

China to accelerate modern water network development during 2026-2030

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BEIJING, Sept. 30 -- China will step up efforts to build a modern water network during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030), with the national water network expected to cover 82 percent of the country's territory by 2030, Minister of Water Resources Li Guoying said Wednesday.

As part of this effort, China will strengthen flood control by improving a system comprising reservoirs, rivers, levees and flood storage and detention areas, and by upgrading monitoring and forecasting based on satellites, radar, rainfall stations and hydrological stations, Li told a press conference.

By the end of 2030, the country aims to add 15 billion cubic meters of reservoir storage capacity and bring 91 percent of key levees up to standard, he said.

China will accelerate efforts to build a system for the optimal allocation of water resources and water supply, and coordinate the development of the national backbone water network with provincial, municipal and county-level water networks.

It will speed up the modernization and upgrading of irrigation districts and promote standardized rural water supply and management. By 2030, the country aims to add 40 million mu (about 2.67 million hectares) of irrigated farmland and raise the rural tap water coverage rate to 98 percent.

The country will strengthen the protection and restoration of aquatic ecosystems, including restoring rivers and lakes and tackling groundwater over-extraction and soil erosion. By the end of 2030, it aims to treat an additional 310,000 square km of land that has been affected by soil erosion.

The country aims to establish a national water network dispatch center, a big data center and basin-level sub-centers, enabling comprehensive monitoring and sensing, intelligent analysis and forecasting, and forward-looking decision support to improve the coordinated management of flood control, water supply and ecological protection, said Li.

Building a modern water network is of particular importance for China, where water resources are unevenly distributed across regions and seasons and floods and droughts occur frequently, with intensifying impacts of global climate change and frequent extreme flood and drought events.

The water network is one of the "six networks" prioritized during China's 15th Five-Year Plan period, alongside new-type power grids, computing power networks, next-generation communication networks, urban underground pipeline networks and logistics networks.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), China completed 5.68 trillion yuan (about 843 billion U.S. dollars) in water conservancy investment, started construction of 181 major water conservancy projects and put 94 major projects into operation, with the national water network covering 80.3 percent of the country's territory by the end of 2025.

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