



THE SERIES OF "CHINA'S MARITIME DEVELOPMENT"

CHINA'S MARINE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT



Authors: Liu Yan, Qiu Jun, Zheng Miao Zhuang, Zhu Xuan



China Intercontinental Press



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Preface

On April 12th, 1961, the world's first manned spacecraft "Oriental" was launched in the Soviet Union. Gagarin described in his historic space flight the scene that human beings have never seen, "The horizon presents an exceptionally beautiful view. A light blue halo encircles the Earth and is mingled with the black sky. In the sky, bright stars are shining with well-defined boundaries." After the 108-minute epochal flight which circled the Earth once, Gagarin returned to Earth.

In December 1968, the U.S. spacecraft "Apollo 8" started its trip to the Moon. Bill Anders, astronaut in the spacecraft, captured the most classic picture in the American aerospace history—the blue Earth rises up from the horizon of the gray moon. This marked the first time for human beings to see the panorama of the Earth.

Anousheh Ansari, an American businesswoman and also the world's first female space tourist, recalled, "The sheer beauty of it (the Earth) just brought tears to my eyes."

How we see the world determines how we treat the world. And how we see the world in turn determines how we treat the oceans.

The blue part of the Earth that we see from space is the ocean, which accounts for 71% of the total area (360 million square kilometers) of the Earth's surface. The oceans contain over 1.35 billion cubic kilometers of water, accounting for about 97% of the total amount of water on Earth. So far, humans have explored only 5% of the seabed, leaving the remaining 95% of the seabed unknown to the public. As the land resources for human survival become increasingly scarce, the oceans with relatively infinite resources have long been the hope for future survival of humanity.

However, when we see the Earth and the oceans from the perspective of the whole universe, and see the oceans from the perspective of human existence, we will find that the oceans have long been scarce and fragile resources for human beings.

Height from which people see things determines their view, and their vision determines their attitude.

In 1990, the 45th UN General Assembly rendered a decision, urging all countries to take marine development and use as a national development strategy. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development passed the Agenda 21 which pointed out: Oceans are a fundamental part of the world's life support system, and also a valuable asset to help achieve sustainable development. On November 16th, 1994, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) came into effect, marking the establishment of a modern system of international maritime laws, and laying a legal foundation for the sustainable development of global marine resources and environments.

With development of human beings and advance of the world, China, as a developing country, must have a new vision and attitude towards the oceans and their development, while making leaps and bounds in its economic and social development.

With a coastline stretching about 18,000 kilometers long, mainland China has about 7,300 islands, each covering an area of more than 500 square meters, and governs a sea area of about 3 million square kilometers. China seas cover three climatic zones of warm temperate zone, subtropical zone and subtropical zone, with the coastal waters being featured by various types of marine ecosystems, such as mangroves, coral reefs, coastal salt marshes, seagrass beds, sea islands, bays, estuaries, and upwellings, as well as abundant marine resources including fisheries, energies, ports and sceneries. Thousands of rivers run into the seas. According to incomplete statistics, there are over 1,500 rivers in six major drainage basins of the Liao River, the Haihe River, the Yellow River, the Huaihe River, the Yangtze River, and the Pearl

River running into the seas. Rich natural environments have created colorful marine environments, making them a beautiful part of China.

China's rich and diverse marine resources and marine environments have made huge ecological services and resources support the for the economic and social development in its coastal areas and even the entire China, acting as a valuable asset to the sustained and healthy economic development in China. Currently, the main marine resources available for development and utilization include marine biological resources, mineral resources, seawater resources, marine renewable energies and marine spatial resources.

With the development and use of marine resources, over 10 marine industries have been formed. The added value created by these industries accounts for about 10% of China's GDP. Meanwhile, the marine resources development activities have also provided over 33 million jobs.

On the one hand, the oceans have provided tremendous support for national economic and social development; but on the other, the rising enthusiasm for marine development and the rapid development of marine economy have also brought enormous pressures on the oceans especially on the ecological environment in the offshore, which has seen sustained deterioration in recent years. At the same time, under the impacts of both human activities and climate changes, disasters occur frequently to Chinese seas, causing huge economic losses. The sustainable development of Chinese seas faces greater challenges.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to environmental protection and sustainable development of Chinese seas, and actively participates in the process of global sustainable development. It has formulated the China's Agenda 21-White Paper on China's Population, Environment and Development in the 21st Century, which specified the sustainable development strategies to be implemented for the future development of China. China is a country with both a vast land and a long coastline. China's social and economic development will increasingly depend on the oceans. Therefore, the

China Agenda 21 took “sustainable development and protection of marine resources” as one of the important action plans.

In the 21st century, the Chinese government pays more attention to the development of the marine industry, giving it a priority in the national economic and social development. With the continuous improvement of sustainable development policies, the sustainability of the marine industry also increases steadily.

In China, the environmental protection of marine ecosystem and the scientific development of marine resources under the premise of protection, have received unprecedented praise and respect from all social circles. Although it is a long process, as this process becomes a forward direction of the world, China’s progress in this area will not reverse, but will even be accelerated to approach the target. The situation where “ecological environment” heroes are respected by people is gradually formed. The understanding of building beautiful oceans being the common responsibility of mankind is becoming a reality.

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