

*Please check against delivery*

(Translation)

**Statement by H.E. Li Zhaoxing,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China  
At the International Meeting to Review the Implementation  
of the Program of Action for the Sustainable Development  
Of Small Island Developing States**

Port Louis, Mauritius, 13 January 2005

Mr. President,  
Secretary-General Kofi Annan,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of the Chinese Government, I wish to express our sympathy and solicitude to all those countries that were struck by the tsunami over half a month ago, and our deep condolences to those who have lost their loved ones.. We appreciate and welcome the solidarity displayed by the international community in the wake of the disaster. The Chinese Government has pledged over 500 million; RMB Yuan in assistance to the affected countries and dispatched rescue teams as requested. We are ready to join . the international community in helping these countries walk out of the shadow of disaster and rebuild` their homeland.

Mr. President,

I am honored to be here in the beautiful Mauritius to attend the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Program of Action for ` the Sustainable Development of Small

Island Developing States. On behalf of the Chinese Government, I would like to extend our congratulations to the conference and gratitude to the Government and people of Mauritius for their thoughtful arrangements. I wish this meeting a success.

Achieving sustainable development is a common challenge to the international community. In 1992 the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) adopted the *Rio Declaration* and *Agenda 21*, setting forth the principle of sustainable development. In 2000 the UN Millennium Summit endorsed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which guides international cooperation on development. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development adopted the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation*, in which the objectives and priority areas of cooperation on sustainable development were further identified. Over the past decade and more, the international community has made much progress in implementing action plans and carrying out cooperation, making sustainable development a universally established norm. However, global environment degradation has not been reversed. International cooperation on environment and development falls far short of our goals. Developing countries still face unfavorable external environment and there is little progress in international cooperation in financial mobilization for and technology transfer to developing countries.

Mr. President,

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are important components in achieving global sustainable development. Due to remoteness, fragile economic structure and lack of resources, SIDS are more prone to fall prey to the uneven development of globalization. Absolute poverty, global warming and frequent extreme climate events damage the social and ecological systems of SIDS. The disaster caused by the tsunami again

tolled the alarm bell. What is most illogical is that the official development assistance provided to SIDS by the international community has kept falling year by year, from US\$2.3 billion in 1994 to US\$1.7 billion in 2002. International co-operation on technology transfer and capacity building is slow in progress.

Ten years ago in Barbados, we adopted the *Barbados Program of Action*, a blueprint to achieve sustainable development in SIDS. Since then, SIDS have put in enormous efforts to bring about coordinated development of economy, society and environment. They have strengthened legislation, increased public awareness on environmental protection, formulated and implemented strategies on sustainable development. However, there is still a long way to go before this goal can be achieved.

Mr. President,

This year marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the UN will hold a summit to review the implementation of MDGs. SIDS are an important part of the developing world. Their chance to achieve MDGs has a bearing on sustainable development of all developing nations and the entire world. At the International Meeting, the Group of 77 has drafted a new Strategic Plan on the sustainable development of SIDS. The Chinese Government supports this plan. Now, action is the key, which has become more urgent than ever as evidenced by the tragic tsunami. The Chinese Government would like to make the following proposals in this regard:

First, collective response to common threat is needed to create a favorable external environment for developing countries including SIDS. The UN reform provides an opportunity to improve the international political, economic and trade orders, which would guarantee SIDS' participation and

voice in the decision-making of international affairs. International commitment in financing, technology transfer and capacity building should be translated into action. The importance of trade in revitalizing the economy and promoting the development of SIDS should be fully recognized. Developed countries have the obligation to further open their markets, remove trade barriers and stop subsidizing agricultural export, with a view to creating favorable conditions for SIDS' economic development. The ongoing Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations should take into full consideration the interests of developing countries including SIDS, making it a development round in the real sense. In this context, it is hoped that the good will of the international community displayed in the wake of the tsunami could turn into long-term determination and action.

Secondly, priorities must be identified and highlighted to address the imperative concerns of SIDS. Due to special natural and geographic conditions, SIDS sustain a series of perverse consequences of climate change, rising sea level and extreme climate events. The international community should abide by the principle of *Common but Differentiated Responsibilities* set forth at the UNCED and take concrete steps to help SIDS meet challenges and overcome difficulties. *The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* and the *Kyoto Protocol* have provided a mechanism for international cooperation on climate change. We urge countries concerned to fulfill their commitments by helping developing countries, SIDS in particular, to cope with challenges such as severe natural disasters and climate change.

Thirdly, capacity building should be strengthened to help SIDS implement their strategies of sustainable development. The international community should intensify input in terms of technology transfer and personnel training and make SIDS

better equipped to address old and new challenges. The UN and relevant international institutions should make this a priority and establish an effective mechanism for monitoring and implementation. The recent tsunami disaster underscores the pressing need for regional mechanisms on surveillance, prevention and assessment of severe natural disasters. The Chinese Government will submit a draft resolution on this matter at the coming World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held in Kobe, Japan later this month. We look forward to your valuable support.

Fourthly, partnership should be intensified to mobilize more resources for the sustainable development of SIDS. Since the difficult situation facing SIDS is caused by multi-factors, closer and more effective partnership is required to pool strength and fight the battle in solidarity. We should welcome and encourage all efforts that would bring more financing, technology, intellectual and capacity support to SIDS, be it South-North, South-South, regional and inter-governmental cooperation, or participation of private sector and civil society.

Mr. President,

As a developing country itself, China is empathetic to SIDS' difficulties in achieving sustainable development. We support their just position of developing themselves and call upon the international community to listen to their voices and come to them with practical assistance. Over the years, the Chinese Government has been deepening and expanding cooperation with SIDS and has provided assistance to the best of its capacity.

As the largest developing country, China is still at a low level of economic development in per capita terms, marked by urban-rural and regional disparity as well as mounting pressure

on the environment and resources. In response, the Chinese Government has chosen and taken on the road of sustainable development, stressing coordination of development between regions, between urban and rural areas, between economic and social progress, between man and nature and between domestic development and opening-up. We believe that China's own success will be tantamount to contribution to the world. We stand ready to strengthen international cooperation and work with SIDS and other countries to promote global sustainable development.

Mr. President,

In the past few days, the international community has reached broad consensus on continued efforts to help SIDS achieve sustainable development. This is just another new beginning. We should seize this opportunity and work together to make greater contribution to the sustainable development of SIDS.

Thank you.