

Statement by Counselor Bai Yongjie at the intergovernmental preparatory meeting of CSD 17 on Agriculture  
Feb. 24, 2009 New York

Madam Chairman,

The Chinese delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

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Food is the first necessity for the survival of man. Agricultural development bears directly on their economic lifeline and their peoples' livelihood. Agriculture has a crucial role to play in meeting the basic needs of the poor and in realizing the goal of halving the population living in poverty and hunger by 2015. The food crisis that broke out last year has revealed many flaws in the policies for agricultural development hitherto in force. For agriculture to enjoy healthy development, it is necessary to engage in deep reflection on the current policies and make major adjustments. In our view, while it is necessary to take action in many aspects, the following are the most important:

First, it is necessary to strengthen our common understanding and further recognize the fundamental importance of agriculture. Countries should regard agriculture from a strategic perspective and place the revitalization of agriculture and maintaining food security at the primary position of their national development strategies. They should formulate agricultural and rural development plans that correspond to their specific conditions, increase capital input, develop and promote agricultural technologies, give incentives to farmers to engage in agricultural production. Great efforts should be invested in increasing food production, guaranteeing the supply of agricultural products and improving in a comprehensive manner the integrated capacity for food production and the capacity for supply guarantee.

Secondly, it is necessary to address the problem by going to its root and promote the agricultural and rural development from all aspects. It is necessary to strengthen the agricultural infrastructure construction and the construction of rural infrastructures such as water, road, power grid, communication and culture. Efforts should also be made to develop rural

public transportation and improve the environment of human settlement in rural areas. In addition, governments should take measures to expand the income generating avenue for farmers and strengthen vocational education and skills training in rural areas so as to enhance the ability of farmers to seek alternative employment and develop “labor economy”. Governments should also intensify efforts in poverty eradication and reduce the number of people living in poverty.

Thirdly, it is necessary to strengthen dialogue and coordination so as to foster an international environment favorable to agricultural development. The developed countries should show greater good faith in the Doha talks on agriculture, fully consider the special concerns of the developing countries, dismantle trade barriers and reduce agricultural subsidies. The international community should set up rational mechanisms for financial support and technological transfer to help the developing countries increase food production. The relevant international organizations should reaffirm the fundamental importance of agriculture, increase input in agriculture and expand support for agricultural projects.

Currently, food crisis is still threatening the survival of more than 800 million people around the world, a situation made all the more alarming by the continued expansion of the financial and economic crises. We are of the view that efforts should be made to respond to both the financial and the food crises in order to avoid greater damage and ensure food security. Thank you, Madam Chairman.