

China says planning more dams on troubled Yangtze

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China's longest river, the Yangtze, seen from the remote mountains in Deqen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of southwest China's Yunnan province. China will build at least 20 more reservoirs or hydroelectric projects on the Yangtze river system by 2020, the government has said, despite growing concerns over dam construction there.

China will build at least 20 more reservoirs or hydroelectric projects in the Yangtze river system by 2020, the government said Tuesday, despite growing concerns over dam construction there.

The figure was contained in comments by a top water resources ministry official on plans for the Yangtze, China's longest river, and its upper reaches that were posted on the ministry's website.

"At least 20 (new) reservoirs will be put into operation by 2020," vice minister Hu Siyi was quoted as saying in a report on the website.

The increase was aimed primarily at further harnessing the hydropower resources of the Yangtze, the report said.

A proliferation of dams in the Yangtze drainage basin has drawn heavy criticism from domestic and overseas experts who have warned of a range of environmental and seismic risks.

Much of the criticism has been centred on the massive [Three Gorges Dam](#) project in Hubei province.

Government reports in recent years have warned that the dam's huge reservoir had trapped massive amounts of pollution dumped into the river system and that the reservoir's weight on surrounding terrain was triggering landslides.

The state-run [China](#) Daily newspaper said Tuesday the government's plans were aimed at tapping 60 percent of the river's hydroelectric potential by 2030.

It quoted Yangtze Water Resources Committee director Cai Qihua as telling a water conference in Shanghai on Monday that currently just 36 percent of that potential was now being harnessed.

But it also noted the proliferating dams and reservoirs -- aimed at meeting China's skyrocketing electricity needs and flood control -- were "posing threats to the ecology of the Yangtze River."

Chinese experts have warned that one of the many dams along the Yangtze river system may have triggered the massive earthquake last May that left 87,000 people dead or missing.

However government officials have rejected those assertions.

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