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Headline: China tackling climate change, says envoy

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A Chinese envoy on Friday told the United Nations Security Council that China has been actively tackling climate change, while stressing that all countries should implement the obligations under the Paris Agreement.

"China has been actively tackling climate change and implementing the Paris Agreement while fighting Covid-19 and promoting economic recovery," Zhang Jun, permanent representative of China to the UN, told the Council's ministerial-level open debate on "climate and security" in open video conference format.

"We pursue green development, put people first, and make every effort to address environmental issues to meet our people's aspiration for a better life. China earnestly implements the basic state policy of resource conservation and environmental protection, and promote ecological progress to build a beautiful China," said the ambassador.

On the achievements that China has scored in climate action, Zhang said China's carbon dioxide emission in 2018 was 45.8 percent lower than 2005, meeting the emission reduction target two years ahead of schedule.

In 2018, the share of non-fossil fuels in China's total energy consumption reached 14.3 percent. A quarter of the world's newly afforested area since 2000 is in China.

The Chinese people now enjoy more blue skies thanks to the improvement of air quality.

"We are vigorously promoting international climate cooperation, advancing the development of a green Silk Road, helping relevant countries develop renewable energy projects such as hydro power, wind power and photovoltaics to achieve energy transition and green development, setting an example for the international community," the ambassador added.

Speaking of the obligations of fighting climate change, Zhang said all countries should firmly support multilateralism instead of putting oneself first, implement the obligations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, especially the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" and respective capabilities, and build a fair, equitable and win-win global climate governance system.

"Climate change is, in essence, a development issue, rather than a security issue. There is no direct linkage between the two. Solution of climate change rests on sustainable development," the envoy said.

He urged the international community to respect the differences of countries, especially developing countries, and help them cope with the difficulties.

The Secretariat of the UNFCCC, UN development system and resident coordinators should, in accordance with their mandates, mobilize efforts of all sides to provide targeted support for climate

change response and economic and social development, he said.

“The Security Council, as the body handling international peace and security issues, should act in line with the mandates of relevant resolutions, analyze security challenges and security implications of climate change for countries concerned, and discuss and handle relevant issues on a country-specific basis,” the ambassador added.

Talking about the relations between nature and the human being, Zhang said that both “share a community of life.”