

CURRICULUM VITAE

ZHANG XINSHENG

Personal

Name: Zhang Xinsheng
Date of Birth: 8 November 1948
Nationality: Citizen of China

Education

Mr Zhang received a Master in Design Studies with distinction at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. He also completed the Advanced Management Program at the Harvard Business School, and was later HBS's Visiting Research Fellow. He was among the first groups of visiting scholars sent by the Chinese Government to the United States in 1980. He also graduated from the China Military Institute of Technology, and Zhejiang University, China.

Current position

Mr Zhang is Co-founder and Executive Chairman of Eco-Forum Global, an independent organization founded in 2009 committed to building consensus among all stakeholders for development of a green and sustainable future. Today's challenges have led him to devote himself to environmental protection and sustainable development.

He is also President of the China Education Association for International Exchange, Vice President of the International University Sports Federation, a board member of the International Institute for Education Planning, UNESCO, and Member of the 11th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Professional background

Mr Zhang was Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO (2005–2007) and was Chairperson of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee (2003–2004).

Mr Zhang has held key positions in China's central, provincial and municipal governments. As the Vice Minister of Education in China (2000–2009), he was in charge of educational policy, regulations, and international cooperation. He promoted the Education for Sustainable Development in China leading to the integration of ESD into the curricula of Chinese schools. He also contributed to the creation of the Confucius Institute Programme.

He was elected for two consecutive tenures from 1989 to 1997 as Mayor of Suzhou Municipality. During this period, the government of Suzhou was one of the first to take economic, social, environmental and cultural factors into account. Under his leadership, Suzhou became the fourth largest city in terms of GDP and a role model of sustainable development in China. It attracted foreign direct investment, which helped preserve the historical city and environment and balance urban-rural concerns and needs.

From 1986 to 1989, he was Vice Chairman of the China National Tourism Administration. From 1978, Mr Zhang was Co-founder and Executive Managing Director of Nanjing Jinling Corporation. His career in industry started in the Nanjing Panda Radio Factory.

Experience and past involvement with IUCN

UNESCO cooperates closely with IUCN and in particular its World Heritage Committee, to which IUCN provides expert advice on natural heritage. As Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO (2005–2007) and earlier as Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee (2003–2004), Mr Zhang has had the opportunity to work with many IUCN experts and consultants on conservation issues.

Offices and membership of governing bodies

In addition to the positions mentioned above, Mr Zhang was the first person from China to be invited to join the Harvard Business School Board of Directors of Associates. He was also Chairperson of the Board of Directors for Sino-Singapore SIP Development Consortium.

During his stewardship of the Executive Board of UNESCO, Mr Zhang was well-respected and known for his leadership ability and his ability to create an inclusive consensus. The *Tribute to Chairperson of the Executive Board* written by the General Conference 34th Session reads: “*The General Conference [commends Mr Zhang’s] intellectual and human qualities which enabled him to build consensus through extensive consultations.*” Former Director-General of UNESCO Matsuura’s letter to China’s top leaders praises “*Mr Zhang’s steadfast quest for harmony and consensus, which has enabled Board Members to reach agreement on many complex issues...the Board has taken 226 decisions...Every one of them was adopted by consensus... [This] great achievement...was largely due to the wise handling of the debates of the Executive Board by Mr Zhang.*”

Other activities

He was a member of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development and Vice President of the Chinese Olympic Committee. He was also elected as Deputy to the 7th and 8th National People’s Congress of China.

Awards

Mr Zhang has been awarded Doctorates *honoris causa* by universities in the United States, Russia, Australia, Hong Kong and Japan.

Vision for the future priorities and development of the Union

It is critical for a new IUCN leader to be a good listener to the members of the Union, with deep understanding of the issues that are of significance, without pre-set judgment or bias. IUCN leaders must build up consensus, preserving past traditions and success while changing to meet new challenges. Thus, the Council should provide substantial support and leadership to the Director General, the Secretariat, and all the Commissions.

Specifically, in respect to the priorities and development, IUCN needs to prepare itself for the future:

1. by anticipating future developments and challenges in the post-Rio+20 period covering the entire range of environmental development issues and in particular future international, regional and national action in support of nature conservation and biodiversity;
2. by contributing to the review of relevant MDGs, the eventual articulation of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the relevant parts of the post-2015 agenda, which will be strategic and policy-guiding factors for all countries and the entire international community;
3. by remaining relevant, and indeed visionary in its ideas and initiatives and by mobilizing decision-makers, the scientific community and relevant NGOs to act in support of the objectives and targets set for the Organization;
4. by exercising global leadership and inspiration in addressing the future challenges related to the state of the world’s environment and societal needs;
5. by designing and implementing strategies and flagship programmes as well as forging partnerships across all priorities identified by the Council; and

6. by reviewing and adapting its governance mechanism and practices to ensure that IUCN will be a model international organization driven by excellence, effectiveness, transparency, accountability and visibility.