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Renewables booming in China: Report

(China Daily)

Updated: 2007-11-17 09:22

China would likely achieve and could even exceed its target of obtaining 15 percent of its energy from renewables by 2020, according to a new report released by the Worldwatch Institute.

The findings of the report *Powering China's Development: The Role of Renewable Energy*, written by Beijing-based researcher and Worldwatch senior fellow Eric Martinot and vice-chair of China's Renewable Energy Society in Beijing Li Junfeng, were encouraging for the sector.

It suggested that if China continues with its commitment to diversifying its energy supply and becoming a global leader in renewables manufacturing, renewable energy could provide more than 30 percent of the nation's total by 2050.

"A combination of policy leadership and entrepreneurial savvy is leading to spectacular growth in renewable energy, increasing its share of the market for electricity, heating and transport fuels," Martinot said. "China is poised to become a leader in renewables manufacturing, which will have global implications for the future of the technology."

More than US\$50 billion was invested in renewable energy worldwide in 2006, and China is expected to invest more than US\$10 billion in developing new renewables capacity in 2007. The investment would be second only to that of Germany.

Wind and solar energy are growing particularly rapidly in China, with production of both wind turbines and solar cells doubling in 2006. China is poised to surpass world solar and wind manufacturing leaders in Europe, Japan and North America in the next three years, and it already dominates the markets for solar hot water and small hydropower.

"Our ingenuity and manufacturing prowess are being harnessed to provide leadership to the world in the field of renewables," Li said. "China's position provides a strong example for other developing countries while helping to drive down renewable energy costs to become competitive with fossil fuels for all countries the world over."

The report discusses China's advances in wind power, solar photovoltaics (PV), solar heating, biomass power and biofuels. It highlights many impressive gains in these sectors.

For example, according to the report, wind power is the fastest growing power-generation technology in China, with existing capacity doubling last year. By 2007, China was home to four major Chinese manufacturers of wind turbines, another six foreign subsidiary manufacturers and more than 40 firms developing prototypes and aspiring to produce turbines commercially.

Solar PV production capacity in China jumped from 350 MW in 2005 to more than 1,000 MW in 2006, with 1,500 MW expected in 2007.

Worldwatch Institute

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