

Hand in Hand to "Lock the Desert Edge": High-Level Salon on Desertification Control Held at Taklamakan Desert in Hotan for World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2025

Hotan, Xinjiang, June 17, 2025 — Under the golden glow of the setting sun over the rolling sand dunes of the Taklamakan Desert—one of the world's largest shifting deserts—over 100 experts, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and local community representatives gathered here today for a high-level salon. Themed "Exploration of New Models for the Edge Control Project of the Taklimakan Desert", the event highlighted China's cutting-edge progress in desertification control while calling for global collaboration to turn fragile ecosystems into resilient green frontiers.



The high-end academic salon coincided with the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought and the 30th anniversary of the "Global Land Degradation and Desertification Control Success Award" presented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to the Cele Desert Grassland Ecosystem Observation and Research Station of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. This salon event was included in the series of activities officially released by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), highlighting China's active contributions and leading role in the global fight against desertification and sandification. Coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the "Global Land Degradation and Desertification Control Success Award" presented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

As the largest mobile desert in China, the Taklimakan Desert is surrounded by frequent sand activities. On November 28, 2024, with the completion of the planting of the last 5,000 square meters of greenery in Yutian County, Xinjiang, a 3,046-kilometer green sand-blocking protective belt was fully closed along the edge of the Taklimakan Desert. As an important part of the "Three-North" Shelter Forest Program (hereinafter referred to as the "Three-North" Program), the "lock-edge project" of the Taklimakan Desert has achieved a major phased victory. As the saying goes, it is equivalent to putting a green "scarf" around the Taklimakan Desert.



Shan Salon invited Feng Qi, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and the director of the Northwest Institute of Eco-Environment and Resources of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, as well as Lu Qi, an advisor to the State Council, the chief scientist of the Chinese Academy of Forestry and the director of the Sanbei Project Research Institute, and Lei Jiaokang, a researcher formerly in charge of the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, to deliver keynote speeches. The three experts respectively presented the progress and achievements of the Chinese Academy of Sciences' work on desertification control, the "Sanbei" project, and the "Guarding the Edge of the Taklimakan Desert" project. They comprehensively and multi-dimensionally showcased the scientific and technological landscape of desertification control in China.



The salon discussed three topics: "Smart Diagnosis of Wind and Sand Hazards and Intelligent Decision-making for Sand Control", "Utilization of Saline Water in Deserts and New Models for Sand Control", and "Ecological Photovoltaic Power and High-quality Sand Control", delving deeply into new models and technologies for the management of the Taklimakan Desert. Many female scientists participated in the exchange and discussion during the meeting.



Lei JiaQiang, a researcher from the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, stated that this "edge-locking and closure" project comprehensively utilized engineering sand control, biological sand control, and photovoltaic sand control methods. While establishing a set of sand prevention and control technology model, it is also urgently necessary to rely on scientific innovation. By developing and applying new materials, new technologies, and new models, the "edge-locking" results can be further consolidated.

"At this high-level forum, we not only invited senior experts in desert control and prevention, but also experts and entrepreneurs from various fields such as new materials and saltwater desalination. Everyone was very enthusiastic and was offering suggestions and strategies on how to promote high-quality desert control and prevention through technological innovation." Lei Jiaqiang said.



During the duration of this seminar, it coincided with the 30th anniversary of the "Global Award for Success in Land Degradation and Desertification Control" presented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This seminar was also included in the global activities of the United Nations Day for Combating Desertification and Drought. The participating experts held a themed signature event at the National Field Scientific Observation and Research Station of the Desert Grassland Ecosystem in Cele, jointly commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Cele Station of Xinjiang Institute of Desert Research winning two awards from the UNEP, and reviewing the glorious history of China's desertification control efforts. Ibrahima Thiaw, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), delivered his congratulatory remarks via video.



As the world marks another World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, the Hotan salon

sends a powerful message: when science, policy, and community unite, even the most unforgiving landscapes can flourish.