

**Summary Record of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Joint Australia China High-Level Roundtable**  
**Australia China Environment Development Partnership**

Rydges Hotel, Canberra, 16 Dec 2010

1. In their opening remarks co-chairs Dr Sun-Hee Lee, A/g Assistant Director-General, Asia Regional Branch, AusAID and Mr Zhang Kening, Commercial Counsellor DITEA, MOFCOM recognised the strengthening of the Australian-China relationship within the ACEDP framework and encouraged the delegates to participate in full and frank discussions to ensure work over the next 18 months is guided by the ACEDP objectives ensuring a persistent strong bi-lateral partnership after the completion of ACEDP
2. Introductions by each of the representative agencies gave an overview of their portfolios and their role in ACEDP projects. The presentations provided an insight in to the size and spread of the agencies and the scale and complexity of some of the projects being worked on. It also highlighted the similarities in work being undertaken and the mutual benefits which could be realised from a strong bi-lateral partnership.
3. Feedback from the Independent Progress Report (IPR) identified a very strong commitment by all partners to the building of strong partnerships. The report identified a number of risks and recommended appointment of a steering committee; this recommendation was implemented by the establishment of the Operations Committee in Oct 2010. Other recommendations included that reporting from the Program Coordination Office be more accessible to less involved parties and that unallocated funds be directed to projects which contributed most to the strengthening of ongoing partnerships. Delegates recognised that the IPR had identified a number of valid issues and had proposed useful recommendations which when implemented would further strengthen the bi-lateral relationship and provide a framework for an ongoing partnership after the conclusion of ACEDP
4. The Report from the Operations Committee advised that the committee is led by AusAID and MOFCOM and is made up of members from partner agencies. At its first meeting in Oct 2010 it endorsed its Terms of Reference, reviewed the draft 2011 annual plan and discussed in detail the Large Irrigation Scheme (LIS) project. The Committee found that Stage 1 of LIS was behind scheduled and this impacted Stages 2 and 3 to the point that the project was unlikely to complete before the conclusion of ACEDP. Accordingly the Committee determined that this project be put on hold and the unallocated funds be directed to other similar projects. Some delegates said the LIS project was complex and sufficient Chinese expertise had not been involved. They said good groundwork had been done on this project but we must be mindful that north and south China have very different issues. There was some concern that the LIS project was stopped but acceptance that the timeframe issues made this necessary.
5. The Status Report on ACEDP Projects informed the meeting that of 24 ACEDP projects three have not yet started, seven have been completed, nine

are due for completion in this financial year and five are due for completion next financial year. By Jun 2010 41% of projects had been delivered and acquitted and by Nov 2010 51% of projects had been delivered and acquitted. This was normal progression for such projects. There was consensus among delegates that the ACEDP projects had achieved a lot towards building partnership and improving policy objectives and that learnings from this program would guide the ongoing Sino-Australian partnerships.

6. Presentations on China's 12<sup>th</sup> 5 Year Plan delivered by representatives from each of the Chinese partner agencies provided a view of the scale of the environmental issues facing China and the measures the next Plan will put in place to protect the environment. The essence of the Plan is to speed up economic development but to do so in an environmentally friendly way. Environmental protection initiatives will target a wide range of issues spanning flood control, drought relief, water and air quality, soil erosion, underground water, marine ecology and forestry. Targets would be set and these would be met by a multi-faceted approach including legislation, monitoring and enforcement, education of the public, the use of market forces and the performance assessment of the leaders of agencies being tied to the meeting of targets.
7. Discussion on the Proposed Strategic Direction for the Remainder of ACEDP revolved around two key recommendations from the Hancock Report (i) how the remaining \$2.8 million unallocated funds would be spent and (ii) that a review be conducted of the ACEDP work program with a view to bringing all the work together in to a cohesive whole by the conclusion of ACEDP in Jun 2012. Eighteen proposals had been received totalling \$5.8 million. Delegates discussed the proposed assessment criteria for these proposals from the Hancock Report and the shortness of time for the completion of activities. After substantial discussion the delegates agreed to adopt the Hancock Report's criteria with the addition of a criterion that proposals should provide a foundation for long-standing Chinese-Australian partnerships. After considerable discussion on how the review would be conducted, what it would cost and the timeframe for it to be done delegates agreed to AusAID undertaking work to determine the scope, timeframe and costing for the review.
8. The 4<sup>th</sup> Joint Australia China High-level Roundtable meeting agreed to the following decisions:
  - i. Approved the criteria for the assessing of extension proposals and that these proposals be assessed by the Operations Committee which would also allocate funds from the unallocated funds.
  - ii. Endorsement of the Hancock Report.
  - iii. Agreement that the Operations Committee would refine the costings and timing for the review of the ACEDP program of work.
9. The meeting concluded with the chair thanking all delegates and support staff for a very successful and participative meeting. The next meeting (HLRT – V) to be held in Beijing.