Section VII Cross-Regional Civil Society Dialogue and **Environmental Confidence Building**

Jennifer L. Turner and Fengshi Wu, Woodrow Wilson Center¹



In their exploration of this question of promoting peace, Conca and Dabelko posit that environmental peacemaking can develop both through state-to-state relations and trans-societal linkages.⁴ At both levels environmental cooperation can transform the bargaining environment between countries, regions, or peoples and help to build trust and interdependence into the relationships. For example, environmental problems often develop gradually and demand a long time to solve. Thus, cooperation on environmental issues could lengthen the time horizons of political decision-makers. If countries or regions develop effective long-term **distential**tive strategies for environmental problems they

² In addition to this environmental-secucould simultaneously instill a habit of more diffuse reci-

> The Concept of Environmental Peacemaking rocity in their relationship, as well as reduce the un-While there is a large body of scholarly reservably on their interactions. Environmental cooperathe linkages between environmental degrad**atio**na and nongovernmental level could serve to conflict, there is almost no systematic reseastchingthan trans-societal linkages and build common important corollary; namely that environmentathsound identity around mutual ecological concerns. eration may be a catalyst for broader processes of re-

gional peacemaking. It merits investigation Environmental Peacemaking in the Context of environmental cooperation can move beyo Catosia Strait Relations

avoiding ecologically induced conflict and actually dight of decades of growing economic integraate more extensive opportunities for building operated over with fluctuating political tensions, it is not surprising that security and economic issues dominate cross-strait dialogues and interaction. Aside from some nascent regional forums on environmental protection in Northeast Asia,⁵ at the governmental level Mainland China and Taiwan rarely cooperate on environmental issues. While there are some potential long-term environmental problems that will impact both (e.g., global climate change, fishery collapse, Mainland's acid rain problems impacting Taiwan), Taiwan and Mainland China are not facing any immediate pollution or natural resource conflict that could force them to negotiate an environmental agreement or undertake joint action. In short, there is not a strong catalyst for high-level cooperation on environmental issues in the Taiwan Straits.⁶

While there are no explosive ecological battles looming in the cross-strait region, the people in Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong do face common environmental problems that stem from the rapid economic development in the region. Public opinion polls in each of the three areas cite environmental degradation, particularly air pollution, as one of the major threats to health and quality of life. Urban sprawl, groundwater c63atiosic

opportunity to examine how environmental NGOs and news reporting have emerged, operated, and mobilized in each society, what type of difficulties they are facing, and what kinds of advantages they each enjoy. Mutual understanding of their counterparts across the Straits lays a good foundation for future dialogues among these civil society organizations. While only a short amount of time has elapsed since the forum, the *Green NGO and Environmental Journalist Forum* already has sparked some collaborative initiatives:

- (1) The Wild Bird Federation, Taiwan began planning to help supply the Black-necked Crane Association at Zhaotong with telescopes to help with education activities among local farmers;
- (2) The *Greenpeace-Hong Kong* office hosted a roundtable with the Taiwanese activists after the forum and explained the specifics on how to organize an online campaign against genetically modified (GM) food;
- (3) The founder of the Taiwanese group *Society of Wilderness*, Hsu Jen-Shiu joined together with *GreenRiver*, a Sichuan-based NGO, to photograph the Jin Sha River in the summer of 2001. Those pictures

Green NGO and Journalist Forum Collage

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