

Modern lifestyles often lead to consumption patterns, which – through their underlying resource and energy consumption and increasing emissions of greenhouse gases- are a major contributor to climate change. The more developed a country is, the more resource and energy it will consume, and the more it will contribute to "climate change," "global change," "carbon emissions" and "global warming"

Global society and especially the industrialised countries have responded slowly to these challenges. Forward looking, in the 1980s, it did establish a United Nations panel on climate change, namely the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). But later on, in the last three decades, we have been largely discussing the reality of the recommendations of the IPCC, but we have not acted very strongly. Ironically climate gas emissions have been increasing even faster over the last ten years than they did in the preceding decade. The main problem, is slow international decision-making.

Globally, one needs an active decision in order to force society to move away from the fossil fuel, and into the renewable energy sources. But in a democratic society, such decision takes a long time. The lack of a dedicated and forceful human response in the first half of the 21st century will put the world on a dangerous and unstoppable track toward self-reinforcing global warming in the second half of the 21st century.

The new book *2052*, divides the world into five regions: namely the US; the OECD countries outside the US (EU, Japan, Canada and the rest of the industrialized world); China; Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa and 10 other big emerging economies; and finally those at the bottom of the income ladder.

A forecast is made for the development of each of the five regions from 2012 to 2052. Over this period the surprising loser will be the US, while China will be the winner. Different groups in the US are disagreeing strongly on what should be done and consequently nothing is being done. Comparatively, China has a stronger ability to make rapid decisions. China has the advantage of having a leadership which is in line with most of the population in its desire to increase living standards in China. Decision-making is faster in China than it is in the US.

Over the next forty years, the increase in global population and economy (GDP) will not be as fast as many expect. Particularly in the OECD countries growth will be slow. That will also be the case in the poorest parts of the world. As a consequence the global demand for resources will remain lower than it would have been if the population and the economy were bigger. China will of course consume more resources as the country becomes richer, and increase its emissions of greenhouse gases. But China is already aware of these challenges and have taken the first steps toward curbing climate change and towards long term self sufficiency in resources.

China faces its short-term development problem like all other countries have had when they were industrializing. Air pollution is getting more serious. When China continues to build industrial structure, urban structure, ideally China should try to be more resource- and

energy- efficient even if that costs a little more than the cheaper solution. Once people get richer, they accept that money is to clean the air instead of increasing consumption.

The article was compiled by Global Times reporter Wang Wenwen based on an interview with professor Jorgen Randers, an academic and practitioner in the field of future studies at the BI Norwegian Business School, and who recently published the book “2052 – A Global Forecast for the Next Forty Years”. wangwenwen@globaltimes.com.cn