

5th GEF China Project Management Meeting

July 11th, 2016

Beijing, China

Opening of the Meeting

Remarks by Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Good morning everyone.

Thank you all for coming. I am very happy to see the entire GEF family in China gathered here today.

Also many thanks to our colleagues at the Chinese Ministry of Finance for organizing this important meeting, and for Vice Minister Shi being with us this morning.

Looking back

This year, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the GEF, so it is a good time to both look back at what we have achieved in the past and what we need to do in the future.

China is very important to the GEF. China is a founding member of the GEF; it is the largest recipient of GEF financing; it is an important and active donor. And perhaps most importantly, China is a trusted and valued partner.

Our strong partnership shows in the many path-breaking projects we have done together, for example the PRC-GEF Partnership on Land Degradation in the Dry Land Ecosystem Program, that helped strengthen ecosystem management, the China Utility-based Energy Efficiency Project that strengthened Chinese commercial bank's ability to finance energy efficiency investments, and our series of China Renewable Energy Scale-up Programs that helped propel the Chinese renewable energy sector forward.

More recently, in GEF-6, China was a key catalyst for our Sustainable Cities Program. In fact, this program very much grew my conversations with the Chinese government. Cities are not only important players for global sustainability, they are also great vehicles for global knowledge sharing. In particular, Chinese cities have a lot of experiences to share with the rest of the world, and are also very interested in learning from other cities. Today, we have a program with more than 25 cities in 11 countries, in which China is the largest partner.

I am very proud of what the GEF has done in China, and in many ways GEF's projects in China can be considered the jewels of the GEF's global portfolio.

Another important milestone in our partnership that happened in GEF-6 was the accreditation of FECO as an implementing agency of the GEF, as part of the expansion in the number of GEF agencies from ten to 18.

Looking ahead

In addition to being the year when we celebrate our 25th anniversary, 2016 is also the first year of implementation of the two major global agreements that were reached last year: the Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted in September in New York, and the Paris Climate Agreement in December.

These agreements are built on the recognition that the health of the global commons—our oceans, forests, land, biodiversity, and our climate system—are fundamental to our future development prospects.

For so long, we humans have taken those global environmental commons for granted, and pushed them to their limit. Now is the time to change course.

We need a radical transformation in all our key economic systems: in our energy system, in our cities, in our food system and in our production system, so that we in the future put much less pressure on the global environment.

I think this is very similar to what China's concept of ecological civilization tries to achieve. Ecological civilization is a comprehensive and coordinated framework for economic and social development in harmony with nature.

In that sense, China is ahead of the curve among the world's nations.

Last night, I arrived in Beijing from Guiyang where I attended the Eco Forum Global—the EFG. EFG shows how much the world pays attention to what China does, both because of the lessons that other countries can learn from China, and also because what China does matters so much to the rest of the world.

Perhaps my main takeaway from this year's Eco Forum Global is how encouraging, and impressive, is the extent to which the concept of ecological civilization is helping guide decision making and policies at all levels to help implement the vision of an innovative, coordinated, green, open and inclusive development path.

At this critical juncture for the world, the GEF and China needs to work together to push this important agenda forward.

As Vice Minister Shi so eloquently said in his note celebrating the GEF's 25th anniversary: China and GEF have been working hand in hand for sustainable development.

We need to continue to strengthen our relationship, to take us to the next level.

I look forward to see how our discussions today can help us in that endeavor.

Thank you very much.