

(Translation)

Strengthen International Technology Cooperation and Address Climate Change Actively

Speech at the Beijing High-level Conference on Climate Change: Technology Development and Technology Transfer

Wen Jiabao

Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

7 November, 2008 Beijing

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are meeting here today for the High-level conference on Climate Change: Technology Development and Technology Transfer. This is of great importance to increasing understanding, building consensus, stepping up cooperation and jointly tackling climate change. On behalf of the Chinese Government, I wish to extend my warm congratulations on the opening of the Conference, and my sincere welcome to all the participants attending the Conference.

Climate change is a major global issue the international community follows closely, and it concerns the living environment of mankind and the prosperity and development of all countries. The Chinese Government always takes a responsible approach to climate change, which we take very seriously. Taking resources conservation and environmental protection as basic state policy and sustainable development national strategy, we have made vigorous efforts to tackle global climate change. First, we have adopted *China National Climate Change Program*, which defines the specific targets, fundamental principles, priority areas and policy measures to tackle climate change by 2010. Second, we have set obligatory target in the Eleventh Five-Year Program on national economic and social development to reduce energy intensity per unit of GDP by 20% in five years. To ensure the fulfillment of the target, we have broken the target into specific goals for local governments at various levels and major energy-consuming enterprises whose performances will be assessed. Third, we lay greater emphasis on advancing the transformation of economic growth pattern and economic restructuring,

and encourage ways of production and consumption that help conserve energy and resources. Fourth, tremendous efforts have been made to develop clean and renewable energy such as hydro power, nuclear power, wind power and rural biogas by stepping up policy guidance and financial input. From 2000 to 2008, the installed capacity of wind power has increased from 340,000 kilowatts to 10 million kilowatts in China, the installed capacity of hydro power has increased from 79.35 million kilowatts to 163 million kilowatts, and the installed capacity of nuclear power has increased from 2.1 million kilowatts to 8.85 million kilowatts. Fifth, we have deepened the reform of pricing, fiscal and taxation systems in the energy and resources sector. By giving play to the steering role played by government and making the most of the mechanism of market adjustment, we encourage the whole society to conserve energy and resources. Sixth, ecological conservation projects such as protecting natural forest and reconverting farmland into forest and grassland have been vigorously pursued, which has increased the country's rate of forest coverage from 13.92 percent in the early 1990s to 18.21 percent in 2005, and the greenhouse gas sequestration capacity of the forest has been further enhanced. Seventh, we have adopted a series of laws and regulations to tackle climate change and have launched extensive awareness campaigns on resources conservation and environmental protection to speed up the building of a resource-conserving and environment-friendly society. Eighth, we have set up the National Leading Group to Address Climate Change to guide the endeavor of government departments and local authorities in this area. These measures are paying off. Last year alone, we shut down many small coal-fired power generators with a total generating capacity of 14.38 million kilowatts, closed down over 10,000 small coal mines, and phased out backward production facilities with production capacities totaling 46.59 million tons of iron, 37.47 million tons of steel and 52 million tons of cement. Energy intensity has been reduced year by year at an increasingly fast pace. We are confident that through our unremitting efforts, the energy conservation and pollution control targets in the Eleventh Five-Year Program will be met.

China is a developing country with a per capita GDP just over US\$2,000. Fifteen million of its rural population still live in abject poverty and over 22 million urban population live on basic living allowances. Although China is in the stage of fast industrialization, its per capita greenhouse gas emission is less than one third that of developed countries and its total historical per capita emission level is even lower. Moreover, a considerable portion of its total emission comes from subsistence emission needed to guarantee people's livelihood and

transferred emission from international manufactures. We are under multiple pressures to grow the economy, eliminate poverty and slow down greenhouse gas emission. If we look at the world history of development, we will see that developed countries encountered their resource and environmental challenges in phases in the course of 200 years of industrialization. But we are confronted with the challenges all at the same time. In addition, we have to address in a much shorter timeframe the issue of energy conservation and pollution control which has taken developed countries decades to tackle after their economies became highly developed. The difficulties we face are therefore unprecedented. The Chinese Government will unswervingly promote ways of production, life and consumption that help conserve energy and resources and protect the environment and build a circular and sustainable economic system with low input, high output, and low consumption and emission to enable the whole society to embark on a path of sustainable development featuring advanced production, prosperous life and sound ecological environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At present, the spread of global financial crisis and the obvious slowdown of the world economy have posed severe challenges to the economic development of all countries and life of their peoples. Under such circumstances, our commitment to tackling climate change must not waver and our actions must not slow down. Here, I would like to make the following observations and proposals:

First, climate change must be tackled through international cooperation. Climate change affects every aspect of people's life. No country is immune from such an enormous challenge and no country alone can fulfill the daunting task of tackling climate change. We must make concerted efforts and conduct pragmatic cooperation if we are to achieve harmonious development of the mankind and win-win progress of all countries. The *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) and its *Kyoto Protocol* have laid the legal basis for international cooperation on climate change. Over the years, the international community has endeavored to comply with them and made certain progress. However, the result falls far short of our expectation. It has been proved that global cooperation is critical to tackling climate change, and factors such as national realities, development levels, historical responsibilities and per capita emissions need to be taken into full consideration. We must face history squarely, acknowledge the reality, take a long-term perspective and carry out long-term and broad dialogue

and practical cooperation. The international community must act in accordance with the principles and provisions of the *UNFCCC* and its *Kyoto Protocol*, recognize that helping others is helping yourself and harming others is harming yourself, actively tackle climate change and work together to make our homeland a better place.

Second, climate change must be tackled under the framework of sustainable development. Climate change is a major environmental issue, but it is ultimately a development issue. It is not in the common interest of the mankind to address climate change at the cost of development, or to blindly pursue economic growth in disregard of the threats of climate change. The current climate change is mainly caused by the accumulated emission by the developed countries over many years. Developing countries, especially the least developed ones are weak in climate change adaptation, thus it is unfair that they have to bear its serious consequences. The developed countries should change their unsustainable consumption mode, significantly reduce greenhouse gas emission and help the developing countries to embark on a path of sustainable development that is suited to their own national conditions and to strike a balance between pursuing economic growth and tackling climate change.

Third, the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” must be followed. The principle reflects the different obligations to be fulfilled by developing and developed countries in combating climate change, and serves as the basic norm playing a leading and central role in guiding the international efforts on climate change. Developed countries should assume their responsibility, face up to the reality of their high per capita emission, faithfully abide by the emission reduction targets for the first commitment period set out in the *Protocol*, and continue to significantly reduce emission in the post-2012 period. At the same time, they should effectively honor their commitments under the *Bali Roadmap* to provide developing countries with support in financing, technology and capacity building to cope with climate change. The international community should give full consideration to the special concerns of the developing countries in adapting to climate change and change the tendency of placing more emphasis on mitigation than adaptation. Developing countries should also try to reduce emission to the extent possible and make their due contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Fourth, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) must be upheld. We should not forget that there are still about one billion

people living under the poverty line in this world and we still remain far from achieving the UN MDGs. It is the due responsibility of all governments to ensure that their poor population benefit from the achievement of human development and modern civilization. The international community has to realize that without the economic and social progress of the developing world, it is impossible to successfully tackle climate change, or to ensure world prosperity and stability. The endeavor to tackle climate change should facilitate rather than frustrate efforts of countries, the developing ones in particular, in economic development and poverty elimination, narrow rather than widen the wealth gap and technology divide between countries, and uphold rather than undermine fairness, justice and social harmony of the international community.

Fifth, climate change must be tackled by relying on technological progress. Science and technology have a significant role to play in understanding climate change and effectively coping with it. Significant progress has been made in the development of new and renewable energy technologies and new breakthroughs are imminent in the development of key climate change technologies. The wider use of such technologies will lay a solid foundation for climate change mitigation and adaptation and provide strong support for the building of low-carbon economy and low-carbon society. Regrettably, no substantive progress has been made in the global sharing of climate change technologies. The international community should step up cooperation in the development and transfer of climate change technologies, speed up consultation on organizational structure, fund allocation, institutional guarantee and other core issues, and establish an operational mechanism featuring government guidance, enterprise participation and market operation so as to ensure the timely access of developing countries to advanced emission-reduction technologies and enhance the global capacity in coping with climate change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Currently, the international community are having discussions on the post-2012 international climate change arrangement and they are committed to reaching an agreement by the end of 2009. The Conference has provided a good platform for exchanging ideas on the development and transfer of climate-friendly technologies. As long as we take a responsible attitude towards the human society and Mother Earth, conduct consultations on an equal footing and active cooperation in accordance with the principles of the *UNFCCC*, we will surely arrive at

equitable and reasonable outcomes conducive to climate protection and development of all countries. The Chinese Government will continue to play an active and constructive role and work together with the international community to make unremitting efforts to tackle climate change.

I wish the Conference a complete success and all of you a pleasant stay in Beijing.

Thank you!