

Statement at CSD16 High-level Segment

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Head of the Chinese Delegation

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Respectable Mr. Chairman and delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of the Chinese Delegation, please allow me to express our heartfelt appreciation for the solicitude, condolence and support from General Secretary Pan ki-moon, Mr Chairman, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand and distinguished ministers and delegates to China's earthquake suffering. I'm convinced that under the assistance of the international community, the Chinese government and people will surely defeat this sudden disaster.

The thematic issues of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa which were identified as the subjects of this CSD16 meeting are closely related to the fundamental interests of various countries. With positive and pragmatic attitudes, the participants reviewed relevant issues comprehensively, which will be conducive to identify the next-step orientation. The Chinese delegation sincerely

appreciates arrangements made by the Presidium and the Secretariat and supports the statement delivered by the Delegation of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of "Group 77 and China".

Mr. Chairman,

The Chinese government has always been paying great attention to food production. Bearing in mind the guideline of “relying on domestic market and basically realizing self-sufficiency”, China keeps increasing allocations to ensure the steady growth of the overall food production capacity. China’s grain production has been on the rise for 4 consecutive years since 2004. The grain inventories are abundant, market prices remain stable and food self-sufficiency rate stands over 95%. China, with 9 percent of the world’s arable land, feeds 21 percent of the world's population, thus making important contribution to the global food security.

The Chinese government regards the solution of “agriculture, rural area and farmers” issues as priority among priorities for its national economic development. In recent years, such initiatives as nurturing agriculture and rural region through industry and urban contributions, building of new socialist countryside and agriculture modernization with Chinese

characteristics have been put forward and implemented one after another. The priority of fixed-asset investment and public services was shifted to rural region and the pro-agricultural policy framework was improved. The agricultural structure was optimized, the quality of agriculture produce enhanced steadily and the production and living conditions such as access to road, power and drinkable water in rural region were improved significantly. In 2007, the per capita net income of rural residents reached 4,140 RMB, up by more than 6 percent for four consecutive years. The absolutely poor population in rural region decreased from 32.09 million in 2000 to 14.79 million in 2007, down by 53.9 percent.

The Chinese government pays great attention to ecological restoration and environmental protection. A series of major ecological projects have been implemented including conversion of cultivated land into forestry, restoration of grazing land to grassland, protection of natural forestry and harnessing sandstorm sources. The trend of desertification was basically curbed with the desertification area decreasing from the average annual expansion of nearly 10,000 square kilometers by the end of the last century to the annual shrinkage of 7,585 square kilometers in recent years.

Mr. Chairman,

Countries should make joint efforts to implement the tasks specified by "Johannesburg Plan of Implementation" regarding agricultural and rural development, drought and desertification. Here I would like to emphasize the following three points:

First, agriculture should be earnestly promoted. All countries should pay attention to agriculture development despite different national conditions and development stages. Countries should select their path of agriculture and rural development suitable to their national circumstances, strengthen infrastructure construction, advance agricultural technology, and enhance the sustainable development capacity of agriculture and increase farmer's income. The food security should be put at very important position and the conversion of food to bio-fuel energy should be rationally controlled.

Second, international cooperation and international aid should be strengthened. The agriculture development and poverty alleviation in developing countries could not sustain without the support and assistance of the international community. Developed countries, should earnestly fulfill their responsibilities and commitments by providing practical and effective assistance to developing countries in terms of capital, technology transfer and capacity building and etc.,. In particular, food aid

should be granted to those African countries suffered most from the food price hike at the time being.

Third, the fair and reasonable multilateral trading system should be established. The food price hike is directly related to the distortion of international trading system. Developed countries should take measures to reduce trade distortion on agricultural produce, improve trading terms with developing countries so that those developing ones could fully play their the comparative advantages and boost their growth through trade. The international community should make joint efforts to maintain the normal food trading order in the world.

Fourth, the challenge of desertification should be resolved collectively. Desertification not only erodes the basic conditions for agricultural development, but also deteriorates the living environment. The role of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) should be strengthened to further international communication and cooperation. The Contracting Parties should earnestly fulfill their responsibilities and obligations so as to enhance their capacity of coping with drought, controlling desertification and adapting to climate change.

Mr. Chairman,

China will always adhere to scientific and harmonious development, the coordination among the economic growth, population, resources and environment, and fundamentally transform its economic growth mode, striving to build a resource-conserving and environment-friendly society. We are willing to exchange and cooperate with various parties to jointly achieve global sustainable development targets.

Thank you!