

Summary of the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development 7-10 September 2021

Against the backdrop of global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and worsening biodiversity and climate crises, participants from around the world convened for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED). Guided by the theme “For Nature and Humanity: Building a Community of Life Together,” experts from governments, academia, the business community, and civil society discussed the research findings and recommendations arising from CCICED’s Special Policy Studies (SPSs) on critical issues related to the environment and development. The recommendations are designed to inform China’s environment and development policies and practices, including its domestic policies, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and contributions to global environmental governance processes.

CCICED’s research is carried out by four Task Forces with responsibility for thematic areas including: global governance and ecological civilization; green urbanization and environment improvement; innovation, sustainable production, and consumption; and green energy, investment, and trade. At the 2021 AGM, delegates discussed SPSs that address: global climate governance and China’s role; post-2020 global biodiversity conservation; global ocean governance and ecological civilization; green urbanization strategy and pathways towards regional integrated development; green transition and sustainable social governance; major green technology innovation and implementation mechanisms; the green BRI and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; global green value chains; and green finance. In addition, participants considered a report on gender mainstreaming in SPS research and recommendations and a scoping study on managing river areas in times of climate change.

Discussions throughout the meeting took place in open forums and plenary sessions from Tuesday to Thursday, 7-9 September. Speakers emphasized the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises and the impacts they are already having on economies and well-being. Many participants highlighted the potential for China to play a leadership role in transforming development practices to address the unfolding ecological crisis. Discussions also addressed the importance of identifying and implementing

nature-based solutions to socio-environmental problems, as well as taking holistic approaches that recognize the complexity of multifaceted challenges.

Many participants lauded CCICED as a platform for international cooperation to tackle pressing challenges of global importance. With major climate and biodiversity meetings on the global agenda in the coming months, participants encouraged China to lead the world in raising ambition to address these critical problems. In the closing plenary, several international partners of CCICED thanked the Council and affirmed their commitment to continue working with China and CCICED to achieve a green transformation that will ensure prosperity and equity for all.

On Friday, 10 September, CCICED held a press conference on the AGM outcomes, as well as a public, livestreamed presentation of SPS research outcomes.

A Brief History of CCICED

Established in 1992, CCICED is a high-level international advisory body comprising members and experts from government, businesses, international organizations, research institutions, and social organizations from China and abroad. CCICED’s main tasks are to study critical environment and development issues facing China and to provide policy recommendations to the Chinese government.

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By providing a platform for international exchange on sustainable development, the Council seeks to “enable the international community to understand China, and support China’s engagement in the world.” CCICED pursues this aim by carrying out comprehensive, cross-sectoral, and multidisciplinary research that integrates environmental, economic, and social concerns and draws on advanced international concepts, policies, technologies, and best practices, with the aim of advancing ecological civilization and sustainable development.

CCICED seeks to balance gender, geographical regions, nationalities, and areas of expertise among participating experts, and is working to increase involvement of youth, the private sector, and civil society in its work.

Research and Policy Recommendations: Since its inception, CCICED has carried out hundreds of research projects involving over one thousand Chinese and international experts. It has also put forward hundreds of policy recommendations on issues, such as pollution control, cleaner production, biodiversity conservation, energy and environment, circular economy, low-carbon economy, ecological compensation, the social dimensions of environmental protection, sustainable consumption, media and public participation policies, corporate social responsibility, green supply chains, and green finance. In addition, the Council has partnered with national and local authorities to pilot its policy recommendations, including those on sustainable consumption, environmental information disclosure, and environmental risk management.

CCICED’s annual policy recommendations are circulated as official government documents by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) to China’s State Council and local governments, providing a reference for policymakers at all levels. CCICED Chair, Han Zheng, is also a Vice-Premier of China’s State Council, responsible for environmental protection, and one of the most senior officials in the central government. He is in charge of the recently created high-level climate “leaders group” formed to direct the country’s emission reduction efforts. Many of the Council’s recommendations have been incorporated into subsequent policies, institutions, systems, and standards. Since 2008, the support team for CCICED’s Chinese and international chief advisors has produced an annual report that tracks progress of China’s environment and development policies, as well as the impact of CCICED’s policy recommendations.

Annual General Meeting: The Council meets once a year at an AGM, usually held in November, with upwards of 300 participants, to consider the reports and recommendations of the Task Forces and special policy groups that work throughout the year on various aspects of environmental and sustainable development policy. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Council, drawing from these reports, an issues paper from its Chief Advisors, and AGM discussions, approves a set of policy recommendations for the Chinese Government.

In 2020, an AGM could not be held due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, the AGM was held under the theme “A New

Era: Towards a New World of Green Prosperity,” and issued eight recommendations including: to promote green consumption and green transformation; make biodiversity conservation a national strategy; and make the green development of the BRI an “important vehicle” for global ecological civilization and a green community with a shared future. In 2018, the AGM’s theme was “Innovation for a Green Era,” with policy recommendations emphasizing: climate change, ocean, and biodiversity governance; green urbanization; greening the BRI; and green development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

Report of the 2021 AGM

Leading sustainability experts from around the world convened in Beijing, China, and online for this meeting, which was held in a hybrid format due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was organized in morning, afternoon, and evening sessions to accommodate participants from a range of time zones. Each day of the meeting, participants were invited to participate in open forums that were held in the morning and/or afternoon (UTC+8), followed by an evening plenary session. Each open forum was further divided into multiple sessions, during which participants addressed different aspects of the overarching forum theme.

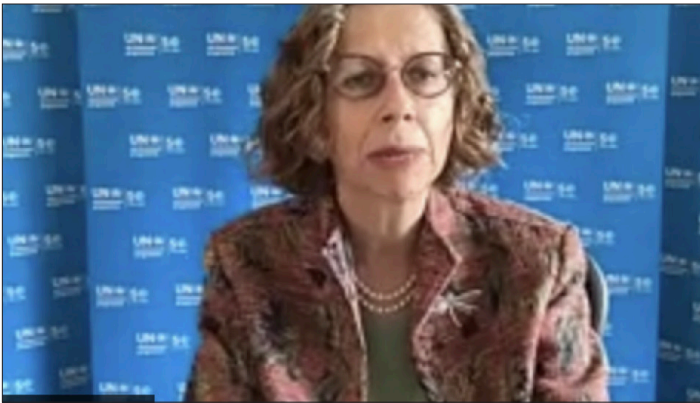
Plenary: Opening Session

In the opening plenary session on Tuesday, 7 September, Huang Runqiu, CCICED Chinese Executive Vice Chairperson and Minister of Ecology and Environment, summarized China’s environmental aspirations toward an ecological civilization. He underscored the importance of holistic and integrated approaches in achieving sustainable development. He noted the societal co-benefits derived from, *inter alia*: scaling down climate emissions; reducing point source pollution; enhancing biodiversity protection; restoring critical ecological systems; and strengthening environmental governance.

Achim Steiner, Administrator, UN Development Programme (UNDP), called for an inclusive and green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, noting this involves ensuring the global



Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator



Inger Andersen, UNEP Executive Director

community comes together to: recalibrate their economies; put nature and climate at the center of national and sectoral decision making; and redirect financial flows towards low emission, nature-positive investments, while also fostering a just transition.

Zhou Shengxian, former Minister of Environmental Protection, emphasized that it will be essential to carefully review and accurately understand China's environmental protection and development undertakings, as well as to promote new ideas and measures.

Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), underscored that the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution threatens our very existence. She outlined opportunities for China's leadership, including by accelerating action on the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through: green COVID-19 recovery spending; phasing out coal and moving to renewable energy; making the BRI "biodiversity positive;" embedding sustainability in international policies; strengthening biodiversity protection in China's coastal waters and high seas; and working through the World Trade Organization (WTO) to reach an agreement on ending fishing subsidies.

Kristin Halvorsen, Director, Center for International Climate Research (CICERO), emphasized that large economies need to step up ambitions ahead of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 26). She said investment choices can lock in consequences for years to come, and underscored that climate change will pose significant challenges both for the planet and the world's financial markets.

Erik Solheim, World Resources Institute (WRI), highlighted policy initiatives from around the world demonstrating that the international community is united in its ambition to reverse climate change. He called for increased urgency in these efforts.

Børge Brende, President, World Economic Forum (WEF), suggested three priorities for the CCICED: focusing on green economic transformation, including through the creation of sustainable value chains for soft commodities; multi-stakeholder collaboration with industry in advancing climate actions; and the prioritization of innovative, frontier technologies in addressing emissions.

Scott Vaughan, CCICED International Chief Advisor, presented key themes from the 2021 CCICED issues paper: implementation, equity, and international cooperation. He noted the paper: seeks to identify concrete steps towards implementation of an ambitious integrated policy agenda on climate and environment; sets out proposals for advancing a just transition; and outlines joint actions to realize the SDGs as part of wider global efforts to control pollution and decarbonize economies.

Liu Shijin, CCICED Chinese Chief Advisor, outlined the recommendations to be given to the Chinese Government, including, *inter alia*, promoting pollution control, promoting urban regeneration that will create a new paradigm for urbanization and rural revitalization, and coordinating domestic targets with the international governance process.

Andrew Metcalfe, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Australia, noted that China and Australia face common issues, outlined Australia's work on the circular economy, and commended CCICED's experts for supporting efforts to combat marine litter and support ocean governance.

Manish Bapna, President and CEO, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), encouraged China to: prepare an enhanced nationally determined contribution (NDC) for the upcoming UNFCCC COP 26; end its overseas coal investments; and ensure that value chains for soft commodities, such as timber, are legal and sustainable.

Stephan Contius, Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, proposed broadening the Council's work on climate change, saying the Council should contribute to the acceleration of action in China, particularly for concrete actions for decarbonization.

Aniruddha Dasgupta, President and CEO, WRI, underlined that China is pivotal in directing global trade toward greener supply chains.

Rodolfo Lacy, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), called for ensuring COVID-19 recovery packages allocate sufficient funding towards climate adaptation measures, especially for vulnerable communities.



Huang Runqiu, CCICED Chinese Executive Vice Chairperson and Minister of Ecology and Environment

Huang Runqiu thanked participants and emphasized that their active participation will ensure future policy recommendations in China are effective in protecting the environment.

Open Forums

Low Carbon Transition of China's Cities and Green Technology Innovation in Communities for Carbon Neutrality:

This session, held on Tuesday, 7 September, was organized by the WEF and the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, and was chaired by Wang Kai, President of the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design. He welcomed the “blockbuster” report on Major Green Technology Innovation and Implementation Mechanisms (Phase II) published under the CCICED SPS on the issue.

In his opening remarks, Liu Shijin, CCICED Chinese Chief Advisor, emphasized that the green transition of China's cities must: be supported by green technology innovation; achieve higher productivity with lower carbon emissions; and accommodate the needs of Chinese communities without dampening economic growth.

The first session of this forum focused on **green technology and green urbanization for carbon neutrality**, and was chaired by Rebecca Ivey, WEF. She stressed that cities are driving the greening of the economy and identified China's rapid urbanization as an opportunity for green growth. Zhang Yongsheng, Research Institute for Eco-civilization, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, marveled that developing countries constitute over half of the 130 countries that have pledged to achieve net zero emissions. He interpreted this as a new era of green development that presents opportunities for developing countries to leap-frog the outdated brown technologies of the developed world.

Li Xiaojiang, former Dean of the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, emphasized that green infrastructure alone will not guarantee carbon neutrality, explaining that consumption patterns, awareness raising, and behavioral change are crucial. He pleaded for an integrated and inclusive approach in promoting low carbon living, with a strong role for women and a strong focus on children and the elderly.



Li Xiaojiang, former Dean of the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design

Antonia Gawel, WEF, explained how integrated planning and design as well as digitalization are needed to achieve carbon neutral energy, mobility, water, food, buildings, and land use. She said collaboration among stakeholders, sectors, and nations contributes to an enabling environment for the green transition.

Li Junfeng, Academic Committee of the National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, noted the influence of domestic energy efficiency and carbon market policies on the reduction of the carbon intensity of China's businesses and highlighted China's relatively low energy usage per capita.

Dong Zhenning, Amap/Alibaba, highlighted his mobility company's contribution to reducing carbon emissions, noting its integrated digital transport planning and payment platform rewards trips by public transport and bicycle. Zhan Kun, China Business Council for Sustainable Development, agreed community members need to take ownership of the green transition and said businesses have a responsibility to develop competitive green solutions.

Zhu Changlong, Shell China, highlighted the opportunities of carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS) for hard-to-abate sectors, noting that large industrial parks with a centralized CCUS process could make the technology cost-effective in the future.

The next session, on **digitalization for sustainability and deployment of green technologies**, was chaired by Li Xiaojiang. Dirk Messner, President, German Environment Agency, highlighted the importance of digitalization, artificial intelligence, and machine learning for sustainability. He pointed to the huge potential of digital technologies to organize the decarbonization of production and consumption patterns. However, he warned that risks of inequality and loss of privacy and freedom need to be addressed.

Tareq Emtairah, UN Industrial Development Organization, identified the need for further innovation in policy and planning, technology, finance, and social areas to achieve future emission reduction targets. He illustrated how digital solutions can help manage the energy value chain from generation, transmission, and distribution to the sustainable end-use of energy.

Wang Kai compared China's urbanization development with that of other major economies, noting differences in energy consumption and mobility patterns and the need to increase green and blue spaces.

Ye Qing, Chair of Shenzhen Institute of Building Research Co. Ltd., outlined opportunities for digitalization in the building sector, with integrated energy generation, storage, and usage solutions for net zero emissions buildings. Li Weidong, China Huaneng Group Clean Energy Research Institute, outlined his company's efforts to reduce emissions through solar and wind power, electric vehicle batteries, and CCUS.

Raymond Yau, Swire Properties, enumerated his company's commitments to low-carbon and sustainable buildings, biodiversity assessments, green spaces, and reporting frameworks.

Yao Qiang, China Electricity Council, detailed the Power Construction Corporation of China's focus on renewable energies and digitalization which provides integrated digital solutions for hydropower stations, including demand forecasting, electricity generation, water treatment, and flood prevention.

Carbon Neutrality and the Role of the Ocean: This open forum, co-organized by the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Friends of Ocean Action, and WEF, took place on Tuesday. Chaired by Jan-Gunnar Winther, Norwegian Polar Institute, the discussion focused on the oceans' role in achieving carbon neutrality and the future of sustainable development of the ocean under climate change.

Kristin Halvorsen, CICERO, highlighted the need for integrated, eco-based management of the oceans. She commended CCICED for the scientific foundation of its work and its Ocean SPS.

A first session on **how oceans can contribute to carbon neutrality** was chaired by Jiao Nianzhi, Chinese Academy of Sciences, who also provided a keynote speech. He presented on the Ocean Negative Carbon Emission programme, highlighting the potential of carbon pumps and other ocean carbon sequestration technologies when used in an integrated way. He underscored the importance of international collaboration to support further research.

Zhang Zhifeng, Marine Ecology and Environment Department, MEE, welcomed efforts by relevant ministries in China to work in a coordinated manner on adaptation and mitigation synergies for oceans. Zhang also noted positive results in improving ocean oxygen levels in mangroves and wetlands.

Carol Robinson, University of East Anglia, spoke about knowledge gaps in ocean carbon removal technologies, stressing that carbon removal processes should be quantifiable, socially acceptable, and ecologically safe.

Liu Yanjun, Shandong University, discussed the "huge potential" for marine renewable energy from wind, tidal, and ocean thermal sources. Aoife O'Leary, EDF, drew attention to the shipping sector's large mitigation potential and its capacity to unlock renewable energy capacity and open new markets to more players worldwide, given its mobility.

Ye Siyuan, Key Laboratory of Coastal Wetland Biogeosciences, China Geological Survey, highlighted work on carbon sink resources in riverside areas north of the Yangtze

River, noting rapid restoration rates and the roles of temperature, salinity, and biomass decomposition.

Focusing on integrated ocean and climate action, Patrick Yeung, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), emphasized the need to: raise ambition on sustained mitigation and adaptation; make nature part of the solution through integrated coastal zone management and ecosystem-based approaches; take a people-centered approach; and merge the climate and ocean finance agendas.

Su Jilan, Chinese Academy of Sciences, moderated the discussion on **sustainable development of the ocean under climate change**. Wang Juying, National Marine Environmental Monitoring Center, China, stressed that healthy oceans are crucial for ensuring prosperous societies and achieving carbon neutrality. He recommended: improving marine environment monitoring systems; promoting integrated management of land and sea-based pollution; strengthening joint actions between marine conservation and climate adaptation; and demonstrating Chinese leadership through sharing good practices related to marine governance.

Liu Hui, Yellow Sea Fisheries Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences, outlined a recent study led by CCICED examining the aggregate carbon footprint and impact of climate change on global fisheries. Liu underlined that all stages of the fishery production process contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

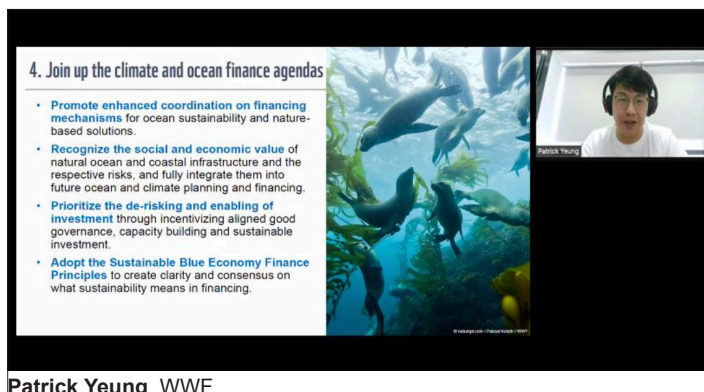
Gwen Ruta, EDF, underscored that climate change is expected to lead to shifts in species distribution and affect the productivity of oceans. She proposed five pathways to building climate resilience: enhancing data collection and adaptive management capacities; acting on climate projections; enhancing intergovernmental coordination to prevent unmanaged marine competition; establishing marine protected areas; and ensuring fairness and equity.

Jan-Gunnar Winther outlined priorities for CCICED's continuing work on the "seamap" for the ocean's future, including: research on marine carbon sequestration; safeguarding marine food resources; ecosystem-based management; and marine tourism.

Green BRI and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: This session was organized by BRI International Green Development Coalition, ClientEarth, and WRI, and was held on Wednesday. In opening remarks, Zhao Yingmin, CCICED Secretary General and Vice Minister of the MEE, called for, *inter alia*: aligning BRI targets with the 2030 Agenda; prioritizing climate change; and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in BRI projects.

Erik Solheim, WRI, underscored the need to strengthen the BRI's focus on green finance and green technology transfer, including through closer cooperation with the private sector.

Moderating the first session, on **BRI green development and the climate change response (SDG 13)**, Zhou Guomei, CCICED Deputy Secretary General, highlighted the BRI's support for green development across the Asia-Pacific region and said green development is critical to implementation of the Paris Agreement.



Andrew Steer, President and CEO, Bezos Earth Fund, emphasized the BRI's "enormous potential" to achieve climate goals and biodiversity objectives. He urged China to use its position as the world's largest importer of soft commodities to galvanize the greening of global supply chains.

Zhou Wei, former Chief Engineer of China's Ministry of Transport, outlined the transportation sector's role in achieving carbon peaking and neutrality, emphasizing that key actions will include electrification of vehicles and transitioning from road to railway. Zhai Dongsheng, NDRC, lamented that developed countries are not matching China's level of support for replacing coal.

Oyun Sanjaasuren, Green Climate Fund, noted that countries are de-risking investments in climate smart activities and said the BRI could drive transformative change. Lawrence MacDonald, WRI, called for NDCs under the Paris Agreement to be used in identifying projects for BRI investment.

Noting that fossil fuel subsidies exceed investments in renewables by nearly USD 100 billion a year across Asia and the Pacific, Liu Hongpeng, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, underscored the potential of the BRI to accelerate the scaling of clean, affordable energy.

Dimitri de Boer, ClientEarth, moderated the second session, on **BRI green development and biodiversity conservation**. Arthur Hanson, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), framed the green BRI as "nature infrastructure" and emphasized the need to look at whole systems.

Narges Saffar, Department of Environment, Iran, said the BRI can restore degraded ecosystems and improve resilience. Lena Chen, National Parks Board, Singapore, highlighted Singapore's efforts to become a "city in nature" by "intensifying nature," connecting urban green spaces, and restoring ecosystems.

Lu Winnie, WWF, recommended that BRI development projects: mobilize stakeholders through a consultative and transparent planning framework; screen for biodiversity risks; and avoid negative impacts on habitats and species. Zhang Xiaoquan, The Nature Conservancy's China Program, emphasized the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity concerns in regional development plans.

Shi Yulong, NDRC, moderated the third session, on **BRI green development and post-pandemic resilient recovery**.

Juergen Voegelé, World Bank, said the BRI could redirect economic development towards a green, resilient, and inclusive model and shift international trade of soft commodities towards environmental sustainability.

Wu Huimin, Executive Director, China International Capital Corporation Limited, said carbon pricing, technology promotion, and education can support green recovery. Emphasizing that during the pandemic, China has led where multilateralism had failed, Kevin Gallagher, Boston University, outlined China's successes in global development finance and encouraged China to ramp up ambition and leverage change in multilateral institutions.

Ecological Civilization: Building a Harmonious and Beautiful World for All: This forum was chaired and moderated by Gao Jixi, MEE, on Wednesday.

Minister Huang Runqiu, CCICED Executive Vice Chairperson, noted that only six of the twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets have been partially achieved, and pleaded for enhanced international cooperation to promote and protect biodiversity. Kristin Halvorsen advocated for the protection of intact nature areas and economic transformation to respect planetary boundaries.

In the session on **innovative governance of global biodiversity**, Marco Lambertini, Director General, WWF International, lamented the lack of a clear global biodiversity target and called for establishing a goal of "Nature Positive by 2030." Naoko Ishii, University of Tokyo and former CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), called for concrete pathways to this goal, especially for food production systems and pricing of natural capital.

Hideki Minamikawa, President, Japan Environmental Sanitation Center, called for integrating human and environmental health and urgent action to address zoonotic diseases linked to wildlife trade and deforestation. Gao Jixi cited the Chinese concept of Ecological Conservation Redlines as an integrated, systematic approach to ecological protection.

Peter Bakker, President and CEO, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, said businesses need clear targets that are based on science. Partha Sarathi Dasgupta, University of Cambridge, called for ensuring that: demands on nature do not exceed supply; measures of economic success value natural assets; and institutions and systems adapt to prevent overuse of the global commons.

Dimitri de Boer called for greater legitimacy of environmental impact assessments for major projects. Ouyang Zhiyun, Research Center for Eco-Environmental Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences, said mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into conservation policy can fill gaps in the protected area landscape.

Zhu Chunquan, WEF Beijing, called for enhanced accounting mechanisms and attention to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Zhang Xiaoquan, The Nature Conservancy, called for a people-centric perspective with nature-based solutions.



Naoko Ishii, Director of the Center for Global Commons, University of Tokyo, and former CEO and Chairperson, GEF

In the session on **solutions and best practices for mainstreaming biodiversity**, Liu Ning, MEE, highlighted successes of red-lining in biodiversity conservation.

Jan-Gunnar Winther said oceans can deliver up to one-fifth of needed emission reductions if we: reduce barriers for off-shore renewable energy installations; support low carbon shipping fuels and port facilities; invest in blue carbon solutions; sustainably harvest fish, seaweed and kelp; and reduce barriers for carbon storage in the seabed.

Rodolfo Lacy, OECD, called for: an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework; scaling of incentives for biodiversity conservation; and reforming policies that incentivize biodiversity degradation. Beatriz Merino, The Nature Conservancy, called for smarter investment in biodiversity conservation.

Hu Biaolin, Tianjin University, called for a balance between development and environmental protection. Zhang Jianyu, BRI Green Development Commission Advisory Committee, recommended market-based approaches to biodiversity conservation.

Stephan Contius, German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, called for climate and biodiversity actions that take account of links to health, agriculture, and other sectors. Tim Benton, Chatham House, called for increasing the resilience of ecosystems by halting land use change, reconsidering consumption patterns, and regenerating degraded areas.

Implementing China's 2030/2060 Carbon Targets and Empowering a High-Quality Development: This forum, held on Wednesday, was co-organized by Energy Foundation China, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation, and the Institutes of Science and Development of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. It was co-chaired by Wang Yi, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Kate Hampton, CEO, Children's Investment Fund Foundation.

In his opening remarks, Liu Shijin, CCICED Chinese Chief Advisor, noted that China is still developing and must address carbon neutrality, pollution, biodiversity loss, and economic growth in an integrated manner.

The first session, moderated by Wang Yi, Chinese Academy of Sciences, focused on **key actions needed to achieve the Paris Agreement** and synergies between short-term economic recovery and longer-term climate goals.

Lord Nicholas Stern, London School of Economics and Political Science, said the world is now at the beginning of "a new growth story" based on natural, human, and social capital. He said this story will be driven by the right kind of investment, grounded in the broader outlook and objectives provided by the SDGs, and marked by internationalism. He also noted this fits well with China's vision of an ecological society.

Laurence Tubiana, CEO, European Climate Foundation, spoke on enhancing global climate action and promoting green recovery, saying that the Paris Agreement and various neutrality targets could not have happened without China's leadership. Zou Ji, Energy Foundation China, discussed supportive policies for a new growth logic.



Liu Shijin, CCICED Chinese Chief Advisor

Zhu Baoliang, State Information Center of China, underscored the importance of addressing equality. Jos Delbeke, European University Institute, shared the European Union's experiences with target setting. Xu Huaqing, National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation of China, called for targets informed by the right philosophy and scientific knowledge.

Noting that China would be undertaking the fastest reduction in carbon intensity in history, Wang Tianyi, CEO, China Everbright Environment Group Limited, underscored the importance of improving resilience and green production and consumption.

Nick Mabey, Chief Executive, Third Generation Environmentalism (E3G), highlighted the role of the international system in signaling the kind of investment needed, including through a common 1.5°C goal, stronger rules on adaptation and mitigation, and finance cooperation.

In the discussion of **policy pathways toward carbon neutrality**, Wang Yi discussed institutional arrangements for achieving the dual carbon targets, emphasizing the need to understand the transitional pattern of developing economies. Noting that cities in China also include rural areas, Qiu Baoxing, State Council, addressed the role of cities in achieving carbon neutrality.

Francesco La Camera, Director-General, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), highlighted IRENA's role as a platform for international cooperation on a more energy efficient, resilient, and inclusive world.

Scott Vaughan, CCICED International Chief Advisor, recalled that the spirit of the Paris Agreement is cooperation based on sovereign self-interest.

From Biodiversity to Climate Change: Gathering New Impetus of Global Green Value Chains: This forum, organized by WRI and the Foreign Environmental and Cooperation Center, MEE, was held on Thursday. Moderator Zhai Guiying emphasized that China is strategically important to greening global value chains (VCs).

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, CBD Executive Secretary, said ecosystem-based adaptation is key to increasing resilience and



Erik Berglof, Chief Economist, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

reducing vulnerability of both people and ecosystems facing climate change.

Liu Shijin emphasized the importance of green value chains (GVCs) and called for consideration of green digitalization.

Manish Bapna, NRDC, called soft commodities the leading driver of tropical deforestation worldwide, emphasizing that GVCs are safer and more profitable than traditional VCs and can help ensure VCs are legal.

Aniruddha Dasgupta, WRI, underscored that conserving the world's forests is central to addressing both biodiversity loss and climate change. He said China is at the heart of the world's VCs and is, thus, in a position to steer the world toward greener livelihoods.

In the first session, participants discussed **challenges and opportunities for synergies of global GVCs, and the climate change and biodiversity agendas**. Erik Berglof, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, moderated the session, noting that firms are pressured by shareholders, stakeholders, and regulators to be drivers of efficiency and VC decarbonization. Thus, he said, they are attracted to locating in countries offering green infrastructure.

Craig Hanson, WRI, noted that five “soft commodities”—soy, beef, palm, timber, and paper/pulp—dominate ecosystem loss. He said greening VCs requires changing demand, supply, and infrastructure. He called for companies, associations, institutions, and countries to implement “no conversion” policies, trade agreements, and market signals that encourage legal and sustainable soft commodities with financing and technical assistance for farmers.

David Cooper, CBD, emphasized China's capacity, as the world's biggest economy, to: encourage progressive production policies in countries that are mega-producers of soft commodities; build an alliance of mega-diverse countries; and move the world toward more responsible production and consumption.

Naoko Ishii cited hidden environmental costs, such as rainforest conversion, in VCs. She encouraged China's leadership for solving this dilemma and called for identifying the values of natural capital for adequate pricing.

Jin Wencheng, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, noted China's increasing biodiversity in agriculture but said

carbon emissions now also come from mechanization within this sector. He called for: tradable credits for agriculture sector emissions abatement and biodiversity conservation; mechanisms to monetize agriculture's carbon sink potential; and transition of agrarian civilization toward harmony between humankind and nature.

Balázs Horváth, UNDP, noted ongoing revamping of VCs in food, manufacturing, services, and other sectors. He cited China's potential pivotal role in building a “new normal” compatible with health, human systems, more equality and environmental protection, including through: expanding its regulatory framework; investment policies for developing countries using nature-based solutions; correctly pricing carbon externalities; designing restorative VCs that factor-in reusability; and cross-country collaboration for transparency.

Wang Xuehong, UNFCCC Secretariat, said increased policy coherence between biodiversity and climate change will achieve a win-win solution.

Chen Ming, Deputy Chinese Co-Leader of the SPS on Global GVCs, moderated the second session on **practice and innovation of global GVCs**.

Kathleen McLaughlin, Walmart Inc., outlined her company's work to accelerate progress on climate and nature, noting it aspires to become a regenerative company that takes a circular approach to materials while advancing prosperity and equity.

Xie Zhaoxu, China Quality Certification Centre, highlighted the Centre's work to certify companies and validate the full lifecycle of products.

Marjorie Yang, Chair, Esquel Group, noted that data in the textile industry is scattered and unsystematic. She highlighted the potential for digital technology to reduce barriers to transparency.

Wu Duilin, Dongguan Municipal Bureau of Ecology and Environment, outlined his city's work on pilot projects on GVCs and shared lessons for successful implementation.

Chen Ying, China Chamber of Commerce of Import and Export of Foodstuffs, Native Produce, and Animal By-Products, called for a Chinese government agency to lead research on sustainable VCs. She said sustainable choices should be made by industry instead of being left to consumers.

Diana Yao, BMW Group, recommended: downstream partner contributions to their upstream suppliers' carbon abatement; maximizing the circular economy by minimizing use of materials; science-based and quantifiable sustainability targets, tools to forecast future targets, and monitoring and regular disclosures of progress in implementation; more accessible and less expensive green power for production; and incentives for new technologies, including carbon-free steel-making and carbon abatement technologies.

Fang Li, WRI China, moderated the session on **GVCs in conserving global biodiversity and curbing climate change**.

Hideki Minamikawa urged: strengthening local resilience through nature-based solutions; creating new commons for diverse stakeholder participation in resource management; and constructing business models for giving high value to natural capital.

Sébastien Paquot, European Union Delegation to China, urged embedding pollution pricing into the price of everything consumed. He called for CBD COP 15 to deliver USD 100 billion in financing for biodiversity.

Ye Yanfei, China Banking Regulatory Commission, called for: specific, unambiguous environmental rules for the agriculture sector, including elimination of pesticides and fertilizers; officially recognized certifying bodies; positive incentives for pursuing green certification; and low interest rates for green projects.

Giovanni Ruta, World Bank, called for pricing the use of nature, repurposing subsidies unfavorable to conservation, improving green cash flows by de-risking private investment, formulating rules on disclosing risks, and technical assistance for the corporate sector.

Noting calls for global minimum standards for green products, Zhang Jianping, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Commerce, suggested this is not feasible due to its complexity and said many developing countries could be disadvantaged.

Liu Qiang, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, called for benchmarking against international best practices and noted different targets for biodiversity and climate change.

Moderator Fang Li emphasized the GVC will be a systematic transformation that links supply and demand.

Managing River Areas in Times of Climate Change: This forum was co-moderated by Joyce Ma, The Nature Conservancy, and Hans Mommaas, Director-General, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, and took place on Thursday.

Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm, The Nature Conservancy, called for planning based on scenarios that combine climate and socioeconomic pathways. He said properly managed human intervention could curb water scarcity in river basins.

Ahmed Saeed, Asian Development Bank (ADB), noted key thematic areas of ADB's engagement on this issue, including on: improved water management; biodiversity restoration and conservation; agricultural non-point source pollution control; integrated flood risk and disaster management; data and digital solutions; and private sector investment.

Li Xiaojiang, former Dean, China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, described the evolution of management of the Yangtze River. Citing problems such as eutrophication, water scarcity and environmental degradation, he highlighted efforts to reverse negative trends including by revitalizing industrialized waterfronts and rewilding artificial shorelines.

Jan Hendrik Dronkers, Secretary-General, Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, praised heightened attention to climate change adaptation, said we must work with and not against nature, and called for multi-level collaboration. Hans Mommaas said rivers are "the blood vessels of ecosystems and entire civilizations" and underscored the importance of integrated approaches, governance, and sharing knowledge and good practices. Henk Ovink, Special Envoy for International Water Affairs, the Netherlands, elaborated the advantages of



Scott Vaughan, CCICED International Chief Advisor

nature-based solutions for increased resiliency, biodiversity, and health. Su Jilan, Second Institute of Oceanography, addressed the importance of river health for marine ecosystems, focusing on estuaries as critical habitats for the early life of fish.

Describing China as "the water tower of Asia," Howard Bamsey, Chair, Global Water Partnership, cited river management as central to the achievement of all SDGs and ecological civilization. He stressed the need to include river specialists in the climate change community.

Li Yuanyuan, Ministry of Water Resources, China, highlighted the importance of: integrating river management with socioeconomic and ecological protection; longer timescales for planning; and a balanced approach combining natural and human aspects of issues.

Zafar Makhmudov, Executive Director, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia, spoke about the Centre's work on transboundary river systems, noting the use of information platforms to enhance climate change knowledge, decision making, and coordination.

A team of students, who competed in China's 6th Innovation Competition at Tsinghu University, presented on natural flood management and underscored the role of youth, on-the-ground work with local communities, and comprehensive spatial planning.

Scott Vaughan highlighted: the importance of scenarios given changes and uncertainty; current innovative work on nature-based solutions; and river basins as strong foundations for policy integration.

Plenary: Policy Research Dialogue

On Wednesday, Zhao Yingmin and Liu Shijin co-chaired the policy research dialogue. Scott Vaughan discussed key outcomes of a scoping study on nature-based solutions and said CCICED should continue to prioritize this work. SPS co-leaders introduced the research and findings from each area.

Global Climate Governance and China's Role: Kate Hampton, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, recommended that China: introduce and gradually strengthen an absolute cap on emissions, prioritizing renewable energies; accelerate development of carbon pricing by setting market signals and

promoting green financing; and strengthen international climate diplomacy.

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Conservation: Ma Keping, Chinese Academy of Sciences, recommended: identifying initiatives and actions to maintain high-level momentum; determining how much protected area is needed and where; and elaborating ecological redlining mechanisms.

Global Ocean Governance and Ecological Civilization: Jilan Su, Chinese Academy of Sciences, reported that building a sustainable ocean economy requires governance of sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, and the ocean's future.

Green Urbanization Strategy and Pathways Towards Regional Integrated Development: Zhang Yongsheng emphasized that a green transition will require a development paradigm that is based on carbon neutrality and peaking targets, redefines cities, and considers green rural revitalization.

Scoping Study on Managing River Areas in Times of Climate Change: Jan Bakkes presented preparatory studies on the Yangtze and Rhine basins, noting that an SPS on this issue would be doable and interesting.

Green Transition and Sustainable Social Governance: Ren Yong recommended, *inter alia*: integrating green consumption and production in national legislation; strengthening monitoring and data collection systems; and defining sectoral interventions, starting with the automobile, steel, food, and waste management sectors.

Major Green Technology Innovation and Implementation Mechanisms: Li Xiaojiang stressed the importance of, *inter alia*, reducing consumption and scaling low carbon technologies. Antonia Gawel, WEF, highlighted the need for: a national carbon market; incentivizing technology transformation to achieve a net zero transition; and recognizing subnational governments' role in deploying green technologies.

Green BRI and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Kevin Gallagher, Boston University, recommended, *inter alia*, that China devise a compulsory set of BRI environmental management systems that include risk screening and an assessment framework.

Global Green Value Chains: Manish Bapna said greening global value chains will increase security and support China's

dual circulation economic model and commitment to carbon neutrality.

Green Finance: Zhang Chenghui recommended, *inter alia*: establishing regulatory financial frameworks for nature-positive activities; increasing product selection for green finance; encouraging lenders to use quantitative approaches to better apply standards, assess risk, and determine impacts of green investments; and extending liability for environmental crimes and strengthening enforcement.

Gender Mainstreaming in SPS Research: Kristine St-Pierre, Director, The WPS Group, recommended, *inter alia*: commissioning a gender analysis for each SPS; documenting relevant case studies; and including gender-focused recommendations in each research area.

In subsequent discussions, Richard Florizone, President and CEO, IISD, highlighted the importance of the Council's work on gender and lauded China's leadership on nature-based solutions. Jennifer Morris, CEO, The Nature Conservancy, underscored the importance of ensuring that renewable energy does not undermine biodiversity goals and called for supporting regenerative agriculture.

Dirk Messner, German Environment Agency, highlighted the potential of technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and digitalization to address sustainability challenges. Hideki Minamikawa highlighted the importance of taking a holistic approach to sustainable development and using taxation and economic incentives to encourage green lifestyles.

Zhao Yingmin closed the session, thanking the CCICED members, special advisors, and experts for their gracious support of CCICED.

Plenary: Closing Session

Huang Runqiu, CCICED Chinese Executive Vice Chair, moderated the closing plenary on Thursday. Achim Steiner noted the discussions had identified five goals: collectively scaling up ambition through Chinese leadership; accelerating progress toward green energy, lifestyles, and business, propelled by digitalization; aligning investments with the Paris Agreement goals, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and the SDGs, including eliminating coal investments; pursuing equity, particularly gender equity; and mobilizing resources for nature-based solutions.

Kristin Halvorsen highlighted a proposal that China include a total CO₂ emissions cap in its updated NDC and recommended adding a carbon tax and eliminating all subsidies for activities driving climate change and the destruction of nature.

Erik Solheim said going green no longer pits the economy against the environment. He highlighted China's halt in foreign coal investing, urging abandonment of all foreign coal investments. He said China and other countries and regions can create a green ecological civilization.

Marco Lambertini, called for a global goal aimed at becoming nature-positive by 2030, noting that green investing and development of zero-deforestation supply chains are already embracing nature-positive goals.



Kevin Gallagher, Co-Leader of the Green BRI SPS, Boston University

Kate Hampton supported Chinese leadership on: setting the global path for fulfilling the Paris goals; channeling public investment into green infrastructure; sharing expertise with countries along the BRI for coal phase-out and green technology phase-in; supporting green COVID-19 recovery; contributing to the Paris rulebook and the post-2020 and 2030 agendas; and pursuing carbon neutrality, including through a carbon market, circular economy, and carbon border taxes.

Emphasizing that China can drive down the costs of technologies and of implementing them at scale, Andrew Steer said there should be no trade-off between a healthy economy and smart action on climate and nature.

Jennifer Morris said it is essential for China and the United States to jointly address the existential threats of biodiversity loss and climate change. Stephen Heintz, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, underscored the relationship between China and the United States is the single most important bilateral relationship of this century. He said global peace and progress depends on the two countries' ability to manage differences while cooperating on matters of common interest.

Liu Shijin called for consensus on new drivers of green development, said the green transition should be holistic and forward looking, and called for developing new alternatives before breaking old patterns. Scott Vaughan underscored the importance of public awareness and education and said it is essential to communicate why actions matter using clear, accessible, and concrete language.

CCICED Chair Han Zheng, Vice Premier of the State Council, reiterated the Chinese Government's commitment to building an ecological civilization that facilitates the harmonious coexistence of humankind and nature. He said China will continue working to implement a new development paradigm.

Huang Runqiu called for continued collaboration to make CCICED a leading science-based advisory platform. He closed the meeting at 9:12 pm (UTC+8).

AGM Press Conference

On Friday, 10 September, Zhao Yingmin, CCICED Secretary General and Vice Minister of Ecology and the Environment, chaired a press conference introducing the outcomes of the 2021 AGM, which he said will provide value to the upcoming CBD



Zhao Yingmin, CCICED Secretary General

and UNFCCC COPs and other environment and development-related processes. He announced that over 2500 people attended the AGM sessions either in person or virtually. He detailed Vice Premier Han Zheng's closing plenary speech, noting the Communist Party of China has taken ecology very seriously since its 18th National Congress, held in 2012. Noting the Chinese Government's approval of CCICED's seventh phase, which will commence in 2022, he expressed hope CCICED will continue to contribute to a more beautiful world. He said CCICED's draft 2021 issues report and policy recommendations emanated from nine SPSs on transitioning to a low-carbon era, with in-depth exchanges held in plenary and open fora. He announced further details would be shared on the CCICED website. He emphasized that achieving the SDGs is only possible through green development.

Liu Shijin, CCICED Chinese Chief Advisor, characterized current work as a once-in-a-century transition, saying the four Task Forces had produced the SPSs on topics related to: global ecosystems, including climate change, biodiversity, and pollution control; green urbanization; sustainable production and consumption; and domestic targets/global governance. He outlined the research topics and listed CCICED's thirty policy recommendations for 2021.

Liu Shijin then shared conclusions from the AGM's discussions, including support for: holistic and collaborative green transformation driving China's continuing development; focusing on equitable transition, including industry substitution, employment safeguards, and living standards; and establishing new alternatives before old practices are eliminated.

Scott Vaughan, CCICED International Chief Advisor, noted we are in a different world since the last AGM in 2019, as the world faces a pandemic, an ecological crisis, and economic uncertainty. He underscored that we are seeing the effects of climate change around the world, including through floods, extreme droughts, and deadly heatwaves. However, he said we have the tools and engagement of key economic sectors to seize the task before us. He highlighted four key issues discussed during the week, including: the challenge and complexity of implementing integrated policies; achieving high quality development; designing green technology systems; and applying a gender and equity lens to policymaking. He said international experts are "profoundly excited" about the launch of Phase VII of CCICED's work and noted enormous appreciation for China's leadership on environment and development.

Christoffer Grønstad, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beijing, underscored Norway's commitment to strengthening its cooperation with China and others to: phase out subsidies, which support activities that contribute to climate change; ensure agriculture does not destroy tropical forests and other ecosystems the world depends on; and decarbonize faster.

Bart Pauwels, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in China, underscored the importance of international coordination on river basins and said sharing knowledge and setting common goals can help achieve change. Noting the 2023 UN Water Conference will be the first of its kind since 1977, he expressed

hope that CCICED would position itself to contribute work on water challenges and adaptation.

Zou Ji, CEO and President, Energy Foundation China, emphasized that CCICED is playing an increasingly instrumental role in supporting China's work on global environmental governance. He called for: upgrading CCICED's role to focus on both regional and international issues; increasing the frequency of its public communications; and helping young people build international circles of friends, saying this would be a strategic investment in our long-term cooperation.

Joyce Ma, The Nature Conservancy, underscored that CCICED can contribute innovative, strategic, and holistic solutions to global environmental issues, citing the concept of nature-based solutions as an important instrument for responding to the biodiversity crisis and climate change.

Thanking speakers for their comments, Zhao Yingmin emphasized that CCICED is an inclusive, open platform for international cooperation and the exchange of ideas.

Introduction of SPS Research Outcomes

On Friday afternoon, CCICED Chief Advisors Liu Shijin and Scott Vaughan co-chaired a session introducing the SPS research outcomes. The Co-Leaders of the SPS teams presented the findings and recommendations of their projects. In his introductory remarks, Liu Shijin praised the international collaboration and achievements of the SPS teams over the past year, underscoring the diversity of topics, teams, and approaches under the SPS programme.

Kate Hampton, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, presented on the SPS on **Global Climate Governance and China's Role**, highlighting collaboration since 2018 to provide decision-making analysis on implementing the Paris Agreement for China and the rest of the world. She referred to the momentum provided by the recent announcement of China's 2030 and 2060 climate targets. She summarized the project's five key recommendations relating to: gradually establishing and

enhancing an absolute carbon emission cap nationally, regionally and sectorally; actively carrying out deep decarbonization efforts in key industries; building a new zero- and low-carbon power generation paradigm; accelerating carbon pricing, carbon market and carbon finance mechanisms; and strengthening international cooperation.

Gao Jixi, Satellite Environment Center, MEE, summarized the SPS on **Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Conservation**, focusing on crucial elements of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework expected to be adopted at CBD COP 15. He stressed the importance of updating Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 on protected areas, and outlined the differing likely effects between a 30% and a 50% protected area target. He then summarized China's Ecological Conservation Redline delimitation method, and suggested how it could be optimized (e.g., to further include carbon sinks in protected areas), and how the method could be used by other countries now that it has been digitalized in cooperation with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). He referred to the cross-cutting nature of biodiversity, the need for its mainstreaming in other sectors, and the importance of gender equality for future conservation efforts.

Jan-Gunnar Winther, Norwegian Polar Institute, presented the **Global Ocean Governance and Ecological Civilization SPS**, noting the goal is to have ecosystem-based marine protection and management, and integrated governance. Among the tasks identified in the SPS, he highlighted the establishment of a sustainable fisheries policy based on the best available climate change science, and addressing marine pollution by, among other things, improving ecological environmental monitoring. Saying that "no action is not an option," he stressed: the ocean's role in achieving carbon neutrality; the need to safeguard its role as a major food source; ecosystem- and knowledge-based ocean management; and promoting a healthy ocean and a blue economy.

Zhang Yongsheng, Research Institute for Eco-civilization, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, summarized the SPS on **Green Urbanization Strategy and Pathways Towards Regional Integrated Development**. He noted that now the context for green urbanization is carbon neutrality, which requires changes in both production and consumption. Among the tasks identified in the SPS, he referred to urban renewal of cities based on a redefined notion of urbanization, involving not just creating parks in cities, but "building cities in parks." He also underscored the importance of: focusing on cities in terms of their community functions and sustainability rather than their size; and green rural revitalization beyond the traditional urban/rural divide, including non-agricultural activities.

Regarding **Green Transition and Sustainable Social Governance**, Ren Yong, Environmental Development Center, MEE, said one of the main conclusions of this SPS was that China's 14th Five-Year Plan has entered a "deep green transition period featuring green consumption and production patterns moving into a substantive stage of practice." He welcomed China's anti-food waste law and, citing the automotive and steel industry as examples, noted the usefulness of green



Gao Jixi, Co-Leader, SPS on Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Conservation, and Director-General, Satellite Environment Center, MEE, China

tax reform and green design and certification. As key policy recommendations, he highlighted, *inter alia*: formulating comprehensive green development policies; encouraging normalization of low-carbon work patterns; taking a full lifecycle approach; and developing guidelines and indicators.

Further elaborating on this SPS, Zhang Jianyu, BRI International Green Development Coalition and BRI Green Development Institute, drew attention to the role of digitalization, incentives, and taxation in encouraging greener lifestyles. He also stressed the need to address the whole supply chain holistically and systematically.

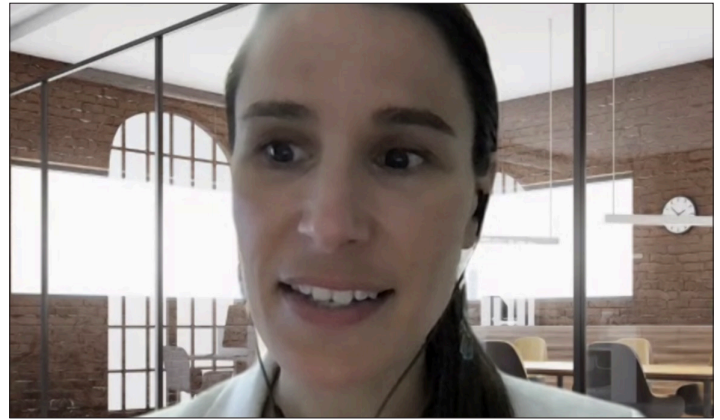
Li Xiaojiang presented on the SPS on **Major Green Technology Innovation and Implementation Mechanisms**.

He stressed how green technological innovation and green consumer choices must complement each other in decarbonizing urban communities, and explained how varying demographics, household structures and income levels make for different levels of energy consumption. He argued that low-carbon living needs an integrated and inclusive approach, with a strong role for women and a strong focus on children and the elderly. He concluded that supportive government policies are needed to provide enabling conditions for a green lifestyle.

Kevin Gallagher, Boston University, presented on the **Green BRI and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. He described how the Chinese Government is already attaching great importance to eco-environmental protection in its overseas investments. He compared the relevance of China's investment to that of the World Bank, noting that China's 2021 Green Development Guidelines for Overseas Investment and Cooperation are comparable to those of international development finance institutions. He recommended that the core principles of these guidelines be made compulsory to provide greater certainty for host countries and other actors. For financial institutions, he recommended the adoption of hierarchical classifications and exclusionary lists for BRI projects to avoid very high-risk projects.

Manish Bapna, NRDC, summarized the SPS on **GVCs**. He called soft commodities the leading driver of tropical deforestation worldwide and emphasized China's market power given it is top-ranked for the import of major soft commodities. He explained that in times of disruption, such as natural disasters or the current pandemic, GVCs are safer and more profitable than traditional VCs. He further stressed that GVCs ensure that emerging sustainability regulations are respected and pointed to new monitoring and tracking technologies which make due diligence more feasible. He identified priorities for promoting GVCs through China's policy and regulatory framework. He expressed hope the global community will use the upcoming series of high-level UN conferences to shift further towards GVCs.

Zhang Chenghui, Institute of Finance, Development Research Center of the State Council, presented the SPS on **Green Finance**, which addressed financing for ecological restoration and promoting the involvement of financial institutions in eco-



Kristine St-Pierre, Expert, Report on Gender Mainstreaming in SPS Research

restoration and biodiversity. She highlighted recommendations to: advance nature-positive principles in practice; encourage institutional investors to practice eco-protective finance; promote innovation in financial instruments for ecological protection; advance the green transformation of China's agricultural subsidies; and advance China's innovation in biodiversity sovereign debt instruments.

The **Scoping Study on Managing River Areas in Times of Climate Change** was jointly presented by: Yang Bo, The Nature Conservancy; Renato Paes de Almeida, University of São Paulo, Brazil; and Jim Best, University of Illinois, US. They said that integrated river basin management is not only essential to climate change adaptation but also presents a key opportunity for new governance practices, and that China can be a global leader in river basin sustainability. They emphasized the need for a holistic approach, governance, and inclusion, as well as for data and monitoring of integrated efforts. They outlined five guiding principles as a framework for future studies: assume responsibilities all the way from headwaters to coastal seas; plan on a long timescale; engage all with a shared vision; adapt to climate change and other stressors in every aspect of river management; and ensure continuous innovation in methods, policy, finance, and management.

Kristine St-Pierre, Director, The WPS Group, presented the report on **Gender Mainstreaming in SPS Research**, noting this had been identified as a research priority and cross-cutting theme for all SPS areas. She drew attention to the recognition of the intersection of gender and environment and highlighted some of the best practices from the SPS research, including: conducting a gender analysis; mainstreaming gender equity awareness and action; recognizing the key role women play as stakeholders and agents of change; including a gender-focused case study; and including gender-focused recommendations.

In closing, Vaughan thanked participants and underscored the importance of international cooperation so well exemplified by CCICED.

Upcoming Meetings

UN Food Systems Summit: As part of the UN Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs by 2030, the Food Systems Summit aims to provide a platform for ambitious new actions, innovative solutions, and plans to transform food systems and leverage these shifts to deliver progress across all of the SDGs. It will be held

during the UN General Assembly to set the stage for global food systems transformation. **date:** 23 September 2021 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/en/food-systems-summit

First Part of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD

COP15): The first part of CBD COP15, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are scheduled to take place in a virtual format with limited onsite presence of delegates from embassies and organizations based in China. The first part will include the opening of the meetings and will address agenda items that have been identified by the Bureau as essential for continuing operations of the Convention and its Protocols, including the budget. There will also be a High-level Segment on 12 and 13 October. **dates:** 11-15 October 2021 **location:** Kunming, China, and online **www:** cbd.int/meetings/COP-15

UNFCCC COP 26: COP 26, the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 16), and the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 3) will convene a year after the conference was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **dates:** 1-12 November 2021 **location:** Glasgow, Scotland, UK **www:** unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/glasgow-climate-change-conference

61st meeting of the GEF Council: The Council, the GEF's main governing body, meets twice annually to develop, adopt, and evaluate the operational policies and programmes for GEF-financed activities. It also reviews and approves the Work Program (projects submitted for approval). **dates:** 7-9 December 2021 **location:** Washington, D.C., US **www:** www.thegef.org/council-meetings/gef-61st-council-meeting

Resumed Sessions of the CBD Subsidiary Bodies and WG-3 on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: The resumed sessions of SBSTTA-24, SBI-3 and the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework are scheduled to reconvene as face-to-face meetings and address outstanding issues with respect to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. **dates:** 12-28 January 2022 (TBC) **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** cbd.int/meetings

Resumed Fifth Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2): Convening under the theme, "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the SDGs," UNEA-5.2 will provide a platform for discussing and implementing nature-based solutions that contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, by holistically addressing its social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Building on the online session in February 2021, the meeting will discuss ways to ensure that policies for economic recovery following COVID-19 lead to a resilient and inclusive post-pandemic world. A special session of UNEA to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of UNEP

will be held for two days (3-4 March 2022). **dates:** 28 February – 4 March 2022 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** unep.org/environmentassembly/

Second Part of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15): The second part of CBD COP 15, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are scheduled to reconvene in a face-to-face meeting in Kunming, China. COP 15 is expected to take a final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as decisions on related topics, including capacity building and resource mobilization. **dates:** 25 April – 8 May 2022 **location:** Kunming, China **www:** cbd.int/meetings/

For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org/

Glossary

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AGM	Annual General Meeting
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCUS	carbon capture, utilization and storage
COP	Conference of the Parties
CCICED	China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development
CICERO	Center for International Climate and Environmental Research
EDF	Environmental Defense Fund
GVCs	green value chains
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
MEE	Ministry of Ecology and Environment
NDC	nationally determined contribution
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission
NRDC	Natural Resources Defense Council
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPS	Special Policy Study
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VCs	value chains
WEF	World Economic Forum
WRI	World Resources Institute
WWF	World Wildlife Fund/World Wide Fund for Nature