

Welcome Remarks by XIE Zhenhua

Mr. XIE Zhenhua became the Minister of China's State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) in 1998, after serving as the Administrator (1993 to 1998) and Deputy Administrator (1990 to 1993) of National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and Vice Chairman and Secretary General of the Committee of Environmental Protection of the State Council (1993 to 1998). He also serves as the Vice Chairman of the National Committee on Hygiene and Health Promotion Campaign and is a member of the Commission for Construction of Three Gorges of the State Council, member of the Committee of Response to Nuclear Emergency of the State Council and Vice Chairman of China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED). Prior to that, Mr. Xie held posts of Director for Human Resources Management and Radioactive Environment Management and Director General for Human Resources and Administrative Management, engineer, assistant engineer at NEPA between 1982 to 1990, and posts in the State Commission for Construction between 1980 to 1982. Mr. Xie holds a Master's degree in Laws from the Department of Environmental Laws, Wuhan University and a Bachelor of Engineering from the Department of Engineering Physics, Tsinghua University.

I am delighted to be with you today to talk about the new Distance Learning Course on Strategic Environmental Assessment, something that is very, very important for us here in the World Bank. In many respects, it is about scaling up and scaling out. It is about how we take environmental analysis and assessment and understanding from the project to the program to the policy level. And this has enormous implications for how we can leverage-up our impact, how we can do better diagnostics, and how we can make a very big difference to the way in which environment interacts in every way of life, from transport systems to land use to tourism to projects and to policies that affect the environment.

So I think this is a very, very important endeavor by the World Bank Institute, and I am delighted to be associated with it.

Many countries are beginning to move in this direction, the direction that the U.S., the Europeans, the Chinese Government are taking, in beginning to think, as they think of a development program: What are the environmental consequences, impacts, and opportunities for dealing with environment in a low-cost and low-transactions way? I think this is a very important part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process.

So again let me welcome you all. Let me say that this is very important to the World Bank, and I am delighted to be here with you to introduce this course on Strategic Environmental Assessment.