

(Translation)

**Persevering in Sustainable Development with Chinese
Characteristics through Innovative Thinking and Practical Action**

Remarks by H.E. Wen Jiabao
Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China
At the High-level Roundtable
Of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development

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Mr. Co-chairs,
Dear Friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to exchange views with you at today's roundtable on the theme "looking at the way forward in implementing the expected outcomes of the Conference". Both history and reality show that the path to global sustainable development may be tortuous, but the future remains bright. We must have full confidence in that. To translate the expected outcomes of the Conference into reality requires actions by all countries. China is committed to sustainable development along with the international community.

China is a staunch supporter of the concept of sustainable development. Since the 1970s, China has participated in all the conferences from Stockholm to Rio de Janeiro that were crucial to the formulation and development of the concept of sustainable development and made its own positive contributions. Since the beginning of the 21st century, China has, in light of useful practices at home and abroad, pursued the concept of scientific development featuring a people-oriented approach and comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development. We have endeavored to build a resource-saving and environment-friendly society, cultivate a conservation culture and blaze a new trail of industrialization. These advanced concepts and ideas have distinctive Chinese features, and have also drawn upon useful international experience.

China is an active practitioner of the strategy of sustainable development. In dealing with the need for economic development, social

progress and environmental protection, we take special care to harmonize their relationship. With respect to economic development, China's GDP maintained an average annual growth rate of 9.9% in the past 34 years, resulting in over 200 million people being lifted out of poverty and China becoming the first country in the world to reach the MDG target of halving the proportion of the poor. China, by practising the world's strictest farmland and water protection systems, has been able to feed one fifth of global population with less than 10% of global farmland and 28% of global average level of water resources in per capita terms. With respect to social development, China has introduced universal compulsory education for free, deepened the reform of old-age insurance system, and made basic old-age pension and medical services available to both urban and rural residents. With respect to environmental protection, China has stepped up energy conservation and carbon emission reduction in an all-round way. In the past six years, China's energy consumption per unit of GDP was cut down by 21%, equivalent to 1.6 billion tons of CO₂, and the total discharge of main pollutants dropped by around 15%. The reforested areas have increased by 620,000 square kilometers, which was the largest in the world. With concrete actions, we have lived up to our solemn commitments to our own people and the international community at large.

China is an energetic promoter for international cooperation in sustainable development. Actively engaging in South-South cooperation, China has contributed to the sustainable development of the world to the best of its ability. By the end of 2011, we had cancelled about 30 billion RMB yuan of debts owed by 50 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), accorded zero-tariff treatment to over 60% of the products of 38 LDCs, and provided over 100 billion RMB yuan in concessional loans to other developing countries. Actively promoting North-South cooperation, China has developed institutionalized cooperation mechanisms with developed countries in such areas as environmental protection, climate change, energy and resources. We have vigorously involved in the activities of international organizations, earnestly implemented international conventions, and fulfilled the responsibilities and obligations commensurate with our capabilities.

Looking ahead, China faces an uphill journey in promoting sustainable development. As a developing country, China may boast a fairly large economy, but its per capita income ranks only around the 90th place in the world. Calculated according to the new standard, China still has more than 100 million people living below the poverty line. What is

more, pressure from resources and the environment continues to mount, and problems of unbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable development remain challenging.

In implementing our 12th Five-Year Plan in an all-round way, we will mobilize the entire society, adopt a holistic approach to shift our growth model quickly, adjust and optimize our economic structure, keep aggregate energy consumption at a reasonable level and energetically build a mode of production, way of life and consumption pattern conducive to resource conservation and environmental protection. In particular, we will strive to meet the obligatory targets set for the year 2015, namely, to lower CO₂ emissions and energy consumption per unit of GDP by 17% and 16% respectively, raise the proportion of non-fossil fuels to 11.4% and cut total discharge of main pollutants by 8% to 10% all from the 2010 levels. These efforts are aimed at improving the quality of development and realizing green prosperity.

We will take a more active part in pushing forward international cooperation, participate in global governance for sustainable development, gradually increase assistance to other developing countries, and work with the international community to build a better world for the future generations.

Thank you.