

Enhancing the Ecological Environmental Protection and Promoting Inner Mongolia's Sustainable Development

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Our esteemed committee members, every expert, ladies and gentlemen:

Environment protection is an essential national policy which relates to the survival and development of our descendants, it is an important part of carrying out the “Three Representative Thoughts” and implementing the sustainable development strategy, as well as a significant mark indicating the development, progress and civilization of a country or a region. It is meaningful of the meeting to focus on the topic of “Environment, Development and Government”. Next, I'll address briefly on the circumstances and efforts of Inner Mongolia people about enhancing ecological environmental protection and construction.

I. Features and Status of Inner Mongolia's Ecological Environment

Inner Mongolia autonomous region stands in the middle Asia and is located at the southeast of the Mongolia plateau. It's the frontier area in north China, extending 2400 kilometers from the east to the west, stretching 1700 kilometers from the north to the south. Its total area is 1.183 million square kilometers. From the northeast to the southwest, this region consists of five different climate areas: temperate humid, semi-humid, semi-arid, arid and extreme arid climate respectively. Its rainfall decreases from 500 millimeters in the east to 50 millimeters in the west annually. Effected by the geography, climate and shortage of water resources, the ecological environment in the region has obvious regional diversification, fragile ecological condition and various ecological types. Daxinganling mountain area in the northeast is the largest coniferous forest in north China. It's the water source of Nenjiang River and Songhuajiang River. Moreover, it provides an ecological defense for the Songliao plain. Inner Mongolia Plateau in the north is the largest natural grassland in our country. It is the green ecological defense in north China. Alashan plateau in the west is the eastern drought desert region in northwest China. Erjina oases in Alashan League, intermittently scattered forest belts and forest vegetations in Helanshan hill land have formed natural defenses in northwest China. The special geographical location and the diversified ecological environment of Inner Mongolia are not only very important to our sustainable development strategy, but also have great effects on the ecological environment of the Capital Beijing and the north China.

Inner Mongolia is vast in territory and rich in resources. There are 680,000 square kilometers utilizable grasslands, nearly 190,000 square kilometers forests, more than 60,000 square kilometers arable land. There are lots of mineral resources under ground such as coal, rare earth, oil, natural gas, salt, alkali, ferrous metal, nonferrous

metal and noble metal etc., its potential value is about several ten thousand billion RMB. For many years, due to the action of the nature and human being's damage, the originally fragile ecological environment have degraded year after year. At the end of the eighth-five-year Plan, the land of desertification, gravelization, salinization, activated dunes and water and soil erosion are more than 17 million hectares, covering 15% or so of the total area of Inner Mongolia autonomous region. Desertification and semi-desertification lands have occupied 60% of the total areas in this region. The ecological environment has deteriorated, mineral resources have been wasted and the water resource is short very much, the precious species reduce sharply, and the sandstorm weather is getting worse year by year. It not only seriously has effect on the sustainable development of the economy in our autonomous region, but also becomes a big threat to the ecological security of the Capital Beijing and the northern areas.

II. The Situation of Ecological Environment Protection and Construction in the Autonomous Region in Recent Years

With the development and progress of economy and society, in recent years we are getting more deeply to realize the importance and urgency of protecting environment. The autonomous region's party committee and governments in different levels have deeply recognized that ecological environment protection and construction is a historical task for all the people and the most important infrastructure construction in the region, so they claimed clearly to strengthen the work and increase input constantly. With the powerful support of the State, we have advanced ecological construction with a high speed during the ninth-five-year Plan period: planting trees of 5 million mu annually, water and soil restoration of 5 million mu annually, grassland improvement of 20 million mu annually. The restored lands of desertification has been accumulated to 0.1 billion mu. The area of forest or grass returned from arable lands sums up to 16 million mu, and the man-made forest comes to 5300,000 hectares. Forest coverage rate increases from 7.7% at the beginning of liberation to 14.82%. The whole region firmly implements the principle of "Developing in the course of protection, while Protecting in the course of development" and the principle of "Prevention mainly, Protection first". We have taken some active and effective measures in the fields of ecological environmental protection and construction, enhancing the construction such as laws and regulations, policy, science and technology, supervision, propaganda and education, and information etc..

Firstly, we set up a group of natural conservation as a rescue action in the areas where are good ecological conditions, various bio-diversity and abundant natural culture relics. Natural conservation areas have grown up from 14 in 1995 to 114 by the end of 2001 with total area of 84,200 square kilometers, occupying about 7% of our national lands. We have started to set up ecological demonstration areas, having constructed 87 ecological demonstration sites with different levels and types. In significant

ecological function areas and very fragile ecological environment, we have built up special ecological function areas and made plans to identify important ecological restoration engineering projects.

Secondly, we invest more than 3 billion RMB in Daxinganling forest area and 29 banners and counties in organizing and implementing natural resources protection engineering.

Thirdly, we took measures of enclosing and transference and returning arable land into forest and grassland etc. in degradation and desertification areas. We have restored more than 9.7 million mu this year.

Fourthly, we started ecological construction projects in the areas where the ecological environments have been too deteriorated to recover by themselves. In 31 banners and counties we have begun the wind and sand treatment project around Peking and Tianjin. Those areas that have been treated are more than 11 million mu. In 29 banners and counties we have started ecological environment comprehensive treatment project. There are more than 5 million mu lands have been treated. The projects aimed at water and soil erosion treatment have been developed in the sections of Yellow River and Xiliaohe River areas in Inner Mongolia. With more than 2.1 million mu finished. We have enhanced “Three North” protection-forest engineering. More than 4.3 million mu of it have been established. As to initial statistics, by the end of 2001, nearly 80 ecological construction projects has been arranged the whole region and started 40 projects of it, with the early-stage capital about several ten billion yuan.

Fifthly, we enhance environmental protection in the development areas of mineral resource and tourism resource. Since 1996, we have cleaned up the mineral industry procedure. 3000 illegal mining enterprises have been abolished, more than 2000 mines have been banned in the Whole region. We have recovered 4051 hectares vegetation in mining mountain for. In order to enhance the protection of tourism resource ecological environment, the regional government has issued “Notice on strengthen Environmental Protection of Tourism Resources”, which raised clear requirement and necessary measures to be taken.

Through organization and implementation of the above measures, the deterioration trend has been restrained preliminarily. The sandstorm in 2002 reduces obviously, and the ecological environment is getting well to some extents.

III. Keep paces with the time and innovate. Do more efforts to realize the environmental protection object of the Tenth 5-year Plan.

While we enjoy our achievements, we should acknowledge clearly that the status of environment is still serious. Environmental protection and construction is an urgent and hard work endowed by the times for us to fulfill. We should take the historic chance to strengthen environmental protection and construction further, focusing on

building well-off society and west regions development strategy closely with encouragement of the spirit of the sixteenth CPC national congress. The initial objects of ecological environment protection are: at the end of 2005, to strengthen the supervising capabilities of ecological environment protection, to restrain deteriorating trends basically, to consolidate and spread achievements efficiently. The general guideline is: firmly set up the concepts that to protect environment is to protect and develop the advanced productive forces, to protect the advanced civilization orientation and to maintain the people's crucial benefits; to handle with the relationship appropriately between the economic development and environmental protection as well as those between human being and nature; to adhere the policy of combination of ecological environment protection and construction. We will enlarge the investment in partial areas with suitable conditions to carry on the artificial construction to recover vegetations in the large area lands by means of various protection measures such as enclosing, transferring, returning arable land to forest and grass etc. The overall arrangement recently is to mainly focus in five regions: water and soil erosion and saline-alkali areas in the upper and middle reaches of yellow River, Inner Mongolia's sand sources area around Peking and Tianjin, Daxinganling natural forest resource conservation area, Hulunbeier and Xilinguole grassland protection area, and Alashan natural enclosing area. We will take four measures: One is to put the development and utility of water resource at the first position in the ecological construction and try every mean to solve the water problem, two is to administrate grassland ecological environment protection and recovering; three is to connect ecological construction with the Western Development strategy the adjustment of agriculture and animal husbandry raising peasant and herdsman's income, poor reduction and development, ecological migration etc. so as to promote the coordinate development of ecology, economy and society; Four is for science and technology to fully play the leading role in the ecological construction and raise the content of science and technology in the ecological construction; Five is to exchange and cooperate with foreign countries actively with principles of self-dependence and hard struggle.

During tenth-five-year Plan, the ecological environment protection and construction of Inner Mongolia should focus on these projects:

One is to implement 8 main ecological construction engineering: grassland ecological construction and protection, natural forest resource protection, returning arable land to forest and grass, setting up main ecological construction county, curing and protecting desertification, "Three-North" shelter-forest project, green path and water and soil conservation engineering.

Two is to establish 10 special ecological function protection demonstration areas where ecological environments are fragile or have special ecological functions. They will occupy 20% of the whole territory in the autonomous region. We should try to restrain the deteriorating trend of the ecological environment in the special ecological

function areas.

At present, the ecological function protection demonstration areas in the lower reaches of the Hei River, Kerqin sandland ecological protection district at the north foot of Yin Mountain are listed in the experimental areas of the national ecological function protection. The total area is 295,500 square kilometers. The work in the earlier stage has been started.

Three is to establish a group of natural conservation as a rescue. There are 136 natural conservation areas have been set up totally. The coverage is 93,000 square kilometers and occupies 8% of the whole territory in the autonomous region. We have also enlarged the investment in natural protection zone. By the way of developing Inner Mongolia's life diversification protection and community construction project between China and Canada, 6 natural protection zones reaching the international level will be set up in 2005. We are trying to build up the natural protection network that has been reasonably arranged, various types, scientifically administrated and can strictly enforce the law. Therefore, various natural ecosystem and important species resources could be protected efficiently.

Four is to set up a group of high standard ecological models including 2 prefectures and cities, 15 banners and counties, 500 towns (Sumu), 1000 villages (Gacha). The whole area is about 300,000 square kilometers. They occupy 26% of the whole territory in Inner Mongolia autonomous region. We'll try to make these areas realize good ecological circulation, sustainable development of economy and society, In 2001, the provincial government approved 17 ecological models to be promoted as the provincial level ones.

Five is to make and improve: "Inner Mongolia Ecological Environment Protection Regulation", "Inner Mongolia Ecological Function Plan", "Inner Mongolia Ecological Environment Standard" and the policies and regulations concerned. To set up and perfect, the information network and supervision and management system, to improve the work conditions and means of environment protection further to develop education deeply of environment protection and to promote the sense of leaders and citizens in different levels so as to make the consistent development of economy and environment as well as the harmonious relationship between human being and nature.

Thank you!

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