

**Keynote Speech at the 1st Meeting of the 3rd Phase of China Council for
International Cooperation on Environment and Development**

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Respectable Council Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Carrying on the past heritage and opening up the future, the current meeting is an important one of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCIED). Since its establishment ten years ago, the CCIED has attained remarkable achievements in its work, and particularly since the Second Session of the CCIED, under the guidance and sponsorship of Vice Premier Wen Jiabao and with common efforts of all council members, the Council has played an important consulting role.

The 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, which just closed, concludes that sticking to the implementation of the sustainable development strategy has been a fundamental principle of economic construction in the past dozen years and will continue to be one of the aspirations in the all-round building of a well-off society in the next twenty years. The strategies for revitalizing the nation through science and education and sustainable development have been written into the Party Constitution and become administrative policies of the party in power.

On the international front, the WSSD was held in South Africa this year, and it passed the Political Declaration and the Plan of Implementation, advocating of the spirit of "Make It Happen". Premier Zhu Rongji led the Chinese delegation to the WSSD and contributed to the success of the Summit. During the preparatory period prior to the Summit, we started drafting the Outline of China's Sustainable Development Actions, which is now under final examination and approval. China was the first country to formulate its national Agenda 21 after the Rio Summit held in 1992, and in the same fashion, China is now formulating the Outline of China's Sustainable Development Actions after the WSSD, making great contribution to the global cause of sustainable development and meeting the inherent needs of its own development.

In the past years, China has attained remarkable achievements in economic and social development, the protection of environment and resources and capacity building, but China is confronted with some challenges, such as the need to reconcile rapid economic growth with enormous resource and environmental consumption, to reconcile the improvement of economic development level with relatively backward social development, and also the challenge of regional disparities.

In accordance with the reality of China, we have put forward the following sustainable development objectives for 2010:

The pattern of economic growth should be gradually transformed into a "low consumption and low pollution" pattern to alleviate the pressure on resources and environment.

Measures should be taken to limit the national population to less than 1.4 billion, restrict the annual average natural growth rate of population to less than 9‰, improve the gross enrolment ratio for junior high school under the Nine-Year Compulsory Education policy to over 95%, increase the gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education to around 20% and to maintain a non-illiteracy ratio for young adults at more than 95%.

Efforts should be made to rationally develop and efficiently utilize resources, keep improving the carrying capacity of resources and improve forest acreage to 20.3% and urban sewage treatment ratio to more than 60%.

To realize China's sustainable development objectives, efforts should be made on all the fronts while with focus on the priorities. Actions should be taken in the following six priority areas:

To build a national economic system in harmony with resources and environment. On the basis of industrial restructuring and the adjustment of regional and urban-rural structures, we should participate in global economic integration actively, put forward the strategic restructuring of the national economy in an all-round manner and preliminarily accomplish an environmentally-friendly, resource-saving sustainable national economy.

Social development. We should build a comprehensive population management framework and prenatal and postnatal care system, maintain a low birth rate, control the total population and improve population quality. Efforts should be made to build social security frameworks such as health care, employment and social insurance in accordance with the level of economic development, improve the quality of public services substantially, establish disaster monitoring and forecasting and emergency response mechanisms, and improve the capacity of disaster prevention and reduction in an all-round way.

To optimize resource mix and promote rational utilization and protection. Efforts should be made to rationally utilize, save and protect resources and improve the level of resource utilization; to put in place strict administrative frameworks for water and land resources and implement strict policies; to improve energy mix and energy efficiency, and strengthen the protection, management, supervision and law enforcement over resources such as forestry, pasture and minerals.

Ecological protection and improvement. Efforts should be made to build a scientific and comprehensive ecological monitoring and administrative system and improve the quality and efficiency of managing natural reserves; to set up ecological reserves and desertification prevention systems and strengthen the harnessing of soil erosion in key areas; to promote ecological agriculture and improve the agricultural eco-system; to strengthen the construction of urban greenbelt and improve ecological quality gradually.

Environmental protection and pollution prevention and control. Efforts should be made to prevent and control water pollution, implement projects of air pollution prevention and control in key cities, strengthen the work of environmental improvement in key sea areas and greatly promote clean production and the development of the environmental protection industry.

Capacity building. Efforts should be made to establish a sound legal framework concerning population, resource and environmental protection, intensify law enforcement, take full advantage of various means of publicity and media to strengthen the entire people's awareness of sustainable development in an all-round fashion, set up systems of sustainable development indices,

monitoring and assessment, and establish information sharing systems for governmental decision makers, the public and researchers.

To reach the above objectives and accomplish tasks, we must adopt effective measures, including:
Administrative measures. We should set up systems of indices that can facilitate the assessment of regions and enterprises for their sustainable development level, and accelerate the tryout of incorporating resource and environmental costs into national economic accounting and the trial system of assessing key projects and major decisions for their impact on sustainable development. Governments at all levels should incorporate the work of sustainable development into their strategies and plans and enforce sustainable development throughout the implementation of plans.

Economic leverages. Governments at various levels should increase investment in sustainable development, direct private and foreign investment to areas of sustainable development, improve financial commitment and the management of funds, and in the meantime take full advantage of the role of pricing in resource saving and environmental protection.

Scientific and educational means. Efforts should be made to disseminate and promote the use of advanced practical technologies that are environmentally friendly, develop education at all levels actively, strengthen the development of human resources and improve the scientific and cultural qualities of the public for their participation in sustainable development.

Legal measures. Efforts should be made to continue strengthening legislation on sustainable development, build institutional capacity and set up standards in connection with the legislation and greatly improve public monitoring and the rule of law.

Demonstration zones. Demonstration zones of sustainable development should be established to showcase various models of sustainable development and spread these models to other parts of the country.

International cooperation. China is a major developing country, and its sustainable development will certainly promote the global sustainable development. We welcome continued attention and support to China from the international community. China will seriously implement all the international conventions and agreements on environment it has participated, actively promote bilateral and multilateral cooperation, including various partnership initiatives, and ensure the successful implementation of its sustainable development strategies.

The theme of the current meeting is sustainable development and governance. The meeting is significant in that it will open up our thoughts and promote the guiding role of the government in implementing the sustainable development strategy.

As we all know, longstanding negotiations occurred over the issue of sustainable development governance during the preparatory process leading to the WSSD, and the controversy concentrated on good governance. On the one side, some developed countries desired to emphasize the role of good governance in sustainable development; on the other side, developing countries, i.e., Group 77, stuck to the Rio principles, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and stressed that priority should be given to tackling the international level of good

governance and establishing a just and reasonable international order of politics and economy. The WSSD concluded with a compromised result which embodies the interests and concerns of all stakeholders.

The Chinese Government has held on to a clear stance on this issue. International cooperation should be conducted under the precondition that the independence and sovereignty of countries involved should be respected, taking into consideration the differences among countries in national conditions, level of economic development and social and historical differences and preventing the intervention of internal affairs of other countries in the name of environmental protection. Under this precondition, we can discuss the governance of sustainable development frankly and sincerely so as to enhance and improve the work of sustainable development at all levels of our government.

In the course of time China has formed an effective framework of governance, which has played a positive role in promoting sustainable development. We have formulated a comprehensive sustainable development strategy in a relatively short period of time, promoted it to the high latitude of a national strategy and integrated it into the national plan of economic and social development. And in this connection the Chinese Government has increased investment, effectively implemented key projects like the project of converting cultivated land back into forestry and projects of harnessing river valley pollution.

However, there is much room for improvement in our administrative system. For instance, on the one hand, China's capacity of monitoring the environment is rather weak; on the other hand, repeated construction of monitoring facilities often occur and barriers to information flow still exist, which illustrates that much coordinating work remains to be done among various sectors and administrative regions.

Governments around the world are confronted with similar challenges to public administration, and either successful experiences or lessons of failure are valuable reference. It is my sincere hope that all council members and experts can fully present their views and make recommendations on improving our work of sustainable development, boosting China's cause of sustainable development.

Thank you all.

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