

November 15, 2017

COP 23

Naoko Ishii
Global Environment Facility (GEF)
CEO & Chairperson

Remarks at China High-level Forum on South-South Cooperation

Good morning everyone.

It is a great pleasure for me to take part in this South South dialogue hosted by the Government of China.

In the past few years, China has rightly been leading the global community in emphasizing the importance of South-South Cooperation, and I was very pleased to see in the invitation to this meeting the emphasis on non-state actors in developing countries, including business, civil society and cities.

I would like to pick up on cities.

Two weeks ago, I was in Delhi to attend the 2nd annual meeting of our [the GEF's] Global Platform for Sustainable Cities. As you may know, the GEF's sustainable city program in large part grew out of a conversation I had with Minister Xie several years ago, in which he suggested that it would be very useful if the GEF strengthened our focus on cities.

Minister: You were so right, and I am very grateful for your good advice. And I am also very pleased to be able to report on concrete results from our conversation these several years ago!

The GPSC meeting brought together mayors and representatives from almost 50 cities from all around—from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and interesting also from countries in developed countries. There was also representatives from several Chinese cities, including the Deputy Mayor of Nanchang. The City representatives spent three days there sharing their experiences on a wide range of issues from sustainable city planning, to mobilization of finance, and much more.

I took several things away from this meeting. Perhaps most importantly, cities are extremely keen to learn from each other. There is a genuine willingness to listen to each other's experiences, and for everyone to share his or her own experiences. There is no "competition" or "negotiation language". There is also a very strong interest in finding ways to involve the private sector.

This means that such south-south collaboration has a huge potential to amplify the impact of our support. If we support a highly successful initiative in one city—whether to electrify public transport, or enhance energy efficiency in building—the lessons can quickly spread to others. But also in situations where we fail can we learn valuable lessons that can be shared. In either case, it can be a win for all.

As was also emphasized in the material for this meeting, there is no doubt in my mind that South-South Cooperation is gaining momentum. South-South Cooperation is increasingly seen by many countries as a welcome complementary modality to address climate change.

I believe that the GPSC is a first-class example of a pragmatic partnership that can help enhance ambitions and accelerate action on climate change.

As some of you know we are right now in the middle of our replenishment negotiations for the GEF's next four-year investment cycle. It is my strong ambition to be able to build on what we have already achieved to do even more to facilitate south-south collaboration going forward.

Thank you very much.