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'Think green while pursuing growth'

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ACHIEVING growth first, then dealing with the damaged environment later is a bad idea, a growth and development report will say when published next year.

That and other recommendations, among them measures to tackle global warming, will be included in the report by the Commission on Growth and Development, its chairman, Nobel laureate Michael Spence, said yesterday.

Not integrating environmental thinking early in the development process could prove very costly for developing nations, as in China's case, he said on the sidelines of the commission's fourth meeting held in Suzhou yesterday.

The independent commission, which was formed last year and is supported by the World Bank, is tasked with identifying strategies to help developing countries achieve and sustain future growth.

It counts among its 21 members leading practitioners from business, policy-making bodies and government, including Singapore Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong.

Another factor that could derail China's growth, said Professor Spence, is an exchange rate that is held down for too long.

Still, he added: 'There are lots of snags, but... I wouldn't want to bet against China.'

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