

## Foreword

Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, the Chinese government has effectively implemented the sustainable development strategy. The concept of sustainable development and what it entails have been incorporated into the state's developmental policies and action plans. While maintaining permanent and rapid economic growth, social progress and rising living standards, China has successfully curbed the momentum of excessive population growth, reinforced the preservation and management of natural resources, stepped up ecological management, and achieved remarkable progress in sustainable development.

China's practice over the years demonstrates that for a country like China, with such a huge population, limited per capita resources, a fragile ecological environment and an underdeveloped economy, there is no other choice but to firmly adhere to the path of sustainable development. To that end, the Chinese government has put forward a new vision of development centering around human development and coordinated sustainable socioeconomic development. This new vision calls for the coordinated development between urban and rural areas, between different parts of the country, between economy and society, between man and nature, and between domestic development and foreign trade and investment. The objective is to build up the nation's capacity for sustainable development, strengthen its national power, improve people's living standards and environmental quality, thereby laying a solid foundation for the realization of China's modernization by the middle of the 21st century.

The fields of water, sanitation and human settlement are closely related to people's livelihood, socioeconomic development and ecological improvements. Sound development of those fields is essential for the coordinated development of China's population, resources and environment, for the nation's economic security, ecological security and social stability. The Chinese government has put the development of those three sectors high on its agenda for national socioeconomic development; indeed, governments at all levels are implementing it in earnest.

To carry out the Plan of Implementation of World Summit on Sustainable Development, UN Commission on Sustainable Development will evaluate and discuss the progresses and policies in water, sanitation and human settlements. In order to give a full picture of what China has done on water, sanitation and human settlements, Office of National Leading Group for Promoting Sustainable Development Strategy organized the related ministries to write this report. The drafting job was spearheaded by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), completed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Water Resources, the Ministry of Construction, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Land and Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture, the State Environmental Protection Administration, the State Forestry Administration, and the State Tourism Administration. The All-China Women's Federation and the All-China Youth Federation also provided their material resources.

This report provides the most updated information concerning progress in water, sanitation and human settlements during the implementation of sustainable development strategy, identifies the obstacles and challenges in those areas, and proposes the strategies and recommendations for those fields.