

### **Timeline for Teach China Sustainability Issues in China:**

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Since 1979, the People’s Republic of China has embarked on a series of economic reforms that have effectively lifted millions of people out of poverty during this period of sustained economic growth. While the government and people of China can rightly be proud of this considerable achievement, it has also resulted in increased degradation of the environment and not all regions have benefited equally from the reforms China has pursued. As Premier Wen Jiabao stated at a national legislative conference in March, 2007, “China’s economic growth is unsteady, unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable.” The Chinese government and its people recognize that a major challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to arrive at a strategy of sustainable development that preserves natural and cultural resources even as it continues to improve people’s lives. This timeline is provided to help contextualize specific events over the past three decades that are significant to appreciating China’s rapid development as well as the environmental challenges and measures China has begun to take to meet those challenges.

1979	Law on Sino-Foreign Equity Joint Ventures marks the official beginning of foreign investment in China.
1980	PRC becomes a member of the International Monetary Fund in April, and a member of the World Bank in May.
1980	Cessation of the surface test program for nuclear bombs near Lop Nor in the Xinjiang province after 23 tests.
1980, Aug.	Creation of four Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Zhuhai, Xiamen, Shenzhen, and Shantou in order to increase Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).
1981	The “Household Responsibility Reform” allows farmers to retain surpluses from their individual plots of land rather than surrendering them to the collective which dramatically increases efficiency.
1982	China’s population surpasses 1,000,000,000 people.
1984	Continued reform policies open 14 coastal cities and three regions as “open areas” for foreign investment, providing tax benefits to further attract FDI.
1984, April	The State Council authorizes the Yangzi Valley Planning Office to draft a feasibility report for Three Gorges Dam project.
1987	The Thirteenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) recognizes the private sector as a necessary supplement to the state sector.
1988	“Provisional Regulations on Private Enterprises” – these regulations, still in effect today, legitimize sole proprietorships, partnerships, and limited liability corporations.
1989	Revision of the environmental legislation from 1979
1990	Stock Markets open in Shanghai and Shenzhen

1992	Deng Xiaoping's "Southern Tour" signals the go-ahead with further market reforms and increased interaction with the world.
1993	Production of the pesticide DDT is officially stopped (but illegally used for several subsequent years).
1994	With nation-wide liberalization, the CCP permits all of China (not just coastal regions) to attract FDI, private business, etc..
1994, Dec.	Start of the Three Gorges Dam Project
1996	Stop of the sub-terrain nuclear weapons test program.
1997	The Asian Financial Crises (the PRC enacts a series of reforms that resulted in the country emerging relatively unscathed).
1998	The World Health Organization reports that of the ten most polluted cities in the world, seven can be found in China.
2000-2003	China begins long-distance population resettlement for the Three Gorges Dam project.
2001	China becomes a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) with the required condition that it revise existing laws and enact new legislation in compliance with the WTO.
2005	At the first Sino-US Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) in Beijing, President George W. Bush and President Hu Jintao participate in a cabinet-level forum in order to develop strategies to reach shared long-term objectives while managing short-term challenges in the US-China economic (and, ostensibly, environmental) relationship.
2005, Nov.	Major pollution of Songhua river after explosion of petrochemical plant in Jilin city (Jilin Province).
2006, Jan.	CNOOC, one of China's largest oil and gas producers, buys a major stake in a Nigerian offshore oil and gas field.
2006, June	China surpasses the United States in carbon dioxide emissions due to fossil fuel use and cement production (although the U.S. persists in surpassing China in per person fossil fuel emissions).
2007, May and Dec.	In the second and third rounds of the Sino-US SEDs, both countries agree to a ten-year cooperation on increasing market access, opening their financial sectors, fostering energy security, protecting the environment, strengthening the rule of law, promoting environmental sustainability, and taking measures on climate change.
2008, May	A major earthquake strikes Sichuan province: the death toll reaches 69,016, with more than 18,000 people still missing.

2008, June	In fourth round of the Sino-US SED, both countries sign a ten year Energy and Environmental Cooperation Framework, laying out concrete steps to address environmental sustainability, climate change, and energy security.
2008, Aug.	China welcomes the world to the Beijing 2008 Olympic games.
2008, Sep.	The toll of sick babies in a nationwide milk scandal surpasses 13,000.
2009, Aug.	China surpasses the United States as the world's largest producer of household garbage.
2009, Nov.	China becomes the largest automobile market in the world.
2009, Dec.	A new gas pipeline is opened between Turkmenistan and China.
2010, May – Oct.	Shanghai hosts the 2010 World Expo.