Celebrating 10 Years of Partnership between UNEP and Tongji University

Brown Bag Discussions at UNEP Headquarters, 27 February, 2013

Background

• Tongji University (TU) is one of the key universities under Ministry of Education, China focusing on science, engineering, medicine, economics, management, liberal arts, law, philosophy and education. TU plays a leading role in environmental issues in China, and has contributed significantly to urban construction & disaster prevention and modern manufacturing through scientific & technological innovations; digitalized and intellectualized design. With over 40,000 students, of which 3,975 are international students and 6,302 faculties, TU has over 200 international partners and an annual research budget of $264 million. The main campus is located in the city of Shanghai, the financial hub of China. As a result of collaborating with the community, Tongji Knowledge Economy Ring is formed around its main campus. The statistics shows that over 300 companies are located in the area and the annual output value was about $3 million in 2012.

• 2012 marked the 10th anniversary of UNEP-Tongji partnership since the establishment of the joint Institute of Environment for Sustainable Development (IESD) in Shanghai. Over the past 10 years, IESD has played a key role in capacity building as well as facilitating China-Africa environmental cooperation. More than 200 students from nearly 50 countries have enrolled in Masters and PhD programmes at IESD. An International Student Conference on Environment and Sustainability has been hosted annually since 2010, bringing over 300 students each year to Shanghai. Capacity building and technology transfer through China-Africa research projects has focused on water resources management. IESD assisted with translation of UNEP’s Green Economy report and other publications, and also supported the launch of the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) on 5 June 2012, in the run up to Rio+20.

Outlook

Over the next 10 years of partnership (2013-2022), TU seeks to:

i. Work as a think tank for UNEP, especially around the thematic priorities; with research emphasis on Water resources management and treatment technologies; Climate change and adaptation; Waste management and disposal; Environmental policy; and sustainable development issues;

ii. Facilitate sustainability-oriented university construction through the promotion of interdisciplinary curriculum design and research;

iii. Consolidate international orientation of students’ recruitment at IESD and expand the number of graduate students studying at IESD to 200 per annum;

iv. Expand international training programs on environment and sustainable development; and

v. Help coordinate with GUPES member universities in mainstreaming environmental topics.

The Brown Bag was attended by nearly 25 participants from UNEP, UNHABITAT, UNON, Xinhua, etc.