



Introduction to ASEMWater

On 4 and 5 October 2010, the Eighth ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) Summit (ASEM 8) was hosted by Belgium in Brussels. Chinese then Premier Wen Jiabao proposed to establish ASEM Water Resources Research and Development Center (hereinafter referred to as “ASEMWater”) in Hunan Province, China, with a view to promoting sustainable development in Asia and Europe through S&T collaboration and capacity improvement in water resources management. The initiative was welcomed by ASEM members and recorded in the “Advance on the Path of Sustainable Development” section of the Chair’s Statement as one of the important deliverables of the Summit.

Based on the principles of equality, opening-up and mutual benefits, ASEMWater is officially founded in Changsha, Hunan Province of China in 2011 in the framework of ASEM. Being a regional organization specializing in science and technology cooperation and a public non-profit international organization, the ASEMWater expects to unite related governments, universities, institutions and high-tech enterprises. On one hand, ASEMWater is to strengthen regional collaborations and facilitate the establishment of a long-term partnership among Asia-Europe water resources research institutes; to develop research and innovative network and create synergies through joint research, technical exchange, technology transfer, diffusion and demonstration, personnel exchange and training, capacity building, sharing of share best practice and data, etc., in a bid to jointly address common concerns about water use and water environment governance. On the other hand, it is to submit policy recommendations and technical consultations to ASEM as well as Asian-European states and governments on sustainable water use and integrated management, strategic planning and action plans, and etc.

Introduction to Event Series of ASEM Water Seminar

ASEM Water Seminar (hereinafter referred to as the “Seminar”) is the continuation of event series of ASEMWater to deepen the sustainable management of water resources. It is held every two years, and the first three Seminars were held in Changsha, Hunan Province of China. In 2018, ASEMWater, in joint hands with Hungarian Water Association and other partners, successfully hosted the 3rd Seminar in Budapest, Hungary, and achieved desirable effects. The Seminar has always been committed to serving the sustainable development of water resources and solving common problems of water resources for ASEM members.

The aim of the Seminar is to establish an international multi-stakeholder forum and network on sustainable water management from a European and Asian perspective, providing opportunities to discuss the challenges and best practices, exchange experiences, and seek solutions. The event is aimed to examine how the governance, the R&D activities, the education and the cooperation-partnership can contribute to addressing these declared water challenges. The Seminar fosters dialogues among the governments, private sector, academia, and the civil societies from Europe and Asia in the field of integrated and sustainable water management. By putting emphasis on the implementation of innovation for sustainability in the real-world venues of cities, industry, and agriculture, the Seminar will share perspectives and encourage collaboration among the many stakeholders who play a role in how we use water— such as municipalities, industrial users, agriculture, policy-makers, regulators, environmental and social organizations, equipment and technology suppliers, consultants, researchers and academicians, financial institutions, and underserved populations, and etc. A key goal of the Seminar will be to develop recommendations and action plans designed to support collaborative efforts among the stakeholders who play a role in the path from supporting.



ASEM Seminar on Sustainable Management of Water Resources in the Context of Urbanization in 2014, Changsha of China



2nd ASEM Water Resources S&T Cooperation Seminar in 2016, Changsha of China



3rd ASEM Seminar on Urban Water Management in 2018, Budapest of Hungary



**4th ASEM Seminar on Urban Water Management and Hunan (Chenzhou)
International Expo on the Sustainable Utilization of Water Resources and Green
Development in 2020, Chenzhou of China**



5th ASEM Seminar on Urban Water Management in 2018, Changsha of China

Brief Introduction to Changsha

Changsha City, the capital of Hunan Province, is the political, economic, cultural, transportation, science and technology, financial, and information center of the province. It holds great significance as an important city along the middle reaches of the Yangtze River. It is a pilot area for the national "Resource-saving and Environment-friendly Society" construction. It is a nationally important grain production center. It is a node city within the city cluster along the Yangtze middle reaches and the Yangtze Economic Belt. It is a hub for the Beijing-Guangzhou High-speed Railway, Shanghai-Kunming High-speed Railway, and Chongqing-Xiamen High-speed Railway.

According to the data released from the Changsha Municipal Statistics Bureau:

Total area: 11,819 square kilometers

Population: 10.4206 million (2022)

Major industrial products: Feed, refined edible vegetable oil, soy sauce, dairy products, refined tea, clothing, chemical drugs, fireworks products, furniture, cement, commercial concrete, excavators, concrete machinery, service robots, industrial robots, automobiles, lithium-ion batteries, optoelectronic devices, mobile phones, and tap water production (2022)

Major agricultural products: Grain, oil, tea, poultry eggs, aquatic products, pork, and milk (2022)

GDP: 1.396611 trillion yuan (2022)

Sum of exports: 246.288 billion yuan (2022)

Sum of imports: 85.268 billion yuan (2022)

Per capita disposable income of urban residents: 65,190 yuan (2022)

Per capita disposable income of rural residents: 40,678 yuan (2022)

Fixed-asset investment: up 5.1% over 2021 (2022)

Location

Located in northeast Hunan Province, the lower reaches of the Xiangjiang River and the western part of the Changliu Basin, Changsha lies between 111°53' to 114°15' east longitude and 27°53' to 28°41' north latitude. To the north it is bordered by Yichun and Pingxiang of Jiangxi Province; to the south, it is adjacent to Zhuzhou and Xiangtan; to the west, it is bordered by Loudi and Yiyang; and, to the north, it is connected to Yueyang. It covers an area of 11,819 square kilometers.

Landform and Climate

Changsha has a variety of landforms and well-developed surface water systems. It enjoys a moderate climate with four distinct seasons. The Xiangjiang River flows through the city.

History and Culture

Changsha was in the first group of cities designated as “national famous historical and cultural” cities. It has a history of more than 3,000 years. It was the place where

Qu Yuan, a great patriotic poet in the state of Chu during the Warring States Period (475 BC-221 BC) and Jia Yi, a renowned scholar in the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD) once lived; a well-known Chu-Han City; and, the center of Confucian learning in Hunan.

Changsha features many famous historical sites, including: the Mawangdui Han Dynasty Tomb; the Four-Goat Square Zun; the Three Kingdom Wu bamboo slips; Yuelu Academy, and Tongguan Kiln. It is the cradle of Huxiang culture which is famous for its practicality and inclusiveness.

The 1898 Reform Movement and the first Democratic Revolution which ended the Qing Dynasty originated, among other places, in Changsha. It is one of the new democracy movements' birthplaces. It is the birthplace of such historic celebrities as Huang Xing, Cai E, and Liu Shaoqi.

Changsha is known as a "Mainland City with the Best Overseas Image", an "East Asia Cultural City", and "City of Media Arts" in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. It is the cradle of renowned cultural brands such as "Hunan TV", "Hunan Publishing", and "Hunan Animation".

Changsha has 58 higher educational institutions, 97 independent research institutions, 52 academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering, 14 national engineering and technology research centers, and 15 national key engineering laboratories.

Changsha is also known for its scientific research achievements, including hybrid rice breeding technology, the Tianhe supercomputer, and the 3D sintering printer-- the first one produced in China.

Population

By the end of 2022, Changsha's total permanent resident population reached 10.4206 million, an increase of 1.8% over 2021. Based on the registered population, the birth rate was 7.84‰, the death rate 7.25‰, and a natural growth rate 0.59‰.

Administrative Divisions

Changsha governs six districts -- Furong, Tianxin, Yuelu, Kaifu, Yuhua, and Wangcheng; two county-level cities of Ningxiang and Liuyang; and one county -- Changsha County. Municipal government offices are located at No. 218, Yuelu Avenue, Yuelu District.

Economy

In 2022, Changsha's GDP rose 4.5% from 2021 to nearly 1.4 trillion yuan, and its general public budget income increased by 0.8% to more than 178.8 billion yuan, including about 120.2 billion yuan from local governments, a 1.2% increase. Government general public budget expenditure was more than 156.6 billion yuan, up 1.7%.

Brief Introduction to ZhangJiajie

Zhangjiajie City is situated in the northwest of Hunan Province, nestled within the heart of the Wuling Mountains. The city was established in May 1988 for tourism development. It now comprises two districts (Yongding District and Wulingyuan District), two counties (Cili County and Sangzhi County), 79 townships and 1,017 villages or communities. It covers an expansive territory of 9,533 square kilometers, with a household registered population of 1.685 million. Being hailed as Hunan's gateway to the world and a welcoming reception hall for visitors, Zhangjiajie takes the lead in the tourism development and serves as a captivating showcase of China's breathtaking natural beauty.

Zhangjiajie is a world-renowned tourist destination. It is often referred to as an "enlarged bonsai and a miniature fairyland" due to its impressive array of 3,000 peculiar peaks and 800 stunning bodies of water. This remarkable destination boasts an impressive collection of accolades, including World Natural Heritage status, the distinction of being one of the first World Geoparks, and the recognition as the naming site for "Zhangjiajie Landform". It also proudly holds the titles of China's first National Forest Park, one of the earliest 5A-rated tourist attractions, and a National Civilized Scenic Area in China. Zhangjiajie's allure extends beyond these accolades. It is home to more than 300 captivating sites like Wulingyuan, often described as a "Fantasy Fairyland", Tianmen Mountain, known as the "Soul of Wuling", Maoyan River, reputed as a "ten-mile gallery", the Seven Stars Mountain, the "Laputa" in China, as well as the awe-inspiring Grand Canyon and skywalk glass bridge. The city boasts 36 scenic spots rated at or above 3A in China's tourist attraction rating system, including 13 rated at 4A and two rated at the topmost 5A level (a 5A rating indicates exceptional overall tourism quality). Since its inception, Zhangjiajie has undergone a

remarkable transformation from being a hidden gem to becoming a global sensation. It has captured the hearts of travelers from 133 countries and regions, established 22 overseas Silk Road stations, forged seven international sister city partnerships, and hosted major events such as the International Travel Agents Conference, the Silk Road Business Summit, and the World Heritage Photography Exhibition. Furthermore, the city also enjoys abundant cultural resources. It is home to 818 items of intangible cultural heritage and nine performing arts theaters, including famous shows like “Charming Western Hunan” and “Tianmen Fox Fairy”. The cinematic world has also been enchanted by Zhangjiajie’s landscape as it provides settings and inspirations for movies and TV series such as *Avatar*, *Journey to the West*, and *A Land So Rich in Beauty*, which cements its reputation as an international city.

Zhangjiajie is a captivating ecological haven. With a remarkable forest coverage of 71 percent, the city holds a pivotal role as a national key ecological zone and a vital protective barrier in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River. It boasts prestigious titles, such as a national forest city, a city meeting national ambient air quality standards, a national sanitary city, a model city in eco-friendly growth and a city meeting the standards for modernized social governance. The territory is rich in flora and fauna, with 1.5 times more species than the entire Europe. Within its boundaries lie 13 world level and national level protected areas. Zhangjiajie’s Badagong Mountain Nature Reserve hosts a UNESCO observatory established under Man and the Biosphere Programme, which makes the reserve one of the 17 key biodiversity areas of global significance in China. In 2023, the city ranks second in Hunan Province in terms of air quality. All the surface water in Zhangjiajie has met or exceeded Class II standards. The water quality of the state-controlled sections ranked eighth across the nation in 2023, while the water quality of the provincial level

sections has ranked among the top in the province for many years. The headwaters of Lishui Rivers have thus earned the esteemed title of “China’s pristine waters”.

Zhangjiajie is an idyllic retreat for leisure and relaxation. Nestled along the mysterious 30° north latitude, it enjoys a mild average temperature of 17.5°C and basks in 1,338 hours of sunshine annually. Apart from a sprawling 122,000 hectares of diverse nature reserves, which accounts for 12.8% of its total area, Zhangjiajie also possesses 12 alpine terraces with an elevation of more than 600 meters, including Chongshan Mountain, Qixing (Seven-Star) Mountain, and Xiongbi (Bear Cliff) Rock. This natural wonderland treasures 14 hot springs and geothermal resources, alongside an annual average anion concentration of 10,000 anions per cubic centimeter in the Wulingyuan District, creating a pristine environment akin to a natural green oasis, a summer resort, and an oxygen bar. The city has developed three provincial tourism havens: Qixing Mountain, Suoxi Valley, and Suoshui River, offering over 800 boutique inns such as Zishan Manju Resort and No. 5 Valley Lodge, as well as three natural hot spring retreats—Wanfu Hot Spring Resort, Jiangya Hot Spring Resort, and Heart-Shaped Hot Spring Resort. Distinctive blocks like 72-Story Tujia Stilt Building Complex, Dayong Ancient Town, Xibu Street, South Gate, and Hourong Street further enrich the city’s cultural tapestry as a pilot city for cultural and tourism consumption. Zhangjiajie is also a paradise for thrill-seekers and outdoor enthusiasts. It serves as a regular host for the World Wingsuit Flying Championships. Adrenaline-pumping activities such as jets passing through the Tianmen Cave, wingsuit flying, and high-altitude tightrope walking have time and again captured global attention.

Zhangjiajie is a youthful city bursting with boundless potential. It has established a comprehensive transportation network that includes air travel, high-speed rail, and highways. Its Lotus International Airport is the first international

airport and the only national first-class airport in the Wuling Mountains, with flights connecting Zhangjiajie with 92 cities, among which 27 are international and regional destinations. Situated at the crossroads of the Guizhou-Zhangjiajie-Changde Railway and the Zhangjiajie-Jishou-Huaihua high-speed rail, the city benefits from an extensive expressway network that spans in multiple directions, which greatly reduces the travel time for both north-south and east-west routes. Besides, the city is home to one provincial high-tech zone and two provincial industrial development zones, attracting top 500 enterprises such as Ningbang Group, Shimao Group, Better Life Group, East Hope Group, China Gas, China Everbright International Ltd. and Nongfu Spring to settle in the city. The synergistic blend of the three-dimensional transportation, a massive influx of visitors, and emerging industries infuses this young city with energy and a bright outlook for the future.