



GEORGE H. W. BUSH FOUNDATION  
FOR U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS  
乔治布什美中关系基金会



中国科学院大学  
University of Chinese Academy of Sciences

THE  
CARTER CENTER



China Data Analysis  
& Research Hub

# Building the Green, Digital and Inclusive City of the 21st Century

11 – 12 January 2024

Online Conference

**Final Program**

This conference is jointly organized by  
China Data Analysis and Research Hub, George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations,  
University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, The Carter Center



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## Preface

***"We don't see any political borders up here like you do on a map; it makes me think that we're all one crew aboard the spaceship earth, flying through the universe. I also think about how fragile the atmosphere looks and how we need to take care of it, and take care of one another"***

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHmLb8xRme0>**

**NASA astronaut Scott Kelly addressing the United Nations General Assembly from International Space Station during the Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015.**

At the historical peak of collective knowledge of humankind, we find ourselves amidst a time of severe global transformation and imbalance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While the threats from climate change, digitalisation, resource depletion, biodiversity loss and demographic changes are gathering massive urbanisation in countries all over the globe poses another significant challenge. In 1800 London was the only city with 1 million inhabitants. Today there are more than 300 cities with more than 1 million people and around 30 megacities with more than 10 million inhabitants. While in the course of industrial revolution and the associated technological innovations the world's population grew fivefold between 1900 and 2017 from 1,5 billion to 7,5 billion people at the same time people living in cities grew by 18-times representing currently around 57% of the world's population. By 2050 the proportion of people living in urban areas is projected to grow to 68%.

Already today people living in cities contribute extensively to climate change and they consume 80 percent of the world's energy and resource consumption. According to NASA hot spots of areas of the world most affected by climate change related sea-level rise over the next century and beyond include the U.S. East Coast, Gulf Coast and Asian coastlines home to some of the world's megacities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Therefor the United Nation's World Cities Report 2022 stresses that "building resilience must be at the heart of the cities of the future. The success of cities, towns and urban areas will largely depend on policies that protect and sustain all, leaving no one behind. We need green investment for sustainable patterns of consumption and production; responsive and inclusive urban planning; the prioritization of public health; and innovation and technology for all". The implementation of the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations contributes to the localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner, and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including Goal 11 of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

In 2021 the first Nobel Summit 'Our Planet, Our Future' organized jointly by the US National Academy of Sciences and the Nobel Foundation deepened the global understanding of man's dependence on planetary boundaries in the Anthropocene – the age of humankind. Featuring amongst others also Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Union, this conference provided full evidence of the state of scientific knowledge about man's deteriorating effect on our planet's biosphere and climate. In 2022 the Bank of International Settlements in Basel – the Bank of National Banks – together with the Bank of China organised the second Green Swan Conference on the severe effects of climate change on the global financial system. Experts from Europe, China and the United States discussed evidence-based measures of mankind and especially the global finance system to cope with the disastrous effects of global warming. In 2023 French President Emmanuel Macron invited 55 heads of state to gather in a Paris sustainable finance summit.





10 years ago in June 2013 – as pointed out in the Council on Foreign relation's (CFR) timeline of US-China relations - President Obama and President Xi underlined the necessity to join forces to fight against climate change and bring down their carbon footprint as a result of their bilateral meeting at Sunnyland, California. One year later, on the sidelines of the 2014 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, which created the APEC Sustainable Energy Center, President Obama and President Xi issued a joint statement on climate change, pledging to reduce carbon emissions. In this U.S.-China Joint Announcement the administrations of President Obama and President Xi published the bilateral goal to launch a Climate-Smart/Low-Carbon Cities Initiative in response to growing urbanization and increasingly significant greenhouse gas emissions from cities. This new initiative on Climate-Smart/Low-Carbon Cities should be established under the U.S.-China Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) established in 2013. As a first step, the United States and China decided to convene a Climate-Smart/ Low-Carbon Cities Summit where leading cities from both countries would share best practices, set new goals, and celebrate city-level leadership in reducing carbon emissions and building resilience. Bilateral conferences took place in 2015 and 2016. In 2021 the United States and China, the world's top emitters of greenhouse gases, signed a joint statement during the UN climate summit in Glasgow. **Mid of November 2023 the U.S. Department of State and the Chinese Ministry of Ecology and Environment published in a concerted action the 'Sunnylands Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Address the Climate Crisis' in the context of the APEC Summit 2023 in San Francisco. In this statement both sides underlined the pivot on 'subnational climate cooperation and action' (including provinces and cities) as well as circular economy and resource efficiency.**

In China the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development issued the "14th Five-Year Plan for Building Energy Conservation and Green Building Development", which clearly states that by 2025, all new urban buildings should be fully constructed as green buildings, the building energy utilization efficiency should be steadily improved, and the building energy consumption structure is going to be gradually optimized. Green building and related strategies are recognized as part of the solutions to use less energy and resources and produce less construction waste. Meanwhile green building is beneficial to both the environment and health. On the one hand it can reduce energy consumption and achieve energy efficiency, catering to the concept of environmental-friendly design. On the other hand, green building can improve the inhabitants' liveability and enhance occupants' satisfaction, having certain positive effects on health.

In the European Union cities are seen as both the source of and solution to today's economic, environmental, and social challenges. Europe's urban areas are home to over two-thirds of the EU's population, they account for about 80 % of energy use and generate up to 85 % of Europe's GDP. These urban areas are the engines of the European economy and act as catalysts for creativity and innovation throughout the Union. But they are also places where persistent problems, such as unemployment, segregation, and poverty, are at their most severe. Urban policies therefore have wider cross-border significance, which is why urban development is central to the EU's Regional Policy. In March 2023 the 5th edition of European Cities Forum held in Torino, Italy brought together key urban stakeholders at European, national, regional, and local levels who are committed to a green and just future of cities. The Cities Forum is a biennial event of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy. Following the theme of this year's edition, the event focused on the role of cities in implementing the European Green Deal and the importance of strategic approaches to address the needs for climate adaptation and environmental protection. The forum put a spotlight on the recent developments under the key policies and initiatives which engage cities such as the Urban Agenda for the EU and the EU Mission for 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities. Against this backdrop the European Urban Initiative (EUI) 2021 – 2027 (formerly Urban Innovative Actions, UIA) promotes the development of circular cities.



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## Program

**Date:** 11 – 12 January 2024

**Time:** from 6:00 am EST (New York) / 12:00 pm CET (Brussels) / 7:00 pm CST (Beijing)  
to 10:30 am EST (New York) / 4:30 pm CET (Brussels) / 11:30 pm CST (Beijing)

**Venue:** online event upon registration – virtual participation via zoom

**Convenors:** *David J. FIRESTEIN, President and CEO of the George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations), Houston, Texas, United States*

*Alexander G. WELZL, President of China Data Analysis and Research Hub (CDA), Vienna, Austria*

*HONG Yongmiao, Dean of School of Economics and Management, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences (UCAS), Beijing, P.R. China*

*Barbara SMITH, Vice President, Peace Programs of The Carter Center, Atlanta, Georgia, United States*

**Main research questions/topics of this conference are:**

1. Could cities be organized in a way that they use mainly regional instead of global resources?
2. Could cities be planned, built, and maintained in a way that the resources they need are regenerated continuously?
3. How will large metropolises in Asia-Pacific, Europe and North America be affected by sea-level rise in the coming decades?
4. What can be done to mitigate to urban heat islands due to global warming?
5. How can sustainable transport/mobility in cities look like in the 21st century?
6. What are the necessary steps towards conveying a planetary patriotism and addressing climate change in intergenerational and inclusive dialogue with citizens?
7. How can the digitalisation help solve complex problems in cities of the 21st century?



## DAY 1 - 11 JANUARY 2024 - FOCUS ON RESEARCH

from 12:00 pm CET (Brussels) / 6:00 am EST (New York) / 7:00 pm CST (Beijing)

to approx. 4:40 pm CET (Brussels) / 10:40 am EST (New York) / 11:40 pm CST (Beijing)

Time in CET | EST | CST in agenda below

### SESSION I: Planetary Boundaries and Climate Change - Facts from Science

12:00	16:00	19:00	Welcome and Introduction by <b>Alexander G. WELZL</b> , CDA
12:10	16:10	19:10	Welcome and Introduction by <b>HONG Yongmiao</b> , UCAS
12:20	16:20	19:20	<b>KEYNOTE - Cities as Global Hot Spots of Climate Action - Resilience through Collaboration, Evidence Based Decisions and Innovation in the 21st Century</b> <b>Curt GARRIGAN</b> , Chief, Sustainable Urban Development Section, Environment and Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand
12:55	16:55	19:55	<b>KEYNOTE – Urbanisation and the Agrifood System – Towards Coordinated Solutions to fight Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss and Ecosystem Degradation</b> <b>Linxiu ZHANG</b> , Director of United Nations Environment Programme - International Ecosystem Management Partnership (UNEP-IEMP), Beijing, China

### SESSION II: Concepts for Green, Digital and Inclusive Cities - State of Research

13:35	17:35	20:35	<b>Clean Energy Transition and Carbon Emission Reduction - Chinese Cities' Contribution to Fight Climate Change</b> <b>Ji GAO</b> , Director Energy and Nature, Environmental Defense Fund, EDF Beijing Representative office, Beijing, China
14:00	18:00	21:00	<b>The Contribution of APSEC and of the APEC Cooperative Network of Sustainable Cities to Promoting Green, Digital and Inclusive Cities</b> <b>ZHU Li</b> , President, APEC Sustainable Energy Center (APSEC), Tianjin, China <b>Steivan DEFILLA</b> , President Assistant, Professor, APSEC, Tianjin, China
14:25	18:25	21:25	<b>Water-retaining Granules for Greener Cities</b> <b>Enrique NACIF</b> , Founder and Managing Director of Green Legacy GmbH, Vienna, Austria
14:50	18:50	21:50	<b>Indicate, Evaluate, Incentivize: Environmental Behavioral Steering in Urban and Rural China</b> <b>Alexander TRAUTH-GOIK</b> , Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of East Asian Studies, University of Vienna, Austria
15:15	19:15	22:15	<b>Biocities and Circular Bioeconomy in the 21st Century - Urban Forests and Nature Based Solutions for Climate Change Mitigation and Well-Being of Citizens</b> <b>Robert MAVSAR</b> , Director of the European Forest Institute (EFI), Joensuu, Finland



Time in CET | EST | CST in agenda below

### SESSION III (part 1): Implementing Novel Concepts - Cases from EU, China and U.S

15:40   9:40   22:40	<b>Subnational U.S-China Cooperation to Promote Green and Resilient Cities - The State of Play following COP28 in Dubai and the APEC Summit in San Francisco</b> <i>James BRAINARD, Mayor of Carmel, Indiana, and Member of the Board of Directors of U.S. Heartland China Association, United States</i>
16:05   10:05   23:05	<b>Towards Sustainable Built Environment in Continental Europe - Best Practice Cases from Selected European Cities</b> <i>Dragana MARINA, Sustainability Research Lead, Continental Europe, and Head of Research &amp; Data Intelligence, CBRE Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark</i>
16:30   10:30   23:30	Wrap-up & Closing by <b>David J. FIRESTEIN</b> , Bush China Foundation
16:40   10:40   23:40	End Day 1

## DAY 2 - 12 JANUARY 2024 - FOCUS ON PRACTICE

from 12:00 pm CET (Brussels) / 6:00 am EST (New York) / 7:00 pm CST (Beijing)

to approx. 4:40 pm CET (Brussels) / 10:40 am EST (New York) / 11:40 pm CST (Beijing)

Time in CET | EST | CST in agenda below

### SESSION III (part 2): Implementing Novel Concepts - Cases from EU, China and U.S

12:00   6:00   19:00	Welcome and Introduction by UCAS
12:10   6:10   19:10	Welcome and Introduction by CDA
12:20   6:20   19:20	<b>Climate Change and Sustainable Urbanization as Part of Europe-China Science and Technology Relations</b> <i>Vojko BRATINA, Policy Officer- S&amp;T Attaché, Science and Technology Section, Delegation of the European Union to China, Beijing, China</i>
12:45   6:45   19:45	<b>Green Real Estate Solutions in China - The State of Play in Reducing the Carbon Footprint of Chinese Cities</b> <i>LI Gary, Director, Head of Tech Solutions &amp; Sustainability, CBRE China, Shanghai, China</i>
13:10   7:10   20:10	<b>Sustainability, Big Data, and Sino-Western Collaboration for a Common Future</b> <i>David Qingzhong PAN, Executive Dean, Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University Beijing, China</i>



Time in CET | EST | CST in agenda below

#### SESSION IV: Providing Sufficient Financing - State of Green Finance for City Development

13:35   7:35   20:35	<b>Climate-related Financial Risks and Risk Management for Urban Infrastructure Investments - Facilitating Green Transition, in Large Urban Agglomerations</b> <i>Morgan DESPRÉS, Executive Director at the European Climate Foundation (ECF), Berlin, Germany</i>
14:00   8:00   21:00	<b>BRI Mach2: Superior Technology, Faster and Deeper Deployment.</b> <i>Henry TILLMAN, CEO, Alyana International, Dubai, United Arab Emirates</i>
14:25   8:25   21:25	<b>Financial Market Conditions for Green, Digital and Inclusive Cities - The Role of Sovereign Wealth Funds and Institutional Investors</b> <i>Winston MA, Adjunct Professor, New York University School of Law, New York, United States</i>
14:50   8:50   21:50	<b>Sustainable Finance for Green Cities in the 21st Century – Bank of China-USA's Strategy, Track Record and Commitment in Practice</b> <i>Xiaojun (Dennis) HUANG, Executive Vice President, Bank of China, US Branches, New York, United States</i>
15:15   9:15   22:15	<b>The EIB as the EU Climate Bank - Financing Innovation for a Sustainable and Resilient Future</b> <i>Teresa CZERWINSKA, Vice President, European Investment Bank, Luxembourg</i>

#### SESSION V: Pivot on Behaviour Change - Evolution of Citizens

15:40   9:40   22:40	<b>Addressing Climate Change in Intergenerational and Inclusive Dialogue with Citizens - Lessons Learned from Austin, Texas and the U.S.</b> <i>Stephen I. ADLER, former Mayor, City of Austin, Texas, United States</i>
16:05   10:05   23:05	<b>Climate Change Perception of Young People – Recent Evidence from China and Western Countries</b> <i>Emilly FAN, Schwarzman Scholar, Dallas, Texas, United States</i>
16:30   10:30   23:30	Wrap-up & Closing by <b>Barbara SMITH</b> , The Carter Center
16:40   10:40   23:40	<b>The Way Ahead – Remarks by the National Climate Advisor to the President of the United States</b> <i>Ali ZAIDI, Assistant to the President and National Climate Advisor, Head of the White House Climate Policy Office, Washington D.C., United States</i>
16:50   10:50   23:50	End Day 2





## Special Guest



***Ali ZAIDI, National Climate Advisor, White House Climate Policy Office, Washington D.C., United States***

Ali Zaidi serves as Assistant to the President and National Climate Advisor. In this role, he leads the White House Climate Policy Office, which coordinates policy development and President Biden's all-of-government approach to tackle the climate crisis, create good-paying, union jobs, and advance environmental justice. Zaidi is a longtime advisor to President Biden, having provided counsel and leadership on climate policy development, legislation, and executive action from day one of the Administration and on the Biden presidential transition and campaign. Before his current role, he served as Deputy National Climate Advisor.

During his time in the Biden-Harris Administration, Zaidi has led on efforts to re-establish U.S. climate leadership, set a national target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50-52 percent by 2030; deliver robust executive actions, including regulatory, investment, and procurement-based initiatives; and secure the largest legislative wins on climate in U.S. history, through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. Together these efforts have advanced the largest annual deployment of solar, wind, and batteries; brought together the U.S. auto sector around an all-electric future; tackled super-pollutants like methane and HFCs; bolstered domestic adaptation and resilience; and centered U.S. climate action around workers and communities, prioritizing good-paying union jobs and the critical work of environmental justice.

Zaidi joined the Biden-Harris Administration after serving as the state of New York's Deputy Secretary for Energy and Environment and Chairman of Climate Policy and Finance, where he led the state's efforts on climate change — driving investment into infrastructure and innovation, empowering workers and communities, and boosting economic and environmental resilience.





Zaidi also taught graduate courses on technology policy and studied the fiscal and financial impacts of climate change as an adjunct professor at Stanford University. During that time, Zaidi also co-founded Lawyers for a Sustainable Economy, a Stanford-coordinated initiative that equips sustainability-focused startups with pro bono legal services.

Zaidi brings the cross-sector and multi-disciplinary experience needed to deliver a whole-of-government response to the climate crisis. During the Obama-Biden Administration, Zaidi served as Associate Director for Natural Resources, Energy, and Science for the Office of Management and Budget and as Deputy Director of Energy Policy for the Domestic Policy Council — helping to design and implement a wide range of domestic and international policies. Zaidi has advised non-profits, including as a Trustee of the Natural Resources Defense Council, and counseled the private sector, as an attorney who helped launch a sustainable investment practice.

Zaidi immigrated from Pakistan and grew up outside Erie, Pennsylvania. He received an A.B. from Harvard University and J.D. from Georgetown University.

## Speakers and Convenors



***Stephen I. ADLER, former Mayor, City of Austin, Texas, United States***

Steve Adler served as the 52nd mayor of Austin, Texas, from 2015 until January 2023. During his tenure as mayor of Austin, his top priorities included mobility, affordability, climate change mitigation and equity for all Austinites. On the national stage, Mayor Adler has served on the Climate Mayors steering committee 2019 to 2022 with Austin being a member of C40 CITIES since 2006. Mayor Adler served as a trustee of the United States Conference of Mayors, chair of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) policy board and vice president of the National Council of Democratic Mayors. During his time in office, Mayor Adler has been a progressive force for climate action in the state of Texas. His transformative work included the PROJECT CONNECT (public transport) and the AUSTIN CLIMATE EQUITY PLAN with the goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. He created new green jobs with an equity lens through the AUSTIN CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS, started the COMMUNITY CLIMATE AMBASSADORS PROGRAM which recruits individuals to host

community conversations and lead projects with historically underrepresented groups about climate change, racial equity, and sustainability and he initiated the AUSTIN YOUTH CLIMATE EQUITY COUNCIL to empower Austin's next generation of climate champions.



***James BRAINARD, Mayor of Carmel, Indiana, and Member of the Board of Directors of U.S. Heartland China Association, United States***

Jim Brainard is Carmel's first seven-term mayor and is one of the longest serving mayors in the United States. He is a member of the Steering Committee of the bipartisan national Climate Mayors organisation, he is on the Board of Directors of the bipartisan U.S. Heartland China Association, and he led a mayor's delegation to visit several Chinese cities in November 2023 to exchange city-to-city views and explore China-US collaboration in the areas of climate change mitigation, green economy, and energy transition. Brainard is serving as a Trustee and co-chair of the Energy Independence and Climate Protection Task Force for the U.S. Conference of Mayors. In 2013, he was announced as "one of 26 local government representatives who make up a new task force to help communities deal with the effects of climate change" and he was on President Obama's Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience.



***Vojko BRATINA, Policy Officer- S&T Attaché, Science and Technology Section,  
Delegation of the European Union to China, Beijing, China***

Vojko is part of the European External Action Service (EEAS) of the European Commission. He joined the European Commission (EC) in 2008, working on the implementation of research policy in the domain of Earth Observation and Climate Change. From 2015 to 2018 he was with two EC Executive Agencies, the Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) and the Research Executive Agency (REA) as Project Officer. Before that he was for many years a staff researcher with Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR) in Florence focused on space research and acted for several years as a Seconded National Expert at the EC with a focus on implementation of EC research policy in the domain of Earth observation and climate change.



***Teresa CZERWIŃSKA, Vice President, European Investment Bank, Luxembourg***

Teresa Czerwińska was appointed the Vice President of the European Investment Bank in March 2020. In this role, alongside looking after the constituency countries (Poland, Hungary, Croatia) she is responsible for Eastern Partnership countries as well as for Central Asia, China and Mongolia. She also oversees the matters of science, education, innovation, digital economy, and the InvestEU programme. Prior to becoming EIB Vice-President, Mrs Czerwińska was a member of the management board of the National Bank of Poland, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Poland, when she was also a Governor of the European Investment Bank. Earlier she held the position of the Undersecretary of State being responsible for the state budget at the Ministry of Finance. Before, in the years 2015 - 2017, she was the Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Science and

Higher Education. Teresa Czerwińska is a Professor of Economics at the Warsaw University specialising in finances and risk management.



***Steivan DEFILLA, President Assistant, Professor, APEC Sustainable Energy Center,  
Tianjin, China***

Steivan Defilla, Swiss national is a visiting Professor of school of architecture, Tianjin University, President Assistant of APEC Sustainable Energy Centre and Leader of the Cooperative Network of Sustainable Cities (CNSC) Pillar Program Team. Responsible for assisting the President in the overall control of all work, focusing on strengthening scientific research and market development, promoting research on global energy dynamics and trends, sorting out hot energy issues, formulating research work plans and supervising their implementation, and promoting exchanges and cooperation between APSEC and high-level international institutions or experts and scholars on sustainable energy technologies. As Senior Energy Advisor to the Swiss Economics Minister (1999 - 2010) he contributed to the reform of the Swiss electricity sector, the Swiss infrastructure strategy and Swiss foreign energy policy.



***Morgan DESPRÉS, Executive Director at the European Climate Foundation (ECF), Berlin,  
Germany***

Morgan Després is the Executive Director International Finance, Economy & Nature Programmes at the European Climate Foundation and is focused on international climate finance, land use and net zero macroeconomy. He is part of the wider ECF leadership team and in charge of supporting ECF's work to achieve "truly net zero" economy. Morgan joined the ECF in July 2022 after 18 years working in the French finance sector and was amongst others Director of Strategy at Banque de France in Paris. He was notably the founding Head of the Central Banks and Supervisors Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS), as well as a co-author of the 2020 Banque de France and Bank of International Settlements (BIS) publication 'The green swan - Central banking and financial stability in the age of climate change'. Morgan holds a degree from the Institut

d'Etudes Politiques de Paris and a MBA from the ESSEC Business School.



**Emily FAN, Schwarzman Scholar, Dallas, Texas, United States**

Emily Fan is an Associate with Boston Consulting Group. 2022 - 2023 she was a Schwarzman Scholar at Tsinghua University in Beijing, PR China. She graduated from Harvard College with a degree in environmental science and public policy. During college, she was the president of the Harvard Undergraduate Clean Energy Group and directed the MIT Energy Conference. Emily is passionate about addressing climate change through promoting cross-sector decarbonization and energy education. Her leadership and service to the environment has spanned the globe in her work with the Natural Resources Defense Council, IKEA, the United Nations Development Programme and New Zealand's Ministry for the Environment. She was awarded one of ten international Zonta Young Women in Public Affairs awards and a New Zealand Youth award. Her research interests center on climate and energy diplomacy in the U.S.-China relationship.



**David J. FIRESTEIN, President and CEO, George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations**

David J. Firestein is the inaugural president and CEO of the George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations. Previously, Firestein was the founding executive director of The University of Texas at Austin's China Public Policy Center and a clinical professor at UT's Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs. Before moving to UT, he served as senior vice president and Perot Fellow at the EastWest Institute, where he led the Institute's Track 2 diplomacy work in the areas of U.S.-China relations, East Asian security and U.S.-Russia relations. From 1992–2010, Firestein was a decorated career U.S. diplomat, specializing primarily in U.S.-China relations. Firestein serves on over a dozen U.S. nonprofit boards of directors and advisors. Among other roles, he is a member of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition's Texas Advisory Committee and a member of the Dean's Advisory Council of the LBJ School of Public Affairs. A native and current resident of Austin, Texas, he holds degrees from Georgetown University and The University of Texas at Austin.



**Ji GAO, Director Energy and Nature, Environmental Defense Fund, EDF Beijing Representative office, Beijing, China**

Ji Gao is a director for the China Energy Modeling Forum (CEMF) and the Oil and Gas program. His research interests include integrated models of development and scenario analysis using the Global Change Assessment Model (GCAM) and the Integrated Policy Model for China (IPAC). He has keen interests in integrated assessment models, establishing linkages and analyzing interactions among energy, agriculture, land use, water, and economic models. Ji received his Ph.D. degree in physical geography at the Capital Normal University and Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, and he got his M.S. degree from Shanxi Agriculture University.



**Curt GARRIGAN, Chief, Sustainable Urban Development Section, Environment and Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand**

Curt Garrigan is Chief of the Sustainable Urban Development Section for the Environment and Development Division of UN ESCAP. Before joining UN ESCAP, Mr. Garrigan served as Cities and Buildings Programme Manager for UN Environment based in Paris, France. He led UN Environment's efforts to plan, along with major building sector stakeholders, the first 'Buildings Day' at COP21, and to launch the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction, which has mobilized 24 countries and more than 70 organisations to scale up building sector climate actions. He also coordinated UN Environment's efforts to assist countries in Southeast Asia to develop Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) for the building sector. Prior to UN Environment, Mr. Garrigan served more than 22 years in operational and management roles for the City of Nashville, Tennessee USA, including Deputy Mayor, Parks Director, and Infrastructure and Planning Coordinator for the city's post-Flood Recovery Team.





**HONG Yongmiao, Dean and Professor of School of Economics and Management, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences (UCAS SEM, Beijing, P.R. China), Member of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Member of the CDA Scientific Advisory Board**

Prof. Hong is a distinguished research fellow at Academy of Mathematics and Systems Science and Center for Forecasting Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), and a special-term professor at UCAS. He is a Fellow of The World Academy of Sciences. Before he joined CAS and UCAS, Professor Hong was the Ernest S. Liu Professor of Economics and International Studies and a Professor of Statistics at the Center of Applied Mathematics at Cornell University in the United States.



**Xiaojun (Dennis) HUANG, Executive Vice President, Bank of China, US Branches, New York, United States**

Mr. Huang leads the Bank's strategic management practice, including risk-based strategic planning and strategy implementation and monitoring. He also oversees the in-house research on macro-economy, banking industry and business development. Mr. Huang also leads the Secretariat of the newly established ESG Committee, and heads the New York Research Center under the BOC Group Research Institute and the BOC Academic New York. Prior to joining BOC, Mr. Huang had extensive securities industry experience in both China and the U.S. He was also extensively involved in the establishment of the Shenzhen Stock Exchange. He is an elected board member of the China International Finance Society, and an advisory board member of the Emerging Market Institute at the Johnson School of Business at Cornell University. He holds an MBA from Cornell.



**LI Gary, Director, Head of Tech Solutions & Sustainability, CBRE China, Shanghai, China**

Shenhao (Gary) Li is Director and Head of Tech Solution & Sustainability of CBRE China and he is Secretary-General of Shanghai Hongkou Green Industry Development Center. He is an Accredited Professional of the USA Green Building Council and the China Green Building Council. Until 2022 he was National Vice Chairman of the Construction Working Group of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and until 2019 Shanghai Chair and National Vice Chair of the Environment Working Group of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China. CBRE Group with offices amongst others in U.S., Europe, and China - headquartered in Dallas/Texas, U.S. - is the world's largest commercial real estate services and investment firm based on 2022 revenue.



**Winston MA, Adjunct Professor, New York University School of Law, New York, United States**

Winston Ma is Nasdaq-Listed Board Chairman of Mountain & Co. I Acquisition Corp. (NASDAQ: MCAA), Vice Chairman of Virtual-Q and Member of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) "Infrastructure and Finance" Investor Advisory Board. For 11 years, he was Managing Director for China Investment Corporation (CIC), China's sovereign wealth fund. At CIC's inception in 2007 he had leadership roles in global investments involving financial services, technology (TMT), energy and natural resources sectors (Head of CIC North America office 2014-2015), including the setup of West Summit (Huashan) Capital, a cross-border growth capital fund in Silicon Valley, which was CIC's first overseas tech investment. Prior to that, Mr. Ma amongst others served as a vice president at J.P. Morgan investment banking, and a corporate lawyer at Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP.

He is a prolific book author on digitalisation and investment topics.





***Dragana MARINA, Sustainability Research Lead, Continental Europe, and Head of Research & Data Intelligence, CBRE Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark***

Dragana Marina is an experienced professional with over 16 years of experience in the real estate sector. Since 2021 she is the Sustainability Research Lead for Continental Europe. She contributes to providing both strategic ESG advice and downstream sustainability advisory services across the whole property life cycle, tackling key issues such as climate change risks, net zero carbon, sustainable development, social value, and wellbeing. In addition, she also leads the research operations for the Danish market. CBRE Group with offices amongst others in U.S., Europe, and China - headquartered in Dallas/Texas, U.S. - is the world's largest commercial real estate services and investment firm based on 2022 revenue.



***Enrique NACIF, Founder and Managing Director of Green Legacy GmbH, Vienna, Austria***

He has been involved in the development and commercialization of superabsorbent polymer solutions for crop production for the past 7 years. Enrique learned about the role of superabsorbent polymers in reducing the risk of drought damage and increasing water efficiency in crop production while supporting IAEA/FAO research activities in this area. He co-founded a university spin-off dedicated to the development, industrial scale-up and commercialization of novel bio-based hydrogel materials for agricultural applications. Originally from Argentina, Enrique studied politics and international law in the UK and has lived in Austria since 2005. With a lifelong passion for the environment and the role of green cities, Enrique has also been involved in urban greening civic projects, including co-founding and managing an urban community garden in Vienna.



***David Qingzhong PAN, Executive Dean, Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University Beijing, China***

David Qingzhong Pan is Executive Dean and Professor of Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University. He oversees the program's daily operations and is responsible for teaching and organizing innovative courses to encourage active engagement between students and industry leaders. As a serial entrepreneur, David used to work in the IT industry as an Engineer, Director of R&D, CEO and Chairman, and was granted various awards for technological innovation. Returning to academia in 2004, David taught courses and conducted research in managerial economics, corporate governance, business development, and economic history at Tsinghua University. He also served as Director of the Development Office of the Tsinghua University School of Economics and Management (SEM), where he was in charge of activities of the School's Advisory Board. David received his BE in Applied Mathematics and Computer Science, ME in Economics and PhD in Finance from Tsinghua University, and his MS in Engineering Economic Systems at Stanford University.



***Robert MAVSAR, Director of the European Forest Institute (EFI), Joensuu, Finland***

Robert Mavsar is the Director of the European Forest Institute, from 1 June 2023. From 2015, he was Deputy Director of EFI, and in this role was responsible for the development and coordination of EFI's research activities, and for the operational development and management of the institute. His main research interests are in the fields of the development of forest research in Europe, bioeconomy, economic valuation of ecosystem services and innovative business models for the marketing of non-wood forest products. Currently he is chairing the Advisory Council of the BIOEAST initiative. EFI coordinates the EU-funded project CLEARING HOUSE gathering 26 partners in Europe and China to mobilise the potential of urban forests as nature-based solutions to restore urban ecosystems.



**Barbara SMITH, Vice President, Peace Programs, The Carter Center, Atlanta, Georgia, United States**

Barbara Smith oversees the Carter Center's democracy, human rights, conflict resolution, and rule of law programs, which operate projects and observe elections in countries across the globe. Before coming to The Carter Center in September 2020, Smith was principal and founder of the international development consulting firm Mountain Time Development. She also was a senior associate at the Center for Strategic & International Studies, focused on the Human Rights Initiative, conducting field work and research on civil society. Her wide-ranging career also includes assignments at the United States Agency for International Development and with the National Security Council in the White House.



**Henry TILLMAN, CEO, Alyana International, Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

20+ year wholesale banking career; ExCo/NEDs at Barclays, ABN and Wells Fargo- focus on emerging markets/Asia. 15 year London based advisory. €25 billion closed transactions, EU and Asia. Since 2018, focussed on new energy in Asia and GCC, more recently CEO of Aiyana International- ex partners of Arlington Energy/MASDAR (UAE). Research-built China Investment research proprietary database (2008). The Polar Silk Road (2018 – joint with SIIS); Scoring BRI projects for returns and ESG (for United Nations 2019 with NDRC), BRI Vaccine Partnership (2020 for CCPIT), Greening the BRI via Technology and Innovation (2021- UIBE); 2022 China led renewable projects along the BRI (BRI Board of Governance 2022), Thorium MSR – is the revolution coming? (Arctic Circle Assembly -2023- attended by CASS, MoFA).



**Alexander TRAUTH-GOIK, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of East Asian Studies, University of Vienna, Austria**

He currently work as part of the European Research Council (ERC) grant project 'Engineering a Trustworthy Society: The Evolution, Perception and Impact of China's Social Credit System'. The focus of Alexander Trauth-Goik's research is tracing the Social Credit System's evolution and regional variation, its perception by the Chinese public, overlap with other governance initiatives, as well as its social, political, and cultural impacts. He earned a Bachelor of International Studies and Doctor of Philosophy in Humanities and Social Inquiry at University of Wollongong (Australia).



**Alexander G. WELZL, President of China Data Analysis and Research Hub (CDA), Vienna, Austria**

Alex is the Founding President of CDA. He has a professional and scientific background in economic research, financial markets, innovation and entrepreneurship as well as sustainability. Until 2020 he taught the first university course in Europe focusing on the National Innovation System of China at the University of Applied Sciences Technikum Wien. He was guest researcher/ visiting fellow at European and Chinese universities. From 2006 – 2013 he represented the European capital market worldwide as European Coordinator/Chairman of EFFAS CIC, Frankfurt a. Main, Germany. Alex holds an MSc in natural sciences from University of Vienna.



***ZHU Li, President, APEC Sustainable Energy Center (APSEC), Tianjin, China***

Li Zhu is a professor and doctoral supervisor of the School of Architecture, Tianjin University as well as the president of APEC Sustainable Energy Center (APSEC). She specializes in low carbon technologies, focusing on low carbon building design, new energy integration, and sustainable energy system planning for low carbon towns. She has written and published more than 130 papers in international and domestic journals. Her research results were applied in 62 practical projects and were granted 17 innovative patents. The APSEC was established during the 11th APEC Energy Ministerial Meeting on September 2, 2014, in China. In order to comprehensively promote research on low-carbon energy transition, sustainable city development as well as clean and efficient energy use, APEC Cooperative Network of Sustainable Cities (CNSC), Clean Coal Technology Transfer in the Asia-Pacific Region (CCT) and Asia-Pacific Energy Transition Solutions (ETS) were set up as the three pillar programs of APSEC.



***ZHANG Linxiu, Director of United Nations Environment Programme-International Ecosystem Management Partnership (UNEP-IEMP), Beijing, China***

Dr. ZHANG Linxiu, UNEP senior staff and Director, UN Environment-International Ecosystem Management Partnership (UNEP-IEMP), and Fellow of The World Academy of Sciences. She is now affiliated with the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research of CAS (UNEP-IEMP's host institute) as a senior research fellow and at the University of the CAS (UCAS) as an Adj. professor. She is leading the implementation of a UNEP flagship programme focusing on the nexus of climate change, ecosystem services and sustainable livelihoods (CEL) through South-South cooperation. Prior to joining UNEP, Dr. Zhang was the Director of Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy of Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), and Member of the Expert Committee of the Leading Group Office for Poverty Alleviation and Development of the State Council. Her previous fields of research covered policy relevant studies on rural development and eco-environment issues, particularly conducted abundant empirical studies on employment and migration, land tenure, public goods and services provision, poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods, climate change adaptation and gender. She is one of the initiators of impact evaluation research in China.





GEORGE H. W. BUSH FOUNDATION  
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乔治布什美中关系基金会



China Data Analysis  
& Research Hub

## The Organising Institutions

Founded amidst the beginning pandemic in April 2020 with its headquarters in Vienna, Austria, [China Data Analysis and Research Hub \(CDA\)](#) follows its motto "Ex Sapientia Lux" and is dedicated to act as an independent, non-partisan and non-profit Sino-European think tank. With systemic and systematic research and analyses CDA strives to contribute to a peaceful bridge-building and evidence-based dialogue between Europe (the West) and China in the coming decades. With an interdisciplinary focus on innovation, deep-tech and sustainability CDA understands itself as an international hub of academics, professional experts from business and governance as well as institutions engaged in bi-/multilateral research and collaborative projects. Against the backdrop of the Grand Challenges of mankind addressed in the UN Sustainable Development Goals CDA strives to make a planetary patriotism and geo-innovation a reality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Located in Beijing, People's Republic of China, [University of Chinese Academy of Sciences \(UCAS\)](#) is administered and managed by Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), established in 1949. Comprising more than 100 institutes, CAS is China's highest academic institution in the Natural Sciences, the highest-ranking consulting institution in science and technology, the preeminent research and development center for the Natural Sciences and high technology, and the most important base in the training of advanced scientific talents. As of August 2020, UCAS had 57 teaching and research institutes as well as 16 affiliated hospitals. At that time UCAS had 3,090 professors and 11,257 supervisors, including 176 CAS Members, from three national research centers (or labs), 73 national key labs, 189 CAS key labs, 29 national engineering research centers (labs) and various national frontier scientific research projects. In 2019, UCAS had over 51,700 postgraduate students enrolled. The [UCAS School of Economics and Management \(UCAS SEM\)](#), strives to be a first-class research-oriented school with a global outreach and an AACSB as well as an AMBA accreditation.

With its headquarters in Houston, Texas, United States, the [George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations](#) honors its namesake's life-long view that the U.S.-China relationship is the most consequential bilateral relationship in the world and that a constructive relationship between the two countries serves a vital interest of the United States, as well as the interests of the entire global community. Bush China Foundation seeks to advance engagement, education and information-sharing among the U.S. and Chinese policymaking, business and academic communities. It is committed to promoting diversity, cross-generational inclusion in foreign policy and to giving back to their communities. The Bush China Foundation's active, wide-ranging, and highly innovative program of activities reflect President Bush's vision of honest and open dialogue between nations and a safer and more prosperous world for all.

Since its foundation in Atlanta, Georgia, United States, in the early 1980ies [The Carter Center](#) has been guided by the principles of its founders, the 39<sup>th</sup> president of the United States and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn. Founded, in partnership with Emory University, on a fundamental commitment to human rights and the alleviation of human suffering, the Center seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health. President Carter's decision to normalize diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China in 1979 changed both countries and the world. The Carter Center remains committed to preserving the legacy of President Carter and Deng Xiaoping's historic decision while adapting to the demands of the 21st century. Through its research, workshops, and online engagement initiatives, the China Focus and program fosters greater dialogue, exchange, and critical reflection on the past, present, and future of U.S.-China relations.