**SEIZING THE URBAN OPPORTUNITY: CHINA**  
*Cities at the heart of the 14th Five-Year Plan and a national vision for net-zero emissions*

**National Priorities for Action for China**

* **China’s economic success story is built on cities**, which are home to three-fifths of its population and 90% of GDP. By 2050, four in five Chinese are expected to live in cities.
* **But China’s urban areas also face major challenges**, including pollution, traffic congestion and urban sprawl. Climate change also poses growing threats, including severe floods, water scarcity, sea-level rise and extreme heat.
* **Beijing has already taken major steps** to address pollution and strengthen enforcement. It has also embraced nature-based solutions to build resilience, from reforestation to the pioneering Sponge City Programme. And it has pledged to reach carbon neutrality by 2060.
* **This is a pivotal time for China**, with the 14th Five-Year Plan (FYP) now unveiled and an updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in the works. China has also made major investments to revitalise the economy after the COVID-19 crisis, with US$729 billion budgeted as of February 2021 for a wide range of projects, including electric vehicles and EV infrastructure, building renovations, railway infrastructure, and Green Development Fund.
* **The report highlights numerous opportunities for action in China**, which include:
  + **Putting sustainable cities at the heart of the implementation of its FYP, NDC, and investment plans** with the aim of peaking emissions in most urban areas by 2025. The FYP’s massive investments will shape China’s trajectory for years to come. This is a chance to transform cities to lead the way to a carbon-neutral future.
  + **Prioritising energy-efficient buildings, both new construction and retrofits, in future spending**. This is a prime opportunity to support the creation of large numbers of jobs in cities and slow the rise in electricity demand.
  + **Supporting small and mid-sized cities**. This is a chance to foster sustainable development, transform mobility and accessibility, and improve inter-regional equity.
  + **Incorporating decarbonisation and resilience objectives**, including nature-based solutions, in national urban design and regeneration strategies. China aims to have 80% of urban built-up areas meet Sponge City standards by 2030, thus it is crucial to keep scaling up those efforts and incorporate equally ambitious measures in urban renewal projects.
* **Successful implementation of the report’s solutions** could result in:
  + **89% fewer GHG emissions** from urban buildings, transport and waste by 2050
  + **Economic returns of $7.7 trillion** by 2050 (after investments of $5.5 trillion)
  + **15.2 million new jobs** in 2030 (mostly in energy efficiency)