

Chinese Achievements and Ambitions during the 2022 SDG Cities Conference

November 17, 2022

Speakers addressed how Chinese cities are addressing sustainable urban development and building thriving and green neighbourhoods.

With October 31st marking World Cities Day and the end of Urban October, the momentum continued with the SDG Cities Global Conference, held by the Municipality of Shanghai with UN-Habitat and C40 Cities, taking place on November 1st, 2022, with many attendees tuning in virtually from all over the world.

The purpose of the conference was to focus on local actions to accelerate the implementation of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a focus on SDG 11: Sustainable Cities. As Shanghai was the host city for the event, many other Chinese cities and organizations were able to showcase their work and share best practices towards the commitment of the United Nations' SDGs.

Climate change is crucial for future generations and particularly for children. This is why low carbon development is the focus area of the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) in China, according to Qiang Liu, the international philanthropy organization's Deputy Chief Representative in China. CIFF has conducted numerous programmes in China, including the energy transition, low carbon cities, air quality improvement, green finance and climate governance. To achieve decarbonization and sustainable development at the global level, Liu believes that it is essential to take a systematic approach to join efforts from all aspects and share good practices among different geographies on executable and sustainable solutions at the local level. According to Liu, this will create a more livable, dynamic, and resilient environment at both the local and international level.

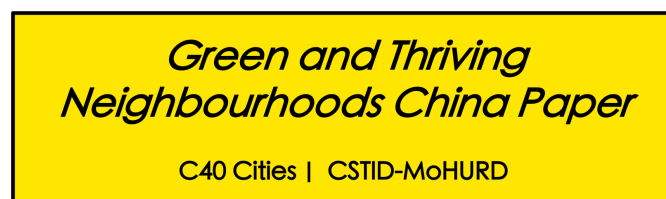


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During the first mini-panel, C40 Cities took the opportunity to launch their report, *Green and Thriving Neighbourhoods China Paper*, which was written in collaboration with the Center of Science and Technology & Industrial Development, Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (CSTID-MoHURD). The report covers multiple approaches and suggested roadmap towards carbon neutrality for Chinese neighbourhoods/communities and addresses how to build green and thriving neighbourhoods which put people first and can adapt well to shifting landscapes. Boping Chen, the Regional Director for East Asia at C40 Cities, and Xinfeng Liu, Director at CSTID-MoHURD, pointed out that emission reduction needs to take place across multiple sectors, including buildings & construction, transportation, and energy, and that neighborhoods should participate actively to it.

Jing Hou, from C40 Cities, and Chunni Yao, from CSTID-MoHURD, elaborated on why neighbourhoods play such a crucial role in raising ambition and driving change for carbon neutrality and sustainability. And, when looking at existing or new communities, they outlined 10 different approaches of importance:

1. Green buildings and energy
2. Clean construction
3. Complete neighbourhoods
4. People-centered streets and mobility
5. Connected places
6. Circular resources
7. Green & nature-based solutions
8. Green economy
9. A place for everyone
10. Sustainable lifestyles



To promote knowledge sharing and best practices, C40 has been working with Chinese cities to support their demonstration neighbourhood projects which aligned with the vision towards realising net zero, people centred communities and the approaches of the Green & Thriving Neighbourhoods Global Guidebook and China Paper. Two notable city projects in China were able to share best practices during the SDG Cities Conference.

One such example is Yantian District of the city Shenzhen, which has received an accolade of honours and awards, including being rated one of the first National Demonstration Areas for the Construction of Ecological Civilization and one of the first United Nations SUC Pilot Areas for Sustainable Development, as well as having been awarded National Green Model Area and National Natural Oxygen.

Another example is of Sino-German Ecopark of the city Qingdao, which is the first bilateral ecological demonstration park in China and was enabled through the cooperation between China and Germany. It is an important window of opening and cooperation in Shandong Province and Qingdao City.

In the words of President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China, green development is needed to ensure harmony between humanity and nature. The SDG Cities Conference, held annually by UN-Habitat, helped promote how China and the rest of the world can work together to build this future.