

Dialogue 1

Exchanges during the China Day held in COP15 City Summit's associated Pavillion

December 2024



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Interact-Bio

Interact-Bio is implemented by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, with support from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) through the International Climate Initiative (IKI). The project aims to enhance the use and management of nature in fast-growing cities and their surrounding regions, particularly in the Global South, by promoting nature-based solutions and their benefits.

It helps governments at all levels integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into core urban functions such as spatial planning, land-use management, infrastructure design, and local economic development. The project also supports city-regions in identifying and leveraging the value of nature to deliver essential services and economic opportunities, while safeguarding the ecosystems on which these benefits depend. This contributes to more resilient and sustainable urban development.

In China, the project is managed and implemented by the ICLEI East Asia Secretariat through its Beijing Office.

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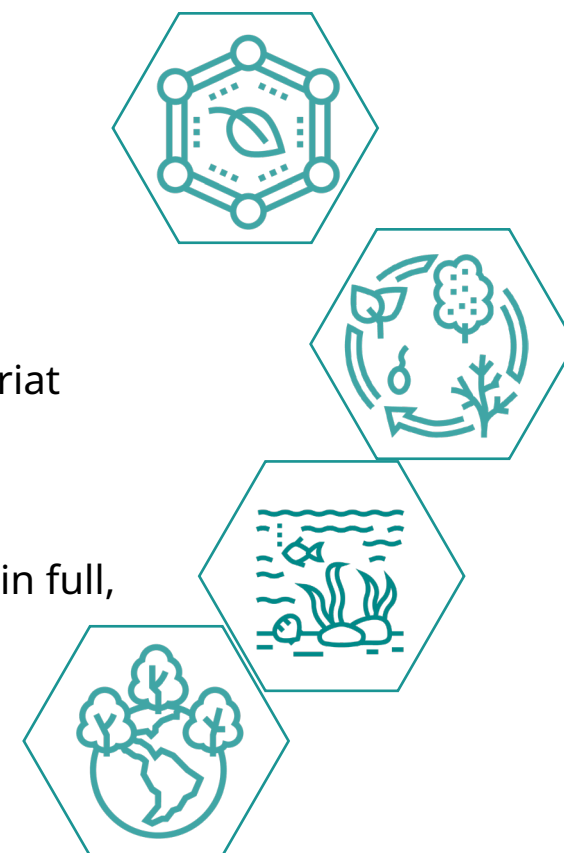
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I. Introduction



On 13 December 2022, the INTERACT-Bio project's first dialogue was held during China Day at the COP15 City Summit's associated Pavilion. The event aimed to foster technical exchange and international cooperation among Chinese and global cities, providing a platform for sharing experiences and exploring nature-based solutions for urban biodiversity and ecosystem management. It also served as a meaningful contribution to the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework by encouraging multi-level action and partnerships that support biodiversity mainstreaming in urban planning and development.



Moderated by Zhu Shu, Regional Director of ICLEI East Asia Secretariat

Zhao Yingmin, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI, Liu Jiachen, Mayor of Kunming, Marie-Josée Audet, Assistant Vice-Minister of the Department of Québec International Relations and Francophonie, and Julie Jodoin, Director of the Litespace Centre of the Municipality of Montréal, delivered speeches on the occasion.



Zhao Yingmin, Vice Minister of Ministry of the Ecology and Environment of China



Zhao Yingmin first congratulated the successful organisation of the 7th City Summit.

He acknowledged the achievements made by Chinese cities and regions in biodiversity conservation, and mentioned that³ - 'local governments at all levels in China are also accelerating their actions, including the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, the formulation and implementation of local strategies and action plans, the construction of a scientifically rational system of nature reserves, the implementation of the ecological red line system, and the increase of resources and financial inputs, as well as carrying out special projects such as ecological restoration.'

He concluded, 'Through the Summit, the practices, experiences, and contributions of global cities and regions in protecting biodiversity and promoting sustainable development can be well demonstrated and exchanged. The City Summit and the China Day thematic activities will provide an excellent opportunity to share the biodiversity conservation work of Chinese local governments. More than 10 Chinese cities and regions will actively participate in the Summit and the China Day activities, exchanging views and interacting with local governments from different countries around the world to seek consensus and enhance cooperation, and contribute their wisdom to work together to promote the achievement of the future new framework targets.'



Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema said, 'We are very happy to have a platform to share best practice cases. Over the past two days, we have had a successful City Summit, and we have heard a lot of best practice examples from Chinese cities, and we have seen a lot of excellent partnerships where Chinese local governments are engaged in international cooperation on biodiversity conservation. Local governments and cities are the main actors and their role cannot be ignored. Today, we will see experts and local governments from China sharing their achievements here, and we will also see China playing a leading role in the field of biodiversity.'



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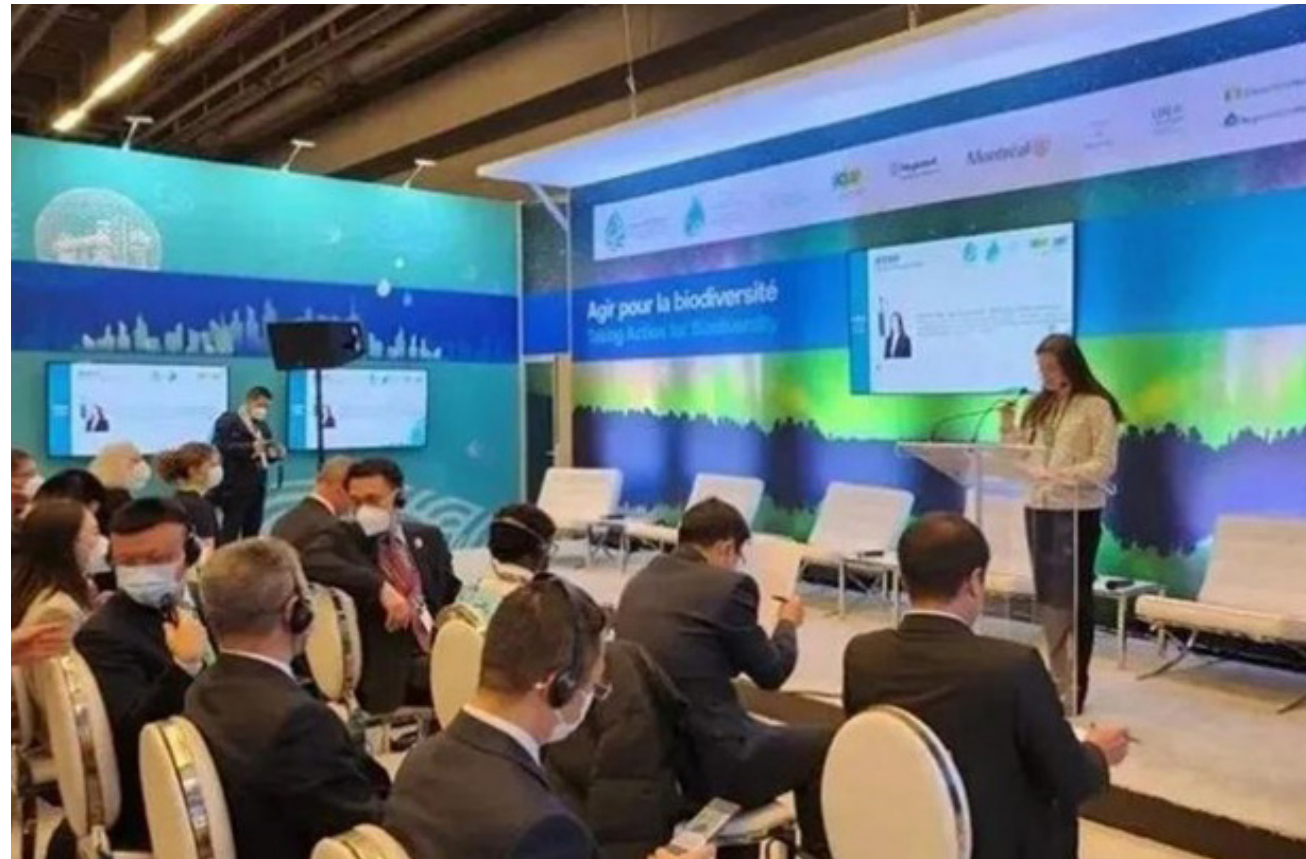
Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI

Gino Van Begin said, 'Local governments and cities are important forces in reversing the trend of ongoing biodiversity loss, which has also been recognised by Contracting Parties. We look forward to the approval by this Conference of the new Plan of Action for Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for the Period 2021-2030. Chinese cities and regions are an essential part of it. Kunming City, for example, has actively participated in the Edinburgh process to promote the full implementation of the new global framework. Chinese local and national governments have achieved outstanding outcomes in biodiversity conservation and created a national strategy for establishing an ecological civilisation. We are delighted to see 11 Chinese cities participating in today's China Day, and we will hear about their stories and actions, and look forward to their effective interactions and cooperation with other national local governments and international organisations.'



Liu Jiachen, Mayor of Kunming

Liu Jiachen said: 'Kunming is the city with the richest diversity of species in China and has done a great work in protecting biodiversity. We are proud to have the opportunity to engage in dialogue with local governments and cities from different continents to explore future opportunities for cooperation. (Different cities) We have our own strengths and our own resource endowments, and the prospects for our cooperation and exchanges are very promising. We believe that we can work together to continue to promote ecological civilisation and biodiversity conservation. Here, we look forward to working with local governments and cities around the world to create a better future.'



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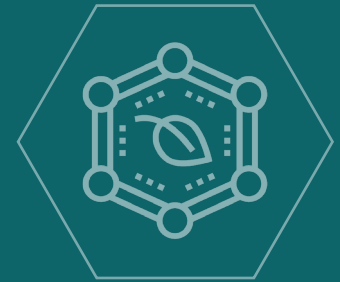
Marie-Josée Audet, Assistant Vice-Minister of the Department of Québec International Relations and Francophonie

Marie-Josée Audet said, 'Quebec and China have had a history of friendship for more than 40 years. Over the past four decades, we have achieved a mutually beneficial and friendly relationship through exchange, dialogue, and mutual assistance. We work particularly with Chinese provinces and cities, including Shandong and Shanghai. Protecting biodiversity and combating climate change are also fields in which Quebec and China can engage in friendly dialogue. I take this opportunity to pay immense tribute to the work of Yunnan Province and Kunming. They have been supporting the work of the COP Conference for a long time and hosted the first phase of the conference.'



Julie Jodoin, Director of the Lifespace Centre of the Municipality of Montréal

Julie Jodoin said, 'COP15 has given us a very good opportunity to realise the importance of biodiversity, and has made us acutely aware of the fact that these next few years are a very important phase both for us and for the world. There is no way we can meet such a challenge alone, we need to work hand in hand with all cities to advance the process of biodiversity conservation.'



II. Three Themes: Promoting Exchanges between Chinese and Foreign Cities



I. Deepening local biodiversity conservation - China's wisdom and contribution

This theme mainly demonstrated and introduced the achievements of Chinese cities and regions in the construction of ecological civilisation and biodiversity conservation, and displayed the achievements of local actions, as well as the Chinese wisdom and solutions contributed to the implementation of the action targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework for the post-2020 period. The main topics included: local biodiversity strategies, ecological restoration, climate adaptation, sponge cities, biodiversity investment, and financing. The theme was co-chaired by Xiao Ding, Researcher of Kunming Bureau of Ecology and Environment, and Zhu Shu, Regional Director of ICLEI East Asia Secretariat.

In the presentation session, Lang Wenrong, Director of the Department of Ecology and Environment of Zhejiang Province, Ge Weiyan, Inspector of the Department of Ecology and Environment of Shandong Province (online), Wen Zhong, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Ecology and Environment of Shenzhen Municipality, as well as Chen Jianfeng, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, demonstrated and introduced the achievements of China's cities and regions in the construction of ecological civilisation and the conservation of biodiversity, respectively. The results of local actions were highlighted.

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Lang Wenrong was introducing Zhejiang Province's biodiversity conservation actions



Ge Weiyan was introducing the situation of biodiversity conservation in Shandong Province



Wen Zhong was introducing the Shenzhen biodiversity conservation actions



Chen Jianfeng was introducing the Hong Kong conservation initiatives

During the exchange and discussion session, Pan Ming, Director of Huzhou Ecological Environment Bureau, Yasunobu Sugimoto, Chief of Natural Environment Department of Aichi Prefecture in Japan, Liu Yan, Director of the Biodiversity Centre of Nanjing Institute of Environmental Science, and Leng Fei, BIOFIN National Project Coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Representative Office in China, were invited to take part in the discussion and communicate with the participants on how to better promote local biodiversity actions.



Liu Yan, Director of the Biodiversity Centre of Nanjing Institute of Environmental Science



Pan Ming, Director of Huzhou Ecological Environment Bureau



Yasunobu Sugimoto, Chief of Natural Environment Department of Aichi Prefecture in Japan



Leng Fei, BIOFIN National Project Coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Representative Office in China



Theme I - group photo

II. Taking synergistic action to advance sustainable urban development

Theme II aims to explore the synergies and interactions between biodiversity conservation and the global agendas of the green economy, combating climate change, and sustainable development, in order to achieve coordinated and sustainable development of the economy, society, and the environment by enhancing the biodiversity conservation, creating new momentum for development and promoting green growth. This session was moderated by Togo Uchida, Director of ICLEI Japan Office, including the following topics: green economy, business-government cooperation, and climate change.

During the presentations, Lorna Slater MSP, Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity, Scottish Government; Yasuyo Fukiakami, Senior Director, Environment Agency of Nagoya, Japan; Lei Jinsong, Director of Ecological and Environmental Bureau of Lishui City, China; and Yang Yuming, Professor, Forestry and Grassland Academy of Sciences, Yunnan Province, China, respectively introduced the work and experiences of Scotland, Nagoya, Lishui and Kunming on synergies between biodiversity and other global sustainable development issues. Tim Scott, Senior Advisor of Nature, Climate and Energy, United Nations Development Programme, highlighted the fact that synergistic action is not only the focus of the global framework for biodiversity conservation, but is also at the centre of discussions for the Climate Change Conference, the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

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Lorna Slater MSP, Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity, Scottish Government



Lei Jinsong, Director of Ecological and Environmental Bureau of Lishui City, China



Yasuyo Fukiakami, Senior Director, Environment Agency of Nagoya, Japan



Yang Yuming, Professor, Forestry and Grassland Academy of Sciences, Yunnan Province, China

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Tim Scott, Senior Advisor of Nature, Climate and Energy, United Nations Development Programme

In the subsequent free discussion session, John Baker, Chief Project Officer of WildAid Global; Chen Chen, Senior Engineer of South China Institute of Environmental Science, Ministry of Ecology and Environment; Craig Hanson, Vice President and Director of Project Management of World Resources Institute; Li Zhiqing, Associate Professor of School of Economics, Fudan University; and Chen Qiao, Vice President of HAOPY Group, took part in the discussion and shared with the participants the work that their organisations have been doing on synergy actions.



Theme II - discussion



Theme II - group photo

III. Building Nature City - Transformation of Urban Development and Planning under a New Framework

Theme III aims to rethink and reassess the value of nature to cities and human beings, to advocate the construction of Nature City in which people, cities and nature coexist in harmony, and to reinforce and mainstream the important role of biodiversity in urban development and planning. It also calls for reflection on how strategies for local biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services, especially in the context of rapid urbanisation, can be integrated and implemented in spatial planning and priority strategies for sustainable development in cities. This session was moderated by Xu Ji, Programme Coordinator of ICLEI Beijing Representative Office, including the following topics: urban spatial planning, NBS, assessment and monitoring, park city, wetland city, and so on.

In the presentation session, Lena Chan, Senior Director of the National Parks Board of Singapore, He Landi, Director of the Ecology Centre of the Kunming Institute of Ecological and Environmental Sciences, Seung Oh Suh, Director of the East Asia Centre of RAMSAR, and Elena Petsani, Project Officer of the European Secretariat of ICLEI, shared their work and projects in establishing Nature City.

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Lena Chan, Senior Director of the National Parks Board of Singapore



Elena Petsani, Project Officer of the European Secretariat of ICLEI



Seung Oh Suh, Director of the East Asia Centre of RAMSAR



He Landi, Director of the Ecology Centre, Kunming Institute of Ecological and Environmental Sciences

In the free discussion session, Meng Han, China Affairs Officer of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme, Maho Igarashi, Officer of the Agricultural Policy Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Sado City, Japan, Zhang Yijun, Chairman of the Board of Beijing Zhenghe Henderson Waterfront Ecological Environmental Management Co. Ltd. and Ingrid Coetzee, participated in the exchanges and discussions with the participants on site, and put forward the directions and suggestions on what can be done to build a Nature City.

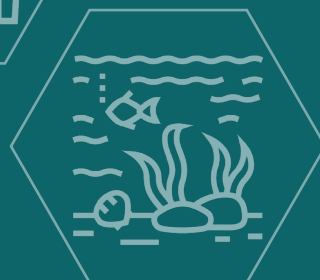


Theme III - group photo

Participants also included experts and scholars from a number of research institutes around the world, businesses, and the media, who discussed with the speakers on-site during the free Q&A session. Their presentations and discussions reinforced the synergies and interactions between biodiversity conservation and global agendas such as the green economy, combating climate change and sustainable development, with a view to creating new momentum for development, to promoting green growth and achieving coordinated and sustainable development of the economy, society, and the environment through enhanced conservation of biodiversity. It also prompted us to rethink and reassess the precious value of nature to cities and human beings, and to advocate the construction of Nature City in which human beings, cities and nature coexist in harmony.

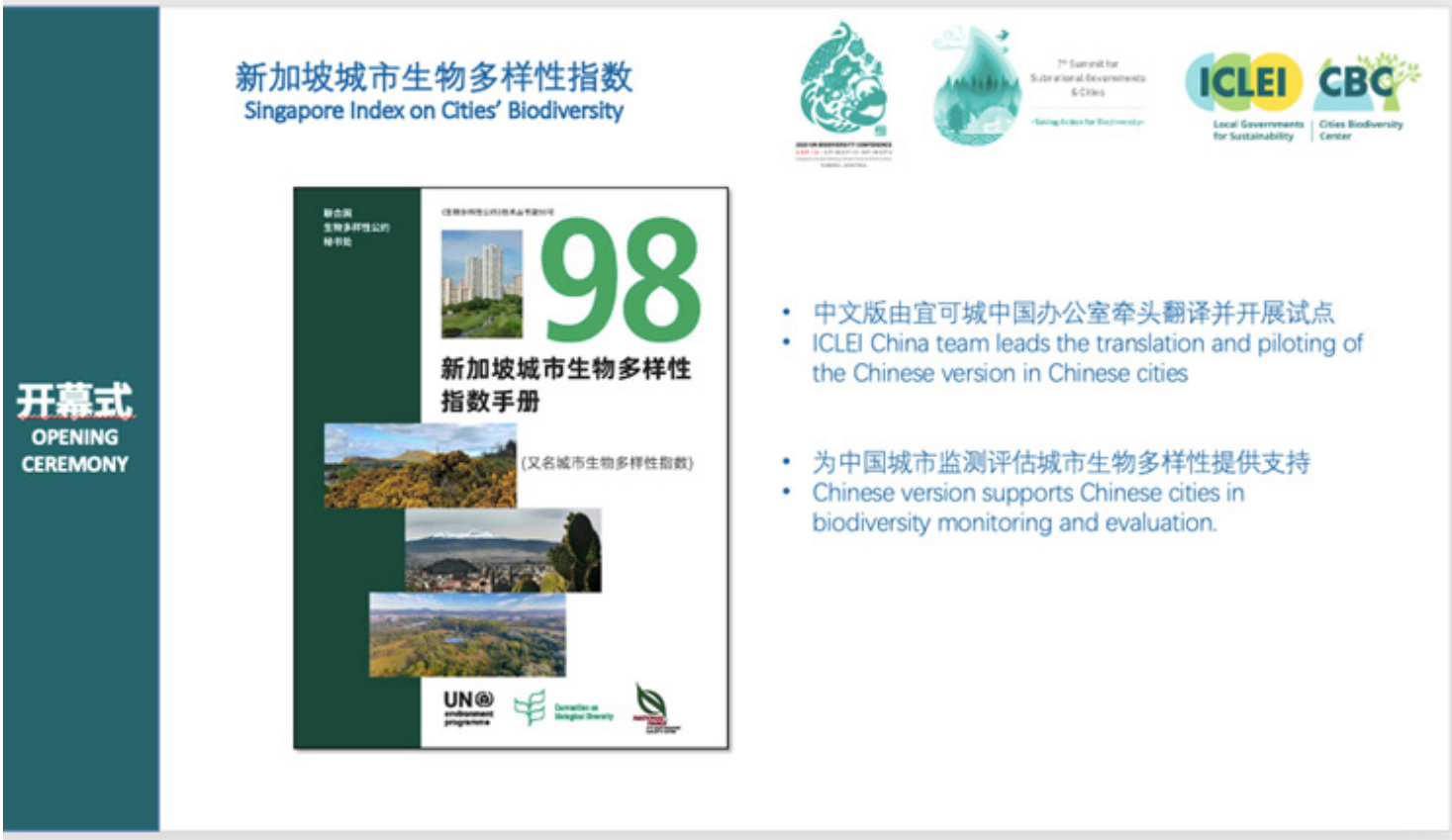


III. New Initiatives, New Actions



At the opening ceremony of China Day, the Chinese version of the Singapore Urban Biodiversity Index was released by the Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and National Parks Board of Singapore (NPB). In addition, the ICLEI Global Centre for Urban Biodiversity announced the cities selected for the ‘Biodiversity Charming Cities’.

The Singapore Urban Biodiversity Index, or City Biodiversity Index (CBI), is a set of indicators used by cities to assess their progress and achievements in biodiversity conservation. It is also the first assessment tool adopted by the international communities to measure the effectiveness of cities, subnational regions or local governments in conserving biodiversity, and has been recognised as the gold standard for urban biodiversity monitoring and assessment.



Singapore Urban Biodiversity Index (Chinese version)

The Singapore Urban Biodiversity Index has a total of 28 assessment indicators to measure three aspects of natural biodiversity in the city, the ecosystem services provided and their regulation and management.

The release of the Chinese version of CBI will facilitate the implementation of this indicator system in China and serve Chinese cities, not only to enable them to assess the existing ecological environment of their regions in a more scientific and reasonable manner, but also to promote the exchange and communication among city management departments, academia, NGOs, schools, the public and enterprises. The 'Biodiversity Charming City' selection in the 7th City Summit was the result of CBI's assessment of the biodiversity work of each declared city.

Oliver Hillel, Programme Officer at the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and Lena Chan, Senior Director of the National Parks Board of Singapore (NPB), who are the main promoters of the Singapore Index, congratulated the release of the Chinese version of the Singapore Index. Oliver Hillel mentioned that the Chinese version can help us to understand the biodiversity conservation and development of cities and regions in China, and provide technical indicators and references for Chinese cities, which is of great significance. Lena Chan mentioned that the Chinese version will help to spread to more Chinese cities, and will greatly enhance the capacity building of Chinese cities - 20 - to facilitate their learning and implementation.



Oliver Hillel (left), Lena Chan (right)

The ICLEI Global Centre for Urban Biodiversity awarded Biodiversity Charming City certificates to six Chinese cities in recognition of their achievements and innovative actions in biodiversity conservation. They are Kunming, Chengdu, Huzhou, Nanyang, Jiaxing and Shenzhen, which have made distinctive experiences and achievements in conserving and utilising biodiversity and upgrading urban ecological construction. This is also the first time that Chinese cities are honoured with the title.

In addition to being showcased during the conference, these excellent cases of urban biodiversity conservation will also be publicised on the global Nature City platform for a long period of time.



Announcement of the cities selected for the Biodiversity Charming City

IV. Ending



At the end of the event, Kobie Brand, Deputy Secretary General of ICLEI Global Centre for Urban Biodiversity, delivered a closing speech. She mentioned that the China Day provided a good stage for Chinese cities and regional cities and international organisations to showcase their local actions on biodiversity conservation, which is what ICLEI, as a global inter-city network, has always been insisting on and advocating, and she hoped that there will be more and more opportunities for this kind of communication in the future, so as to promote the interaction of China's local actions and the world.



Kobie Brand, Deputy Secretary General of ICLEI Global Centre for Urban Biodiversity



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