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Strengthen Cooperation for Global Food Security

Address by H.E. Hui Liangyu
Vice Premier of the State Council of
The People's Republic of China
At the World Food Summit

Rome, 16 November 2009

Mr. Chair,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by extending, on behalf of the Chinese Government, warm congratulations on the convocation of the World Food Summit and wishing the Summit a complete success.

Thirteen years ago, world leaders gathered in Rome and made the solemn pledge of ensuring food security for all and halving the number of the world's hungry people by 2015. Seven years ago, an anti-hunger declaration was adopted also here at the World Food Summit, which reiterated the shared vision of achieving the United Nations

Millennium Development Goals. Today, we have again gathered in Rome at this important meeting to discuss key issues on food security at a moment when the international financial crisis has brought severe challenges, world poverty reduction efforts have suffered major setbacks, hungry people in the world have increased to over one billion and a world food crisis is very likely to happen. This meeting is therefore of special significance to world food security, global economic recovery and sustainable development.

Mr. Chair,

Food is essential to the survival of people and grain is the principal food. Freedom from hunger is the most fundamental human right. Food security is the basis for economic development and social stability. It is also an important prerequisite for national independence and world peace. At present, the international community is under the dual pressure of an international financial crisis and a global food crisis. Some developing countries have seen their development process severely hindered and social stability threatened. The international community should view and address food security as a matter vital to human survival and development, and safeguard food security in the world through strengthened cooperation. To this end, we wish to put forward the following suggestions.

First, increase input and raise food production. All countries, developing ones in particular, should in ways suited to their national circumstances, invest more in agriculture, break the technical bottlenecks inhibiting output growth, build up the capability to resist natural disasters, plant diseases and insect pests and strive for higher yield and greater self-sufficiency. Developed countries and international organizations should provide developing countries with financial, technological, market and capacity-building assistance with due respect for the sovereignty of the recipient countries and more emphasis on building their own "blood-generating" capacity.

Second, create a sound market environment for mutual benefit and win-win progress. The causes of a food crisis are complicated, including unbalanced supply and demand, as well as distorted international agricultural market and financial speculation. All countries should jointly oppose trade protectionism in all its forms and manifestations and push for a positive outcome of the Doha Round negotiations. Developed countries should demonstrate greater sincerity in the negotiations, slash agricultural subsidies, remove trade barriers and give greater market access to developing members so that a fair, reasonable, sustainable and stable international agricultural

trading order can take shape. It is imperative to enhance financial regulation over agricultural markets and effectively curb speculative activities. This should become one of the priorities in reforming the international financial regulatory system.

Third, press ahead with reform and improve the global governance mechanism. China supports the strengthening of the global governance mechanism for food security and the early establishment of a food security safeguard system encompassing early warning, emergency relief and macro-control and regulation functions. China favors the adoption of a comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable strategy for global food security that ensures efficiency and equal participation of all parties. China supports the strengthening of the UN food and agriculture agencies through reform and endorses a bigger role of the Committee on World Food Security and the Task Force on the World Food Security Crisis of the United Nations.

Fourth, adopt a holistic approach for comprehensive and balanced growth. In the final analysis, the food issue is a development issue. Food security is closely related to economic growth, social progress, climate change and energy security. All countries should pay great attention to the impact of climate change on agriculture and other

China is ready to work with the international community to safeguard world food security and build a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity.

Thank you.

Africa, Latin America, the Pacific and other regions, we have set up agricultural technology demonstration centers, experiment stations and dissemination stations, sent over 30,000 agricultural experts and technical personnel, and helped train a great number of local agricultural technical personnel.

China will continue to enhance exchanges and cooperation with other countries in food and agricultural development. We are ready to continue to provide agricultural assistance to other developing countries to the best of our ability within the framework of South-South cooperation, including expanding agricultural technology demonstration centers, sending more agricultural experts, offering more agricultural training programs, and providing emergency humanitarian assistance in food. Last year, we decided to double the number of agricultural experts and technical personnel sent abroad and provide agricultural training programs in China for 3,000 people from other developing countries. China has signed the agreement and started to contribute US\$30 million to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to establish a trust fund for projects and activities to help developing countries improve their capacity of agricultural production. We will as always increase our support on a continued basis for international institutions for food and agriculture.

sectors, intensify global cooperation on climate change under the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", and strive for a positive outcome of the up-coming Copenhagen Conference. The international community should take seriously the long-term implications of the development of the bio-fuel sector and guide it toward sustainability based on the principle of "not competing for food with humans and not competing for land with food". Energy security should by no means come at the cost of food security.

Mr. Chair,

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Over the past 60 years, we have placed great importance on agriculture and food. Providing sufficient food for over one billion people has been on top of our agenda. Our policy is to realize basic food self-sufficiency, strengthen the fundamental role of agriculture and pursue agricultural modernization with Chinese features. We have enhanced water conservancy for rural farmlands, accelerated the advance of agro-science and technology, and motivated farmers to produce more. As a result, we have made notable achievements in agriculture and rural development. China feeds about 20% of the world's population with about 9% of the world's arable lands and about 6.5% of the world's fresh

water. The Chinese people, who once lived in hunger, now enjoy moderate prosperity. We have met ahead of schedule the targets for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger under MDGs. It is a historic transformation. It is a miracle. It is the Chinese people's great contribution to global food security, world peace and development.

China now has a favorable food security situation. The comprehensive grain production capacity is on a steady rise. Grain reserves are abundant. Staple agricultural produce is in sufficient supply. Food prices are basically stable. Grain output has been increasing for five years in a row since 2004, reaching a record high of over 500 million tons in 2008. We expect another bumper harvest this year. For many years, China has been able to meet its own food demand on its own. Every year we export an average of 8 million tons of staple grains such as wheat, rice and corn. Our agricultural markets are fairly open with the average tariff level only one fourth of the world's average. We have every reason to be confident that we can ensure food security by mainly relying on domestic production.

However, we are keenly aware that China has a large population, agricultural infrastructure is weak, economic and social development in rural areas has fallen behind and there is a growing income gap between urban and rural areas. The international

financial crisis has brought us new pressures and challenges. Therefore, we have made it clear in our response to the international financial crisis that in boosting domestic demand, rural areas have the greatest potential; for steady and relatively fast economic growth, agriculture is the foundation; and in improving people's well-being, farmers are the top priority. We have increased input, enhanced agricultural infrastructure and projects designed to improve rural residents' livelihood, and maintained good momentum of steady and relatively fast development of agriculture and rural areas. These have been a strong support for the stabilization and improvement of China's economy. We are confident that the goal of 8% GDP growth for this year can be met.

Mr. Chair,

As a developing country, China has done its best to provide help to other developing countries and contribute to world food and agriculture development. Over the years, we have made contributions to international institutions for food and agriculture and provided emergency humanitarian food assistance to some countries in need. Meanwhile, we have been committed to helping other developing countries improve their capacity of food production with our advantage in agro-technologies. In nearly 100 countries in Asia,