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**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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PRESS RELEASE

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(Translation)

**Statement by H. E. Ambassador Zhang Yishan, Deputy Permanent
Representative of China to the United Nations, at the Intergovernmental
Preparatory Meeting for the CSD13 on Human Settlements**

(3 March 2005, New York,)

Mr. Chairman,

The International community has made long-term efforts to achieve the goals in the area of human settlements. The Special Session of the General Assembly on Human settlements and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) both reaffirmed the goals and consensus of "adequate shelter for all" and "sustainable human settlements". The reality, however, is a cause of serious concern to us all, with over 924 million people still living in slums across the world, accounting for 32% of the total urban population in the world. If no resolute actions will be taken, it is estimated that the total number of slum dwellers would rise to 2 billion over the next 30 years, almost all of whom would be in the developing countries.

The major obstacle to the achievement of the goals of human settlements lies in the lack of financial resources and capacity in the developing countries. Economic development and poverty eradication, therefore, should provide a fundamental solution to the problem. To achieve the goals in this area, countries should adopt appropriate policies, strategies and plans suitable to their respective national conditions, and Governments should play a lead role while encouraging active participation from all relevant stakeholders. Meanwhile, efforts should be made to strengthen international cooperation and exchanges, help the developing countries mobilize financial resources and enhance capacity building at all levels from the central government down to local institutions.

Mr. Chairman,

The Chinese Government has accorded top priority to housing development and the improvement of the environment of human settlements in its national economic development endeavor and adopted robust measures to achieve the goals in the field of human settlements. China started by tackling the problem at its source, adheres to the principle of addressing both the root cause and the symptoms of the

problem and pays great attention to maximizing the role of its human settlements partners. As a result, our urban and rural development as well as human settlements environment have undergone fundamental changes. The per capita housing footage in China has registered a significant increase. At present, China's per capita housing footage in cities and towns is 23.7 square meters, and in rural areas is 27.2 square meters. In the mean time, the integrated functions of residential dwellings in China have also improved considerably. China has by and large established a residential housing market system that is in keeping with China's specific situation. Chinese people's house purchasing power has risen by a large margin. In our energetic pursuit of an urbanization strategy specially tailored to the Chinese characteristics, we have stepped up urban and rural planning and upgraded urban development. Effective *efforts* have been made to transform and regenerate the old quarters in cities and towns. Through increased investment, we have succeeded in turning infrastructure construction into a new frontier of economic development, made great strides in the development of urban infrastructure and multiplied the cities' functions for delivering integrated services. By attaching great importance to urban sewage management and environment protection and promoting urban greening development, we have visibly improved the quality of our residential and overall urban environment. The Chinese Government is vigorously promoting efforts to continuously intensify the restructuring of the urban development and environmental management system and has, through governance by law, further improved and perfected a whole array of legislation and regulations governing the development and management of residential areas. We have set up working mechanisms for urban disaster prevention and reduction and formulated effective guidelines which combine disaster preparedness with the building of an ecologically-sound environment.

Mr. Chairman,

As a developing country, China still faces many outstanding difficulties in the area of human settlements. We will seriously address these problems and challenges by actively drawing upon the relevant experience and lessons of other countries. We will also further strengthen our cooperation with other parties in the fields of mobilizing financial resources, bringing in foreign technologies and strengthening capacity building.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.