

As written

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**The Thirty Second Session  
United Nations Commission Population & Development**

**New York, 22 March 1999**

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentleman,

First of all, on behalf of the Chinese delegation and in my own name, I would like to extend my congratulations to you on your election as the Chairman of the thirty-second session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development.

In the eyes of the Chinese delegation, the secretary-general's concise report on 1999 world population monitoring is of great significance. World population will reach 6 billion this year. As we step into the new century, we believe its necessary to look back on the 20<sup>th</sup> century population situation globally and look ahead into the population development trend and major population issues of the next century.

It will benefit various governments in mapping out and formulating future population and development strategies and other social and economic policies. Here, I'd like to summaries the current population situations in China and provide relevant statistics.

#### **China's current population situation**

China's population totals 1.248 billion , of which 370 million are urban residents and 870 million are rural residents. Thanks to our 20 years' family planning efforts, the birth rate has gone down from 33.43 ‰ in 1970 to 16.03 ‰ in 1998; the death rate has remained between 6 ‰ to 7 ‰ since 1970s; infant mortality rate is 33.03 ‰; maternal mortality rate is 6 1.9 per 100,000. The natural growth rate of population has fallen , from 25.83 ‰ in 1970 to 9.53 ‰ in 1998.

Total fertility rate is down, from 5.81 in 1970 to 2 in 1998. Average life expectancy is 70.8, 68.8 for men , 73.2 for women. Urban population reproduction pattern has already been transformed into one that is characterized by low birth and low death rate and low rate of increase. Rural population is in transition toward this pattern.

#### **Age structure of China's population**

	1982	1998
O-14	33.6%	25.7%
15—64	61.56%	67.6%
65 and above	4.9%	6.7%

The age structure of China's population is in the process of rapid change. Due to the fact that decrease of fertility rate took place in a relatively short period, the change of age structure has developed its own peculiarities. According to the projection, by the year 2000, people aged 60 and above will reach to 130 million, making up 10% of the total population.

In developed countries, aging of population occurs slowly with modernization and urbanization; it occurs when people already enjoy a high standard of living , and when the state has relatively solid economic strength to tackle the ensuing problems. But China is a developing country , population aging occurs at a rapid rate, with an absolute quantity. These factors aggregate China's task to tackle problems in this regard.

## **China's urbanization and its floating population**

Since 1980s, China's economic development has accelerated the urbanization rate, resulting in a big increase in floating population. By 1997 China had 668 cities, where population expanded from 172 million in 1978 to 379 million in 1997. In 1998, urban population made up 30.4% of the total population. According to incomplete statistics, China now has a floating population of 80 million, with 60% to 70% coming from rural areas.

Mr. Chairman,

China is the most populous developing country. Although its arable land makes up only 7% of the world's total, it needs to feed 21% of the world's population. Its large population, insufficient arable land, lack of per capita natural resources, relatively underdeveloped economy, uneven economic and social development of its regions are all the basic facts that China has to face. Although we have made great progress in bringing down the fertility rate, the characteristics of its age structure and huge population base still resulted in net annual population increase of 12 million. China is confronted with certain situations that resist change in a short period, including the uneven economic and social development of its regions; its underdeveloped areas; 63 million people living in poverty and large proportion of its population still illiterate and semi-illiterate. In addition, China is under heavy pressure while restructuring its large and middle-scaled state-owned enterprises, its education, medical care, housing, transportation, employment and social security systems. The shortage of water

resources, worsening of ecological environment led by excessive lumbering of the forest resources and increasing frequency of natural disaster occurrence are all directly related to the excessive growth of population. It is projected that in dozens years to come, an extra 300 million people will be added to its heavy population load before China's population can come to stabilization. With all these in view, China must stick to the national policy to control the population quantity and improve its quality ( in terms of health and education) in order to boost China's social and economic development and help improve people's lives.

With the coming of the new century, China faces double population pressures resulted from its huge number of people and the aging of its population. The Chinese government believes that the key solution to its population problems lies in its commitment to develop the economy vigorously, to enhance its comprehensive national strength, to integrate its population programmes into general strategy of sustainable development so that it can materialize its goal of balanced and sustainable development in population growth and economic development, rational utilization of natural resources and environmental protection. In the recent years, we have given our special attention to combine our family planning programme with poverty alleviation programme, with rural economic development, with helping the farmers getting rich through their hard work, with bringing about changes in people's traditional family views and with uplifting women's status. Our efforts have achieved very good results.

Regarding the issue of aging of population, we are left with the only

choice to adopt the principle of combined responsibility---that of the society, the family and the individual. In 1996, the Chinese People's Congress passed *The Law on the Protection of Elderly Rights of the People's Republic of China* . We will further establish and improve our social security systems. While attaching importance to the role of family support, we will actively institute community care for the elderly in order to better their lives .

Mr. Chairman,

Standing at the turn of the century, as we review the present population situation and look ahead into the future population development, we feel that the future has both opportunities and challenges in store for us. The Chinese government would like to make concerted efforts with other countries and make positive contribution to the further stabilization of the world's population.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!