

(Translation)

Join Hands to Address Climate Challenge

Statement by H.E. Hu Jintao
President of the People's Republic of China
At the Opening Plenary Session of
The United Nations Summit on Climate Change

New York, 22 September 2009

Mr. President,
Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,
Dear Colleagues,

Today, world leaders are gathered at the United Nations to discuss ways to tackle climate change. This is of great significance for catalyzing strong action by the international community to meet this global challenge.

Global climate change has a profound impact on the existence and development of mankind, and is a major challenge facing all countries. In the last 37 years, from Stockholm to Rio de Janeiro, and from

Kyoto to Bali, we have made concerted efforts and achieved notable progress in protecting the global environment and tackling climate change. This is a historic process, through which all countries have deepened their understanding, built consensus and stepped forward to meet the challenge. The *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)* and its *Kyoto Protocol* have now been universally recognized as the primary channel to address climate change. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities has been established as the basis for closer international cooperation. And sustainable development and harmony between man and nature has become the common goal of all parties.

Climate change is an issue arising in the course of human development. It is associated with both natural factors and human activities. It is an environmental issue, but also, and more importantly, a development issue, as it is closely connected with the development stage, way of life, size of population and resource endowment of different countries and their places in the international division of labor. In the final analysis, we should and can only advance efforts to address climate change in the course of development and meet the challenge through common development.

At stake in the fight against climate change are

the common interests of the entire world, and the development interests and people's well-being of the vast number of developing nations in particular. It is imperative to give full consideration to the development stage and basic needs of developing countries in addressing climate change. Both their historical and per capita emissions are low. Due to their low development level and shortage of capital and technology, developing countries have limited capability and means to deal with climate change. And they have to bear a large amount of transferred emission as they are placed at the lower end of the international industrial chain in the process of economic globalization. For developing countries, the top priority now is to grow economy, eradicate poverty and improve livelihood. The international community should pay close attention to the predicament of developing countries, especially the small island states, the least developed countries, landlocked countries and African countries. It is important to listen to their voice and respect their wishes, and combine our efforts to address climate change with those to promote the growth of developing countries and build up their own dynamism for development and ability for sustainable development.

Dear Colleagues,

To address climate change and achieve

sustainable development is an urgent and long-term task for all of us. It bears on the living environment of mankind and the development prospects of all countries, and calls for the unremitting efforts of the whole world. In this connection, let me highlight a few principles we need to follow in our common endeavor to tackle climate change:

First, fulfilling respective responsibilities should be at the core of our effort. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities embodies the consensus of the international community. Adherence to this principle is critical to keeping international cooperation on climate change on the right track. Both developed and developing countries should take active steps to tackle climate change. We should act in keeping with the provisions of the *UNFCCC* and its *Kyoto Protocol* and advance negotiations under the Bali Roadmap in real earnest. Developed countries should fulfill the task of emission reduction set in the *Kyoto Protocol*, continue to undertake substantial mid-term quantified emission reduction targets, and support developing countries in countering climate change. Developing countries should, in the light of their national conditions and with the financial and technological support of developed countries, work hard to adapt to climate change and do their best to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Second, achieving mutual benefit and win-win outcome should be the goal of our effort. Climate change respects no national borders, and no country is immune from it. To counter this challenge requires the whole-hearted cooperation and coordinated actions of the international community. Developed countries should support developing countries in tackling climate change. This is not only their responsibility, but also serves their long-term interest. We should foster the idea that helping others is helping oneself and make our endeavor on climate change a win-win for both developed and developing countries and a win-win for both the interests of individual countries and the common interests of humanity.

Third, promoting common development should be the basis of our effort. Developing countries need to strike a balance between economic growth, social development and environmental protection, strengthen capacity for sustainable development and avoid the old path of "polluting first and cleaning up later". They should not, however, be asked to take on obligations that go beyond their development stage, responsibility and capabilities. Without common development, particularly the development of developing countries, there cannot be a broad and solid basis in the long run for tackling climate change.

Fourth, ensuring financing and technology holds the key to the success of our effort. Developed countries should take up their responsibility and provide new, additional, adequate and predictable financial support to developing countries. This, in effect, represents a joint investment in the future of mankind. Environment-friendly technologies should better serve the common interests of humanity. In order to enable the developing countries to have access to climate-friendly technologies, it is necessary to set up a sound interactive mechanism with governments playing the leading role, businesses taking part and market principles at play.

Dear Colleagues,

China has made great achievements in development, as shown in the profound changes in the livelihood of the people and the outlook of the society, and China's total economic output is now one of the largest in the world. But on the other hand, China still lags behind more than 100 countries in terms of per capita GDP, and it remains the biggest developing country in the world. With one fifth of the world's population and given the disparity between the urban and rural areas and among different regions and the imbalances in economic and social development, China still faces many difficulties and has a long way to go before it can

achieve modernization. Out of a sense of responsibility to its own people and people across the world, China fully appreciates the importance and urgency of addressing climate change. We have taken and will continue to take determined and practical steps to tackle this challenge and provide assistance to other developing countries as our ability permits. We will continue to support small island states, the least developed countries, landlocked countries and African countries in better adapting to climate change.

China attaches great importance to and has actively promoted scientific development, that is, comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development which puts people's interests first. We have set the building of a conservation culture as a major strategic task. We will adhere to the basic state policy of conserving resources and protecting the environment and follow the path of sustainable development. We will make fresh contributions to tackling climate change as we accelerate transition to a resource-conserving and environment-friendly society and make China a country of innovation.

China has adopted and is implementing the *National Climate Change Program*, which includes mandatory national targets for reducing energy intensity and the discharge of major pollutants, and increasing forest coverage and the share of

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renewable energy for the period of 2005 through 2010. By reducing energy intensity alone, China can save 620 million tons of standard coal in the five-year period, equivalent to cutting 1.5 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

In the years ahead, China will further integrate actions on climate change into its economic and social development plan and take the following measures: First, we will intensify effort to conserve energy and improve energy efficiency. We will endeavor to cut carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by a notable margin by 2020 from the 2005 level. Second, we will vigorously develop renewable energy and nuclear energy. We will endeavor to increase the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to around 15% by 2020. Third, we will energetically increase forest carbon sink. We will endeavor to increase forest coverage by 40 million hectares and forest stock volume by 1.3 billion cubic meters by 2020 from the 2005 levels. Fourth, we will step up effort to develop green economy, low-carbon economy and circular economy, and enhance research, development and dissemination of climate-friendly technologies.

Dear Colleagues,

The world expects us to make a decision in the face of climate change, an issue which bears on

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mankind's survival and development. I am convinced that as long as we adopt a responsible attitude toward our respective countries and mankind as a whole, proceed from the present reality while looking ahead to the future, uphold the *UNFCCC* and its *Kyoto Protocol* as the primary channel, stay committed to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the mandate of the Bali Roadmap, we will make the Copenhagen Conference a new milestone in the international cooperation on climate change. China stands ready to join hands with all countries to build an even better future for the generations to come.

Thank you.