

China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development Annual General Meeting 2018

CCICED's 2018 AGM reconvened on Friday. In the morning, eight parallel open forums on various environment- and development-related themes took place. In the afternoon, an official opening and a plenary session convened, during which participants heard high-level addresses, and considered the 2018 CCICED Issues Paper as well as the Council's draft policy recommendations to the government of China.

Open Forums

Green Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the SDGs

This session was co-chaired by Li Ganjie, Minister of Ecology and Environment (MEE), China, and Erik Solheim, UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Li reflected on the success of the Green BRI in five years, noting its contribution to economic prosperity and green development.

Solheim and Li Yong, UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), highlighted that the International Coalition for Green Development on the Belt and Road will be launched in May 2019, and will focus on finance, standards and the environment.

On **synergies between the BRI and the 2030 Agenda**, Shi Yulong, National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China (NDRC) recommended coordination of SDGs and Green BRI; green partnerships; and a green development fund.

Aban Marker Kabraji, IUCN, highlighted BRI opportunities for SDG achievement such as the creation of new protected areas.



CCICED Executive Vice-Chair **Li Ganjie**, Minister of Ecology and Environment, China, and CCICED Executive Vice-Chair **Erik Solheim**, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) ©CCICED



Oyun Sanjaasuren, Director, External Affairs, Green Climate Fund (GCF) ©CCICED

Wang Xiaolong, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China, cautioned against pursuing economic development at the expense of the environment.

Nosipho Ngcaba, South Africa, encouraged the use of established environmental tools to understand environmental risks.

Iskandar Abdullaev, Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia, underscored the importance of policy measures, improving standards, and green jobs.

On **BRI and green finance**, Andrew Steer, World Resources Institute (WRI), encouraged financial institutions to build capacity in low carbon technology.

Oyun Sanjaasuren, Green Climate Fund (GCF), recommended alignment of green BRI elements with countries' nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the UNFCCC.

Peter Bakker, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, called for improvement of green investment standards.

Wang Wen, Renmin University of China, cautioned against overestimating the BRI's environmental risks.

On **international partnership for green development on the Belt and Road**, Guo Jing, MEE, China, encouraged technology transfer among countries for infrastructure construction.

Marco Lambertini, WWF, underscored the value of civil society participation in development project planning.

Wang Tianyi, China Everbright International Ltd., said public-private-partnerships can provide green benefits.

Galit Cohen, Israel, noted BRI plans to introduce sustainability criteria, certification schemes and green development innovation hubs.

Zhang Jianyu, Environmental Defense Fund China Project, said the forthcoming Coalition's work needs to integrate data and scientific evidence.



Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility (GEF)
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Discussions focused on green investments, low carbon approaches, and green electrification.

The group agreed that UNIDO will present the outcomes of the Forum to the CCICED AGM in 2019.

Post-2020 Biodiversity Conservation

Catherine McKenna, Environment and Climate Change Minister, Canada, highlighted cooperation in the establishment of a Chinese national parks system and China's important role in CBD COP 15.

CCICED Secretary General Zhao Yingmin described efforts to: improve the mechanism governing China's 2011-2030 biodiversity strategy and action plan; protect genetic resources, and implement the CBD and related protocols.

On mobilizing a new partnership for global cooperation to facilitate multiparty participation, Li Lin, WWF International, introduced a "political mobilization" strategy for nature, including: creation of a coalition of champions for nature; a robust post-2020 framework; and inviting heads of state to COP 15.

Naoko Ishii, GEF, said the planetary boundary for biodiversity is "even more in the red zone" than climate change, and called for: a science-based target for business; a narrative that highlights biodiversity protection as needed, possible and desirable, and multi-stakeholder coalitions.

Noting that Forum's annual Global Risks Report identifies various environmental risks as particularly pressing, Dominic Waughray, World Economic Forum, highlighted the need for a multi-stakeholder action agenda for nature.

On how to set an operable and achievable framework for post-2020 biodiversity conservation, Ma Keping, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, outlined recent research on the importance and feasibility of protecting "half of earth." He introduced a stakeholder-centric implementation mechanism to enable the CBD to deliver on its promise.

Inger Andersen, IUCN, stressed the need to define a biodiversity "apex target," comparable to the 1.5°C to 2°C climate change targets and said the Aichi Targets need to draw links between health, peace, gender, indigenous peoples participation, and land tenure.

Gao Jixi, MEE, China, highlighted China's "ecological conservation redline" (ECR) approach that protects: key species habitats, ecologically sensitive and fragile areas, and important ecological function areas.

In the **discussion**, participants stressed the need to, *inter alia*: convey urgency; broaden engagement; invest in enabling conditions; and ensure a whole-of-government approach and coherence with other multilateral environmental agreements.

Green Development Innovation for the Yangtze River Economic Belt (YREB)

Stephen P. Groff, Asian Development Bank (ADB), called for cross-sector coordination and introduced ADB's investment of USD 2 billion for the YREB initiative.

Wang Jinnan, Chinese Academy for Environmental Planning provided policy recommendations on an integrated management plan, combined sustainable livelihood development, and an ecological compensation scheme and sustainable financing mechanism.

Amy Leung, ADB, outlined the rationale for the ADB's investment in the YREB, and stressed the need for "balanced" development that minimizes impacts on the natural environment.

On legislation for protecting the Yangtze River, Cheng Lifeng, National People's Council, highlighted a lack of coordination among the over 50,000 hydro power projects already in place along the Yangtze.

Mark Tercek, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), shared TNC's international experiences on watershed management issues and emphasized the importance of setting up innovative partnerships with different stakeholders.

Scott Vaughan, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), called attention to integrated approaches for better climate resilience to address challenges such as low water levels.

Brendan Francis Gillespie, former Head of Water Programme, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), identified successful project models for water governance.

On policy innovation for green development, Hans Friederich, International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, introduced bamboo growing projects in parts of China that provide ongoing profits and job opportunities to local communities.

Zhang Qingfeng, ADB, described the Bank's joint projects with China in the Yangtze River basin.

Wang Xiaokang, China Industrial Energy Conservation and Clean Production Association, stressed the need to clarify the origins of river pollution as a first step.

Pang Xiaopeng, Renmin University of China, described ways to introduce a gender perspective into project design, implementation, and evaluation.

During the **discussion**, participants echoed the importance of integrating gender considerations into the YREB.

Addressing Climate Change by Innovating Development Pathways

This session was co-chaired by CCICED Vice Chairs Xie Zhenhua and Achim Steiner and took place against the backdrop of China's enhanced role in climate change governance – from "a mere participant" to "torchbearer." Discussions centered on innovative low-carbon development pathways, such as new patterns of economic growth and



CCICED Vice-Chair Achim Steiner, Administrator, UN Development Programme (UNDP)
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Stephen P. Groff, Vice President, Asian Development Bank, and Incoming CCICED International Chief Advisor, **Scott Vaughan**, President and CEO, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) ©CCICED

long-term development goals, and institutional innovations in climate change governance. Participants highlighted the need to, *inter alia*: address climate change and air pollution jointly; operationalize Paris Agreement Article 6 (market and non-market approaches); and combine climate action with poverty eradication and affordable energy. Noting recent election results, a Brazilian NGO representative urged the international community to obtain assurances that Brazil will remain a party to the Paris Agreement before accepting the country's offer to host UNFCCC COP 25.

Environmental Governance for the Ocean

This session was co-chaired by CCICED Vice Chairperson Vidar Helgesen, Special Envoy to the High-level Panel on Building Ocean Economy, Norway, and Su Jian, Honorary Director General, Second Institute of Oceanography, State Oceanic Administration, China. Discussions focused on innovation of marine environmental governance systems. Participants considered the status and challenges of marine biodiversity; marine land-based pollution and its impacts; and solutions and actions for marine environmental governance.

Innovation-Driven Green Urbanization

CCICED Chief Advisor Liu Shijin, and CCICED Member John DeGioia, President of Georgetown University, US, co-chaired this session. With the global urban population predicted to increase by 2.5 billion by 2050, countries around

the world are facing challenges to achieving sustainable urban development. Discussions focused on two key themes related to the sustainable urbanization challenge: challenges and pathways for innovation, and sustainable water management.

Beautiful China 2035

This session was co-chaired by Maria Krautzberger, President, Federal Environment Agency, Germany, and CCICED Special Advisor Hu Baolin, Tianjin University. Discussions focused on China's 2035 target to fundamentally improve the ecological environment and achieve the objective of building a Beautiful China. Participants considered objectives and indicators for improvement of the ecological environment, and needed innovations in institutional reform and policy formulations.

Green Consumption for Green Transformation

Marjorie Yang, Esquel Group, and Kathleen McLaughlin, Walmart, co-chaired this session. Discussions centered on resource and environmental problems caused by "irrational" consumption structures and patterns. Participants discussed the effect and strategic position of green consumption in the overall process of green transition, as well as strategies, priority areas, legislation and policy instruments for promoting such consumption.

Opening Session

The Council's official opening was chaired by CCICED Executive Vice Chairperson Li, Minister of MEE, China.

CCICED Executive Vice Chairperson Catherine McKenna, Canada, commended China's progress on environmental protection and noted the world needs China's "warrior spirit" in tackling environmental challenges.

McKenna thanked Arthur Hanson, outgoing CCICED International Chief Advisor, for his work in supporting China's environmental leadership, and announced Scott Vaughan, IISD, as his successor.

CCICED Chairperson Han Zheng, Vice Premier of the State Council, China, highlighted China's advancements in environmental protection, saying this has contributed to improvements in water and air quality, and the extension of forest cover. He noted strict environmental enforcement, proactive engagement in international environmental governance, effective national planning, working with industry, and the restoration of ecosystems as among the actions being taken by China to achieve eco-civilization. Underscoring that China "will reform, innovate and modernize governance and government capacity" to tackle environmental challenges, Han reaffirmed China's support for CCICED as an inclusive and cooperative environmental platform.



The dais at the official opening meeting of the 2018 CCICED AGM

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Arthur Hanson, outgoing CCICED International Chief Advisor ©CCICED

Plenary Session

Following the opening of the session by McKenna, Li welcomed participants to the “first CCICED hosted by the new MEE.” He outlined President Xi Jinping’s philosophical guidance on ecological civilization, noting it answers both theoretical and practical questions, such as why China is building an eco-civilization, and how to build it. He highlighted that the government had identified the “battles, roadmaps and schedules” for environmental protection, including with regard to air pollution, diesel truck emissions, and polluted urban water treatment.

Xie Zhenhua, China’s Special Envoy on Climate Change, remarked on China’s efforts to achieve poverty reduction while promoting the low carbon economy.

Erik Solheim, Executive Director, UNEP, commended China’s progress in attaining the “triple-win” of a thriving economy, improved human health, and an enhanced environment.

Zhou Shengxian, Vice Chairman, Committee of Population, Resources and Environment of the 12th Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, noted that China is in a challenging transitional stage with regard to ecological civilization achievement.

Steiner underscored the need for continued commitment to the environment despite the volatile geopolitical situation.

Helgesen remarked on CCICED’s valuable role in inspiring the world on environmental governance.

Åsa Romson, IVL Swedish Environmental Institute, urged members to rethink the definition of “innovation” and noted innovation in Sweden such as its carbon tax, industry partnerships and progress on building material alternatives.

Issues Paper

Hanson introduced the 2018 CCICED Issues Paper, entitled “Shocks, Innovation and Ecological Civilization A ‘New Green Era’ for China and for the World.” Noting that shocks can be interactive, environmental, socio-economic and political in nature, he said the paper addresses “buffers” to ensure a continued sustainable development for China. He highlighted the document’s conclusion that China will be a “torchbearer for a green and sustainable world in this time rife with contradictions that threaten our future.”

McKenna thanked Hanson and, alongside Li, presented him with a plaque acknowledging his contributions to the Council and China.

Draft Policy Recommendations

CCICED Chief Advisor Liu Shijin presented the Council’s draft policy recommendations, which address ways to overcome global shocks while creating green opportunities. The key recommendations include:

- upgrading China’s contribution to global climate governance;
- enhancing China’s role in national and global ocean governance;
- promoting leadership in developing global biodiversity goals;
- greening the BRI; and
- strengthening reform in the YREB.

In the ensuing discussion, various participants welcomed the draft recommendations. They suggested these could be enhanced to, *inter alia*:

- introduce more ambitious biodiversity goals;
- address challenges related to global fisheries;
- promote China’s concept of a “sponge city” as a way to tackle urban water issues; and
- employ language that is more appealing to the business sector.

In closing, CCICED Vice Chair Xie Zhenhua, echoed by Liu, supported a strong emphasis on technology innovation. Hanson suggested that a future Special Policy Study could look into trade and investment and invited further comments on the draft recommendations by the close of the day. Liu additionally invited participants to suggest topics for future research.



A view of the plenary session

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