



The Luck of China

Special Speech at CCICED 20th Anniversary Forum

Song Jian, Former State Councilor of China and Chairperson of CCICED Phase I

I am very happy to attend CCICED 20 Anniversary Forum today. Twenty years ago when CCICED was established, I had the honor of establishing CCICED with my colleagues and friends. Today, I feel delighted when I see the colleagues who had worked with us in that year. Twenty years have passed. How time flies! CCICED has now become a model for international cooperation with an important role in China's environment and development. We feel gratified for it.

The establishment and development of CCICED goes along with the historical progress of the environment and development of China. We celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 1911 Revolution this year. In modern times, the Chinese people suffered from poverty and lagging behind over the past 100 odd years due to invasion, civil war, and natural and man-made calamities: we used to be called "the sick man of East Asia". A new development era has commenced since 1949 when the People's Republic of China was established and in particular since the early 1980s. Aimed at economic growth and sustainable development, China has taken measures such as the development of productivity, elimination of poverty and plagues, population control, protection of the environment, fighting against pollution and the acts damaging environment and has achieved national rejuvenation and social progress under the special national conditions of a huge population and lack of resources. As a result, the Chinese people can live in a Xiaokang society with decent life.

30 years ago, the Chinese Government clearly knew that we had neither experience nor sufficient knowledge in terms of sustainable development. We needed the guidance from relevant departments of the United Nations and the kind help of foreign countries and prominent and worthy personage. CCICED was established just under this background. The cause of China has obtained the sympathy and support of UN and foreign friends. The government of foreign countries, in particular the Canadian Government, generously

provides great financial support, contributing to the 20-year success of CCICED.

The historic role of CCICED and valuable policy recommendations of experts and friends have played an important role in shifting the development path of China. This is the luck of China. All these have been recorded in history, and reflected in current laws and regulations or in the National Archives. The Chinese people and future generations will remember and appreciate the deep friendships of relevant foreign governments and international friends.

In its early stage, CCICED recommended that China closely combine environmental protection with economic and social development policy, and also establish a resource pricing evaluation system including environmental resources to change the exceedingly low price of natural resources and minimize the waste of resources during production and consumption. This recommendation became an important factor for China to identify its price for resource products and plays an important role in raising resource efficiency. Second, China has learned a wide range of advanced ideas and successful experiences of foreign countries, which have been reflected in almost all CCICED projects.

As an international cooperation mechanism, CCICED has greatly promoted the environment and development of China. In the beginning of 1990s, China surged ahead in the fight against environmental pollution. CCICED set up task forces on topics such as energy strategy and technology, pollution control, monitoring and information collection, development of science & technology as well as training, resource valuation, environmental economic and pricing policy and conservation of biodiversity in time. Experts and scholars with profound knowledge and rich experience served as chairs of CCICED task forces. They have designed national policies with the big picture of systematic science that goes beyond the limit of pure remedy measures for environmental protection. As a result, China has mainstreamed environmental protection into a development process at a relatively early stage, which greatly strengthened the voice of environmental protection in the national development process and shortened the required period for China to explore the coordinated development path for the environment and development.

In the 20th century, China has controlled population growth, eradicated hunger and overcome plagues with an evidently higher living standard. In the 21st century, aiming to reach the living standard of intermediately developed countries, China has a hard task with a lot of difficulties. Now, China clearly states that it will take scientific development as the theme and transformation of economic development mode as the main line to guide and facilitate its future development. Correct handling of the relations between the environment and development is an important component of this theme and main line. The Outline of the



“12th Five-Year Plan” for National Economic and Social Development” clearly states that China will focus on the development of a resource-saving and environment-friendly society and the transformation of economic development mode. Under this new situation, people hope that CCICED will play a stronger and more important role. That is, it will put forward policy recommendations on effective approaches to the development of resource-saving and environment-friendly society in China. In my view, China is still faced with a dilemma; all 1.34 billion people want a good life with access to electricity, air-conditioning, enough food and clothes as well as convenient transportation. The overall demands will be huge. It is expected that CO₂ emissions will exceed that of the United States with a lot pressure on water resources, grain and energy. How do we solve the problem? How can man live in harmony with nature? Some suggest that in the 21st century China should limit its population down to 1 billion, restrict consumption, or stop burning coals and so on. We look forward to new ideas and policy recommendations from CCICED, taking China as its case. Once it is successful, the experience of China will be extended to other countries in the world, which will serve as a reference for the promotion of sustainable development of the world.

China expects that its population will stop growth at 1.5 billion. The resources and space of China are sufficient to support 1.5 billion people. It is expected that an industrialized and modern China will stand out in the east in the next 50 years.

China is always with you.

Taking this opportunity, I once again express my sincere thanks to all Chinese and international colleagues and friends who have made contributions to CCICED!