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Dear Participants:

I am pleased to extend my greetings to the organizers and participants of the China Planning Network (CPN) China Week 2009, the sixth year continuation of the CPN effort to fuse western scholarship on urban development with China's rapid urbanization experience.

The world economy is experiencing the biggest crisis since 1929. China is no exception but has faced unique opportunities and challenges. How does China's rapid urbanization make a difference in dealing with the economic downturn? Is urban development a victim of this crisis or is it a source of solutions? Should job creation be the most important priority of China's big cities, which have become significant economies in their own right?

It is timely and important for CPN to organize China Week 2009 and to assemble a team of ten MIT professors and 35 western scholars in Beijing to answer these questions and address aspects of China's urban development, such as housing, transportation, planning education, economy, regeneration, and urban energy and environment. This year a conference on urban energy and environment issues has been introduced to CPN China Week, and we hope that MIT, through its Energy Initiative, might contribute significantly to addressing the energy and environment challenges in China.

I am impressed by CPN's Open Platform because it seeks to break down multiple boundaries between disciplines, between academia and practice, and between China and the West. Born at the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP), the China Planning Network has engaged 15 programs and 26 professors at MIT. CPN now has 180 participating western scholars and professionals and over 2,500 members in the West.

Now, however, I am particularly excited to see the partnerships with universities, governments, industries, and the public media that CPN is establishing from within China. I thank Vice-Premier Zeng Peiyan of China, Former Prime Minister John Winston Howard of Australia, President Ji from Renmin University, Vice President and Provost Yuan from Tsinghua University, President Li from Chongqing University, Vice-Minister Xie from National Development and Reform Commission, Vice Minister Qiu from the Ministry of Housing and Urban/Rural Development, Vice-Minister Pan from Ministry of Environment Protection, and President Li from China.com.cn for the great energy and effort that each has contributed to the CPN China Week 2009.

CPN is devoted to making the world's best scholarship on urban development accessible to the public in China. It is also MIT's mission to disseminate knowledge to the world, and I am pleased that MIT is able to contribute its intellectual resources to help China take on development challenges. I thank CPN for strengthening MIT's commitment to do so.

I wish you great success with the CPN China Week, and I hope each participant becomes an ambassador to bring the discussions and debates during the CPN China Week to your own practices and everyday life.

Sincerely,

Susan Hockfield