



European Economic and Social Committee
The President

Brussels, 3 May 2012, Concert Noble

EU- China Urbanisation Partnership
Staffan Nilsson's Intervention at the Opening Session

Seul le texte prononcé fait foi

Check Against Delivery

Dear Vice Primer Minister Li,
Dear Commissioner,
Dear honourable participants,

On behalf of the EESC, I welcome the establishment of the EU-China Partnership on Sustainable Urbanisation and share its objectives. With our Chinese counterparts, we are ready to be involved in this initiative and, in particular, in the annual flagship event of the Partnership: the EU-China Urban Forum.

We have in place for many years now the EU-China Round Table. Within this framework (which was started 10 years ago, and was supported in the EU-China summit 2004), the EESC meets regularly with the Chinese Economic and Social Council. Just a few weeks ago we had our [EU –China Round Table in Hangzhou](#). [Our declaration](#) adopted by the end of our discussions in April focused on sustainable urban development. Our two rapporteurs, Evelyne PICHENOT on the European side, and Professor Zou Ji on the Chinese side, have done a huge work together.

Together with our Chinese colleagues, we agreed that sustainable development must be human-based, comprehensive, coordinated and balanced. Models of



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sustainable urban development should co-exist to preserve the environment, encourage social integration and involved specific measures for the development of sound transport systems, energy efficiency, broad access to green technology and a recycling economy.

Whatever the model, civil society's needs to be regularly informed and involved in urban planning and implementation. The involvement of civil society is a key to promote and uphold the accountability of the various parties involved. The creation of Councils for sustainable development at national and local levels could be instrumental in this context. The regional implementation of article 10 on the information and consultation of the 1992 Rio Declaration (or the Aarhus Convention in the European context) could also be instrumental.

I would like to stress here the importance of the sustainable development of rural areas, because they feed the urban areas. It is about food security. We believe it is important to exploit the rural areas properly by protecting the environment, ensuring proper working conditions and making key public services available to rural populations.

Last but not least I would like to mention [our work for the Rio+20 summit](#). We believe that the Rio Conference must send out a clear signal to the world community, with specific proposals for the transition to an economic order based on qualitative economic growth. Sustainable urbanisation should be part of the Rio+20 agreements. Let's face the challenges and go for change! Together we can re-build a more sustainable world!

For further details:

Coralía Catana | EESC President's Spokesperson

+32 (0)25469963 | +32 (0)498984613

E-mail: coralia.catana@eesc.europa.eu | president.eesc@eesc.europa.eu

Internet: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.staffan-nilsson-speeches>