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## INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SECTOR

### China: Country's central role attracts wave of bodies

By Dina Medland April 26, 2012

On a trip to Hainan Province, Robert Zoellick, [the outgoing World Bank president](#), was quoted in the China Daily newspaper last week as saying that emerging economies should play a bigger role in the World Bank and that more Chinese economists and researchers should hold high positions in the Bank.

But participation for China concerns more than just its citizens working abroad – it is about the growing presence of international agencies working in China, reflecting both the scale of the country's economic growth and its importance in the area of sustainability and climate change.

The most active international public sector agencies in China include the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, UN agencies, foreign embassies and the chambers of commerce of China's major trading and investment partners.

Nicholas Lardy, a senior fellow at the private, non-profit Peterson Institute for International Economics in the US, and an expert on China, says: "I can say with confidence that there are hundreds if not thousands of international public sector bodies working in China, including specialised NGOs working on all manner of issues – social, economic and political. They are piling in because China is central to addressing successfully many of these global issues."

Mr Lardy points out that the National Resources Defense Council, a large US non-profit body dealing with climate change and related issues, has one of its main offices in China because "China is central to reducing emissions causing global warming".

PwC, the professional services firm, recently appointed Allan Zhang, a specialist in China climate change policy and sustainable business, to the firm's UK team in this area. "As China embarks on diversifying its energy mix to reduce reliance on imports and environmental damage, the renewable energy sector has become one of the most

important industries in the country. It has been listed as one of the seven strategic emerging industries in China, and the government has invested heavily and will continue to do so.”

There are many non-government organisations and international public sector agencies active in the areas of energy conservation, renewables and carbon markets, says Mr Zhang. Active NGOs that he mentions include WWF China, The Climate Group, Carbon Disclosure Project, Joint US-China Collaboration on Clean Energy (JUCCCE) and World Energy Resources.

Asked about their activities, he adds: “They organise conferences to raise awareness, stage initiatives independently or jointly with Chinese government agencies, and promote new standards and technologies in China.”

By having offices on the ground these public agencies also “gain first hand knowledge about what is going on in the country and can establish networks with central and local government agencies and the Chinese business community”, says Mr Zhang. Before joining PwC he worked in China’s Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation for 13 years.

The importance of addressing climate change issues alongside those of infrastructure in emerging economies is one that is serving to reinforce the importance of being in China. As recently reported in the FT, the World Bank has been trying to ramp up its activities in infrastructure funding. At the same time, China’s lending to middle income nations recently exceeded that of the World Bank.

An interesting example of an NGO in China is the International Network for Bamboo & Rattan, headed by J Coosje Hoogendoorn. She says: “Inbar is the first and, up to now, the only global intergovernmental organisation hosted by China.

“Our mission is to contribute to pro-poor green growth in the world through improving the bamboo and rattan value chains where appropriate. Inbar was set up in 1997, is now almost 15 years old, and has grown from nine to 38 member countries. In those 15 years the organisation has developed from a fledgling organisation to a well accepted institution, both in China and globally.”

Working in China has become easier during these 15 years, she adds: “Sometimes we face bureaucracy, and being an intergovernmental organisation – which means our governance, operating and funding structure is linked to the governments of our member countries – presents a unique set of challenges. However, our focal institution in China, the State Forestry Administration, has always provided support, and in many cases help, to deal with any hurdles.”

Inbar’s headquarters are in Beijing, but most of its projects are outside China. Ms Hoogendoorn says: “One of the most interesting developments of the last few years is the growing interest of our partners in China to partner with us also in projects outside China – a swing to so-called South-South collaboration.

“This is a development that pleases us at Inbar and illustrates the élan of the Bric

countries [Brazil, Russia, India and China] in becoming much more important contributors to the global development agenda.”

High-profile UN organisations in China outside the climate change field include the UN Board of Auditors, whose chairman – a role rotated every two years – is Liu Jiayi, auditor-general of the People’s Republic of China.

There are also dozens of universities and research organisations with offices and programmes in China, says Mr Lardy. He points out that Stanford has just become the first US university to construct a building on a main Chinese University campus, after it recently launched a research centre at Peking University.