

WORLD

China urges joint efforts in resource governance

By MINGMEILI at the United Nations mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

The international community should strengthen cooperation on natural resource governance to safeguard the stability of global resource supply and industrial chains, and contribute to international peace and development, says a Chinese envoy to the United Nations.

The UN Security Council held a high-level open debate on Wednesday themed “Natural resource governance: the foundation of peace, security and prosperity”. It explored how inclusive, transparent and sustainable natural resource governance can help reverse conflict dynamics and strengthen conditions for peace.

“Natural resources are precious gifts bestowed by the Earth on humanity and constitute the material foundation for human survival and sustained economic and social development,” said Sun Lei, charge d’affaires ad interim of China’s Permanent Mission to the UN.

“However, conflicts in some regions demonstrate that resource abundance does not automatically bring development and prosperity, while poor governance may trigger and fuel violence and conflict,” Sun said. Peace and stability are the solid guarantee for natural resource governance, he said.

The international community should uphold a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, remain committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes, urge parties to conflicts to cease military confrontation, and support regional countries and organizations in strengthening cooperation, he said.

It should also jointly combat the illegal exploitation and smuggling of natural resources, enhance supply chain transparency and traceability, and cut off armed conflicts’ access to natural resources at the source, he added.

The causes of armed conflict are “complex and diverse”, involving political, social and economic factors, Sun said.

“Natural resources should not simply be regarded as the root cause of conflicts, nor should normal economic, trade and industrial cooperation be securitized, politicized or instrumentalized,” he said.

Moreover, fairness and justice are important prerequisites for cooperation on natural resources, he said.

“International law grants states permanent sovereignty over their

natural resources, and this principle must not be challenged.

“Certain countries should stop seizing the resources of other countries through sanctions, pressure and military coercion, and must not revert to colonial domination and plunder,” he said.

China supports building an open, inclusive, fair, equitable, cooperative, win-win, green and clean governance system for critical minerals, Sun said. He warned that using the pretext of “de-risking” or “national security” to pursue bloc confrontation and build exclusive “small circles” will only disrupt market order and undermine the common interests of all countries.

Sustainable development is the ultimate goal of natural resource development, he added.

“Facts have repeatedly shown that the persistent problem of the illicit exploitation of natural resources is rooted in poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. To break the vicious cycle between natural resources and conflict, it is essential to support the countries concerned in achieving independent and sustainable development,” he said.

Fulfill commitments

Sun also called on the international community, especially developed countries, to fulfill their assistance commitments and support resource-rich countries, especially developing countries, in improving their resource governance systems and increasing the added value and returns of resource products.

Such efforts can be done through technology transfer, capacity-building, talent development and industrial upgrading, thereby reducing poverty, creating employment, truly benefiting local people, and building a stronger foundation for peace, he said.

At last year’s G20 Summit, China put forward the International Economic and Trade Cooperation Initiative on Green Mining and Minerals to promote the establishment of a new type of mineral resources partnership featuring openness, win-win cooperation, fairness and equity.

“China stands ready to work with the international community to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation on natural resources, better help relevant countries transform their resource endowments into drivers of development, and embark on a path toward lasting peace, stability, development and prosperity,” Sun said.

Transit collision



Emergency responders inspect the wreckage of a collision between two trams on the Erasmus Bridge in Rotterdam, Netherlands, on Wednesday. The crash left 15 people injured, one severely, forcing authorities to close the landmark bridge while investigators were trying to determine the cause. MITCHELL DE KWANT / AFP



Courthouse commotion

Supporters of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro rally outside a New York courthouse on Wednesday. A US judge set a June 1 trial date for Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, following their third court appearance since being forcibly seized by US troops in a military raid in January. The couple has pleaded not guilty to federal drug trafficking and firearms charges.

ZHANG FENGGUO / XINHUA

Middle East sea routes face mounting turmoil

Growing tensions disrupt crucial waterways, raising energy security risks

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong, CUI HAIPEI in Dubai, UAE, and LIU JIANQIAO in Beijing

Maritime security in the Middle East is deteriorating further amid the US-Iran war, as disruption expands beyond the Strait of Hormuz to the Red Sea, raising fresh concerns over global energy supplies.

The latest incidents threaten two of the world’s most critical oil shipping routes, adding to market jitters and prompting renewed concerns from the International Energy Agency.

Yemen’s Houthi group said on Thursday that it had targeted two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea, claiming the vessels violated its recently announced maritime restrictions. The Red Sea carries about 7 percent of global oil supplies.

In a statement aired by the group’s Al-Masirah television, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said the Houthis struck the tankers, identified as *Encelia* and *Layla*, using “ballistic and cruise missiles as well as drones”. He claimed the attacks set both vessels ablaze and achieved the group’s objectives.

Saudi Arabia has not commented on the Houthi claim. However, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations said on X that it had received a report of an incident involving a tanker about 130 kilometers southwest of the Saudi port of Al Shuqaiq.

The vessel’s master reported being struck by an “unknown projectile”, causing a fire that the crew tried to extinguish, the organization said.

The Houthis’ claim came two days after the group expanded its maritime restrictions to target vessels trading with Saudi ports, citing an attack on Yemen’s Sanaa International Airport.

Separately, Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said on Thursday that one of three oil tankers attempting to transit a mine-laden route in the Strait of Hormuz caught fire, while the other two turned back.



Students gather at Sanaa University in Yemen on Wednesday during a rally in support of the Houthi movement, as regional tensions with Saudi Arabia continue to escalate. MOHAMMED HUWAI / AFP

The IRGC said the strait was “under our control” and would remain closed as long as “the evils of the United States” continued in the region. It warned that any tanker attempting to pass without coordinating with Iran would “suffer the same fate” and urged Washington to “stop hostile actions in this sensitive region”.

The developments came as US President Donald Trump vowed to bomb Iranian infrastructure whenever Tehran targets a ship in the critical waterway, and as the US and Saudi Arabia signed an agreement to cooperate on developing a civilian nuclear program in the kingdom.

Worrying situation

“If I were a country dependent on oil and gas imports, I would be very worried regarding the latest re-eruption of tensions in the Middle East,” said Syed Muhammad Osama Rizvi, a global market and product strategist at energy intelligence firm Primary Vision.

Rizvi said the global refinery capacity remains constrained, while refining margins and crude oil prices have surged. Iran holds the “upper hand by sheer stroke of geography”, he said, warning that the Red Sea could “become another avenue of war soon”.

Ding Long, a professor at Shanghai International Studies University’s Middle East Studies Institute, said

the attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz stem from a deeper dispute over control of the strategic waterway.

The US and Iran hold fundamentally different interpretations of the provisions on the strait’s administration under a memorandum of understanding signed last month. Tehran has sought to strengthen its jurisdiction by requiring vessels to register and proposing transit fees, measures Washington rejects, Ding said.

“These competing positions reflect the two sides’ broader geopolitical rivalry and their conflicting strategic interests in the Gulf region,” he said.

Meir Litvak, a senior research associate at the Alliance Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University in Israel, said the Trump administration may lack patience for prolonged negotiations and could settle for vague formulas to claim success, as neither side appears willing to make major concessions on key issues.

International Energy Agency Executive Director Fatih Birol said in a statement on Tuesday that the agency is closely monitoring oil markets.

“The escalation in hostilities affecting the Strait of Hormuz and energy infrastructure in the region increases security of supply concerns and uncertainty over the market outlook,” Birol said.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Briefly

UNITED STATES

Chinese duo earns top math honor

Chinese mathematicians Deng Yu and Wang Hong were awarded the Fields Medals at the opening ceremony of the 2026 International Congress of Mathematicians held in Philadelphia on Thursday, marking the first time Chinese mathematicians have won the prestigious honor. The Fields Medal is a top international mathematics prize awarded every four years to two to four young researchers in recognition of their outstanding mathematical achievements in existing work and their promise of future achievement.

INDIA

41 killed as floods ravage Assam state

Floods triggered by torrential monsoon rains have killed at least 41 people in India’s northeast Assam state, officials said on Thursday. “We have lost 41 precious lives till date and thousands of livestock has been washed away,” Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a social media update on the toll from monsoon rains that began last month. “Cloudbursts upstream, coupled with localized heavy rainfall, 436 percent above normal, have led to flooding in villages that have not seen such devastation in recent history,” he added.

FRANCE

Modeling scout linked to Epstein found dead

Daniel Siad, a modeling scout with ties to the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, has been found dead at his home outside Paris, prosecutors said on Wednesday. Siad’s body was discovered on Monday evening. An autopsy will be carried out to determine the cause of death, the Nanterre prosecutor’s office said. Siad’s name appeared nearly 2,000 times in the Epstein files released by the United States Justice Department. Since a wide-ranging probe into human trafficking and tax fraud was opened in February following the Epstein files release, 24 women have come forward as victims or witnesses of alleged acts committed by Siad or others, Paris prosecutor Laure Beccuaud said on Wednesday evening.

JAPAN

Hundreds hospitalized in heat wave ‘disaster’

More than 450 people received hospital treatment for heat-related issues in a single day in Tokyo — the highest number since records began 16 years ago, emergency services said on Thursday. The figure was released as Japan sweltered in a heat wave that has killed at least 14 people over the past week. A total of 453 people were treated in hospitals for heat-related issues on Wednesday, the Tokyo Fire Department said. Emergency callouts were also at the highest level since at least 1963.

Modi vows to set up special courts to punish guilty in exam fraud

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that “fast-track” courts would be set up to prosecute those behind exam paper leaks, his first public response after days of youth protests demanding the resignation of the education minister.

Modi’s comments came hours after protesters clashed briefly with police on the streets of New Delhi late on Wednesday, with officers firing tear gas and wielding canes to push them back.

The protests have grown into one of the biggest challenges to Modi since he came to power in 2014, with opposition parties echoing the

demands of the youth movement and disrupting the monsoon session of Parliament that began this week.

“Nothing is more important than the welfare and future of our youth,” Modi posted on X, promising to set up fast-track courts to punish those involved in the exam paper leaks.

“This continues our series of steps for safeguarding the interests of students. Those who try to harm the future of our youth will not be spared,” he said.

Fast-track courts, designed to quickly hear and dispose of cases, were created to get around the country’s justice system that can take years to conclude cases.

Such special courts have been set up to handle sex crimes against women and children, terrorism, money laundering, and crimes by lawmakers.

The youth-led Cockroach Janta Party launched protests last month against the question paper leaks that affected some 2 million students and have been linked to several suicides.

It responded on Thursday to Modi’s announcement by quoting his X post and saying Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan “must resign”.

Leader of the main opposition Congress Party, Rahul Gandhi, also

responded by quoting Modi’s post and saying it was the prime minister who had harmed the future of Indian youth the most.

“You allowed and encouraged the total capture and destruction of our education system — and protected every person responsible for it,” Gandhi said, reiterating that Pradhan should be sacked, Modi should apologize to students, and those who assaulted them should be punished.

Late on Wednesday, more than 10,000 people were estimated to have gathered at the Jantar Mantar protest site in central New Delhi, local media reported, as Cockroach

Janta Party leaders vowed to continue their month-old protest until Pradhan resigned over the exam paper leaks.

The party, which has millions of followers on social media, emerged in May initially as a satirical response to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant reportedly likening young people to “cockroaches” and “parasites” during a court hearing.

The movement has since broadened its agenda to include concerns over unemployment, opportunities for young people and government accountability.