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2021, April 5

OUTLINE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION

BACKGROUND

Humans have transformed the earth's natural environment in order to improve health and wellbeing. On that path they have crossed ecological boundaries and reached the age of the Anthropocene in which sustainable life on earth is at risk. Despite a common global goal of sustainable development, ecological life support systems at risk, tensions are increasing, and it is more urgent than ever to combine efforts across cultures and disciplines to create ecological civilization. Humans have made great progress in various fields of knowledge and practice which, when advanced, enables them to coexist with nature and build ecological civilization for a new era of the Ecozoic. In that era of the Ecozoic, or Ecological Civilization human and planetary health are center stage.

The Urban Health and Wellbeing programme is a global science programme and interdisciplinary body of the International Science Council (ISC). The International Science Council is a non-governmental organization with its headquarters in Paris and a global membership of 40 international scientific Unions and Associations and over 140 national and regional scientific organizations including Academies and Research Councils. The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the Chinese Association for Science and Technology (CAST) are ISC members. ISC's aim is to act as the global voice for science and, among others, regularly represents the voice of its science community, for example, at the United Nations High Level Political Forum.

The mission of the Urban Health and Wellbeing (UHWB) programme is to develop a systems approach for a better understanding of how the multiple social and environmental determinants of health in cities interact and define the quality of life in cities. However, the health of people in cities is also an important indicator of planetary health. Human activity on earth has disrupted the provision of global goods and services from interconnected ecosystems and thereby endangered the very foundations for a healthy life on earth. Cities are global hubs where information, energy, resources and people from the entire planet come together. Planetary health emergencies like pandemics and climate change play out in cities and it is in cities where solutions for the planet's impaired health can be found first.

The human impact on nature has not only reached planetary dimensions, it is also progressing exponentially fast, leading to the so-called great acceleration, where interconnected human and ecological systems are at the brink of collapse at a global scale, leading to food, water and other resource shortages. These, in turn, trigger inequality and global tensions between nations. In response to those increasing tensions, science has another important role to play. Apart from accelerated knowledge creation, science diplomacy and intercultural understanding through science are important components for global peace.

Since October 2014 the UHWB programme has brought together a global community of scientists, policy makers and practitioners from all continents at international conferences, symposia and workshops. The programme has initiated the establishment of an Urban Health Laboratory at Beirut Arab University, Lebanon, initiated the inter-ministerial Urban Health Model in San Salvador and has brought together the urban, disaster risk, health and data science communities for co-creating policy options for sustainability, by means of collaborative systems modelling.

In its final phase 2021-2023 the UHWB programme aims at transitioning into a permanent organisation, and it is developing a demonstration project, here (for the time being) referred to as the International Center for the Advancement of Ecological Civilization, or short "Eco College". The UHWB programme

will put together a team and organize activities which will lead to the establishment of the center. The knowledge and the networks which have been created during the programme's lifespan will be linked to the center as an operational foundation. New networks of experts and institutions will join the center, especially in countries along the Belt & Road. The specific operation and design will be determined by a development and strategy team.

In this outline, the vision, mission, design and initial activities for the center are outlined. It is open for comments and contributions and serves as a starting point for a brainstorming among interested parties.

VISION

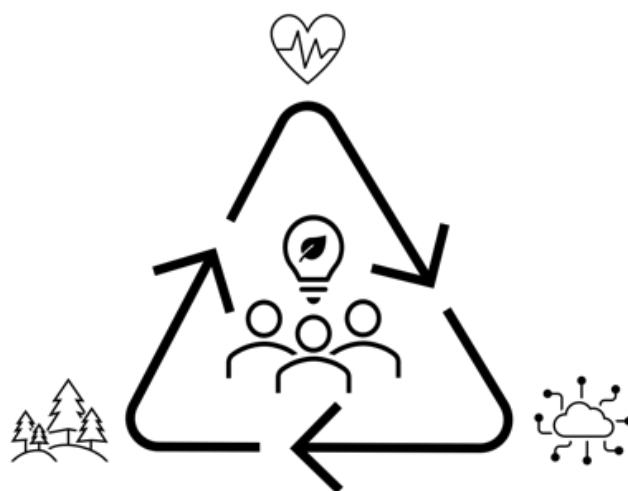
An international center for the co-creation of knowledge, health and peace for building ecological civilization through experiencing nature, sharing of knowledge and community engagement.

MISSION

The center will make important contributions to science diplomacy, knowledge co-creation and finding local solutions, together across boundaries, for the planetary health emergencies we are facing and their causes.

The center's aim is to

- 1) offer a place for experiencing and being inspired by nature and restoring **health**.
- 2) provide a space for scholars and global thought leaders as well as companies and organizations from around the world to share and co-develop ecological **knowledge** and technology for ecological civilization.
- 3) build **peace** and **intercultural understanding** through collective learning of how to realize ecological civilization.



CORE FUNCTIONS AND TARGET GROUPS

The ICEC will be a place for sharing and co-creating knowledge for realizing ecological civilization globally, for intercultural understanding, peace and collective action and a sanctuary for experiencing nature and regaining health.

The center will

1. organize seminars, workshops, symposia and conferences, and invite global thought leaders and experts from around the world to share knowledge and engage in dialogue
2. offer a space for regaining holistic health,
3. provide the opportunity to interact and work with local communities.

Target groups are individuals and professionals who wish to experience nature and regain health, interact and work with local communities, share and enrich their knowledge with scholars and experts from China and around the world.

CONCEPT AND DESIGN

The center which can consist of multiple building units, will be located in close to or inside a nature area, e.g. forest, or within a nature- and culture rich landscape. It is envisioned to be part of a rural-urban environment in which life of ecological civilization can be demonstrated and practiced in collaboration with local communities.

The center will be part of a peri-urban rural revitalization programme and contribute to creating the foundations for life in ecological civilization. Central idea is the combination of nature experience and inspiration as well as a healthy life, in healthy environments knowledge exchange and co-creation.

Ideally the core functions of the center (knowledge, health and intercultural understanding) will be combined in one location. It is however also possible to locate the centers functional units (management and admin, seminar and training, accommodation and recreation) in different locations of a village system, while they should not be separated too far from another beyond village boundaries.

ORGANISATION

The center will be co-directed by a Chinese and non-Chinese director, who are knowledgeable and experienced with the core functions of the center and who work together as a team to coordinate the activities of the center. They will each be supported by an assistant. The center's activities will be informed by an international board of experts representing countries and respective knowledge areas, especially along the Belt and Road.

The specific organizational and leadership structure will be determined in accordance with local rules and regulations. A combination of public support for land, building and permanent staff in combination with volunteer work and business operation, is an option.

PROJECT REALIZATION, INITIAL PHASE

The UHWB international programme office (IPO) at IUE, CAS will lead the planning and realization of the project from IUE, CAS side. For the UHWB programme the project will be a demonstration project for a systems approach to urban health and wellbeing. The office will hire an expert with experience in realizing similar projects, especially for the initial conceptual design phase. In close cooperation with the UHWB programme, the expert will be responsible for negotiating with relevant stakeholders and delivering a conceptual plan and feasibility study.

In accordance with the mission of the center, the components of the center will consist of:

1. an environment close to or inside a nature area, like forest or nature-rich cultural landscape
2. seminar, study, exhibition and office buildings
3. accommodation facilities for guests and staff of the center

The center is a place for exchanging knowledge and also demonstrating solutions, for example by renewable energy generation, waste recycling and organic food production and permaculture.

Companies and entrepreneurs can collaborate with the center to benefit from the knowledge exchange with global thought leaders and demonstrate technological advances made in different areas.

Collaboration with local communities is essential.