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SPECIAL REPORT

Powering China's Development The Role of Renewable Energy

The breakneck expansion of China's economy has no equal in modern times. In its quest for prosperity, China must consume ever more energy to power its buildings, fuel its vehicles, and support its rapidly expanding industries. With domestic coal as the dominant energy form but imported oil growing quickly, the country is now grappling with the far-reaching environmental, security, and social implications of its growth.

Fortunately, China is already a global leader in renewable energy, with ambitious plans for the future. In 2006, China was first in the world in solar heating and small hydropower, third in solar power manufacturing, and fifth in wind power. Many Chinese renewable energy companies are set to become global leaders. By 2020, Chinese agricultural and forestry wastes might supply the next generation of biofuels for transportation.

With global investment in renewable energy now exceeding \$60 billion per year, renewables can no longer be ignored as a significant energy source for China and the world. As China overtakes the United States as the top emitter of greenhouse gases in the next few years, the need to transition to cleaner, more secure, and more sustainable energy has never been more important. With its economic ambitions and growing role as a global manufacturing powerhouse, can China help lead the world to a more sustainable future?

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