



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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(Translation)

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Mr. Chair,

The Chinese delegation is delighted to have this opportunity of introducing to all of you information regarding the Chinese population experience, especially in terms of population distribution, urbanization, domestic migration and their impacts on development.

Over the past 30 years, China has made remarkable accomplishments in the areas of population and family planning with Total Fertility rate (TFR) declining from 5.8 at the beginning of 1970s to 1.8 at present, realizing historical transformation of the population reproduction pattern ahead of time, effectively mitigating the pressure of an excessively growing population on resources and the environment and vigorously promoting economic development, social progress and people's livelihood. The decline in TFR has led to the reduction of dependency ratio by 1/3 and created a 40-year "Population Dividend" period for economic growth. In 2007, Chinese economic aggregates were the 4th largest in the world while per capita GDP in China reached USD 2,400. Health and education status of the population in China has scored impressive improvement, with per capita education level of the population aged 15 and above going up from 4.5 years at the beginning of 1980s to around 8.5 years in 2005. The poverty-stricken population has declined dramatically with the number of absolute poor in rural Chinese from 250 million in 1978 to 14.79 million in 2007 and poverty occurrence rate going down to 2%. Population urbanization has accelerated, i.e., the year 2007 registered a 44.9% urbanization ratio and

590 million urban population, up by 1.3 percentage points and 19.90 million respectively in the nearly 10-year period. Between 2003 and 2007, maternal mortality rate declined from 51.3/100,000 to 36.6/100,000; infant mortality rate went down from 25.5‰ to 15.3‰, and the total number of health institutions reached 315,000 nationwide, an increase of 24,000. Over these years, the Chinese government has paid high attention to the development of community and rural health services, devoting itself to addressing problems such as difficulty in accessing healthcare and over-expensive health services, and greatly promoting improvement of women's reproductive health and health care for women and children.

However, we are also somberly aware that in the future population development in China will exhibit unprecedented complexity. Quantity, health and education, structure and distribution of population will intervene while the trend of population growth by inertia remains strong. In the next dozen or so years, with a net annual growth of 8-10 million, total population in China will peak around 1.5 billion in 2033. The working-age population will maintain its huge size with those aged between 15 and 64 peaking at 1.01 billion in around 2016, imposing a severe employment challenge. Overall education status of the population remains low, difficult to meet the requirements of fierce competition based on integrated national strength. Population ageing is accelerating with the proportion of those aged 65 and above in total population rising from 5.6% in 1990 to 8.1% in 2007, exerting unprecedented pressure on urban and rural social security systems. The migrant population keeps increasing, which constitutes enormous challenges to distribution of public resources and intensifies the need for enhanced urbanization. All these plus structural diversification of the poor population expose China to an arduous task of promoting balanced and harmonious social development.

Mr. Chair,

China, as the most populous developing country in the world, is experiencing population migration and mobility of the largest scale throughout human history. Over the past 20 years, with rapid economic development and the establishment and improvement of the socialist market economy, population migration and mobility has assumed a rapidly expanding scale, rising from over 2million at the beginning of the 1980s to 150million in 2005. Migration from rural to urban areas has become the major factor that contributes to the increase of urban population. In the coming 30 years, with increasing improvement of the

socialist market economy system, such migration and mobility of the population will be further intensified. It is estimated that in the next 20-30 years, there still will be over 300 million migrating from rural to urban areas, pushing urbanization rate up to 53% in 2020. While the population reaches its peak, urban population will climb to 1 billion.

According to the 2005 survey data, population migration and mobility in China exhibits the following structural features: 1. Migration goes from rural to urban areas, and from economically less developed western and central regions to the more developed eastern coasts; 2. The migrants are dominated by the working-age population or population in the prime of their years and float for an average duration of 5 years; 3. majority of the migrants are engaged in the secondary or tertiary industries in urban areas, with farmers increasingly dependant on wage/salary incomes from non-agricultural jobs as their main means of increasing income. It is worth noticing that the average education exposure of migrants is 9.08 years, higher than that of the population at the source areas. Furthermore, 71.46% of the migrants are married, leading to the trend of "family" migration in recent years. Large-scale migration of rural population in the prime of their years into urban areas intensifies the aging problem in the countryside. According to the 2005 sample survey, due to rapid decline of TFR, the average size of the Chinese family went down to 3.13. Smaller families have brought along the headache of engaging the entire society in providing old-age care and support. Older people aged 65 and above in urban and rural areas take up 6.42% and 7.5% respectively of total urban and rural population, while families only consisting of older persons (empty nests) are drastically increasing. Population migration and mobility has changed the close blood tie that traditional family care of the old relies on. Geographic separation of family members makes it unrealistic for the elderly to look for care and support from their grown-up children or grandchildren, further weakening the foundation for old-age support. All these have exerted huge pressure on the government to provide old-age support.

China is now undergoing a transition of social development. On the one hand, sustained rapid economic growth enhances integrated national strength and promotes all-round social development. On the other hand, amidst the process of sustained economic development, some acute problems and conflicts still exist in population development, requiring the government to take them into earnest consideration for proper solutions. More prominent ones include: chronicle co-existence of low population growth rate with large-volume overall population growth; increasing

pressure on employment and social security; persistent institutional obstacles to spacial migration and social mobility of the population; lack of a uniform urban and rural labor market----which will lead to relatively low level of population urbanization and deviation of the labor-industrial structure from the economic structure and thereby intensify to some extent problems such as enlarging regional development gap between urban and rural areas; increasing difficulties of the urban poor; poor social security system regarding old-age support under the context of rapid population ageing; huge gaps with regard to the provision of public services (e.g., education, medical care, health including reproductive health, etc) to migrants floating to cities from rural areas.

Mr. Chair,

Population issues have always been a critical factor impacting on socioeconomic development and constraining holistic coordinated sustainable development in China. In the new historical era, the Chinese government will implement its scientific outlook on development on all fronts, incorporating population development strategies and plans into the overall program for national socioeconomic development, and will adhere to the principle of human orientation, paying high attention to people's livelihood, promoting institutional innovation and prioritizing investment in holistic human development in accordance with requirements of constructing a harmonious socialist society. We will also stabilize the low fertility level, put an appropriate adjustment on the quantitative side of the population, achieve balanced population development, improve population structure, upgrade education and health level of the population, guide rational distribution of the population and ensure population security. China shall endeavor to transform from a populous country to a power of human capital for coordinated sustainable development of population, economy, society, resources and the environment. To achieve the above objectives, the Chinese government is now pooling efforts to prepare programs for major function zones nationwide. With accelerated urbanization, by 2020 there will be another 300 million working-age population migrating out of the countryside. As such, the prerequisite for sustainable development is to develop a scientific understanding of the internal rules regarding the relationship between population, environment, resources and regions, and prepare balanced plans for future population distribution, economic layout, land utilization and urbanized development in line with carrying capacities of resources and the environment, as well as current development density and potentials of different regions. While developing the major function

zones, we will guide voluntary, orderly, and stable mobility of the population. Migrants with steady jobs and residences in priority development areas should be encouraged to settle down; while key development zones should be incentivized to accept population inflows in the process of accelerated industrialization and urbanization. To proactively respond to population ageing, the Chinese government will also make arduous efforts to construct and improve its old-age support system and old-age social service system, formulate and implement strategic plans and policies for ageing development, enhance facility and infrastructure development to promote community old-age services, gradually improve a basic old-age support insurance system in urban areas through the integration of social contribution with individual accounts, develop a multi-layer urban old-age support security system; enhance traditional virtues such as grown-up children supporting their elderly parents, family care of the old and mutual help among neighbors. Let us join hands to work relentlessly for a harmonious and family-friendly society and a beautiful living environment!

Thank you, Mr. Chair.