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Green Beagle

PRESS RELEASE

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Civil society extends the knowledge on air quality for wide use by locals and state authorities: Air pollution severe at town famous for fresh produce

Self-investigation of Weibo (a network for we-media in China) netizen @菜乡时报 contributes to extension of information on air quality in Shouguang, a town in Shandong province famous for its fresh produce. The civilian survey with a "PM 2.5 detector" (1) is an important part of the IPEN/Green Beagle's project on Strengthening the capacity of pollution victims and civil society organizations to increase chemical safety in China (2). Results indicate that the air pollution by fine dust was very severe this summer, and was thus highly detrimental towards human health. Of the readings recorded between 12 July and 3 August, none attained a 'high' or 'good' air quality level according to Chinese Air Quality Indexes (AQI), with 42.9% as 'severely polluted'. Communication of the pollution monitoring data with locals and state authorities fosters social dialogue and promotes social responsibility for air protection.

The pollution monitoring data collected by @菜乡时报 between 12 July and 3 August (3) confirm findings of Shandong Province Environmental Protection Office announced via its official Weibo account @山东环境, noting the comparative visibility at 8 am on 16 July between 17 municipalities within the Shangdong province. Weifang municipality, to which the township of Shouguang belongs, was ranked a dismal last.

Since the Green Beagle Environment Institute purchased its first "Electromagnetic Radiation Tester" in 2010, environmental groups and environmentalists within Chinese civil society have contributed to monitoring of pollution levels. They have equipped themselves with PM 2.5 detectors, heavy metal testing machine, as well as water quality detectors. Local environmentalist Feng Yongfeng adds: "There are currently six PM 2.5 detectors in use within China. Experts from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention have also been using them to monitor indoor air quality levels. Environmental organisations are pleased to contribute to the monitoring effort." This is an important part of the joint project between Green Beagle and international network IPEN supported by the European Union (EU). The project aims to generate new publicly available data about pollution and improve capacities of civil society organizations for involvement in policy making in China.

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Measured PM 2.5 particles are dusty air pollutants known to invade airways and to produce respiratory and cardiovascular illness (4). These come from activities that burn fossil fuels including industrial processes, power plants or motor vehicles. Major health threat is related to chemicals binding to fine particles such as heavy metals and organic pollutants such as for example polyaromatic hydrocarbons**.** According to @菜乡时报, "the township of Shouguang currently has over 10 industrial clusters that are spread across its towns and streets, with each cluster containing tens of enterprises. Those enterprises are major sources of fine dust pollution in the area."

Other example of collaborative approach in solving the environmental pollution illustrates the respond towards @菜乡时报's complaint informing that an ash pile and a waste corridor lie aside an industrial cluster in Gucheng Sub-district in Shouguang. Environmental Protection Department of Shandong Province has confirmed its information on Weibo and Gucheng Sub-district Office together with Municipal Solid Waste Division of Shouguang government has cleaned the waste up.

Footnotes:

1) PM 2.5 pollution was measured by LD-6S Multi-purpose Laser Dust Meter, also known as a "PM 2.5 detector"

2) Strengthening the capacity of pollution victims and civil society organizations to increase chemical safety in China is an EU-funded project of IPEN with partners Arnika – Toxics and Waste Programme and Green Beagle that aims to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and communities impacted by pollution to increase chemical safety in China. The Project (also known as the China Chemical Safety Project) is being implemented in China over two years with the EU contribution.

3) Results of PM levels alongside the AQIs (Air Quality Indexes) of China and the United States

PM2.5浓度与中美两国AQI(空气质量指数)等级对照表

中国AQI标准		PM2.5 标志性浓度 微克/立方米	美国AQI标准	
等级	AQI值		AQI值	等级
一级 优	0	0	0	Good 健康
	22	15.4	50	
	50	35.3	100	Moderate 中等
二级 良	88	65.4	150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups 对敏感人群不健康
	100	75	156	Unhealthy 不健康
三级 轻度污染	150	115	180	
四级 中度污染	200	150	200	
五级 重度污染	300	250	300	非常不健康
六级 严重污染	500	500	500	
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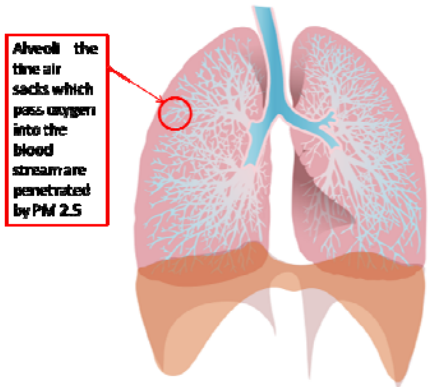
4) Fine dust particles, so called PM 2.5, penetrate the deepest part of the lungs, such as the bronchioles or alveoli and can enter the blood stream or affect other organs.



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