

中华人民共和国代表团

Delegation of the People's Republic of China

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(Translation)

Statement by H.E. Mr. Chen Yaobang,
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State Planning Commission of China,
At the High Level Segment of
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the UNFCCC

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the Chinese Delegation, let me congratulate you on your election as the President. I believe that guided by your rich experience, this conference will be a success.

Five years ago, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted, thus providing a good foundation and an effective framework for mankind to address climate change. The Convention acknowledges that the Earth's climate change and its adverse effects are a common concern of humankind. The Convention notes that human activities have substantially increased the atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases. The Convention further notes that the largest share of historical and current global emissions of GHGS has originated in developed countries, and that per capita emissions in developing countries are still relatively low. The Convention has set forth the ultimate objective in addressing climate change. In accordance with the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" and the principle of equity, the Convention has set forth different commitments for developed countries and developing countries in combating climate change. Moreover, the Convention has established a complete set of mechanism for addressing climate change.

Over the past five years, though the implementation of the Convention has been on track, its progress has fallen short of expectations. According to the Convention provisions, the developed countries should stabilise their anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases at their 1990 levels by the end of this century, but according to the national communications from the developed countries, most of them will not be able to fulfil this commitment. Although the Convention stipulates that the developed countries shall provide financial resources and technology needed by the developing countries to implement the Convention, there is no progress in technology transfer. The "replenishment" for the Convention's interim financial mechanism has met with difficulties and so has the "availability", to quite a few developing countries, of the financial resources for funding the preparation of their national communications. The pilot phase of "Activities Implemented Jointly" (A.I.J) as initiated by the Decision of the Conference of Parties at its first session in 1995 have been reported very limited number of projects to date. All this shows that the implementation of the Convention is faced with great challenges.

The Conference of the Parties at its first session in 1995 reviewed the developed countries' commitments in Article 4 Paragraph 2(a) and (b) of the Convention, and concluded that "these subparagraphs are not adequate" and needed strengthening. Accordingly, the Conference of the Parties adopted its Decision 1/CP.1, namely the "Berlin Mandate", focussing on strengthening the developed country Parties' quantified limitation and reduction objectives (QELROs) for their anthropogenic GHG emissions beyond the year 2000. To this end, the Berlin Mandate decides to begin a "process" and sets forth clearly that the process will "not introduce any new commitments" for the developing country Parties.

Over the recent two years, in order to implement the Berlin Mandate, representatives of various countries have been engaged in serious and painstaking

negotiations. However, the progress and the performance of the developed countries are highly disappointing. According to the Convention and the Berlin Mandate, the developed countries should take the lead in combating climate change, but they have failed to do so in setting the QELROs as demanded by the Berlin Mandate. (Given that a major cause of today's global climate change is the anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases, this is mainly attributable to the emissions of the developed countries ever since the industrial revolution. Even currently, with only 22% of the world population, the developed countries consume over 70% of the world energy and account for more than 60% of the world CO2 anthropogenic emissions. Therefore, the primary responsibility in addressing climate change lies with the developed countries.) Besides, the Berlin Mandate demands that policies and measures should be set for the developed countries to achieve the QELROs. However, some developed countries attempt to introduce issues like "emissions trading" or the so-called "joint implementation" in the context of QELROs. Such attempts, which pay no heed to the environment for survival of other countries and which are aimed at shifting responsibility overseas, cannot be accepted. According to the Berlin Mandate, the main task of the present session of the Conference of the Parties is to adopt "a protocol or another legal instrument" on the basis of the results of the negotiations of the AGBM. But some developed countries have introduced quite a few issues outside the scope of the Berlin Mandate, in an attempt to impose new commitments upon developing countries. While supporting the adoption of a protocol or another legal instrument that is in conformity with the Convention and the Berlin Mandate, the Chinese Delegation is opposed to the introduction of any new commitments for the developing countries and is opposed to the launching of any negotiation process that attempts to introduce new commitments for developing countries.

Mr. President,

Like other developing countries, China is one of the victims of the adverse consequences of climate change. The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the issue of global climate change, and China is among the 10th earliest countries that have ratified the Convention--UNFCCC. Following the UNCED held in Rio de Janeiro, the Chinese Government formulated "China's Agenda 21"--- a sustainable development strategy which is suited to China's country-specific conditions. Besides, the State Council (i.e. the Central Government) of China has set up a Co-ordinating Group on Climate Change, involving all relevant ministries and departments, and has taken climate change into consideration in programming socio-economic development. With only 7% of the world arable land, China is feeding nearly 22% of the world population and has effectively solved the food problem for the nation's 1.2 billion people. In the past 20 years, China has persevered in large-scale afforestation and scored world-acknowledged achievements in this respect. In light of her national conditions, China has implemented her policies of controlling population growth in the past 20 years and more; without these efforts her population would have grown by an additional 300 million in the same period of time. All this shows that China has made her share of contribution to modifying longer-term trends of climate change.

As a developing country with 1.2 billion population, while being willing to make greater contribution to addressing climate change, China is also faced with enormous actual difficulties in this regard. The per capita consumption of electricity by the

Chinese people per year is only 700 kilowatt-hours. Although the past decade has seen continuous growth in the nation's GDP, her per capita GDP grew to only US\$ 364 in 1996, according to the U.N. "1997 World Economic and Social Survey". The per capita greenhouse gases emission of China accounts for only one-seventh that of the average level of the developed countries. Nearly 60 million Chinese are still living below the poverty line, and people in quite a number of rural, remote and border areas have no electricity or insufficient electricity. Therefore, poverty eradication and developing economy are still the overriding priorities of China.

"All men are created equal", whether in rich or poor countries. The right to subsistence and the right to development are fundamental human rights of each and every human being. Just like the people in rich developed countries, the people in the poor developing countries, too, have the basic rights to survival and to pursue a better life. The Chinese Government has the obligation to meet the demands of basic energy and living necessities for the nation's 1.2 billion people. It is not possible for the Chinese Government to undertake the obligation of reduction of greenhouse gases emissions until the country develops to the level of a medium developed country. After having attained the level of a medium developed country, China will conscientiously study the issue of undertaking the obligation relating to reduction of greenhouse gases emissions. Pending that, the Chinese Government will, in line with its own sustainable development strategy, seek to abate the increase rate in greenhouse gases emissions. In this context, China is making efforts in the following four aspects: First, persisting in policies to control the population growth rate and to realise zero population growth after the year 2040. Second, implementing vigorously the "Energy Conservation Law" to encourage and popularise energy saving technologies and to raise the energy efficiency. Third, intensifying the nation's efforts to develop renewable energies and taking measures to increase the use of hydro, wind, solar and other renewable sources of energy and nuclear power, so as to gradually bring down the proportion of fossil fuels in the energy structure. Fourth, continuing to enhance the sinks of CO₂ through persistent efforts in afforestation, addressing desertification and development of eco-agriculture.

Mr. President,

The issue of climate change concerns the present and future generations of humankind. In order to promote sustainable development of all countries, in particular of developing countries, China, as always, stands ready to take an active part in international cooperation and exchanges and to make her due share of contribution in addressing climate change within the framework of the Convention.

Thank you, Mr. President.