese spinach from Emerald Bay Farm, an eight-acre farm located in the northeast outskirts of Beijing. Though not organically certified, Emerald Bay grows vegetables without the use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides, on land not previously used for industrial purposes, and draws groundwater from the nearby Shunyi mountain range.

With a bag of fresh produce in hand, Wan returns to the office with a smile, already eager for the evening's meal. "You have to do what you can in this environment," she says, gesturing out the window to a gray sky on a day when pollution has reached "unhealthy" levels according to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing's Air Quality Index. "No one cares about their health until the moment that they are in crisis, and then it's too late," she said. Though the higher prices from Emerald Bay are a deterrence, Wan, like other Chinese 20-somethings and young family households in China's major cities, has decided the money is worth the promise of better food quality.

It's no surprise that the demand for safer food, which includes organics, has taken off in China. The country's rapid economic growth over the past 30 years has devastated its environment. A five-year study conducted by China's environmental ministry in 2014 showed 20 percent of the country's farmland to be hazardously polluted. Major scandals including high levels of heavy metal cadmium in rice, exploding watermelons pumped with growth hormones, and the use of steroid clenbuterol (or "lean meat powder") to induce muscle growth of pigs have made food

safety a priority for many Chinese. A 2016 study by consultancy McKinsey showed that 72 percent of Chinese consumers worry that the food they eat is harmful to their health. One research outfit says the organics market in China has grown 30-fold over the past decade.

“I think the whole industry and community [around organics] is growing,” said Chang Tianle, who runs the Beijing Farmers Market (BFM), originally founded by a group of expat artists in 2010 and run by a handful of volunteers. In her previous work with the Minnesota-based Institute of Agricultural Trade Policy, Chang traveled around China to support sustainable family farms. After attending BFM’s second meeting, she saw the potential for building trust between farmers and customers – unlike China’s traditional urban wet markets, which usually consist of wholesale vendors, not farmers. Chang jumped in to help with BFM outreach on Chinese social media, bringing in a surge of local interest. The farmer’s market now has a team of 19 employees that run the weekly market, two community centers that sell produce and conduct consumer education events, a network of 30,000 WeChat followers, and partnerships with sustainable farms across China. Chang estimates that there are now over 100 farms around Beijing alone following organic practices, even if they’re not certified.

Certification has been a tricky issue in the organic food market, and China’s own regulatory framework isn’t helping. On paper, China has some of the most stringent standards for organic food in the world, but consumers doubt whether they can trust food regulators, and authorities’ ability to enforce the regulations is anyway questionable. Third-party labeling suffers a credibility deficit, as the dozen-plus organizations in China authorized to administer organic labeling have been accused of uneven oversight, handing out certifications to farms that can simply pay the fee, and informing farms of audits in advance.

The confusion surrounding certification hasn’t made it easier for consumers to distinguish what is and is not, in fact, organic. Yang Xu, a biogas consultant in his early 30s, said that he was not happy when his girlfriend came through the door with a bag of groceries marked “organic.” “I don’t think it’s worth it,” he said. “I don’t trust that it’s organic.” Chang worries that with all the products claiming to be organic, consumers are confused about the difference. “I met one woman who said ‘if it’s wrapped in plastic, I think it’s organic,’” Chang said.

The food scandals that have plagued China have taught consumers to be skeptical. “A lot of people worry that organic is so expensive, and they don’t know if it’s real,” said Zhang Xiaoji, a parent in Chengdu whose child attends a local private school. Zhang began spending more for higher quality produce when his daughter, now eight, was born. Before subscribing to Sunshine Earth Farm’s seasonal farm share program, Zhang made the 30-mile drive west of town to visit the organic market himself. Now, in addition to picking up his box of produce from the farm, Zhang also rents a plot to garden on the weekends with his daughter. “If I’ve met the farmer and I understand the farm, I’m willing to spend more money,” said Zhang.

In one hopeful development, social media – particularly mobile messaging platform WeChat – both spares consumers a trip to the supermarket, and has helped make direct farm-to-consumer communication easier. Farmers selling produce at BFM Beijing’s farmers market make sure that customers can easily scan their farm’s QR code, allowing customers to place orders remotely at any time. One farmer said 70 to 80 percent of his sales came through Wechat and Taobao, another Chinese e-commerce website. Other farms like Emerald Bay rely entirely on WeChat.

Small organic farms may be best positioned to solve the trust issue surrounding organics, but they struggle to be profitable. Wang Min, 35, who left an investment job to start an eco-friendly farm in 2012, has seen several young farmers fail due to high capital costs and low scalability. Emerald Bay Farm, started in 2009 by a former government worker, has yet to break even, although its WeChat customer base is now 300 and growing. Chang acknowledges slim profit margins for BFM farmers, which often get reinvested back into their respective farms.

Yet the price of organic food still ranges from three to five times that of conventional produce, and in some cases 10 times more, according to a February 2013 report by respected newsmagazine Caixin. Meanwhile, per capita disposable income even in Beijing, one of the wealthiest cities in China, was only \$7,200 in 2015. Goldman Sachs estimates that China’s rural workers earn about \$2,000 a year. For many, that means organic food is still either unaffordable, or an indulgence. “So many things can kill you: cigars, alcohol, the air you breathe,” said Yang, the consultant, gesturing outside a window to grey skies. “Why would you care about vegetables?”

¿China quiere un Orden Internacional “Justo y Equitativo”

China ya no es sólo una potencia asiática sino global. Insiste sobre reformas en las instituciones internacionales y se mueve desde el “tercerismo” hacia una política multilateral que amenaza la hegemonía de Estados Unidos.

[¿Does China Really Wants a ‘Just and Fair’ International Order?](#)

By Shaheli Das*

The Diplomat – 04/10/2016

In the past month, there has been much discussion about whether Beijing was able to shape global governance at the recently held G20 summit in Hangzhou, China. Plus, global governance reforms will remain a key issue of deliberation at the BRICS summit scheduled to be held

in Goa, India in October 2016. Why is the issue of global governance reforms of key interest to China and how does Beijing seek to achieve its objective?

Today China is no longer merely an Asian power; it is clearly a global power to reckon with. In fact, every major international issue at present calls for China's involvement. Thus its great-power status grants China a greater share in global agenda setting. In various multilateral forums, China has insisted upon global governance reforms. Such reforms primarily refer to the restructuring of international institutions such as the Bretton Woods bodies (including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). In its bid to bring about such reforms, of late China has embarked upon its own process of global institution building. A case in point is the institution of a Silk Road Fund, which seeks to enhance connectivity and trade within the framework of the 21st century Maritime Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative; the BRICS-led New Development Bank; and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

China asserts that its chief demand with reference to reforming the UNSC and the Bretton Woods institutions is to grant a greater voice to developing countries in global agenda setting. As a permanent member of the UNSC, China demands reasonable reforms in the body, in terms of addressing under-representation of developing nations. However, China has contradicted its position of offering unrelenting support to developing nations by displaying an ambivalent response to the appeal of the G4 nations (India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan) to join the UNSC as permanent members. This raises questions about the fairness of the new international order that China seeks to build, even though rhetorically Beijing frames its reforms as a question of justice.

With regard to reforms in the Bretton Woods institutions, China acts as a revisionist power. Beijing has principally utilized its seat at International Monetary Fund to call for reforms to its board and push to bring a greater number of emerging market economies to the table. Most importantly, China's stance on governance reforms comprises of justifying the need to diversify the candidate pool used to elect the IMF managing director, a position historically held only by Europeans.

As this Asian giant refurbishes its effort to construct a more "just and fair" world order, the country's activities have earned increased speculation from the West. The West, led by the United States, views the Chinese actions as an endeavor to thwart the U.S.-led world order. However despite the United States' portrayal of the China-led global institutions as key contenders to their Western counterpart, China has always maintained that such institutions are meant to complement (and not supplement) the existing systems. Moreover, Chinese leaders have emphasized that their activities are a demonstration of words being matched with deeds.

China seeks to accomplish its objective of bringing about global governance reforms through a trust-building process. Its strategy is to build bilateral and multilateral ties with the developing

world as well as repeatedly using rhetorical terms such as “win-win” relationship, South-South cooperation, and “strategic partnership” diplomacy to win their trust. Although Beijing projects itself as the leader of the Third World, striving for a greater voice for the developing nations in U.S.-led global institutions, the country’s real motive is to shore up its own international stature by generating a consensus in the global South.

To this end, China uses the instrument of development finance through institutions such as the AIIB and the NDB to contest U.S. supremacy. The New Development Bank, the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, and South-South Cooperation fund can offer development finance worth \$50 billion, \$100 billion, and \$20 million respectively. Most developing nations are confronted with the challenge of infrastructure gaps, which stems from impediments in securing long term financing. China has cashed in on this aspect of discontent among developing nations. At the same time, a chief factor driving China’s heavy investment of capital in these institutions is its disappointment with the U.S. refusal to increase China’s voting power in the World Bank and IMF and, most importantly, to increase the country’s economic clout.

China is gradually moving away from its previously held strategy of “thirdworld-ism” toward that of multilateralism, faintly challenging U.S. hegemony. It cannot be denied that given the ongoing power transition, China’s dramatic economic rise and military modernization, the country seeks a superpower status at par with its key adversary – the United States. Thus global governance reforms would mean greater authority for the developing nations and China, as the leader of the Global South, would definitely have a greater voice in global governance and agenda setting as a result. This would in turn lead to the establishment of a new “just and fair” international order that would primarily be dominated by China. Thus China’s move clearly demonstrates an effort to promote the Beijing Consensus in place of the Washington Consensus.

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[China pide solución eficiente y duradera para crisis mundial de refugiados](#)

Xinhua – 06/10/2016

En su más reciente discurso sobre la actual crisis de refugiados, un importante diplomático chino enfatizó que se tiene que dar el mejor uso a los recursos necesarios para incrementar la eficiencia y dijo que es importante apearse a los principios humanitarios y evitar politizar o abusar de los mecanismos de protección de los refugiados.

Ma Zhaoxu, jefe de la misión china en la sede de Naciones Unidas en Ginebra, pronunció el martes un discurso durante el debate general de la 67ª sesión del Comité Ejecutivo del Programa del Alto Comisionado, en el que abordó la postura y opiniones de China sobre el asunto de los refugiados.

”La cuestión de los refugiados constituye una crisis humanitaria que pone a prueba la conciencia de la humanidad y desafía las capacidades de todos los países para proteger a los refugiados”, indicó Ma.

El diplomático chino señaló que los países en desarrollo han recibido a la mayoría de los refugiados, lo que impone una gran presión sobre su desarrollo económico y social.

Ma señaló que en algunos países y regiones, los sentimientos xenófobos contra los refugiados se están incrementando y dijo que la protección de los derechos básicos de los refugiados es precaria.

De acuerdo con el enviado chino, se deben brindar soluciones específicas para abordar tanto los síntomas como las causas de raíz de los problemas, y todos los países deben solucionar las disputas a través del diálogo a fin de reducir el número de refugiados y desplazados por la guerra y la inestabilidad.

El diplomático también dijo que debe haber cooperación internacional para producir un enfoque holístico hacia estos asuntos y para implementar más rápido la Declaración de Nueva York sobre Refugiados y Migrantes y el Marco de Respuesta Integral a los Refugiados.

Se debe permitir a la Oficina del Alto Comisionado de Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados (Acnur) ”desempeñar con eficacia su papel coordinador y se deben formular e implementar soluciones integrales”, señaló Ma.

Ma añadió que como miembro permanente del Consejo de Seguridad y como mayor país en desarrollo, China está comprometida con la defensa de la paz mundial, la promoción del desarrollo común, la búsqueda de soluciones políticas para los asuntos conflictivos y la contribución de su propia aportación para resolver el asunto de los refugiados.

”China está lista para seguir reforzando su cooperación con Acnur y sus esfuerzos con los demás países para promover la protección internacional de los refugiados, a fin de lograr pronto una solución integral y duradera para la cuestión mundial de los refugiados”, concluyó.

China quiere que se hagan más bebés

La política de un solo hijo produjo en China un desequilibrio demográfico con el peligro del decrecimiento de la población. Ahora el gobierno, como los de otros países, promueve que las familias tengan más de un hijo.

[Beijing wants More Baby-Making](#)

But it is too late to reverse the damage of the one-child era?

By Mei Fong*

Foreign Policy - 23/09/2016

Sept. 18, officials in the central Chinese city of Yichang sent an open letter urging Communist Party members to have a second child and help replenish the city's falling birth rates. This follows a nationwide move to a two-child policy in early 2016, prompted by fears the country's shrinking worker base could act as a continuing drag on economic growth.

In short, China's unpopular and controversial system of population control known as "one-child" policy is becoming "have one more child" policy. But the move may be too little and too late for a country that has become synonymous with the most restrictive birth policies in the world.

As a policy matter, China's switch to the beginnings of a pronatalist policy is sensible. As with many other modern societies, family sizes in China have shrunk due to the combined forces of urbanization and female empowerment, which has created more opportunities for women.

Several countries have tried to stem the downturn in their own birth rates by offering financial incentives – cash payments called "baby bonuses," as well as tax breaks. Others have been more blatant in telling their citizens to, quite simply, do it for their country. Italy just launched its first annual "Fertility Day," a much criticized campaign that follows on the heels of similar movements in Denmark, South Korea, and Turkey. In 2010, South Korea's Ministry of Health and Welfare designated days when it turned off office lights early as "family days" in hopes its workers would go home and make babies.

What sets China apart, of course, is that decades ago the country launched, and then persisted in, the world's longest-running anti-natal campaign. In the 1970s, the world was awash in fears

that population growth would far outstrip the planet's resources, prompting books such as *The Limits to Growth*, commissioned by the Club of Rome, and Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*. In 1980, still in that milieu, China introduced harsh regulations that became known as the one-child policy and ended up putting about one-third of Chinese households – 90 percent in cities – under a one-child limit. Now, that vision seems outdated, and China recognizes it needs the birth of new workers to sustain growth. But the course of population decline, once set, is hard to reverse.

The Yichang open letter makes explicit the changes authorities have quietly been making to address China's demographic decline. Beijing has been sending messages for some time now that Chinese women should reproduce more, using propaganda to stigmatize college-educated women who delay marriage as unappetizing “leftovers,” or *sheng nu*. A number of government-backed adult education seminars, called Confucian workshops, have sprung up across the country promoting “traditional” values, such as deference to men; Ding Xuan, a popular speaker, tells attendees at these workshops that strong women run the risk of cancer melting off “unwomanly” parts. Sexist movements aimed at shaming women into marriage are not new – witness Japanese media's labeling of single women as “parasites” and insistence that wedding cake is “bad after 25.” But no state power has at its disposal as formidable an apparatus to control, disseminate, and accentuate its messages as China.

Grandparents are another weapon in China's arsenal. The country's so-called Little Emperor generation – spoiled only children being another side effect of the one-child policy – has elevated helicopter parenting to stratospheric heights. Parents in China meddle in their children's decisions on where to work and whom to marry to a degree unheard of in the West. With only one offspring to minister to the needs of parents and grandparents – a phenomenon known in China as 4-2-1 – anxiety over the fragility of the urban Chinese family structure is high. With retirement ages among the earliest in the world (as early as 45 for some women), China's seniors will at least have a lot of time to chivy their offspring into generating yet more offspring.

Such measures may not be enough to address the country's dwindling numbers. For the past 20 years, China has seen birthrates below replacement level. If the trend continues, in one of the most dire estimates, China's population could eventually decline close to its 1950 levels of about 500 million – a startling reversal for the world's most populous nation.

Because it has sharply limited family size, China now faces a declining population at a far earlier stage of its economic growth than most European countries, which took about 50 years – twice as long as China – to arrive at a stage where their retirees outweigh their worker base. A declining, aging population is a first-world problem, but China hasn't yet achieved first-world prosperity: It may be the world's second-largest economy by size, but its per capita GDP is just one-sixth of South Korea's and one-ninth of the United States'. Scandinavian countries have had the most (albeit limited) success bringing birthrates up by spending heavily on measures

like generous parental leave and subsidized education. Political will aside, Beijing simply doesn't have that kind of money.

China also has a distorted gender mix, another legacy of its planned birth policies. By limiting family size in a culture that has historically venerated sons, the one-child policy has caused, by some estimates, more than 60 million "missing" girls in China – those daughters who were never born, or were killed, or were given away. That means there are fewer women to have the babies Beijing suddenly wants.

In addition, Beijing must now fight to dislodge the effects of 30-plus years of propaganda pushing the one-child family as ideal. "For years, the government has been educating its people that birth planning is the best family style," a young Chinese friend told me. "It means wealth, happiness, and a less crowded society. For me, brought up in a one-child family, it seems natural to bear only one child."

If it's somehow possible to nag people into having more children, then China will have an edge. But it's unlikely that the Chinese Communist Party can employ the same kind of abusive tactics it used to reduce the population in order to accomplish the reverse. It's far simpler to drag someone in for an abortion than to force someone to reproduce and rear children. Beijing may be taking a new tack in its birth policies, but the shadow of coercion still lingers.

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