

Statement of the Chinese Delegation on the UN Systematic Framework
for Environmental Activities
(January 23, 2007)

Mr. Chairman,

In our efforts to carry out system reform of the UN environmental activities and improve international environmental management, we must always base ourselves on the integrated framework of sustainable development and take into consideration of the overall context of the UN reform in economic and social fields. Environment is inseparable from sustainable development and the parties concerned should, on the basis of the common understanding reached at the 1992 UNCED and the 2002 WSSD, explore in a balanced and comprehensive manner specific ways and means to strengthen the activities of the UN in the environmental field so as to ensure the coordinated development of the three pillars of economic growth, social development and environmental protection. In this connection, CSD should fully play its role in providing policy guidance and coordination.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the years, UNEP and the relevant funds and programs have provided considerable help to countries in various aspects such as offering advice on environmental policy, introducing concepts, technologies and standards of environmental management, personnel training, publicity and education in environmental protection and building up implementing capacity. However, each agency seems to operate in a self-contained way. For some short-term projects and activities in particular, a lack of coordination among them keeps them from creating synergy and is likely to cause duplication of work and a failure to fully utilize the limited resources.

As far as developing countries is concerned, now they are faced with the ever more acute problem of limited coping capacity versus relentlessly increasing environmental pressure. In dealing with this problem, they need the international community's strong support. The international environmental system should above all focus on solving the urgent problems facing the developing countries, establish priority areas on the basis of the division of labor among various agencies and internationally agreed common understandings, and enhance coordination. The ownership and participation of recipient countries are important conditions for effective

environmental protection cooperation. Agencies concerned should formulate and adjust their assistance programs in accordance with the specific situations of various countries with a view to supporting the implementation of their national strategies for sustainable development. The issue of environment is an over-arching global issue; therefore, UN agencies in the field of environment should cooperate closely with international financial institutions like the World Bank and other regional development banks in order to promote the harmonization between environment and development, as well as the sustainability of development.

Mr. Chairman,

Although the EMG has held a number of meetings since its establishment, it is our view that it has not been able to play its due role. It should take further measures to effectively carry out inter-agency coordination. To this end, it is necessary to enhance the monitoring of and guidance to the group by national governments. The EMG should provide regular briefings to the member states of its member agencies, briefings that will include measures taken, progress achieved and problems to be solved. The question of inter-agency coordination can be put on the agenda of the agency concerned so that member states can better guide the work of the EMG and prompt it to give feed-backs to various views and gradually improve its work.

As for making UNEP the pillar for environment, we believe that UNEP represents an effective platform for the international community to engage in comprehensive discussions on questions related to environment. It has contributed to national and international environmental protection, especially through providing policy suggestions and technical advice. As the principal special agency of the UN system in the field of environment and sustainable development, UNEP has great potentials. However, it has long suffered from insufficient political support of its member states. The focus of the reform should be to further strengthen and reform UNEP in accordance with the requirements of the WSSD and in connection with the new developments in the field of sustainable development, with a view to improving its functions and enhancing its efficiency.

In our view, the following are some practical measures to increase the effectiveness of the UN activities in the field of environment: first, strengthen the GMEF; secondly, strengthen and fully utilize the EMG to exchange information, coordinate the agendas and programs of various agencies, enhance policy coherence, strive for flexible and rational use of financial and human resources and enhance efficiency; thirdly,

environmental protection can be incorporated in the operational activities of the UN in the context of sustainable development and UNEP should make full use of its global and regional advantages to help the developing countries implement their strategies for sustainable development.

On the question of financing, a sound financial foundation is a basic condition for the strengthening of international environmental management and the reversal of the trend of environmental degradation. For many years, international cooperation in environmental protection has been beset by the problem of financing, particularly the failure of the developed countries to honor their commitment for new and additional funds. In order to solve this problem, the developed countries should take effective measures to increase their ODA. At the same time, it is necessary to resort to multi-channelled financing: the funds of the GEF should be increased to make it truly the principal global financing mechanism in the field of environment. The guiding role of UNEP in the allocation of funds of GEF should also be strengthened. The financial situation of UNEP needs to be improved, so the UN member states should gradually increase their donations to the UNEP and the developed countries in particular should do so at a level no lower than their highest historical records. Other innovative ways of financing can also be explored as beneficial supplements to the ODA.

On the question of strengthening partnership, the UN has carried out various forms of cooperation with relevant partners in recent years and achieved some results. Many representatives of private sector, NGOs and civil society took an active part in international conferences in the field of environment and have played a positive role in promoting environmental protection and sustainable development. We welcome the further expansion of this partnership as a beneficial help to the UN environmental activities. To this end, we are of the view that first of all, cooperation with relevant partners should be carried out in accordance with the UN Charter and the Organization's rules of procedure so that all concerned know what rules to follow; secondly, partnership is a beneficial supplement to, rather than a replacement of, inter-governmental cooperation; thirdly, modes of cooperation should be flexible, diversified and tailored to the characteristics of the partners concerned as well as the fields and levels of cooperation; and fourthly, an effective assessment system should be set up to guide partnership in order to ensure its quality.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.