Part 2.
CCICED 20th Anniversary Open Forum

The Luck of China

Special Speech at CCICED 20th Anniversary Forum

Song Jian, Former State Councilor of China and Chairperson of CCICED Phase I

I am very happy to attend CCICED 20 Anniversary Forum today. Twenty years ago when CCICED was established, I had the honor of establishing CCICED with my colleagues and friends. Today, I feel delighted when I see the colleagues who had worked with us in that year. Twenty years have passed. How time flies! CCICED has now become a model for international cooperation with an important role in China's environment and development. We feel gratified for it.

The establishment and development of CCICED goes along with the historical progress of the environment and development of China. We celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 1911 Revolution this year. In modern times, the Chinese people suffered from poverty and lagging behind over the past 100 odd years due to invasion, civil war, and natural and man-made calamities: we used to be called "the sick man of East Asia". A new development era has commenced since 1949 when the People's Republic of China was established and in particular since the early 1980s. Aimed at economic growth and sustainable development, China has taken measures such as the development of productivity, elimination of poverty and plagues, population control, protection of the environment, fighting against pollution and the acts damaging environment and has achieved national rejuvenation and social progress under the special national conditions of a huge population and lack of resources. As a result, the Chinese people can live in a Xiaokang society with decent life.

30 years ago, the Chinese Government clearly knew that we had neither experience nor sufficient knowledge in terms of sustainable development. We needed the guidance from relevant departments of the United Nations and the kind help of foreign countries and prominent and worthy personage. CCICED was established just under this background. The cause of China has obtained the sympathy and support of UN and foreign friends. The government of foreign countries, in particular the Canadian Government, generously

provides great financial support, contributing to the 20-year success of CCICED.

The historic role of CCICED and valuable policy recommendations of experts and friends have played an important role in shifting the development path of China. This is the luck of China. All these have been recorded in history, and reflected in current laws and regulations or in the National Archives. The Chinese people and future generations will remember and appreciate the deep friendships of relevant foreign governments and international friends.

In its early stage, CCICED recommended that China closely combine environmental protection with economic and social development policy, and also establish a resource pricing evaluation system including environmental resources to change the exceedingly low price of natural resources and minimize the waste of resources during production and consumption. This recommendation became an important factor for China to identify its price for resource products and plays an important role in raising resource efficiency. Second, China has learned a wide range of advanced ideas and successful experiences of foreign countries, which have been reflected in almost all CCICED projects.

As an international cooperation mechanism, CCICED has greatly promoted the environment and development of China. In the beginning of 1990s, China surged ahead in the fight against environmental pollution. CCICED set up task forces on topics such as energy strategy and technology, pollution control, monitoring and information collection, development of science & technology as well as training, resource valuation, environmental economic and pricing policy and conservation of biodiversity in time. Experts and scholars with profound knowledge and rich experience served as chairs of CCICED task forces. They have designed national policies with the big picture of systematic science that goes beyond the limit of pure remedy measures for environmental protection. As a result, China has mainstreamed environmental protection into a development process at a relatively early stage, which greatly strengthened the voice of environmental protection in the national development process and shortened the required period for China to explore the coordinated development path for the environment and development.

In the 20th century, China has controlled population growth, eradicated hunger and overcome plagues with an evidently higher living standard. In the 21st century, aiming to reach the living standard of intermediately developed countries, China has a hard task with a lot of difficulties. Now, China clearly states that it will take scientific development as the theme and transformation of economic development mode as the main line to guide and facilitate its future development. Correct handling of the relations between the environment and development is an important component of this theme and main line. The Outline of the

"12th Five-Year Plan" for National Economic and Social Development" clearly states that China will focus on the development of a resource-saving and environment-friendly society and the transformation of economic development mode. Under this new situation, people hope that CCICED will play a stronger and more important role. That is, it will put forward policy recommendations on effective approaches to the development of resource-saving and environment-friendly society in China. In my view, China is still faced with a dilemma; all 1.34 billion people want a good life with access to electricity, air-conditioning, enough food and clothes as well as convenient transportation. The overall demands will be huge. It is expected that CO_2 emissions will exceed that of the United States with a lot pressure on water resources, grain and energy. How do we solve the problem? How can man live in harmony with nature? Some suggest that in the 21st century China should limit its population down to 1 billion, restrict consumption, or stop burning coals and so on. We look forward to new ideas and policy recommendations from CCICED, taking China as its case. Once it is successful, the experience of China will be extended to other countries in the world, which will serve as a reference for the promotion of sustainable development of the world.

China expects that its population will stop growth at 1.5 billion. The resources and space of China are sufficient to support 1.5 billion people. It is expected that an industrialized and modern China will stand out in the east in the next 50 years.

China is always with you.

Taking this opportunity, I once again express my sincere thanks to all Chinese and international colleagues and friends who have made contributions to CCICED!

Sharing the Achievements, Embracing the Future

Summary Speech at CCICED 20th Anniversary Forum

Zhou Shengxian,
Executive Vice Chairperson of CCICED and MEP Minister

Members, experts, ladies & gentlemen, friends,

The 20th anniversary of CCICED is a big event in the environmental protection history of China. In the history of the world environment and development cause, the environment and development cause of China has basically maintained the same pace with that of the world. During this process, "two surging 20 years" deserve review, and CCICED is closely linked to the second 20-year period.

The first 20-year period was from the 1972 United Nations Conference on Environment to 1992. The Chinese Government sent a delegation to attend the United Nations Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. The conference adopted the famous Declaration of United Nations Conference on Human Environment; it quoted the statement of Chairman Mao Zedong: "Man constantly has to sum up past experience and go on discovering, inventing, creating and advancing". This was the first time when environmental protection of China joined the international environment and development tide. Not long after, China held its First National Conference on Environmental Protection, which put forward the 32-character long guiding principle for environmental protection, that is to "make an overall plan and rational distribution, comprehensively use resources and turn disadvantages into benefits, rely on the people to protect the environment and bring benefits to the nation". This officially opened the prologue to environmental protection of our country. The Second National Conference on Environmental Protection held in 1983 took environmental protection as a basic national policy in our country, which indicated the strategic position of environmental protection at a national level.

The second 20-years range is from the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development to now. The Chinese Government officially approved the establishment of

CCICED in April of 1992. In June of 1992, Premier Li Peng heading the Chinese Government Delegation attended the United National Conference on Environment and Development. The environmental protection current of China once again joined with the world environment and development tide, and sustainable development became the long-term national strategy and action plan of the Chinese Government. After that, the joint efforts of our government, people and CCICED have greatly facilitated environmental protection entering the main platform, main line and large arena of national economic and social development with continuous progress and achievements.

CCICED has developed a unique brand attracting high attention at home and abroad over the past 20 years. Each year, the Premier of the State Council meets CCICED Members and directly listens to their policy recommendations that cover a series of key issues in the field of environment and development as well as many practical issues on environmental problems of China in the region and the whole world. The Vice Premier or State Councilor of the State Council in charge of environmental protection serves as Chairman of CCICED and presents an important speech at the CCICED AGM each year; this is unique in the whole world. Maintaining vigor and vitality, the direct dialogue mechanism of CCICED is long in history, high in level and big in influence and attracts high attention at home and abroad, while receiving good feedback.

CCICED has put forward a series of policy recommendations with profound influence over the past 20 years. With the international environment and development trend as the background and based on policy demands of Chinese environment and development, CCICED has carried out nearly 100 policy research projects in areas such as pollution control, circular economy, eco-compensation mechanism, environmental governance and environmental economic policy. Many experts have been invited to conduct studies, over 140 policy research reports have been completed and over 200 pieces of policy recommendations have been put forward, which have attracted high attention of the Chinese Government and have been turned into action. For example, based on the findings of a study on eco-compensation mechanism, ecosystem service and management strategy, CCICED put forward the policy recommendation on establishing an eco-compensation mechanism and developing a national strategy for ecological conservation and development. At present, the Regulations on Eco-compensation in China is under development. Here is another example, the policy recommendations of CCICED on encouraging clean production and developing national industrial, financial, taxation and monetary policies to facilitate the development of circular economy have strongly facilitated the release of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Promotion of Clean Production and the Law of the People's

Republic of China on Promotion of Circular Economy. Yet another example, the CCICED Task Force on Trade and Environment suggested that the automobile industry of China should introduce the Euro Ⅱ~Ⅳ emission standard. The Chinese Government has adopted this policy recommendation and carried out national Grade Ⅱ~Ⅳ emission standards which are equivalent to the Euro Ⅱ~Ⅳ standard. Many policy recommendations of CCICED have made evident achievements in China and will keep on playing their active role.

CCICED has developed a successful international environment cooperation and partnership in the past 20 years. Up to now, a total of 1000 Chinese and international experts and scholars from different fields, disciplines and backgrounds have taken part in CCICED research and developed good and effective cooperative relations. The government of more than 20 countries, international organizations and institutions, and international non-profit organizations provide CCICED with financial support in several ways. Adhering to an open and practical spirit, and adopting a unique perspective and service for decision making, CCICED has turned into a platform where China and the international community interact and learn from each other in the field of environment and development. It has become a bridge for international cooperation on environment and development over the past years.

Members and experts,

China now enters a new development stage of rapid industrialization, urbanization and agricultural modernization. Striving for steady economic development while protecting the environment is a dilemma for us, it tests our wisdom and capacity. The Outline of the "12th Five-Year Plan" for National Economic and Social Development" describes the blueprint for the development of the economy and environmental protection cause of China in the next five years. The Suggestions of the State Council on Strengthening Major Work on Environmental Protection released not long ago clearly require that we adhere to environmental protection during economic development and economic development during environmental protection and actively explore a new path to environmental protection that is small in cost, sound in benefits, low in emission and sustainable in development. There is a bright future and a hard task for environmental protection and economic development in China. Therefore, China is still in urgent need of policy recommendations and intellectual support from CCICED.

The Chinese Government approved the establishment of CCICED Phase V in July this year. This shows full affirmation of our government to CCICED and demonstrates the determination and will of China in sustaining CCICED. I hope that the new phase of CCICED will give full play to its advantage of intense wisdom and talents as well as its

international perspective and successfully carry out key research projects identified by CCICED Phase V. I would like to put forward the following suggestions for your reference.

First, focusing on further uplifting the development of ecological civilization, CCICED should deepen its study on the objectives, key elements and hot issues of a new path to environmental protection and better serve the environment and development cause of China.

Second, focusing on key issues and challenges for transformational development of economy and society of China, CCICED should carry out strategic and projecting studies and put forward policy recommendations that meet the national conditions of China with important guidance.

Third, focusing on issues such as reduction of total discharge, trade of emission rights, pollution control, environmental management, degradation of ecosystems and protection of biodiversity, CCICED should carry out relevant studies and put forward more specific and feasible policy recommendations.

Fourth, focusing on environmental problems such as heavy metals pollution, chemicals and hazardous waste, POPs, ozone, mercury and indoor pollution, CCICED should study countermeasures and early warning approaches.

Members and experts,

The 20th anniversary of CCICED links the past to the future, I hope that CCICED continues its research and innovation, writes new chapters and contributes to the bright future of China and the world.

Finally, I wish a complete success of the CCICED 20th Anniversary Forum!

TOWARDS RIO + 20: Seizing the Opportunities for a Sustainable 21st Century

Keynote Speech at CCICED 20th Anniversary Forum

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director, Member of CCICED Phase II, III and IV

(November 17, 2011)

Dr. Song Jian, Vice Chairpersons, Dear Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Anniversaries are very special moments and I think to all of you who are in this hall today and in the company of the founding fathers and mothers of the China Council, at a time when the world in many ways was still thinking about environment in very different terms than it is today, I would like to begin by paying my tribute to you. Because I think you have assembled in this hall here, not only from outside of China but also from within China, as pioneers in trying to change our appreciation of what it means to manage our environment more responsibly and sustainably but also to realize that there is a progression that we have also traveled, which is reflected in the history of the China Council itself.

Before I try to speak to a few of those, let me also just refer to some of the anniversaries that Doctor Song Jian also just referred to. In some ways you could say with Rio+20 next year this is also China Council Plus Twenty, because you are on the verge of opening the fifth cycle of its work. It is also just before Rio, which is a conference that in 1992 did change the conversation about development. I emphasize development because environment already then had become a driver as had the priority to address poverty and inequity. It was perhaps the first global articulation of an understanding that development cannot only be measured by economic indicators alone, that growth, even in the form of a GDP indicator defines only one dimension of development and even that dimension, as we know today, somewhat imperfectly. It is also the anniversary, as Doctor Song Jian referred to, of pioneers who in 1972 began that conversation at the global level in Stockholm, which subsequently also led to the establishment of the institution that I have the privilege to head

today, the United Nations Environment Programme. We will be celebrating the 40th Anniversary next year.

If you look back over this period, then in many ways the evolution and the history of the China Council reflects also the journey of learning and appreciation that the global community has passed through: not always in synchronicity, but certainly in many similar steps. The environmental agenda at its earlier stage was one of beginning to realize destruction in the immediate vicinity of where we lived, worked, and conducted our daily business. It was driven by a realization that the kind of pollution and habitat destruction that we were basically taking as a given in the development process was beginning to harm people, literally kill people. That is why the early age of the environmental agenda was more focused on a clean-up agenda. Subsequently, as science began to open up our understanding and our eyes, to not only the local phenomena of environmental destruction and its impacts on human well-being, but also to the fact that increasingly it became obvious that at the end of the twentieth century, humanity had managed in less than a 150 years to move from being an added biological actor in the broader eco-system, to becoming such a dominant player that we were beginning to affect the fundamental life support systems on the planet. That conscienceousness I think has been central to understanding also the incredibly rapid evolution of the environmental agenda over the last twenty years. From the atmosphere to the biosphere, to our land resources and water resources, to our oceans and fishery resources, it is an extraordinary conquest of mankind, as it would have been called perhaps thirty years ago, and today perhaps of humanity's footprint on the planet.

I often use the image of a world map where you have the world's oceans and then tell people that we have succeeded in less than 100 years to affect the resources in our world's oceans to such an extent that first of all, the oceans are warming. We are confronted with thermal expansion as a result of global warming, we are affecting the ice caps of the planet resulting in, according to the latest research, probably a sea-level rise this century of close to a meter if not more, and just a few years ago we thought the range was more like 20 centimeters to 50 centimeters. And remarkably we have managed to affect the world's fisheries to such an extent, that well over half of the world's fisheries are already at maximum level of exploitation, are declining, or are on the verge of doing so.

We face issues of food security and continue to practice agriculture in a way that historians will one day say "how blind could a society be?" Because as we try to discuss how we will try and feed those 7, 9, 10 and, low and behold, perhaps one day 15 billion people, the net balance of our agricultural systems on the planet is that we are destroying

the very foundation, the production factor called land at an unprecedented scale. Desalinization, decertification, land degradation and loss of arable soils have reached a level never before found in terms of human impact on the planet. This in part I think is the backdrop which has informed us with the scientific knowledge and also the appreciation of the empirical foundations to understand what the collective impact on the planet is, to take the environmental agenda to another level.

We have begun to talk about eco-systems, about the atmosphere, about the bio-sphere, we have looked at diversity and we have begun to appreciate that a single species may seem nothing particularly important to an ignorant human being, but to an informed and educated human being at the beginning of the twenty first century, the meaning of species extinction has taken on a very different dimension. And yet, we are going through perhaps the greatest extinction crisis in human memory and certainly in geological terms right now. This is also a reason why I believe, as we meet this year here at the China Council, we have had a conversation about the environmental aspects of development, that has progressed, that has matured, and that has taken on an entirely different dimension. We have begun to understand that at the beginning of the twenty first century, the environmental dimension of sustainable development is increasingly becoming a defining element of development, rather than a resource simply to drive it. And that is why the conversations that we have had, and I think the world has also learned through the China Council, we have learned much faster how closely linked the notions of sustainable development, social and environmental terms truly are.

As we prepare to meet in Rio next year, what is evident is that the world has articulated a paradigm for development that is highly intelligent, that links and recognizes the linkages between social equity, environmental sustainability and economic development. And we have had, and this is often difficult to explain to a world when we put the statistics of the state of the planet out, an extraordinary two decades of innovation, exploration, new ideas, new technologies, and new practices emerging. But at the end of the day, twenty years after Rio, twenty-one years after the China Council first met, we have not succeeded in really practicing what we set out for the world in 1992, and that is to manage sustainable development as three dimensional, and not as separate pillars that for much of the twentieth century were essentially in competition with one another, and almost followed a chronology of development: first economics, then social, then environmental. The fact is that many who paid the price for this are not around to tell the story because millions have been killed in the name of that logic of competition between the pillars, in every country of the world all the time.

What I think is so extraordinary about the China Council is what it has become: one of the places, one of the spaces, one of the platforms of the world. I said this yesterday already in our Council, where our conversation about development has matured over twenty years speaks to the challenge and the opportunity of the twenty first century and humanity. In yesterday's and the previous day's discussions, in terms of the task forces and directions for the future of China's development, there is a quality of thinking analysis and conversation that you will find in few other places around the world. A lot of it has to do with the people you assemble in the council, and Mr. Zhou, you have continued a tradition of inviting to the council people who will articulate innovation with responsibility, but also with an ambition to think about development differently. We have also begun to appreciate, from China's own reflections and evolution of thinking, a vision of development that is at this point in time in the new Five-Year Plan that is really quite remarkable, because it is one of the few if not the only nation that views its own development in the short term against the backdrop of a civilizational challenge. You have articulated in China the litmus test and the criteria for short term development planning in terms of the five year cycle against the backdrop of a vision of ecological civilization. To some in the world at large, hard-nosed economists, financial market operators, politicians who have to go to elections every four years or five years, this concept may seem sometimes abstract.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, next year as we meet again in Rio, we do indeed have to confront the fact that we identified a civilizational challenge in 1992, but we have not yet found a response to meet that challenge, even in 2012. Because with all the great things that have happened in the context of sustainable development over the last twenty years and some would say thirty of forty years, the harsh bottom line is that on basically all of the major indicators of sustainability on this planet, the world is not headed in the right direction. In some respects, the world actually is accelerating in the wrong direction, whether it is carbon emissions, whether it is the world's oceans and fisheries I referred to, whether it is the challenge of feeding a hungry world, whether it is recognizing that in already 8 years time roughly one third of humanity will live in water stressed situations, or whether it is the spectrum of climate change and its, in some respects, still difficult to appreciate implications, which we will continue to debate until perhaps the "Bangkoks" are flooded every second year in 25 cities, instead of just one or two as it is right now. When almost half a nation is flooded as we saw in Pakistan last year, is this not a moment where you would expect the world to say "well maybe the IPCC is right, even if it doesn't know everything and it makes mistakes". Isn't that enough of a reason to look at a dramatic change of direction? I think the world is beginning to reach that point and that is also why

the terminology with which we now discuss sustainable development, here in the Council and worldwide is characterized increasingly by terms such as "transformation". I think we are at a point where the concept of planetary boundaries has given us a better understanding in the last two years about what we actual mean by what a planet can sustain, that these planetary boundaries are now coming so close to the actual footprint of humanity's economic actions that transformation is called for.

Next year's conference in Rio is in many ways trying to catch up with the China Council, I think, has articulated many of these issues over the last few years. In that sense Minister Zhou, I would only encourage you, as you also referred to this morning Margaret, to seize the opportunity of bringing some of the lessons of China Council's thinking to Rio. The world would benefit from it, not in terms of a Chinese model or in terms of Chinese leadership, but because of the thinking that this Council has fostered in this council over a period of two decades.

As many of you know, the summit in Rio is in a sense happening against the backdrop of exactly the opposite of what the summit is about. We are confronted by financial crises, banking crises, Arab Springs, natural catastrophes and in many ways lots of excuses for focusing on the short term rather than the long term. It was my colleague Juan Somavia, the head of the International Labour Organization, who during the financial crisis of three years ago continued to remind us that actually, there was a crisis before the crisis. That crisis before the crisis I just tried to describe in terms of a few more environmentally focused parameters, but they have their equivalent also in the social and inequity reality of this world. If we look at Rio next year, then many might say "well what can a summit on sustainable development in the year 2012 really achieve?" Perhaps we need to rethink the way we look at sustainable development, not as something that is a destination in the future, which is really the psychology of 1992, but that has become an imperative of the now in order to have a future.

In that sense, the thematic focus of the Rio conference next year, first of all in the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication is not about some distant vision about an alternative future, but it is a dramatic reflection on the need for transformation, but also a recognition that the age where individual nations and communities could determine their own well-being by determining what happens within their boundaries is long gone. Our world is condemned for the better or for the worse, to have to act collectively, and that is a fundamental principle that in some ways needs to be rediscovered. Because having now served for five years as a Senior Staff Member of the United Nations, I can tell you that I think the confidence in multinaturalism in general, but

also the belief in the ability of the United Nations to be a critical part of facilitating that collective capacity, is not at its highest level.

We are a world divided. We are a world also lacking in common objectives and purpose and orientation. We define our abilities to act by the actions of others and that in historic and civilizational terms has often been a tragic error. Whether it is in climate change negotiations in the WTO or any other forum, the notion that you move first before I move has become a recipe for paralysis. That paralysis also cements the inequity of the legacy and the present. But worst of all, it deprives us of the ability to act with a responsibility for the future.

That is why in Rio, I think there is a moment where we must ask ourselves, that is the second focus of the conference, how to govern together as a community of seven billion people divided into 193 nations, into hundreds of languages, into thousands of agendas, and into tens of thousands of reasons why my particular interests should come first. It is a moment that is civilizational in terms of the responsibility to govern, to govern with a responsibility and understanding that no nation today on its own is able to chart its own course. It is why we will look both at governance in general, the institutional framework for sustainable development we have at our disposal today, but also more specifically at the international environmental governance framework.

Here again I think the evolution of the discussion at global level shadows and reflects the discussion here in China. Many of us have been witnesses to China's decision to establish a Ministry of Environmental Protection, and many of us have had the privilege and the pleasure to work under this exceptional and dynamic Minister, Minister Zhou, its first head and a champion and pioneer for the next generation of environmental action and policy-making in China. This environmental policy-making is increasingly becoming more than just putting norms and standards and regulations in place, it is more than monitoring, it is more than enforcement; it is beginning to inform the discourse about the future opportunities and options of a nation. That is why I think we are so privileged as members of the Council, as experts, as academics and advisors to this Council to follow this discussion, because both the discussion about the transformation agenda in China and its own pathway in terms of an institutional and governance agenda have mirrored the pathway of the world. But I would suggest to you today on the occasion of this twentieth anniversary, as I have sometimes said perhaps for those who do not understand where sustainability and sustainable development agenda will move next, look to China, because here we see both the choices, dramatic choices, but also the sense of opportunity and responsibility to act.

Again in Rio, we will also reflect to some extent another issue that I have alluded to.

That is this notion of global action: the idea of introducing sustainable development goals as a framework within which the international community can look at, while monitoring and moving forward the development agenda over the coming decade is currently being discussed. I personally think it is a very interesting proposition because it recognizes that the problems, as we viewed them perhaps twenty years ago, of development, population growth, and developing countries arriving in the global economy as consumers, producers, polluters, providers and increasingly also sustainers of the global economy have shifted the entire focus of global action. In a workshop recently when we looked forward to the future role and function of the United Nations, there was a very interesting remark made by one of our colleagues. We have viewed in the last twenty years the main challenge for the world being located or centered in the global South, perhaps the world needs to begin to realize that as it looks forward there are a growing number of indicators that in fact the greatest challenge for the next twenty or thirty years may increasingly be located in the global North. That in itself begins to redefine also the parameters for global action, and it will make tectonic shifts occur in the way that we have defined and divided the world and also the multilateral agenda for the last twenty years. There is perhaps no longer that clear line between North and South, developing and developed country. There will be other alliances. There will be other realities. But certainly in looking forward, recognizing that sustainability is now really a global responsibility and one that must be acted on collectively will hopefully find its expression, also in this notion of sustainable development goals.

Doctor Song Jian, Minister Zhou, distinguished guests,

Let me end my remarks this afternoon by thanking you for giving me the opportunity to be part of this celebration here, to have served on the China Council for two periods and also to say on behalf of many of my colleagues in the United Nations system, how much we appreciate the work that all of you have done, that we have tried to contribute to, and that we hope very much that in the next phase of this Council the kinds of ideas, perspectives and lessons learned will increasingly also shape our global agenda.

Thank you.

Environment and Development of China: Opportunities and Challenges

Keynote speech at CCICED 20th Anniversary Forum

Qu Geping, Former Chairperson of Environment Protection and Resources Conservation Committee, National People's Congress; Former Administrator of National Environmental Protection Agency; Vice Chairperson of CCICED Phase I, II and III

Members, ladies and gentlemen,

I am very happy to attend CCICED 20th Anniversary Forum today and share with all old and new friends the advancement of the environment and development of China over the past 20 years as well as the future opportunities and challenges.

The Chinese Government approved the establishment of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (hereinafter referred to as CCICED) two months before the Rio UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. CCICED held its First Annual general Meeting on April 19, 1992. This marks the new stage of environment and development progress of China and its synchronization with international pace in this field.

I. China sets up important policy discussion platform under a grave environmental situation

The 1980s and 1990s was a period of rapid development of township enterprises, increasing environmental pollution in some regions, acceleration of industrial development, fast growth of resource consumption and a preeminent environmental pollution problem. The environmental situation of China is very serious due to the development of pollution from point sources to linear and non-point sources. The Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 called for the establishment of a global partnership for the achievement of sustainable development and the assistance from developed countries to

help developing countries solve their problems and conflicts in environment and development. Therefore, whether it's large scale control of environmental pollution or exploration of sustainable development at a higher level, China urgently needs comprehensive learning from international communities and international intellectual support; this was the practical requirement for the establishment of CCICED. Meanwhile, environmental cooperation to some extent was the first area of China that opened to the outside world for international cooperation. Even if there exist difficulties in some foreign cooperation programs in other fields, environmental cooperation usually suffers little impact and plays an important role in maintaining the overall cooperation relations. Against this backdrop, the Chinese Government established the "China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development".

The establishment of CCICED has played a very important role in the progression of China's environment and development, which is a key measure of China for improving environmental awareness and capacity in developing environmental policies. An international workshop on development of Hainan in 1991 gave me inspiration; it would be a good idea if China set up an international forum on environmental cooperation where the leaders of China and relevant departments could listen to foreign experience in environment and development and recommendations on environment and development to facilitate coordinated development of China, this would no doubt remedy our deficiencies in knowledge and experience. I firstly discussed this idea with State Councilor Mr. Song Jian, who voiced active support. Then I discussed it with our international friend Mr. Martin Lees and worked out the specific program. Later, Premier Li Peng showed his support without any hesitations about this forum when he listened to the briefings.

CCICED is composed of famous experts at home and abroad as well as the leaders of relevant departments. The Chairman of CCICED Phase I was State Councilor Song Jian. The Chairman of CCICED Phase II was Mr. Wen Jiabao, Vice Premier at that time. The Chairman of CCICED Phase III was Vice Premier Zeng Peiyan. I took the post of CCICED Vice Chairman from Phase I to Phase III. Over the past years, CCICED has carried out studies in areas such as environment and development, energy and environment, control of environmental pollution, development and ecological conservation in West China, resource valuation, conservation of biodiversity, environment and trade, circular economy, eco-compensation mechanism, public participation and environmental governance and put forward policy recommendations to the Chinese Government. Each year, the Premier of the State Council listens in person to the policy recommendations of CCICED and answers the questions of Members. Sometimes the President, Chairman of NPC Standing Committee

and NPPCC Chairman would listen to the recommendations of CCICED Members, too. Serving as a high-level think tank for democratic, scientific and comprehensive decision making by the Chinese Government, CCICED has made important contributions to the environmental protection and sustainable development cause of our country.

II. In terms of development history, we must keep on learning about advanced international experience in environment and development

The establishment of the unique institution of CCICED not only receives active appreciation by the Chinese Government, but also generates wide influence in international communities. At the end of the Third Phase of CCICED after 15 years, there was a question of whether or not CCICED should continue. When listening to the policy recommendations of Chinese and international experts on November 10, 2006, Premier Wen Jiabao clearly noted that CCICED should keep its long-term existence until the international community is satisfied with the environmental protection cause of our country. Today when CCICED Phase IV is going to finish its term, we are again at the key time and face the same question. To answer this question requires careful review and examination on our environmental protection work according to the above instruction of Premier Wen Jiabao. That is, are international communities satisfied with the environmental protection cause of our country? Are Chinese people satisfied? The answer is quite clear: although we have made great efforts in environmental protection, with the world's most complicated environmental problem, we are facing difficult and intertwining problems, strong public demands for good environmental quality, mounting pressure from international communities and unprecedented challenges due to concentrated outbursts of environmental problems in the past 30 years in our country, which in developed countries happened during the past several hundred years..

In terms of understanding and strategy of environmental protection, China has developed and "carried out the strategy of synchronized planning, implementation and development in terms of economic, urban and rural development and environmental protection (three synchronizations principle)" as early as the 1980s. In the 1990s, China put forward the strategies such as sustainable development, and the development of a resource-saving and environment-friendly society and green economy. However, all these strategies lack a relevant institution and policy mechanism as well as a supervision mechanism.

Now, the environmental protection input of China as percent of GDP reaches the level of OECD. However, current environmental input of OECD countries is against the

backdrop of completion of industrialization and urbanization, balance of industrial structure and dominance of the service industry, whereas China is just at the stage of accelerated industrialization and urbanization with still a dominance of heavy and chemical industry in industrial structure. This shows that although there is similar investment in environmental protection, we have big differences in the severity of environmental problem confronting us.

In terms of actual outcomes of environmental protection, China has done a lot in adjusting industrial structure, controlling pollution and improving the environment over the past 30 years. But we still face a serious environmental situation and ecological degradation has not been under control due to our stage of development. The statement on environmental situation in the early 1980s was: "degradation of the overall environment with control in some regions and worrying prospects". The assessment of the environmental situation in the Macro Strategy for Environment of China in 2010 was: "the overall situation has not been under effective control, is still grave, and receiving increasing pressure, although there is certain improvement in some regions". Comparing the above two statements, we can clearly understand that we are facing more pressure. The report on Macro Strategy for Environment of China involving the Chinese Academy of Engineering Science and Ministry of Environmental Protection as well as many senior experts and scholars also points out: "Some environmental quality indicators of our country enjoy continuous improvement, however, the overall environmental situation is still serious with many difficulties and challenges."

The serious situation shows that there is no simple solution to the environmental problems of China, and these challenges will last at least 20 years. However, China's environment and development in the future will face both crisis and many opportunities. CCICED no doubt plays a vital role in helping China seize these opportunities.

China quickly accepted the idea of green development over the past few years with particular attention to green economy, low carbon economy, circular economy and eco-compensation and at the same time, it is striving to mainstream the environment into economic decision making. These mark good trends in China in addressing the fundamental and systematic problems. In his speech on December of 2010, Vice Premier Li Keqiang points out: "The transformation of economic structure of our country is speeding up with increasing constraint of resources and environment, it becomes a trend to develop green economy". At the Davos World Economic Forum and the CCICED Annual General Meeting, he also said that China will pay high attention to environmental protection, high energy efficiency and innovation of emission reduction technologies in its industrial restructuring. These speeches of leaders of China demonstrate China's commitment to the agendas that

are included in CCICED policy recommendations to the State Council. These remarks also point out the direction of CCICED future activities; i.e. paying attention to the policies facilitating the development of green economy, or "green transformation". The progression of environment and development of China has been upgraded from learning the experience of developing countries in environmental governance to a higher and more comprehensive level where China and international communities jointly facilitate green transition and green growth of global economy. As the core institution guiding long-term progress of China's environment and development, CCICED will meet greater opportunities in the future.

III. CCICED should play a greater role in the environment and development progress of China

The cause of environmental problems in China still lies in its extensive economic growth mode and improper decision making and administration by the government. Therefore, we must carry out more active policy measures with a vision. Starting from the past three policies and eight systems, environmental policy has been raised its position in national policies with the establishment of a guiding principle of synchronized development, which marks the gradual maturation of environmental management of our country from idea to practice. However, the problems in front of us are more complicated and involving wider fields compared with those in the past. The key to addressing environmental problems lies in the economic development area and in the government decision making and management process. This requires our absorption of internationally advanced experience to meet the challenges based on real conditions of China to a greater extent. Our future tasks will be more difficult, the complexity of environment and development issues will present new and higher requirements for CCICED as an important institution. Based on past experience, we must follow the international trend of environment and development and facilitate green development of China.

As I said in the past, CCICED is a "window" and sets an example for environmental cooperation in the world. In the future, this window will open more areas. CCICED is a "bridge" that links China to other countries in the world, government to civil society and department to department. In the future, this bridge will not only link each party, but also bring the strength of all stakeholders to contribute to green development of China and the world. CCICED is a "platform" that creates good conditions for an open and candid exchange of comments and suggestions among Chinese and international experts on environment and development issues. In the future, this platform will not only facilitate the study of environment and development issues by Chinese and international experts, but also

become an important arena promoting exchanges on environment and development among all countries.

The Chinese Government has officially approved the establishment of the CCICED Phase V; this no doubt is the best answer. I wish that CCICED will obtain more achievements and make greater contributions to sustainable development of both China and the whole world.

Thank you all!

Leading Comments at CCICED 20th Anniversary Forum

Huguette Labelle,
Chancellor, University of Ottawa; Former president of CIDA;
Vice chairperson of CCICED Phase Ⅰ and Ⅱ
(November 17, 2011)

Thank you very much, Margaret. It is wonderful to be back. It is a great honor and I was delighted to be invited and come to what I've always seen as the most outstanding experience that one could be part of. Certainly out of my professional life, I would have to say that this has been the highlight, and I'm sure that it has also been for many of you. This is a long stretch, Dr. Song Jian, from one of these first meetings where you, Professor Qu Geping, Martin Lees, Maurice Strong, and a number of others, were planning for this council to be started. One of my first recollections was to see China being one of the first countries, if not the first, to have a substantial agenda 21 ready to roll out very quickly after Rio. So, to my understanding no other country in the world has been able to undertake a similar initiative as the China Council on environment and development. I think we tried in one or two places, Martin, but it did not work, for some reason. It did not lift. It did not get off the ground. So, this afternoon I am very conscientious of our time, and I would like to just comment on two aspects. Having heard so many tremendous presentations earlier this afternoon, I will try not to repeat those but say that I have been very inspired by them. The two areas are: one, I was reflecting on why this council has been so successful, and with increased success, over the years. And secondly, going back, Professor Song Jian, to one of the points you were talking to: the dilemmas. With great humility I would like to address some of those for the China Council in the future.

So, why has this been so successful? You would all have your story to tell, but from my point of view, I think that first of all there was sustained leadership support at the highest level. We would probably not be in this room without it. Second is that the Council has

worked on the top and most relevant issues to China. Otherwise, again, we would not be here. To me, the third point is that the international experts remained, because they felt that their input was being considered, but I think we also remained because we were learning an awful lot from what was happening in China along the way. I think another reason was the regular reporting, and the fact that the reports that were made by various working groups and task forces did not go into a black hole. We were able to see the progress of how these were being used over time. Another aspect is how the council evolved from the early time to the current situation. It did not stay static; it changed in order to be able to deal with how fast China was changing. Therefore the speed of work was accelerated, the speed of delivery was accelerated, and also we saw, or at least are hearing about at this meeting for example, how people are starting from having painted the big picture in terms of what was to be attained, to then dealing with the specific aspects of getting there. Dr. Song Jian, I was very interested to hear your comments that one has to really go into the specificity, and I think Professor Qu Geping also mentioned that, of what is workable but also what can be implemented. There was another point to me which is why this Council was successful; it was the transparency of how it worked and how the Chinese Government was more than at ease of reporting publicly what was happening here and also reporting on the implementation of the recommendations. It tackled issues that matter. As I mentioned earlier, I think the spirit of learning between the Chinese leadership, the table, and the international community was very strong and remains to this day.

Now let me highlight a few challenges among a very long list that I am sure all of you have discussed, debated, and that we have heard this afternoon. I think one of the issues that we all face around the world, and that China will probably faced increasingly, is what I am calling the “push back”: the push back of those who have special interests, be they industries, be they local governments, be they investors, which means that the China Council here can be a very strong counterpart in supporting the right policies and the right regulations that need to be implemented in the face of this “push back” by those who have special interests.

A second dilemma is the whole field of policy capture. Again, by those who have special interests trying to influence, sometimes with a lot of resources, the various policies that they would like to see implemented, which would protect their investment and the revenues which they hope to make. So to me this policy capture can bring a lot of dissonance between what is right to do for the future of a country and what others might prefer to see, in terms of their own interests.

To me, a third area, and this was raised in particular by Dr. Qu Geping, is the increased decentralization in China of authority to other levels of government. It is bringing a situation

where, unless the national government is able to maintain the ground which is essential in a nation to ensure that the public good and the public interest are kept, then the territory could be totally devolved in such as way that there is a cacophony and there is no central heart beating for what is the right policies, the right regulations, the right systems of controls as well as implementation, because implementation in decentralized societies is very hard. I come from Canada and, as you know, we have a very decentralized way; we are a federation, like some of you are around this table, and with greater decentralization comes greater difficulty of ensuring that what is right for the country as a whole is indeed implemented at all levels. We also heard, in particular from Arthur Hanson and Professor Shen, about the place for international cooperation. The globalization of the issues that we are talking about here and that kind of international cooperation becomes preeminent, and not always easy. We have seen some of what has been happening in international fora, where it is very often the lowest denominator which brings about a consensus, where unfortunately, one should have a much higher denominator to work for. We also see situations where different countries are waiting for others before making their commitment to provide what their contribution will be to this very important and central world situation. I think that with the work that China has done, with the work that this Council has done, it is more than important for China to have a very positive contribution to the world debates so they are less dysfunctional and much more able to move forward in terms of what is required so that it is not a question of waiting always to see what the other one will do. As mentioned by Achim, we are dealing with an international very important situation here.

My fourth area, I'll go back to you Professor Qu Geping, relates to how we measure our success as nations, and if the only way we measure our success is by GDP growth and economic growth, we will not get there. I think together we have to find much better ways of indentifying what the indicators are for the best possible quality of life for our citizens going forward; I think that this kind of debate is taking place in different fora, but not in the same way. Of course economic growth has its importance if we want to pull people out of poverty, but it may not pull all out of poverty because we have seen a lot of inequity and non-inclusive growth around the world, and we see it today. So I think that to be able to bring forward those kinds of new indicators of success so that we not only have Bloomberg every minute talking about quarterly reports or daily reports of shares going up or down.

A fifth area that I would like to put forward is that of China's very rapid industrialization; I am not sure that any other nation has seen such speed in industrialization and expansion of consumption by citizens. I think that we need to make citizens part of the solution. It is not necessarily easy, Dr. Song Jian, when we have 1.3 billion people. At the

same time, if these 1.3 billion people become committed, and can have in their DNA the kind of life that they need to live and the kind of support for what they want their country to do in terms of policies as well, I think we could have just the greatest revolution that has ever been had. I think that it is possible to have a high quality of life and yet reduce our footprint, and to introduce greater personal responsibility in each citizen of our countries, starting with young people. I think if our youth, through our education system, through our media, and otherwise can have a strong moral compass, ethically, as well as the kind of behavior professionally that they should lead, we might counter some of the issues that were raised by Professor Qu Geping earlier. I think a very positive aspect here is that China has been very open with its people in identifying the major issues that China is facing. Whether it is the nexus between water, food, and energy, or the increased pollution in certain sectors and so on, or what is happening with energy as a whole, it is tremendous in helping people understand what the stakes are, but I think that people shouldn't believe that it is only the government that is part of the solution, but instead that they also have to be part of the solution.

Now of course there are many, many other aspects that you have been discussing and that are important. I didn't want to overly repeat; I've taken off some of them from my own comments because they have been presented so well earlier this afternoon. I must say, Art, that I have a granddaughter as well. She heard me so much talk about China and the Council, that at five years old she decided she had to come to China. As children are very persistent, she never gave up until I brought her to China when she was nine years old, because she decided to study China and by six and seven she knew much more about China than I ever did, after having been here for 13 years every year and more. So she has become a great ambassador for China in her school and in some of her activities now. The Council has set new standards for international cooperation. I have been very privileged to have been part of this most exceptional experiment, in a way, which has now lasted. Let us hope it will be contagious in terms of other countries of the world. We need to celebrate this success, because it's a success of solidarity, between countries, between institutions, between people, that I think we are celebrating today.

You were talking of reward earlier, Dr. Qu Geping, and I think our reward is to be part of this outstanding experience and to have been part of it I fell very, very privileged. So thank you for having invited me. I am very grateful for that.

Leading Comments at CCICED 20th Anniversary Open Forum

Martin Lees,
Senior Adrisor and Former Secretary General of the Club of Rome; Rector Emeritus of the University for Peace in Costa Rica; Member of CCICED phase Ⅰ, Ⅱ and Ⅲ.

Madame President, State Counsellor Song Jian, Minister Zhou, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am most grateful for this opportunity to speak at the 20th Anniversary Forum of the China Council which has proved to be a unique and constructive channel for cooperation between China and the world community.

This anniversary is, I believe, an appropriate occasion to say a few words about the origins of the Council, to consider the underlying reasons for its success and to identify some key opportunities and challenges for the future where the China Council can continue to make important contributions.

The origins of the China Council

In my view, the decision by the Chinese authorities to establish the Council was not a sudden inspiration but was a coherent step in the wider processes of reform and opening up which were initiated in the late 1970's. From my perspective, the very first step was the organization in 1983 of a high-level conference in Beijing on the core issue of "Mobilizing Science, Technology and Investment for China's Development." In those days, China's development strategy was organized around the "four modernizations", one of which was Science and Technology. The participants had the unexpected privilege of a three hour exchange of views with Premier Zhou Xiyang. Although we did not realize it at the time, this established an important precedent of providing a wide range of experience and ideas from different countries directly to the leadership of China.

Note 1: A shortened version of this text was presented at the 20th Anniversary Forum

Building on this initial success, the next major step was the convening of an international conference in June 1988 which provided an opportunity for dialogue between the leadership of China and a group of international leaders and experts on the key strategic issues of China's reform and opening up to the outside world. We had the remarkable and unique opportunity to exchange views successively with the three top leaders of China, including a two hour meeting with supreme leader Deng Xiao Ping.

One point on the Agenda of this 1988 conference specifically focused on the significance of environmental and resource constraints as a determinant of China's long-term development strategy. This environmental perspective was reinforced by a parallel programme focused on the establishment of a Council to guide the development of the island of Hainan, the largest Special Economic Zone in China, so as to achieve economic progress in harmony with the environment. Although this effort did not ultimately succeed in its purpose, as the pressures of economic development overwhelmed the concern to preserve the environment, it did provide a precedent for the later establishment of the China Council.

Out of this meeting with the leaders of China emerged a programme of international cooperation "China and the World in the Nineties" which provided the Chinese leadership directly with focused international advice and experience on a series of key reform issues. This programme which continued over about ten years in partnership with the Development Research Center of the State Council and the State Development Planning Commission, now NDRC, laid the foundations for the development of the China Council.

It was in this context that three very senior and distinguished Chinese personalities, in a letter of 10th January 1990, proposed an initiative to focus attention on the core issue of environment as critical to the future of China's development, recognizing the important opportunities of international cooperation in this field.

I am very happy to take this opportunity to congratulate two of these remarkable personalities who are with us here today. Without their committed efforts, the China Council would not have been established: They are of course Dr. Song Jian, then State Counsellor and Chairman of the National Environmental Protection Commission of the State Council and Dr. Qu Geping, then Administrator of the National Environmental Protection Agency. These two remarkable personalities have been for decades, the pillars on which the movement towards a sustainable path of economic progress in China has been founded. The third important supporter of this initiative was Professor Ma Hong, President of the Development Research Center of the State Council.

Let me quote a few lines from this letter which was, at the time, a remarkable and

perceptive statement of intent:

"The Chinese government has decided to invite a small number of international personalities to visit Beijing for discussions with the leadership about a major new programme of international cooperation on the conservation of the environment in China.

We recognize that the protection of the environment in China is essential to the future of the Chinese people. We are also fully aware that the People's Republic of China, which constitutes about one fifth of the world population, must actively take part and sincerely cooperate with other countries in the global efforts to resolve the serious environmental problems which threaten our planet.

The Chinese government is already making substantial efforts on environmental matters with limited resources available. We wish now to continuously strengthen our ability to tackle our environmental problems. This will help to improve our economic prospects and provide a healthier, more productive and better life for the Chinese people.

If we can, with international support, coordinate and manage the environmental issues of China harmoniously with our economic growth, this will make important contributions to reducing the threats to the world environment as a whole……

International cooperation and support will be critical to the success of our work. For this reason, the Government has decided to arrange this international meeting so that we can explore the possibilities at a high policy level. We hope to make a rapid start and stimulate substantial new programmes of international cooperation."

The letter concluded as follows: "We hope that the private high-level meeting will help us, in a spirit of openness and cooperation, to define a strategy and to initiate action which will enable us to combine economic growth, modernization and reform with the long-term conservation of the environment. This will be not only in the vital interest of China, but of the whole world."

It was on this basis that we were able to convene a major international conference focused on "The Integration of Environment and Development" here in the State Guest House in October 1990. I would like to record that it was visionary support by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations which made it possible to take this critical step towards the establishment of the China Council.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Song Jian, who chaired the Conference, indicated that the Chinese authorities were in principle prepared to consider the establishment of some form of organizational arrangements to ensure that work on the important issues which were the focus of the Agenda should continue after the conference. The conference was indeed a considerable success and, already at the closing banquet in the Great Hall of the People, Dr.

Qu Geping was able to inform us that Premier Li Peng had authorized the necessary steps to create an organizational framework to follow up the ideas and proposals made at the conference.

Thus, in October 1990, we had a remarkable opportunity to establish an institutional arrangement to promote the integration of environment with the economic development of China. But two fundamental issues remained: how to design a suitable – and unprecedented – institutional framework and how to find the essential financial support quickly so as to maintain the remarkable political interest and support which the initiative enjoyed at the highest levels of the Chinese government.

Here I would like to underline the important role played by another key personality who, unfortunately cannot be with us here today. This is Mr. Xie Zhenhua, now Vice Chairman of NDRC for Energy Efficiency and Climate Change, former Minister of Environment and then, in 1990, Deputy Adminstrator of the National Environment Protection Agency. Under the guidance of Dr. Qu Geping, we together drafted the Charter of the China Council by March 1991 which, with the support of Dr. Song Jian and Qu Geping, was then approved by the State Council.

In spite of all this remarkable and rapid progress, the final essential step towards the establishment of the Council remained to be taken: how to find the initial financial support to launch the Council quickly and convincingly. In view of the long and positive relationship between Canada and China since the founding of New China in 1949, I visited Dr. Marcel Massé, President of CIDA in Ottawa and asked him for the necessary support. He confirmed to me within six weeks that CIDA would provide the requested CDN$ 5 million over five years to support the Council.

I would like to express my deep appreciation for this early and generous support which enabled us to organize the first session of the Council, here in the State Guest House, in April 1992. The sustained support of CIDA, which continues to this day, has also provided a solid basis for the work of the Council and a framework within which many other donors have now given their support to the Council. This has assured a rare degree of stability and predictability on which the serious longer-term activities of the Council have been sustained. The cooperation between Canada and China, especially between CIDA and the Ministry of Environmental Protection, supported by an excellent and committed team of officials and experts on both sides, has guided the development of the Council over the past twenty years and has been, from the start, a key element in its continuing success.

Reasons for the success of the Council

The China Council has proved to be an unusual success in enhancing international cooperation between China and the world community in the vital area of environment and development. Let me suggest some of the key reasons for this success. In my view, these must be preserved to ensure the continuing relevance and effectiveness of the Council:

(1) First, the leadership of China is unusually open to considering international experience and advice. But, most important, they then critically assess the diversity of opinions and experience which is presented and select and test those elements which are most relevant to the needs, the culture, the conditions and the aspirations of China. The Members of the Council therefore have the rare privilege of engaging with top leaders on the key issues of China's development strategy and international cooperation. They have had for twenty years, the opportunity to focus attention on strategic choices, risks and opportunities in a future-oriented perspective.

And, as China's role in world affairs becomes ever more significant, this opportunity which the Council has to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation will be of even greater value in the future. It is also increasingly important for other countries across the world to understand the ideas, achievements and aspirations of China.

(2) Second, the Council's mandate and activities focus on the central issue of the integration of economic development with energy and resource use and the environment. The ability of China to raise the living standards of its vast population while respecting real environmental and resource constraints is perhaps the most significant challenge to the future success of China's development strategy. The balanced and integrated approach adopted by the China Council which covers the wide range of connected issues related to economic development and environment is crucial. Development and environment are in fact, two sides of the same coin. The strong engagement of the powerful economic organs of the Chinese government, particularly of NDRC, in the work of the Council is thus of particular importance as China moves towards a path of sustainable development.

(3) Third, on the Chinese side, the Council is intended to bring together participation across the government, from the wide range of ministries and agencies engaged in the issues of environment and development. This cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary collaboration on which the Council is founded is difficult, but it is increasingly needed to address the connected challenges of the modern world.

(4) Fourth, the credibility of the recommendations and suggestions of the Council depends on the solid, continuing work of the Task Forces and Working Groups which

develop sound proposals, based on rigorous and extensive scientific analysis. This combination of solid scientific analysis and high-level access has ensured the continuing relevance and effectiveness of the China Council. In this respect, the Council is designed to bridge the gap between science and policy, an interface of critical importance, particularly in relation to climate change, as leaders must understand the new realities derived from climate science and policies must adapt to meet new challenges. As a result of 20 years of analysis and cooperation between Chinese and international experts, the Council has built up a unique body of knowledge, experience and publications and has generated worldwide networks of researchers and experts which will be of enormous value in its future work.

(5) In designing the Charter of the Council, we specifically included a "sunset clause", a provision which ensures that, at the end of each five year phase, a specific decision must be taken to continue the Council based on an in-depth review of its goals, its operating methods and the relevance and effectiveness of its activities. This provision has ensured the constant renewal of the programme, methodology and membership of the Council and, in my view, accounts in part for its continuing vitality and relevance.

Future challenges and the role of the China Council

On this Anniversary, we are asked not only to celebrate the achievements of the Council over the past 20 years but also to look ahead. I will conclude therefore with two observations concerning the critical challenges of the future where the Council can play a valuable role.

First, there is a need for a sense of urgency. The problems and risks we face are increasing in scale and intensity in spite of all our efforts. In particular, there is an urgent need for effective action to mitigate the increasing risks of dangerous climate change and to adapt to its inevitable impacts. This critical issue, coupled with the essentially connected systemic issues of ecological degradation, energy, water and resource security, must be a focus of the Council's future work.

Climate science, together with increasing physical evidence from across the world and a deeper understanding of the paleoclimatic record, clearly indicates that the scale of human activities, particularly of climate change emissions, runs the risk of triggering irreversible and dangerous climate change. In spite of 20 years of negotiations and substantial efforts, we are above the worst case scenario of IPCC. And the increase in emissions between 2009 and 2010 was around 6%. If we continue on this path, we are heading for a rise in global average temperature of at least 4.5° C by 2100 and most probably substantially more.

This implies double this rise in certain areas of the world. And, it is particularly important to recognize that the processes driving climate change are non-linear: we cannot therefore expect a gradual process of global warming but must prepare for sudden major changes which could have devastating consequences on the prospects for development in China and across the world. The increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events simply underlines this conclusion.

China has established a clear and coherent government-wide strategy to address the issue of climate change and has introduced strong institutional arrangements to ensure effective action. And China is making enormous, and largely successful, efforts to reduce the energy intensity of economic growth. Carbon intensity dropped by 20.8% between 2006 and 2010 according to a recent study by Tsinghua University. But over this same period, aggregate emissions rose by 33.6%. It is of course the aggregate figure which will determine whether the battle for world climate stability will be won or lost.

China is itself especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change: it follows that the successful achievement of China's strategy for development, to improve the living standards, health and happiness of the Chinese people, will depend substantially on the success of Chinese and international efforts to preserve the stability of the global climate system. Here again, economic progress and environmental protection are two sides of the same coin of sustainable development.

The leaders of China have long recognized that it is not a feasible strategy to focus first on growth and then later to address the environmental consequences. Thus, the issues of economic growth and the preservation of a viable environment and a stable climate must be integrated within one coherent overall strategy for national development. This insight is crucial to preserve the stability of the climate system and thus the prospects for China's development. Strategies to determine the content and trajectory of growth must be radically changed, together with economic and energy structures, in order to act not only on the symptoms but also on the underlying drivers of climate change. Here again, the role of the Council can be of particular importance in enhancing cooperation between China and the world to define, agree and implement urgent, substantial action to avert the risks of catastrophic climate change.

Second, we need a radical rethinking of the path of economic growth. The impacts of a world population of seven billion people today are already devastating the terrestrial and ocean ecosystems and grossly overusing the natural capital of the planet. As the world population rises to over 9 billion people in less than 40 years, it is clear that the present consumption-driven, fossil-fuel based path of economic growth is not sustainable.

It is also painfully clear today that the current models, values and strategies which have been driving economic growth as measured by GDP for the past thirty years are failing: they are stimulating excessive and unsustainable demand for material consumption; they are failing to provide millions with employment, opportunity and social justice; they are threatening to destroy the rich and fragile ecosystems of the planet which are the life-support systems of humanity; and they are destabilizing the unusually favorable climatic conditions which have allowed the development of our civilization. In spite of all our efforts, this dangerous situation continues to deteriorate. We must finally recognize that incremental change is necessary but that it is not sufficient to salvage the future.

Recovery to a business-as-usual path of economic growth will simply not be sustainable. The restructuring of the growth trajectory of the world economy to achieve equitable, inclusive and sustainable development is therefore the vital challenge of the 21st century. But to push through transformational change in any country will be a difficult task. We have seen that the pressures for consumption, supported by powerful special interests, will strongly resist the changes needed to build the new more efficient, low-carbon, green and inclusive economies of the future.

We must explicitly consider how to overcome these obstacles to progress so as to achieve a reconciliation between man and nature: between the needs and aspirations of humanity and the realities which drive and sustain the natural systems of the planet.

Fortunately, this central challenge has long been recognized by the leadership of China, first through the creation of the China Council itself and now in its commitment to reorient China's development onto a more equitable, balanced and sustainable path. This new approach is reflected in the Chinese strategy for climate change, in the "12th Five-Year Plan", in the concept of "scientific development" and in the goals and strategies of the Xiao Kang Programme, aimed at achieving an all round prosperous society.

The China Council can play an important role in supporting the continuing transformation of China's development trajectory onto a sustainable path. It can clarify emerging risks and identify strategic opportunities for transformational change through in-depth analysis and sound science and present these respectfully, clearly and directly to the leadership. This will be in the essential interest of China itself and of the whole world.

And as China's role, insights and experience become increasingly important in an interdependent world which is now in a process of massive economic and political transformation, the Council can help to improve international trust and understanding

by conveying China's ideas, objectives and achievements into the wider world community.

…

I am sure that all of us who have been involved in the work of the Council consider it a great honour and privilege to have been able to participate in a small way in the historic processes of China's rapid and successful development. I myself am deeply grateful to have had this opportunity to be a member of the China Council family across the world.

I wish the government and the people of China and the China Council itself continuing success in promoting international understanding, collaboration and action on the vital issues of environment and development which must be managed successfully to assure the sustainable progress of China and a prosperous and peaceful world for future generations.

Thank you.

Leading Comments at CCICED 20th Anniversary Forum

Borge Brende,
Vice Chairperson of CCICED Phase Ⅲ; Managing Director of the World Economic Forum;
Former Minister of Norwegian Ministry of Environment

State Councilor, Dr. Song, Minister Zhou, Mr. Qu, Vice Minister Li, Esteemed colleagues on the Council,

Mr. Martin Lees' talk just confirmed that an anniversary gives us a unique opportunity to learn from the past, but also to reflect on important challenges of our time. The current crisis of the global economy and the political space it has created allows us to ask fundamental questions about how the system works and how it does not. This is an ideal time to plant seeds for and initiate reforms.

It is often the sudden and unexpected events that reshape political and economic context overnight. The last decade was caught by shocks: 9/11 at one end, the financial crisis and the oil food spike at the other. This decade has already seen another oil food spike, another fundamental financial crisis, the Fukushima nuclear accident, and major extreme weather events. Shocks and crises spread further and faster than before, but so can smart ideas and new solutions. The next years we will see the arrival of a staggering amount of technology, particularly in the areas of biotechnology and genetics, computer science and energy and resource efficiency. Many of these new technologies could have highly positive environmental impacts, from reducing emissions to enhanced resource productivity. Dr. Song raised a very fundamental question in his talk: how to manage the energy poverty. There are 1.5 million people globally not having access to basic electricity and there will be 2 to 3 billion more of us by 2050; how can we accommodate for this and decouple this from rising CO_2 emissions? We very much need policies that introduce new inventions and also new technology, like China has had during the last years, going from having almost none to being the world leader in producing and exporting windmills, and also solar panels. By

doing so, they have introduced these new energy sources and new markets at a much lower price.

Throughout history, change has always required a champion. We need leaders who know how to collaborate across sectors and continents, and who can articulate a vision of what is possible. I believe it was this kind of vision that was driving the founding fathers of CCICED. CCICED is a unique institution. Other nations should consider, as also previous speakers mentioned, the experience that China has had with this institution, with a view to establish their own local brand of CCICED. However, a nation has to be brave to seek independent advice outside the government corridors. China has shown that kind of self confidence and braveness and has evidently gained from it.

Two main transformations are underway in China: a move to becoming a conservation society and an all inclusive society. A young mature adult, CCICED, is up to the task of providing the best advice along the difficult transformational path that China is following. Or to use the visionary phrase of Minister Zhou at the start of this meeting, the realization of China's green transformation will be China's active contribution to the world's development.

I am really pleased and feel privileged to be part of a Council that can also be a partner with China on this very important path.

Thank you.

CCICED at 20: Activities, Impacts and Future Opportunities Summary Report①

1. CCICED Background and Characteristics

Two months before the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED) held its inaugural meeting in Beijing on April 19, 1992 attended by senior Chinese and a number of international environmental experts. This Council is a high-level international advisory organization to the Government of China. Though it was established as a non-governmental body, there has been strong Chinese governmental involvement and support in addition to participation by many international funding partners. CCICED's 20 year history of activities has taken place over the most significant period of China's rapid economic growth and action on environment and development. These also have been the critical decades for the rise of global agreements concerning sustainable development, in which China is an active participant.

1.1 Twin Backgrounds for the Genesis of CCICED

Besides the efforts of individual environment and development advocates in China and the international community, the genesis of CCICED owes much to two important trends.

One was the inevitable need for considering environmental factors in the context of China's reform and opening-up policy. This policy, adopted in 1978, had entered a key stage in the 1990s. But well before, in 1972, a Chinese delegation participated in the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, leading to the formal start of China's domestic environmental protection agenda. To a certain extent, cooperation on

① This interpretive Summary Report has been prepared by Chinese members of the CCICED Chief Advisors Group. It is based on a much longer overview report with the same title written by the CCICED Chief Advisors, Dr. Arthur J. Hanson and Prof. Shen Guofang, with inputs from the Chief Advisors Group and others. The purpose of the Summary is to provide an introduction to 20 years of work on environment and development policy advice.

environment was among China's earliest fields of opening-up and international cooperation. The environment became an important vehicle for international cooperation even in times of difficulties in the years ahead. Therefore, the overall reform and opening-up process and the special role of international environmental cooperation formed a political background for the genesis of CCICED.

The second was the need for China to draw upon on-going international environment and development processes and experience as it set out on its own course. The 1987 report Our Common Future and particularly the 1992 Rio Earth Summit marked a new era of sustainable development for the world. Industrialized countries had been the leaders on both environmental pollution control and environmental management, with a solid theoretical research base, policy development and practical implementation experience. The Rio Summit called for a global partnership on sustainable development, and North-South assistance on environment and development issues.

Based on a gradually expanding research capacity, formulation of several environmental laws and regulations, and early environmental institutions in the1970s and 1980s, China had developed some capacities for pollution control and ecological conservation initiatives by the early 1990s, and had actively participated in the path-breaking effort on sustainable development of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) and all processes leading up to UNCED (Rio Earth Summit). China was eager to learn from international society and to pursue international knowledge and experience regarding both large-scale pollution control and in-depth sustainable development applications. This was the basis of practical need for the establishment of CCICED.

1.2 Three Elements of Uniqueness

CCICED is comprised of around 50 members each with a term of five years. 2011 is the last year of CCICED Phase 4 and the next five-year phase will start in 2012. There are three major elements of uniqueness that have facilitated successful development of CCICED, making it a unique "brand" nationally and on the world's environment and development stage.

(1) High-level organization with broad range of participation. CCICED includes half Chinese and half international members. The members have comprised key political leaders, business leaders, representatives from international organizations and NGOs. The Council Chairperson is the Vice Premier of the State Council with responsibility for environmental protection. The Minister of Environmental Protection is the Chinese Executive Vice

Chairperson, and the President of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is the International Executive Vice Chairperson. Over twenty years, 24 international organizations, countries, regional organizations, NGOs, multinational corporations and foundations have funded CCICED activities.

The Council meets with a senior leader of China and forwards its policy recommendations to the State Council each year. Every year more than 200 national and international experts are engaged in CCICED activities. It is evident that no other country has such a high level national mechanism based on outside consultation. The high-level members, competent research teams and broad participation of stakeholders provide solid foundations for CCICED to carry out high-level, diversified and inclusive policy advisory work.

(2) Clear themes and direct access to high-level decision makers. CCICED identifies specific themes based on national and international context, under which key topics requiring priority attention are examined by Task Forces (called Working Groups in early phases) or Special Policy Studies. These studies are jointly carried out by national and international experts who are drawn from a wide range of organizations. Their work takes into account both domestic Chinese needs and international experience. Each year, the findings are presented to CCICED members during the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Based on the AGM discussions, recommendations to the State Council are finalized.

There are three channels for China's Government to receive CCICED policy recommendations: ① Meetings between the State Council Premier and CCICED members. Premier Wen Jiabao has met with the Council 13 times (including when he was Vice Premier); ② Direct participation of the CCICED Chair and leaders of relevant ministries during the AGM. Former CCICED Chairs including Mr. Song Jian (State Councilor), Mr. Wen Jiabao (as Vice Premier), Mr. Zeng Peiyan (Vice Premier), plus Mr. Li Keqiang (the current Vice Premier) between them have participated in 20 AGMs and presented important speeches; ③ Policy recommendations are circulated to the State Council and relevant ministries along with the reports of the task forces and special studies. In addition, policy recommendations are also disseminated to local governments and relevant stakeholders through the CCICED website, roundtable meetings and publications. The unique "Expressway" for the CCICED findings and policy recommendations to reach the national leaders makes CCICED's impact on decision-making incomparable to most other ordinary research organizations.

(3) Strong institutional support and adaptive evolution. In addition to high-profile attention from China's Government plus financial and other support from international

partners (a list of partners is included in the full version of this report), effective internal governance and continuous innovation of the mechanism are key contributors to CCICED's thriving status over the past 20 years. The internal management structure includes: a Bureau that is responsible for key decision-making and development of operation rules; the Secretariat (in the Ministry of Environmental Protection) and the Secretariat International Support Office (at Simon Fraser University in Canada) are CCICED's supporting units. Over the past decade an additional component, the Chinese and International Chief Advisors and their supporting group has contributed. They are responsible for identifying study themes and directions, providing guidance to task forces, drafting an annual Issues Paper and policy recommendations to the Government of China. In order to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of studies, CCICED has carried out a number of reforms and periodic adjustments including identification of themes, improving organizational modes and operation mechanisms. Enhancing this internal supporting capacity of CCICED has been important. Enhancements have included management training, and building the ability to provide integrative analytical skills.

2. Activities Over Past 20 Years and Impacts

2.1 Key Policy Study Activities

Provision of policy recommendations to the Chinese Government that can have substantive impact on policy formulation and outcomes is the ultimate objective and value of CCICED. Over the past 20 years, CCICED has mobilized several thousand experts through about 62 task forces, special policy studies or working groups on comprehensive and in-depth studies of environment and development issues in China, based on which more than 140 policy study reports have been prepared. Each year 10 or more major policy recommendations are submitted to the Chinese Government. In addition, more detailed recommendations of task forces and special studies are circulated to relevant departments and to others. Identification of new policy study topics is based on two considerations: one is international environment and development agendas and their relative value in terms of knowledge and experiences; the other is the situation of environment and development in China and urgency of need.

CCICED Phase 1 (1992—1996) started just at the time of new global era was ushered in by the Rio Earth Summit, with its new proposals for international cooperation on environment and development. Soon after, China issued its Ten Strategic Policies for China's Environment and Development, and produced China Agenda 21 that, for the first

time, began to mainstream sustainable development concepts into long-term national economic and social development plans. CCICED Phase 1 topics were mainly related to fundamental studies in key areas with emphasis on introduction of basic theory and practical experiences, including biodiversity conservation, energy strategies and technologies, science and technology, resource accounting and pricing, environmental monitoring, pollution control, environment and trade, economic planning and environmental conservation.

During CCICED Phase 2 (1997—2001), there was significant progress on international cooperation on environment and development symbolized by the Kyoto Protocol and implementation of the Global Biodiversity Convention. Bilateral environmental cooperation was becoming active, the UN Millennium Development Goals were adopted, and many good practices of sustainable development started to emerge on the part of businesses, often with leadership by national and international civil society organizations.

Near the turn of new century, China entered a stage of heavy chemical industries, with obvious deterioration of the overall environmental pollution situation. To address the worsening situation, China implemented comprehensive environmental rehabilitation programs with an emphasis on cities and on regional environmental pollution control campaigns, especially since the mid-1990s, and adopted sustainable development and science & education as two basic strategies for revitalization. Transformation of economic growth mode was raised for the first time. China also experienced serious problems and changes during this period: effects of the Asian financial meltdown, the historic 1998 flood, and the impacts of joining the World Trade Organization in 2001.

Under this situation of rising growth but also taking into account both challenges and new economic opportunities, CCICED expanded its Phase 2 to include not only those topics covered in Phase 1, but also others: foresight and early warning topics related directly to the economy and environment, clean production, environment and transport, economic planning and environmental protection, western forests and grasslands, and sustainable agriculture. These topics were not fully included in the central agenda of environmental protection and sustainable development in China at the time. CCICED's efforts in this regard provided a sound theoretical and policy foundations for later actions by China's Government. Drawing on international concepts and experiences was still a sustaining part of the Phase 2.

Phase 3 (2002—2006) was a period of important reform for CCICED based on changing international perceptions of environment and development, and also of transformative change within China. The 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development

(WSSD) signaled a renewed and more proactive stage of sustainable development in international society, with many new practices and methods worth studying, for example, ideas about recycling and circular economy. Another was the growing emphasis on understanding the value and need for protection of ecological services. The WSSD had a significant influence on Phase 3 work, including building a better understanding of China's role in the world as it started its meteoric rise as an exporting nation.

Within China, the government put forward its overall well-off society strategy in 2002, with objectives of quadrupling GDP (revised in 2007 to quadrupling of per capita GDP) by 2020 and enhanced capacity to implement sustainable development broadly within society in both cities and the countryside. Economy entered a new round of high-speed growth, but the 10th Five-Year Plan's environmental objectives were not achieved. Intolerable pressures on resources and environment were becoming obvious, and within government and society there were more active reflections on development modes.

According to this changing environment and development situation and based on past lessons and experiences, CCICED adopted active adjustments to its membership, policy study activities, and operations, including: (1) A broader range of expertise and backgrounds among members; replacement of working groups by task forces with more immediate deadlines for reporting, and more focused study themes; and an increase in the number of international funding partners; (2) Implementation of the Chief Advisors mechanism to provide guidance and advice on CCICED studies and other substantive aspects of the work. (3) An increasing role on the part of Chinese experts in the preparation of policy studies, with the numbers of supporting Chinese experts nearly doubled. These changes allowed the task forces to be established in a more systematic way with carefully drawn themes and focus of work.

There were 21 task forces during Phase 3, covering topics such as sustainable agriculture, sustainable industrialization, sustainable urbanization, and environmental governance. As to the products, although still based in part on external experience, the number of original products tailored specifically to the Chinese context was on the increase. In general the complexity of topics to be addressed also increased, with fewer opportunities to seek "off-the-shelf" solutions.

Based on fruitful achievements during Phase 3, including significant inputs regarding the "11th Five-Year Plan", CCICED Phase 4 (2007-2011) has made even more significant progress, to become the most active and successful phase of activity. The successes of Phase 4 included accurate judgments about China entering a strategic transformative change period in its environment and development relationship, more emphasis on overall and

macro level needs of China, enhanced focus to the work, better foresight and strategy analysis of topics, increased integration among the research products, and increased impact of policy recommendations on China's environment and development agenda.

During the Phase 4 period, China experienced many historic events including the global financial crisis, the Wenchuan earthquake, the 2008 ice and snow disaster, the Beijing Olympic Games and the Shanghai World Expo. New development strategy concepts and approaches also were becoming mature, including the theme of scientific development, a development mode change, and the objective of Harmonious Society. New requirements of Ecological Civilization, Resource-Saving and Environmental Friendly Society were put forward by the Government. The "11th Five-Year Plan" was the first to adopt mandatory energy saving and emission reduction targets. Green development has drawn broad attention in the past few years.

Recognizing the new situation of environment and development in China and addressing key issues, over the five years of CCICED Phase 4 the following themes were examined in sequence: innovation and environmental friendly society, institutional innovation and harmonious development; energy, environment and development; ecosystem management and green development; and green transformation of economic development. Under the umbrella of these themes, a total of 13 task forces, 5 special policy studies and 3 other studies were carried out.

2.2 Key Policy Impacts

It is not an easy task to provide a comprehensive assessment of the policy impact of CCICED's policy recommendations. First, it is difficult to identify a timely response between CCICED's recommendations, the policy decisions and actual changes or outcomes. Even when there is uptake of a recommendation by decision-makers, there may be no immediately measurable action or consequence that can be directly linked, since these depend on both decision-making processed and appropriate enabling conditions. Second, it is not possible to confirm the "cause and effect" relationship between CCICED policy recommendations and decision-making changes. There could be many policy recommendation channels and supporters behind any policy change or formulation. In fact, CCICED remains modest in seeking credit concerning its impact on China's sustainable development. Those devoting their efforts to CCICED activities, and the funding partners generally are satisfied as long as the overall or partial progress of China is consistent with the policy recommendations of CCICED. This satisfaction depends on progress reflected through four aspects:

(1) Improved strategy. Over twenty years, CCICED witnessed the high-speed economic development and grave resource and environmental situation in China. CCICED has provided a significant level of strategy advice to address these interlocked concerns, ranging from broad adoption of market based instruments to its recent advice covering the need for environmental guidelines on Chinese outgoing direct investment (ODI). Especially, CCICED has constantly recommended the mainstreaming of environmental protection into national economic and social development in order to promote integrated progress towards China's sustainable development. Meanwhile, CCICED is also highlighting strategic opportunities for incremental progress of China's sustainable development and major transformation of coordinating environment and development, often through sectoral strategies.

(2) Advances. Introduction of international advanced concepts and policies, technologies and best practices is a major activity of CCICED's studies and recommendations. Currently, one can find ample evidence from CCICED's recommendations about introduction or improvement of many concepts, regulations, governance system and approaches in China's environmental management domain, such as pollution fee, pollution trade, total pollution control, environmental tax, green credit, resources accounting, and full cost pricing, etc.

(3) Foresight. This requires CCICED to stay ahead of the curve for suggesting practices suitable for China's changing economic, social and environmental situation, based on latest trends of international environment and development. This helps to keep China in line with new opportunities, while maintaining its competitiveness and achieving improvements in the environment that are beneficial to both China and the rest of the world. CCICED has started studies and provided recommendations on some issues well before Chinese society, industry and government were fully aware of their significance, for example, biodiversity protection, cleaner production, circular economy, low carbon economy, green development, renewable energy, and green taxation.

(4) Early warning. For issues related to trade and environment, rural environment, forest/grassland rehabilitation policy, transportation pollution, marine pollution, and heavy metal pollution such as mercury etc., CCICED has started relevant studies before they were recognized in China's agenda. It is accepted that these studies have provided good early warning for China to pay timely attention.

In terms of policy impact, there are many cases about which CCICED can feel proud. Early in 2007, CCICED started discussions on low carbon economy, a Task Force was established in 2008 to carry out in-depth study, in 2009 China leaders made official

commitment on low carbon economy, and subsequent pilot activities have been implemented by relevant ministries. After the 2008 financial crisis, CCICED introduced UNEP's green economy concept, and put forward recommendations for China to pursue green development. The "12th Five-Year Plan" approved in 2010 has fully incorporated such a concept with specific measures. A package of recommendations on ecosystem compensation was provided by CCICED in 2006, and since early 2009 China has shown its systematic attention through various activities, and relevant legislation is now in process. A similar path was followed much earlier on with regard to circular economy. In 2007, CCICED carried out systematic study on total pollution load reduction, and suggested that China should expand pollution control based on actual improvement of environmental quality. The total pollution load reduction in "12th Five-Year Plan" issued in 2011 indicated that NH_3-N and NOx have been included. In 2006 and 2007, CCICED recommended twice to Premier Wen Jiabao to upgrade SEPA to a full ministry status as part of the State Council, and in 2008 the Ministry of Environmental Protection was formally established. Numerous other examples could be cited where it is believed CCICED recommendations have made such direct impacts.

3. CCICED Value and Future Opportunities

It is not difficult to perceive the unique value of CCICED through its composition and operational mechanism, its policy studies over 20 years, and its impact on China's policies. There is a strong sense on the part of the various participants in CCICED that the considerable effort expended is worthwhile because it has created a unique knowledge system about China's environment and development and how to deal with diverse challenges. This is leading to important positive impacts within China for the health and well-being of the people of China, and outside of China concerning the global environment and development agenda.

Various high-level figures have given their appraisal on the value of CCICED:

Premier Wen Jiabao said during his meeting with CCICED members in 2010: "The reason the China Council has lasted is because of the sincerity and good cooperation from both sides. For so many years, international experts and friends have sacrificed their free time to study China's problems and put forth recommendations. This has been of great help to China. From a broader perspective, I get the sense this is also your own commitment to Mother Earth, the only home we have."

Vice Premier and current CCICED Chair Li Keqiang mentioned in 2009 AGM that: "For 18 years, CCICED has witnessed the development of environmental protection in

China…many study findings and policy recommendations have been taken up by the Government of China."

Concerning CCICED findings and policy assessment, UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said at the 2007 AGM: "I believe that China is now in the forefront of helping the world to interpret the environment in the context of development—more as a driver for development."

Huguette Labelle, former CCICED International Executive Vice Chairperson who as Co-chair of the 2006 Special Task Force on Review and Prospects noted: "The CCICED task force on Forests and Grasslands provided an early assessment of performance that was an outstanding example of analysis. The work of this task force was listened to and acted on by the Government of China."

The 20 years of experiences show that the unique value of CCICED is reflected through four key roles of the Council:

(1) A bridge linking China with international communities, the government with society and intergovernmental agencies towards a harmonious development between man and nature.

(2) A think tank to disseminate new ideas and advanced international experience on sustainable development to policy makers at various levels in China.

(3) A high-level international advisory body in which Chinese and international experts exchange views frankly.

(4) Facilitator to China in introducing its achievements, experience and solutions to international communities.

The Rio+20 summit is approaching in June 2012. Sustainable development implementation by international society over the past 20 years has been full of difficulties: resource and environmental crisis situations are deteriorating in many spots; globally, the financial crisis is still overshadowing all; the MDGs are difficult to achieve, and often there are hurdles for international environmental cooperation. Therefore, there is a need for closer and stronger cooperation among members of the international society. CCICED is a concrete example of the value of such cooperation. Hopefully this experience will be useful to others.

While China is fortunate to be at a key stage for the construction of a "well-off" society, there are still problems of "unbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable development". Resource and environmental constraints on economic and social development are still increasing. Current environmental situation and future trends are: ① There is improvement on certain areas of concern while the overall deterioration has not been stopped; ② The

situation is still grave and environmental pressure is still increasing; and (3) The tasks of ecological civilization and environmental friendly society construction remain formidable. There is a need for a sustainable new road for China's environmental protection with low environmental cost, high benefits and low pollution emissions. It is obvious that sustainable development is the only way towards a bright future for mankind. It is a long journey that needs continuous exploration efforts from CCICED.

For the future of CCICED, Premier Wen Jiabao has given the answer: "On the question of how long this Council will exist, I can tell you that we will continue until the international community is satisfied with China's efforts towards environmental protection. This is not an easy task: it will require the efforts of many generations, perhaps dozens."

Summary Record on 20th Anniversary Open Forum "Sharing the Achievements, Embracing the Future"

Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, Beijing
(November 17, 2011)

I. Introduction

In November 2011 the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development ("the Council" or CCICED, pronounced "sea-said") held the fifth annual general meeting of its fourth phase. Immediately following the conclusion of this meeting, the Council reconvened to celebrate its 20th anniversary with an awards ceremony and speeches and statements by members and former members.

II. Opening Remarks by Li Ganjie

CCICED Secretary General Li Ganjie opened the 20th anniversary forum and introduced leaders and former Council members. He welcomed distinguished guests, experts, and associates.

In his remarks Li Ganjie said that 20 years is just a drop of water in the river of history, but during these past 20 years big changes have taken place in the theory and practice of environmental development in China. CCICED's achievement should be attributed to the consistent support provided by the Chinese government and to the efforts of the Council's founders and builders as well as its members and supporters.

The theme of this forum is "Sharing the Achievements, Embracing the Future." This means we should not only look back on the history and development of CCICED but more importantly look toward the Council's future so that we can enable it to play an even bigger role in helping China achieve the goals of its "12th Five-Year Plan" (FYP).

III. Special Remarks by Song Jian

Li Ganjie introduced Song Jian, former State Councillor of China and Chairperson of CCICED during Phase I. As Li Ganjie put it, Song Jian is one of the founding fathers of CCICED. Here are the highlights of Song Jian's remarks:

It is gratifying to see that CCICED is playing an important role in China's environment and development. The Council has developed into a very influential platform and organization, and sets a good example for international cooperation.

There is a Chinese saying that "time flies," and 20 years have passed in the blink of an eye. In these 20 years, with support from scientists and experts and friendly governments, we have enjoyed rapid development. In the past the Chinese people suffered from poverty and backwardness as a result of foreign aggression, civil wars, natural disasters, and manmade calamities. China used to be called the sick man of Asia. But after the founding of New China — and especially in the past 30 years — we have done quite a good job of developing our country. We built industry, reduced poverty, eradicated diseases, protected the environment, and controlled population growth. So the Chinese people are now quite happy.

These achievements made by the Chinese people wouldn't have been possible without the support of international friends and experts and scientists and governments. Premier Wen and Vice-Premier Li have both affirmed the contribution made by the Council and expressed their gratitude to all of you for your support. I totally agree with them.

20 years ago the Chinese government realized clearly that China did not have sufficient experience and knowledge in sustainable development and modernization. China needed guidance from UN agencies and help from countries which treat us as equals. CCICED was founded against this backdrop.

Many recommendations from the Council have been incorporated into China's laws and departmental regulations. According to Chinese tradition, all those recommendations are published. The most important ones are submitted to senior central government leaders. The original copy is kept by the central archives for future generations to see. In China we have a saying: we want to keep important documents in the temples of the famous mountains for future generations to see.

Right from the founding of CCICED we stressed the importance of drawing on the experiences and lessons of western countries. That is to say, we aimed to integrate the policy of environmental protection into our national development strategy.

China has decided to take scientific development as the winning approach, and the

transformation of economic development mode as the major task. It is interesting to note that past CCICED reports have put great emphasis on this point. The "12th Five-Year Plan" commits China to becoming a resource-conserving and environmentally friendly society. This too was a basic idea put forward by the Council, that is, that environmental protection needs to be incorporated into law, into development strategies, and into the highest decision-making processes.

According to the United Nations, in another three decades China will have 1.5 billion people. As some people have claimed, all the earth's resources are insufficient to give everyone in China a happy life. People want electricity, air conditioners, autos, and so forth. Inevitably, energy consumption will grow — but we still need to reduce emissions. Chinese scientists have been making suggestions about how to do this, for example by no longer burning coal, but such recommendations would be hard for the government to adopt.

In view of the fact that the global population is projected to rise possibly to 15 billion, the Council should take China as a case study on how to solve the problem of emissions reduction and response to climate change while enabling such a huge population to have a decent life. In this way China can contribute to the world in helping solve the conflict between development and environment.

IV. Keynote Speech by Achim Steiner

Li Ganjie introduced Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and a member of CCICED during Phases II, III, and IV. Steiner spoke on the theme of "Rio+20: World Process on Environment and Development." Here are the main points of his presentation:

Anniversaries are special moments. I begin by paying tribute to all of you here in this hall today. I think you have assembled here — both from outside and inside China — pioneers in trying to change our appreciation of what it means to manage our environment more responsibly and sustainably.

Not only is this the 20th anniversary of CCICED, but next year we observe the anniversary of the 1992 Rio conference. That meeting changed the conversation about development, because it was the first global articulation that development cannot be measured by economic indicators alone. Next year is also the 40th anniversary of the pioneers from 1972 who began that conversation at the global level at Stockholm, and whose work led to the establishment of UNEP.

During this period the history and evolution of the China Council reflects also the journey of learning and appreciation that the global community has passed through. The

environmental agenda in its earlier stages was one of recognizing the destruction in the immediate vicinity of where we lived, worked, conducted our daily business. It was driven by a realization that the kind of pollution and habitat destruction that was taken as a given in the development process was beginning to harm people — literally to kill people. That's why the early agenda was focused on cleanup.

Subsequently, science began to open our eyes to the fact that humanity had managed in less than 150 years to move from being just one more biological actor in the global ecosystem to becoming such a dominant player that we were beginning to affect the planet's fundamental life support systems. That consciousness has been central to understanding the incredibly rapid evolution of the environmental agenda over the last 20 years.

In less than 100 years we have affected the resources in the oceans to such an extent the oceans are warming. We are confronted with thermal expansion as a result of global warming. We are affecting the icecaps resulting in a sea level rise this century probably of a meter or more. Remarkably, well over half the world's fisheries are already at a maximum level of exploitation, or are declining or on the verge of doing so.

We face issues of food security and continue to practice agriculture in a way that historians will one day say: How blind could a society be? Even as we try to feed 7 billion people (one day perhaps 15 billion) we are destroying the very foundation of agriculture — the production factor called land — at an unprecedented scale, through desalination, desertification, and degradation. Loss of arable soils has reached a level never before found in terms of human impacts on the planet.

The scientific and empirical knowledge that has informed us about these impacts has helped take the environmental agenda to another level. We have begun to talk about ecosystems, the atmosphere, the biosphere, biodiversity. We have begun to appreciate the peril of species extinction (even as we are going through perhaps the greatest extinction crisis in human memory). Thanks to this scientific knowledge, here at the China Council our conversation about the environmental aspects of development has matured, progressed, and taken on an entirely different dimension. We have begun to understand that the environmental dimension of sustainable development is increasingly becoming a defining element of development rather than a resource simply to drive it.

Even though the world has articulated a paradigm for development that recognizes the linkages among social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic development, and even though we have had an extraordinary two decades of innovation and experimentation, we have not yet realized the goal we set in 1992, that is, to manage sustainable development as a three-dimensional process — economic, social, and environmental — and not as

separate pillars that for much of the 20th century were essentially in competition with one another.

The China Council is extraordinary in that it has become one of the platforms in the world where the conversation about development has matured so that it speaks to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. There is a quality to thinking, analysis, and conversation that you will find in few other places. A lot of this has to do with the people assembled around the Council — people who will articulate innovation with responsibility but also with an ambition to think about development differently.

We also appreciate China's own evolution of thinking and its vision of development as expressed in the new FYP. China is one of the few nations (if not the only nation) that views its own short-term development against the backdrop of a civilizational challenge — a vision of ecological civilization.

To some in the world at large — hardnosed economists, financial market operators, politicians — this concept of ecological civilization may seem abstract. But we have to confront the fact that, although we identified a civilizational challenge in 1992, as of 2012 we have not yet found a response to that challenge. With all the great things that have happened in the context of sustainable development in recent decades, the harsh bottom line is that in virtually all major indicators of sustainability, the world is not heading in the right direction. In some respects it is accelerating in the wrong direction.

Whether it is carbon emissions, or the state of the oceans and fisheries, or the challenge of feeding a hungry world, or whether it is recognizing that, eight years from now, one-third of humanity will live in water-stressed situations, whether it is the spectre of climate change — we will continue to debate until the flooding we have seen in Bangkok will happen in 25 cities instead of just one or two right now.

When almost half a nation is flooded, as we saw in Pakistan last year, isn't this a moment where you would expect the world to say: surely this is a reason to look at a change of direction. I think the world is beginning to reach that point, and this is why the terminology with which we now discuss sustainable development here in the Council and worldwide is characterized by terms like transformation. We are at the point where the planetary boundaries — what a planet can sustain — are now coming to such close perimeter with the footprint of humanity's economic actions that transformation is called for.

In many ways, next year's conference in Rio is trying to catch up with what the China Council has articulated on many of these issues over the past few years. I encourage the Council to take this opportunity to bring some of the lessons of its thinking to Rio. The

world would benefit from it — not in terms of a Chinese model or Chinese leadership — but because of the thinking that China has fostered in this Council over two decades.

The summit in Rio is happening against a backdrop of exactly the opposite of what the meeting is about. We are confronted with financial crises, banking crises, natural catastrophes — lots of excuses for focusing on the short term rather than the long term.

Many might say, what can a summit on sustainable development in 2012 really achieve? Perhaps we need to rethink the way we look at sustainable development, not as something that is a destination in the future (which was the psychology of 1992) but as a current imperative we must achieve so that we will actually have a future. In that sense the thematic focus of the Rio conference next year is not about some distant vision about an alternative future. It is a dramatic reflection on the need for transformation.

We must also recognize that the age when individual nations and communities could determine their own wellbeing by what happens within their boundaries is long gone. Our world is condemned for better or worse to have to act collectively. That is a fundamental principle that needs to be rediscovered. We are a world divided, lacking in common objectives and purpose and orientation. We define our abilities to act by the actions of others. That has often been a tragic error. Whether it is in climate change negotiations or other fora, the notion that you move first before I move has become a recipe for paralysis.

This paralysis cements inequities and deprives us of the ability to act responsibly for the future. That is why in Rio we must ask ourselves: how can we govern together as a community of 7 billion people, in 193 countries, hundreds of languages, thousands of agenda, and 10,000 reasons why my particular interest should come first? We must govern with a responsibility and understanding that no nation today is able to chart its own course. This is why we will look both at governance in general and more specifically at the international environmental governance framework.

Here again the evolution of the discussion at the global level reflects the discussion in China. Many of us have been witness to China's decision to establish the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP). Its environmental policy-making is increasingly becoming more than just putting norms and standards and regulations into place, more than monitoring, more than enforcement. Instead, MEP informs the discourse about the future opportunities and options of a nation.

That is why we are so privileged, as members and associates of the Council, to follow this discussion in China. I suggest to those who want to understand where the global sustainable development agenda will move next, look to China, because here we see both the dramatic choices that are being made and also the sense of responsibility and the

opportunity to act.

Recently a UN colleague said: We have viewed in the past 20 years the main challenge for the world as being located or centered in the global south; perhaps the world needs to realize that a growing number of indicators suggest that the greatest challenge of the next 20 to 30 years may be located in the global north.

That change in perception in itself begins to redefine the parameters for global action. It will make tectonic shifts occur in the way we have defined and divided the world. There is no longer that clear line between north and south, developed and developing countries. Sustainability is now a global responsibility, and one that must be acted on collectively.

V. Keynote Speech by Qu Geping

Li Ganjie introduced Qu Geping, former Administrator of China's National Environmental Protection Agency, among other senior posts, and Vice-Chair of CCICED during Phases I, II, and III. He spoke on the topic "China's Progress, Challenges and Opportunities for Environment and Development." Here are the highlights of his presentation:

Today I wish to talk about large and serious issues in China's social and political structures as they relate to the environment. There is a "lagging" of political structures which has fostered income inequities between countryside and city, regional differences, and widening gaps between various social strata resulting in social tensions. Resource depletion has created serious environmental problems which continue to grow and which are turning into extremely grave social and economic problems.

This situation places before us a number of possible scenarios as well as paths to follow. We have two options, either of which could happen: that development will continue in China in a positive way, or that it could be an extremely unhealthy process. As the global economy becomes more integrated and environmental issues are internationalized, environmental issues become tangled in international economic, social, and political interests. So we have our own national problems, and then there are international problems to think about too.

What do we do in this situation? We need to continue Deng Xiao-ping's policy of opening and reform, which includes adjusting social and political structures, coordinating economic and social interests, and easing social tensions and conflicts. Then we will be able to provide guarantees and drivers for China's transformation of the development pattern. We will solve from the root a number of environmental problems enabling us to carry out sustainable development and build a green economy and an ecological civilization. Reforms

in economic and political structures are fundamental to this process.

We must accept that our environment faces an extremely grave situation. As a MEP document says: there have been some partial improvements, but overall the situation is deteriorating. This is the kind of clear assessment we need to have; we cannot be blindly optimistic.

To achieve sustainable development, we need to look at three interlinked areas:

First, some serious challenges have resulted from rapid growth combined with slow structural transformation. Although even as early as the 9th Five-Year Plan the central government proposed a transformation of economic structures, today we still have rapid industrialization and urbanization, with heavy industry going into high gear toward peak production, and relying on large investments and extensive resource competition. Despite the passage of time, this mode of production — investment-driven, and characterized by competition for resources — has not changed. Structural adjustment has been slow, and in fact sometimes it has been reversed.

We are limited increasingly by the scarcity of resources and by deterioration in the overall environment. How much more land, water, and other resources is China going to need? How is it going to use them? I think we are actually swimming against the current, because there are so many problems and so many issues. It's going to be extremely difficult to protect the environment under these circumstances. Sometimes we are even forced to retreat. Now, we can take certain measures which may be effective, but overall, if things don't change the situation is only going to get worse.

Second, the economic system and the public management system lag behind the situation and are unsynchronized. Furthermore, their reforms proceed only with great difficulty. The relationship between government and markets is still unclear. In local governments you see the concept of "GDP first above all," for example in performance evaluation. Often, local governments are only thinking about their own region or their own city, and they look upon their own activities as sort of a business enterprise.

Meanwhile, the rule of law and the provision of public service — traditional functions of government — have not been effectively established. Excessive pursuit of investment to start projects and to use local resources in order to drive local output and increase tax revenue has resulted in a neglect of public services, and a neglect of protection of the environment and of the public interest. Often, local governments launch a "green campaign," or an "environmental protection activity," but the results actually only serve market forces. In fact there was no real attempt to make it green. These were just slogans.

We must step up reforms in the economy and in public management, and rely on the

law to fortify the role of government, especially in public services. Only then will we be able to strengthen environmental management and the effectiveness of government measures. The environment, after all, is not an isolated issue; it is closely linked with all the operations of a nation.

We must set up a healthy governmental role for environmental protection and improve the management of public services. On the one hand we must emphasize the role of government and guidance, but at the same time make use of market leverage and recognize the important role of enterprises and the public. So it's not going to depend just on directives from MEP; it has to include everybody.

Third, in the process of social transformation we've seen that ethics and morals have become skewed. Over-consumption and the emphasis on money and material things have created a number of challenges. This single-minded pursuit of wealth and material comforts is a legitimate desire on the part of human beings, but we need to maintain some kind of balance between market and morals — between the material and the spiritual. In that way economic growth will be restrained by social values and we will be able to deal with this issue of imbalance and lack of coordination and unsustainability.

Today, many traditional Chinese moral and cultural values have been lost, but a new system — a new ecological civilization — is not yet in place. This creates pressure on the environment. If this pursuit of money and material things is not limited by values and moral teachings, and if we regard them as the only yardstick for social success, we are not going to be able to stop the destruction of the environment.

Ladies and gentlemen, China's environmental problems mainly stem from the economic growth model, inappropriate government policies, and poor management. These problems necessitate a fundamental shift in government management. That is why we need to learn from the experience overseas related to China's realities. The China Council has proposed good policy recommendations. I hope it will continue and provide its distinctive and original and unique perspectives and advice.

And how can all of us make a difference? In two ways. First, Council members — as in the past — should look at these urgent issues and propose specific and focused recommendations on issues that are widespread and serious in China. Second — as in the past, when the Chinese government heeded and adopted the Council's recommendations — we should put these ideas and advice into practice.

I think that what Council members have done is incredible. They are all from the bottom of their hearts genuinely and seriously trying to help China resolve the issues of environment and development. I say to our old friends: I express my respect and thanks to

you. I hope that all members of the China Council, old and new, will continue in this path, and I am sure that this will happen.

Here in China, there are certain things we should have done properly, but we did not. I am still hoping we can do things properly. Overall, development is not too bad in China, but there are many problems. If we don't deal with these issues properly I am quite worried about the future. I want so much that our economic development should proceed well — that we can have blue skies, and clear water, and a wonderful environment to live in.

VI. Keynote Speech by Arthur Hanson

Li Ganjie introduced Arthur Hanson, Distinguished Fellow at the International Institute for Sustainable Development, CCICED member during all four phases, and International Chief Advisor during CCICED Phase IV, among other posts. He spoke on the topic "CCICED at 20 — Impacts and Looking Ahead" and he made the following points:

All that I wish to say about the China Council you will find in our book CCICED at 20. All, that is, except the emotion I have felt working with the Council. For me, CCICED has been a thrill, at times a terror. I have tried to come at this work as a humble servant to a great endeavour, and I submit that's how we all tried to come to this great roundtable — one of the greatest in the world, as far as I'm concerned.

The Council brings together people of different nationalities and organizational backgrounds. We've been fortunate to park our differences and our affiliations at the door, and walk in here and sit down and talk. I think one of the reasons the Council has worked so well is that we conduct a respectful dialogue. We learn from each other. We take ideas out of this room and we try to place them into our own societies. I think the organization is unique and I want to give some examples.

I often hear the expression "dreaming in the language." When you have started dreaming in a new language you can be said to truly understand the setting. I confess even after my 20-year involvement in China I don't think I can dream in the Chinese language. But I cannot go through a day when I am not thinking about something related to China. The China Council is an exciting endeavour, and I am fortunate to be able to come to a setting like this and to share problem solving with a group this skilled and this interesting.

Something else that guides my thinking is my own grandchildren. When you have a child who is going to be here for 50, 75, 100 years, what can one say to that child? First of all I want to be able to say: I tried my best. And then I want to be able to say: I tried a lot of that in countries other than my native land, and particularly in Asian countries, and

particularly in China, and I hope that I have made some contributions and I want you children to do the same in your own lives. The advice I give these children is: try to understand China, because this country will be meaningful in your life. The point here is that what we do in the China Council is not only cross-cultural but also cross-generational in terms of our ultimate impact.

I believe that phase V will be the most exciting, the most significant phase of the Council's work, for many of the reasons that Qu Geping just mentioned. This is a time of great uncertainty — he describes the situation as being very grave — but we also have a great opportunity for China. China has the money, it has a better management system in place than ever, and it has new emerging industries that allow it to do things not only within China but in its relations with the world. So, a key message for the future is this: we face an unprecedented level of challenge, but also of opportunity.

The Council has been given a great deal of trust by the government of China. We have been able to do things that most other countries would not allow a foreign group to do. For example, right now we are looking at China's outgoing investment, and at China's image in the world and how it can improve this image as it relates to environment and development. It's extraordinary that we are able to do these studies.

Will China become an environmentally responsible citizen in the world? That is one of the key issues we will address in the coming five years. Of course, China is already a responsible citizen in many of its international activities, but how to strengthen that, how to use it to the mutual advantage of China and the rest of the world? And how to ensure that the international perception is positive about China's role?

Along with that comes another big question: is the moderately respectful dialogue that the China Council has always pursued a model that can apply elsewhere in the world? We don't really know the answer, because China is unique in so many ways. What is clear is that components of this model can certainly be applied elsewhere. That's one reason why the China Council ought to be highlighted at Rio+20. People should learn from us, and we should be prepared to share our experiences.

It has been a marvellous journey, a journey of learning, of happiness, of working with marvellous people, both at the international and Chinese level. It has also been a fulfilling journey. I think we have seen real progress in our work through the China Council.

In closing, I wish to acknowledge the support from team members who over the years have contributed much, for example, Earl Drake, Yichun Dai, and Chris Dagg from the International Support Office at Simon Fraser University. Here in Beijing we have a dedicated crew in the very small Secretariat who work hard and who contribute their

intellectual capacity and their practical capacity in organizing events and so forth, and who pull this together so that we can have these kinds of discussions. Thanks to all who have contributed.

VII. Keynote Speech by Shen Guofang

Li Ganjie introduced Shen Guofang, former Vice President of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, CCICED member during Phases III and IV, and Chinese Chief Advisor during CCICED Phase IV, among other posts. He too spoke on the topic "CCICED at 20 — Impacts and Looking Ahead." Here are the main points he made:

During the many years of my involvement with CCICED I have seen with my own eyes the development and progress in China's environmental protection. And I have also witnessed the close cooperation and lasting friendship between the Chinese experts and the international experts, and I'm very proud of it.

The China Council has played another unique role: it has nurtured a generation of experts and scholars who are concerned about the protection of the environment. I myself have benefited a lot from my participation in this work. It has improved my understanding of the relationship between development and the protection of the environment. I have had more contacts with overseas colleagues, and so now I can look at these issues from different perspectives. It has benefited me very much as an old man, and I am sure it has also benefited the younger experts.

The issues discussed in the Council are wide ranging, plus we have a direct dialogue with the State Council, which is why we have attracted so many young experts in engineering, environmental protection, and the humanities. They have been doing sound research on macro-economics, policy design, and the drafting of the recommendations. While contributing to the Council they themselves have become more knowledgeable and experienced in these issues, and I'm sure this generation will contribute more in the future to the further protection of the environment in China.

20 years is a very important span for a person. In 20 years we become a young person, and then we become an old man, and then we become a really old man. And then we retire. I myself have seen one generation after another participating in the work of the Council. Today I am happy to have invited all the experts who have retired from their posts to celebrate the 20th anniversary. However the China Council has clearly defined objectives and a clear mechanism and support from the international community, so 20 years is just a short time span for it. So the China Council is now at its prime.

VIII. Outstanding Contribution Award Ceremony

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of CCICED, the Council presented awards to organizations and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to its work.

The five organizations that were honoured are:

(1) Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

(2) German Agency for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)

(3) United Kingdom's Department for International Development

(4) Netherlands' Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu)

(5) Japan's Ministry of the Environment (Kankyōshō)

Also honoured were eight Council members who had made outstanding contributions during at least three phases of the Council's work. These individuals are:

(6) Qu Geping

(7) Achim Steiner

(8) Arthur Hanson

(9) Martin Lees

(10) Claude Martin

(11) Crispin Tickell

(12) Julia Marton-Lefèvre

(13) Björn Stigson

The award to Qu Geping was presented by former State Councillor and former CCICED Chair Song Jian.

Also honoured was Yichun Dai, who has been employed at the Secretariat's International Support Office in Canada during the entire two decades of the Council's existence. Her energy and dedication have helped provide the corporate continuity and enduring professionalism that have contributed so much to the success of the organization.

IX. Leading Comments from Huguette Labelle

Margaret Biggs, President of CIDA and Executive Vice-Chair of CCICED during Phase IV, introduced Huguette Labelle, former President of CIDA and Vice-Chair of CCICED during Phases I and II. Here are the highlights of Huguette Labelle's remarks:

Why has this Council been so successful over the years? One reason is that it has enjoyed sustained support from the highest levels of the Chinese government. As well,

CCICED has worked on those issues that are most relevant to China. The Council's international experts remained committed and engaged because they felt that their input was being considered (also because they were learning much). Their task force and working group reports did not go into a black hole but were actually being used.

As well, the Council evolved in parallel with the broader changes in China. It focused on solutions that could actually be implemented. Its transparency has also been a factor in its success — the Chinese government has been comfortable reporting publicly the Council's proceedings and the implementation of its recommendations. The spirit of learning between the Chinese leadership and the international community has been strong and remains so to this day.

And what are the dilemmas or challenges facing the Council? One issue that China, like all countries, will face is what I call the "push back"— by industries, local governments, or investors — who want government regulations to accommodate their own special interests. A related dilemma is "policy capture" through processes such as high-level lobbying by special interests that wish to protect their investments or revenues as opposed to doing what is right for the whole country. To counter this pressure, CCICED can be a strong partner of the central government in supporting and implementing the right policies.

China is challenged also by the increased decentralization of authority to other levels of government. The national government needs to maintain the public good; otherwise there will be a cacophony of competing interests. There will be no central heart beating for the right policies, the right regulations, the right systems of control and implementation. With greater decentralization comes greater difficulty in ensuring that what is best for the country as a whole is implemented at all levels. We have seen this problem in my home country, Canada.

We also need to consider China's contribution to international cooperation. As we were reminded here today, often in international fora it is the lowest common denominator that achieves consensus, whereas we should be aiming for higher achievements. Countries often wait for others to act before they make a commitment on their own contribution. In light of the work that China and this Council have done, therefore, it is important that China make a positive contribution to these world debates so that they are less dysfunctional and better able to achieve what is required.

Another issue is how do we measure our success as nations? Relying on gross domestic product (GDP) or economic growth or stock prices is insufficient. We have to find much better ways of identifying the indicators for the best possible quality of life for our citizens. Of course, economic growth is important if we want to pull people out of

poverty — but growth does not always rescue everyone. We have seen a lot of inequity and non-inclusive growth around the world.

Many problems arise from China's rapid industrialization. I don't think any other nation has ever seen such speed of industrialization and expansion of consumption. We need to make citizens part of the solution. If China's 1.3 billion people become committed and support the right policies, I think we can have the greatest revolution that has ever been.

I believe it is possible to have a high quality of life and at the same time to reduce our environmental footprint. We need to introduce greater personal responsibility on the part of individual citizens, starting with youth who need a strong moral compass. The Chinese government has been remarkably open with its citizens about the major environmental issues the country is facing. This is tremendous in helping people understand what the stakes are. But people should not believe that only the government is responsible for finding answers; citizens themselves also have to be part of the solution.

The Council has set new standards for international cooperation. I have been privileged to have been part of this exceptional experiment which, let us hope, will be taken up by other countries. We need to celebrate this success, because it is a success of solidarity between countries, between institutions, between peoples. Our reward is to have been part of this outstanding experience.

X. Leading Comments from Martin Lees

Margaret Biggs introduced Martin Lees, former Secretary General of the Club of Rome and CCICED member during Phases I, II, and III. Here are the highlights of his presentation:

In my view, the decision by the Chinese authorities to establish the China Council was not a sudden inspiration, but was a coherent step in the wider processes of reform and opening up which had begun in the late 1970s.

An international conference in June 1988 provided an opportunity — one of the first — for dialogue between the leadership of China and a group of international leaders and experts on the key strategic issues of China's reform and opening up to the outside world. We had the remarkable and unique opportunity to exchange views successively with the three top leaders of China — the Prime Minister, the General Secretary, and ultimately a two-hour meeting with supreme leader Deng Xiao-ping.

One point on the agenda of this 1988 conference specifically focused on the significance of environmental and resource constraints as a determinant of China's long-term development strategy. Out of this meeting emerged a program of international

cooperation called "China and the World in the Nineties." This program, which provided the Chinese leadership directly with focused international advice and experience on a series of key reform issues, laid the foundations for the China Council.

It was in this context that three senior and distinguished Chinese personalities, in a letter of 10 January 1990, proposed an initiative to focus attention on the core issue of environment as critical to the future of China's development, recognizing the important opportunities for international cooperation in this field. Two of these people are with us here today: Song Jian and Qu Geping. These two remarkable personalities have been for decades the pillars on which the movement towards a sustainable path of economic progress in China has been founded. The third important supporter of this initiative was Ma Hong, President of the Development Research Center of the State Council, who is regrettably no longer among us today.

Let me quote a few lines from this letter which was, at the time, a remarkable and perceptive statement of intent:

The Chinese Government has decided to invite a small number of international personalities to visit Beijing for discussions with the leadership about a major new programme of international cooperation on the conservation of the environment in China. We recognize that the protection of the environment in China is essential to the future of the Chinese people. We are also fully aware that the People's Republic of China, which constitutes about one fifth of the world population, must actively take part and sincerely cooperate with other countries in the global efforts to resolve the serious environmental problems which threaten our planet……

International cooperation and support will be critical to the success of our work…

We hope that the private high-level meeting will help us, in a spirit of openness and cooperation, to define a strategy and to initiate action which will enable us to combine economic growth, modernization and reform with the long-term conservation of the environment. This will be not only in the vital interest of China, but of the whole world.

It was on this basis of this Chinese initiative that we were able to convene a major international conference focused on "The Integration of Environment and Development" here in the State Guest House in October 1990. I would like to record that it was visionary support by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations which made it possible to take this critical step towards the establishment of the China Council.

Song Jian, who chaired that conference, indicated that the Chinese authorities were in principle prepared to consider the establishment of some form of organizational arrangements to ensure that work on the important issues which were the focus of the

agenda should continue after the conference. After the conference Qu Geping was able to tell us that Premier Li Peng had authorized the creation of an organizational framework to follow up the ideas and proposals made at the conference.

I would like to underline the important role played by another key personality, Xie Zhenhua, then the Deputy Administrator of the National Environment Protection Agency. Under the guidance of Qu Geping, we together drafted the Charter of the China Council by March 1991. With the support of Song Jian and Qu Geping, it was approved by the State Council.

In spite of all this remarkable and rapid progress, the final step towards the establishment of the Council remained to be taken: how to find the initial financial support to launch the Council quickly and convincingly? In view of the long and positive relationship between Canada and China since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, I visited Marcel Massé, President of CIDA, in June 1991 in Ottawa and asked him for the necessary support. Within six weeks he confirmed that CIDA would provide the requested CA$5 million over five years to support the Council.

I would like to express my deep appreciation for this early and generous support which enabled us to organize the first session of the Council, here in the State Guest House, in April 1992. The sustained support of CIDA, which continues to this day, has also provided a solid basis for the work of the Council and a framework within which many other donors have now given their support.

Let me suggest some of the key reasons for the success of the China Council. In my view, these factors must be preserved to ensure the continuing relevance and effectiveness of the Council.

First, China's leaders are unusually open to considering international experience and advice. But, most important, they then critically assess the diversity of opinions and experience which is presented, and select and test those elements which are most relevant to the needs, the culture, and the aspirations of China.

Second, the Council's mandate and activities focus on the integration of economic development with energy and resource use and the environment. This balanced and integrated approach, which covers the wide range of connected issues related to economic development and environment, is crucial to the success of this Council. Development and environment are, in fact, two sides of the same coin.

Third, on the Chinese side, the Council is intended to bring together participation from the government-wide range of ministries and agencies engaged in the issues of environment and development. This cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary collaboration on which the

Council is founded is very difficult, but it is increasingly needed to address the connected challenges of the modern world.

Fourth, the credibility of the Council's recommendations and suggestions depends on the solid continuing work of the task forces and working groups which develop sound proposals based on rigorous and extensive scientific analysis. This combination of solid scientific analysis and high-level access has ensured the continuing relevance and effectiveness of the China Council. The Council is designed to bridge the gap between science and policy — an interface of critical importance today, particularly in relation to climate change.

I conclude with observations concerning the critical challenges of the future where the Council can play a valuable role.

There is a need for a sense of urgency. The problems and risks we face are increasing in scale and intensity despite our efforts. In particular, there is an urgent need for effective action to mitigate the increasing risks of dangerous climate change and to adapt to its inevitable impacts.

Climate science clearly indicates that the scale of human activities, particularly of emissions, runs the risk of triggering irreversible and dangerous climate change. If we continue on this path, we are heading for a rise in global average temperature of at least 4.5° C by 2100 and probably substantially more. It is particularly important to recognize that the processes driving climate change are non-linear: we cannot therefore expect a gradual process of global warming giving us time to talk and think. We must prepare for sudden major changes which could have devastating consequences on the prospects for development in China and across the world.

The impacts of a world population of seven billion people today are already devastating the terrestrial and ocean ecosystems and grossly overusing the natural capital of the planet. As the population rises to over 9 billion in less than 40 years, it is clear that the present consumption-driven, fossil-fuel based path of economic growth is not sustainable.

Fortunately, this central challenge has long been recognized by China's leadership, first through the creation of the China Council itself and now in its commitment to reorient China's development onto a more equitable, balanced, and sustainable path. This new approach is reflected in the Chinese strategy for climate change, in the "12th Five-Year Plan", and in the concept of the Xiao Kang program, aimed at achieving an all-round prosperous society.

The restructuring of the growth trajectory of China and of the world economy to achieve equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development is the central vital challenge of

the 21st century. This will be a difficult task. We have seen that the pressures for consumption, supported by powerful special interests, will strongly resist the transformational changes which are essential. We should know by now that incremental change will not save us.

China can play a major role in defining the new models of growth and development, the new strategies, and the new partnerships needed to seize the opportunities ahead and to build the new low-carbon green economies of the future. And the China Council can play an important role in supporting the continuing transformation of China's development trajectory onto a sustainable path.

XI. Leading Comments from Børge Brende

Margaret Biggs introduced Børge Brende, Managing Director of the World Economic Forum, former Minister of the Norwegian Ministry of Environment, and Vice-Chair of CCICED during Phase IV. Here are the main points of his remarks:

Martin Lees' talk confirmed that an anniversary gives us a unique opportunity to learn from the past but also to reflect on the important challenges of our time. The current crises of the global economy and the political space it has created allow us to ask fundamental questions about how the system works and how it does not.

This is an ideal time to initiate reforms. It is often the sudden unexpected events that reshape political and economic contexts overnight. In recent years we have seen 9/11, financial crises, oil/food spikes, the Fukushima nuclear crisis, and extreme weather events. Shocks and crises can spread further and faster than before — but so can smart ideas and new solutions. The next years will see the arrival of staggering amounts of new technology, especially in biotechnology and genetics, computer science, and energy and resource efficiency. Many of these new technologies will have highly positive environmental impacts, from reducing emissions to enhanced resource productivity.

But how to manage the energy poverty? Already 1.5 billion people globally do not have access to basic electricity, and there will be billions more of these people soon. How can we accommodate this but decouple it from rising carbon dioxide emissions? We need a policy that introduces new inventions and new technologies in the way China itself has already done in recent years. China went from almost zero to being the world leader in producing and exporting windmills and solar panels, and so has introduced these energy sources into new markets at a much lower price.

Throughout history change has always required a champion. We need leaders who know how to collaborate across sectors and continents, and who can articulate a vision of

what is possible. I believe it was this kind of vision that was driving the founding fathers of CCICED. The China Council is unique. Other nations should consider the experience that China has had with this institution with a view to establishing their own local brand of CCICED. However, any nation has to be brave to seek independent advice outside its own government corridors. China has shown this kind of self-confidence and courage, and evidently has gained from it.

Two transformations are under way in China: a move toward becoming both a conservation society and an all-inclusive society. CCICED is up to the task of providing the best advice on the difficult transformational path that China is following. Or, as Minister Zhou Shengxian phrased it at the start of the 2011 Annual General Meeting: "The realization of China's green transformation will be China's active contribution to the world's development." I am pleased and feel privileged to be part of a Council that can be a partner with China on this very important path.

XII. General Comments

Margaret Biggs invited comments from Council members and from special guests. Here are summaries of the points made from the floor:

Having witnessed the Council in all its phases, I can see that the enthusiasm and passion of both Chinese and foreign members have not been lost. I underline what other speakers have said: although China has gained from this experience, the individuals serving around these tables for the past 20 years have gained a huge amount also. We will take what we have learned here and pass the message on to other places around the world. I do hope other countries will follow this leadership model — this inter-cultural, inter-sectoral dialogue that is breaking down the walls separating us from making progress.

We need to think beyond conventional economics. There is a mandarin term for "clean green growth" which implies we should reject the obsession with growth and GDP which is so evident in the conventional economic view. Instead we should try to bring in environmental costs, supplementary expenses, and the true value of happiness, human welfare, and a harmonious society. Harmony of course goes back to the days of Confucius, and perhaps the Chinese have been ahead of others in trying to define and establish new methods of economic measurement that would make society work better. The Council should encourage the scientists in China who are pursuing this because it's going to be an extremely valuable contribution in the years to come.

CCICED has not only been informative in coming up with ideas of what China can do to improve its environmental record and its international cooperation; it has been equally

informative for us all. I have been amazed when reading the CVs of my colleagues to find that the China Council is always mentioned as an important item. And so it does in my CV too. We are all proud to have been part of this unique exercise.

"Ecological footprint" is an indicator that aims to supplement GDP which, as we know, has failed to measure national economic performance. We have not gone far with developing the concept of ecological footprint, but for China it's important because often the impact of the Chinese economy is criticized abroad in terms of resource consumption. Some nations use China to excuse the fact that they themselves are not taking action at home. They point the finger at China for wrecking the world's resources. This is dishonest behaviour, but all the more reason for China to introduce transparency about its resource consumption abroad.

We will lose a lot of tropical forests in the decades to come, essentially because of the demand for commodities such as palm oil, soybean, and beef. Soybean plantations, for example, produce per hectare about 10 to 15 times the revenue as sustainable forestry. We do not account for lost forests, neither in terms of carbon sequestration nor biodiversity, so we urgently need a system that introduces the valuation of these natural assets. It can be done by adopting systems and standards for the production of some of these commodities, such as the certification mechanisms of the Forest Stewardship Council. There are other standards for palm oil and soybean. The Council should look into some of these valuation systems.

Whenever the international members of CCICED happen to meet at a debate or a workshop outside the context of the Council, we always refer to our particular kinship — being members of the China Council. It's a family, an affiliation, and we cannot but mention that we are members of this exceptional body. We are proud to be part of this international movement.

I've worked in all four phases of CCICED. As colleagues here have already said, it has been a huge privilege to work for the Council. Why did I do it? Because China is the planet's "ground zero" country. Whether this planet gets through another century depends not on Europe or America, but on China. China is the biggest country, and so it is having the biggest impacts on the planet. It is the only country that can really decide the issues this way or that. Frankly, I do not work in my own country because I think it is pointless — there is nothing my country could actually do to help solve the issue.

I miss some of the features of the early Council when it was smaller. We got close and we discussed very frankly the problems. I feel we've become too big, too formal, too polite. I was delighted to hear Qu Geping say the truth boldly. That was the unique feature of the

early Council. We didn't hide the problems. We were here to find solutions. China's only sin is that it is too big. People might fear it because of its size, but China is leading the world in many areas of environmental protection; for example, China plants more trees than the rest of the world put together. Nobody can accuse China of not caring about the environment.

In the area of "aid architecture" there is disarray in the way donors and countries work together. CCICED however provides an excellent example of what works. For developing countries the major lesson is that unless policy-makers are serious, adopt a long-term perspective, and are consistent in their approach and open to new ideas, they are not likely to achieve as much as China has. This is an important lesson for donors too, because increasingly I hear the term "knowledge institutions" or "knowledge bank," but when you scratch the surface you find there is little knowledge being imparted. With the China Council there is a strong knowledge content which is provided in a collaborative manner. We need to think about how to use the donor community's limited resources more effectively, and this Council is a good example of what can be done.

XIII. Closing Remarks by Zhou Shengxian

Margaret Biggs invited Zhou Shengxian, Minister of Environmental Protection of China and Executive Vice-Chair of CCICED during Phases III and IV, to deliver a special speech and summary on the forum's theme of "Sharing the Achievements, Embracing the Future." Here are the main points that he made:

China has gone through two periods of 20 years each, both of them momentous and tumultuous. The first period began with the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. China's government sent a delegation to the conference, which adopted its well-known declaration, the text of which actually includes a quotation from Chairman Mao Zedong. The original wording was that "mankind must never stop summing up its experience. It must have inventions, discoveries, creativity. It should move forward." When we read these words today, we find them pertinent indeed. That conference was the first meeting between the Chinese and the international environmental protection cause.

Soon after that, China convened its first national conference on protection of the environment. This meeting proposed directives on comprehensive planning, rational arrangements, measures to turn harm into benefit, and reliance on the population to work together to protect the environment and benefit the people. This event became one of the opening salvos in China's efforts toward environmental protection. In 1983, the second national conference on environmental protection was held in which protection of the environment became a basic policy for China.

The second 20-year period started in 1992. In April of that year, the Chinese government approved the establishment of CCICED. In June, Premier Li Peng led a Chinese delegation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. This was the second time that China's environmental protection efforts met with those of the international community. Since 1992, sustainable development has become a national strategy and plan of action for the Chinese government. Thanks to joint efforts involving our governments, our people, and CCICED, we have made environmental protection a prominent component of our economic and social development.

Over the last 20 years the China Council has received a great deal of attention from people at home and abroad, and has established its own distinctive "brand." The Premier of China each time has received Council members and listened to our recommendations, which have included many practical proposals for China and the world. The Chairman of each CCICED phase has always been a member of the State Council and the Vice-Premier in charge of the environment. This enduring, direct dialogue with high-level leaders is unique in the world.

The Council has made over 200 significant proposals and policy recommendations. These relate to issues such as pollution control, the circular economy, ecological compensation, and environmental management. It has engaged in over 100 different studies. Many experts have participated in these investigations, and they have written up over 140 reports. Many of the Council's recommendations have been adopted by the Chinese government and implemented. If we pay attention we can identify places in China's system of environmental regulations where CCICED recommendations have been adopted.

Furthermore, the China Council has trained a large number of people to help with the cause of China's environmental protection. Our senior experts have guided and mentored a whole group of young PhD students and scientists to join in these task forces. This gives us hope for the future. As new young people gradually come on board and older experts leave the scene, we can say we've achieved the sustainability of scientific research.

The China Council has pioneered a very successful kind of international cooperation and partnership in environmental studies. Over 1000 scholars and experts from all sectors, disciplines, and backgrounds have participated in Council task forces, as well as thousands more who took part in other ways in these activities. This is a win-win situation for everybody. Developed countries possess advanced knowledge about the environment and advanced technologies, while China has this huge market which needs these things. Through this window of the China Council a lot of knowledgeable and farsighted people have come here to work on these projects.

During the coming Phase V, where should we put our efforts? First, we should elevate our "ecological civilization." What does that term mean? It's not just about planting a few more trees, not just about preventing pollution. It's a new kind of economic structure or form of consumption. It raises the whole issue of environmental protection to the level of a development path. That's why the State Council has pointed out that we must use scientific and technical innovation to search for new, less costly ways to do things, with lower emissions, greater sustainability, and increased efficiency.

Second, we need to focus on the main issues in the transformation of China's economy and society, that is, on the transformational issues. This requires strategic, forward thinking. On the one hand we must respond to China's present reality, but also offer long-term guidance and direction. China is huge, and one kind of solution is not going to solve all the problems. One size does not fit all, and if we blindly copy certain experiences from certain countries, that isn't going to work either.

Third, we need to focus on the trade of emission rights, pollution prevention, and environmental management — but particularly the protection of biodiversity. What is biodiversity? Biodiversity is life. It is our life. Like climate change, biodiversity is going to be another extremely important issue for the whole world.

Forth, we need policy studies on some very specific issues, for example, pollution by heavy metals, chemical hazardous waste, and environmental risk.

XIV. Closing by Margaret Biggs

At the conclusion of the anniversary forum, Margaret Biggs thanked the speakers, the participants in the discussion, Council members, and special guests. She made the following brief remarks:

Today we paid tribute to those who founded this Council and those who have worked during the past two decades to maintain and enhance and strengthen its relevance and impact.

Those of us here today remain committed to working on solutions to the sustainable development challenges facing China, and indeed the world, with the same determination and dedication as those who came before, and in the same spirit of friendship and cooperation that has been the key to the China Council's special success.

As one of our guests has said when describing the advice, support, friendship, and collaboration characterized by the China Council, "It is something money cannot buy — it is more priceless than that."