

Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony

Li Keqiang, Vice Premier of the State Council of China, Chairperson of CCICED

Members and experts,

Ladies and gentlemen, friends,

I am very happy to meet you again and to discuss environment and development issues in China with you. With “Ecosystem Management and Green Development” as the theme, this Annual General Meeting will focus on discussion on such topics as the development of China’s “12th Five-Year Plan” and exploration of a new path to environmental protection. These will play an active role in accelerating the development of a resource saving and environment-friendly society in China.

This year is the last year of the “11th Five-Year Plan” period in China. We have effectively addressed the impact of the international financial crisis and maintained steady and fast economic growth over the past five years, lifting the development of modernization to a new height. According to estimates, China’s per capita GDP will reach \$4000 this year. While China enjoys economic growth, resource conservation and environmental protection have also been strengthened. The accumulated reduction of COD and SO₂ emission was 9.7% and 13.1% respectively from 2006 to 2009. The discharge of major pollutants has continuously declined during the first six months of this year. These hard-earned achievements have demonstrated China’s determination and capacity in strengthening environmental protection, and reflect China’s will and action in facilitating green development.

Meanwhile, we clearly understand that, with a huge population, China has relatively insufficient resources and environmental carrying capacity, and the contradiction between development and environment is still very acute. Although China ranks among the best in the world in terms of overall GDP, its per capita GDP ranks only around 100th in the world. The coastal regions and some big and medium sized cities have gradually enjoyed modern prosperity. However, the central and western parts of China and many rural areas still lag behind. China’s economy is experiencing rapid growth, but it also exhibits striking problems

of imbalance, poor coordination and unsustainable development. China is still a developing country; we face tough work ahead and have a long way to go in promoting development and achieving modernization. China needs to go further in industrialization and urbanization, and the environmental problems that developed countries experienced at different stages of their industrialization process over several hundred years have a concentrated occurrence over the past two decades in China. Limited resources and environmental carrying capacity have become a bottleneck constraining China's further economic and social development. However, it is unrealistic and unfeasible to talk about environmental protection without giving consideration to development, and it is not sustainable to talk about development without giving consideration to environmental protection. At present, the international community pays close attention to issues on climate change, resources and environment. New ideas and practices, such as green economy and low carbon development, appear one after another, bringing about new opportunities and challenges to environment and development for China. The new situation of domestic development and new development trends in the world urge us to accelerate the shift of our economic development mode; facilitate development of a conservation culture; follow the development path that is low in cost, high in benefits, low in emissions and sustainable in development; and achieve sound and rapid economic and social development.

Not long ago, the Fifth Session of the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China reviewed and passed the Recommendations on the Development of the "12th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development", which puts forward overall requirements for development over the next five years. In the future, with scientific development as the main theme and transformation of economic development mode as a guideline, we will coordinate and facilitate aspects of the transformation to optimize sustainable development. To accelerate the transformation of the economic development mode in China will constitute a profound reform in the economic and social fields, and each field will need a comprehensive, systematic and strategic transformation, including the reform of the development concept, transformation of the development mode and innovation within the development path.

Eco-environment is both a development issue and welfare issue. With increasing overall national capacity and economic scale, and a higher living standard in China, we must pay more attention to the quality and benefits of economic development as well as to ensuring and improving public welfare. Conservation culture is the measurement and driving force for accelerating the transformation of the economic development mode, the outcome of which can be measured with one basic criterion: the reduction of the cost of resources and



cost to the environment. One important decisive factor in this undertaking is how big an effort we will put into the protection of eco-environment. We will take the development of a resource-saving and environment-friendly society as an important driving force for the acceleration of this transformation; firmly implant the idea of green and low carbon development; and strive for industrial structural reform, and change production modes and consumption patterns to make them conducive to conservation of resources and protection of the environment.

First of all, we need to facilitate green development and address resource and environmental constraints. Green development is an effective approach to the reduction of resource consumption and environmental protection. It is also conducive to regeneration of development advantages and space for new development. We will accelerate the development of new and high technology industries and modern service industries with low consumption of resources and minimum environmental pollution. Focusing on energy saving and environmental protection, we will reform traditional industries, phase out outdated productivity, and actively develop circular economy. We will advocate green and appropriate consumption in the whole society, and make resource conservation and environmental protection a voluntary action of everyone in the society. China is a country with a huge population, and if everyone does something within his/her capacity in this field, 1.3 billion people will generate huge benefits. Improving our living environment is both a strong public desire and an important responsibility of the government. We will meet public expectations of higher living standards and improvements in environmental quality; invest more effort in the construction of sewage treatment, garbage treatment, and clean energy facilities, addressing striking environmental problems such as water, air and soil pollution that threaten human health and affect production and everyday life; and create a good living environment for the general public.

Secondly, we must follow natural laws and protect the safety of eco-systems. “Harmony between Nature and Man”, as in the teaching of Taoism, has been an important component of traditional Chinese culture. Once damaged, the eco-system often cannot completely restore itself, which will seriously affect human survival and development. Although China has a vast land area, there is a large difference in the natural endowments and environmental carrying capacities among different regions, with relatively limited space suitable for survival and development, and there is a relatively high tension between man and nature. We must think of our future generations. We must not only provide support to the development of current generations, we must also leave room for the development of future generations. We will strengthen overall planning and management; overcome the barriers of



administrative zoning, with attention to main function areas and policies related to differentiated regional environment and development; protect the integrity and safety of eco-systems and create a development pattern appropriate for China's conditions. We will adhere to the principle of prioritizing protection and natural rehabilitation, carry out major ecological restoration projects, protect key ecological function areas and important ecological systems, maintain biodiversity and improve the ecological environment.

Thirdly, we must accelerate reform and innovation, and provide vigor and vitality for the development of a conservation culture. Both incentives and constraining mechanisms are important tools for achieving resources conservation and environmental protection. We will speed up innovations of systems and mechanisms; develop and implement as soon as possible the indicator system and examination method for assessing the development of a conservation culture; improve relevant regulations and standards; identify appropriate prices for resource products and implement financial, taxation, monetary and industrial policies conducive to conservation of ecology and environmental protection. The development, application and extension of new technologies have profound impacts on economic and social development, and will determine the capacity in development and utilization of resources and protection of the eco-environment. We will combine self innovation with international cooperation; make more efforts to develop energy saving, environmental protection, as well as new energy and low carbon technologies; concentrate on research of key fields and projects; widely extend advanced applicable technologies; and continuously improve the development of a conservation culture.

Addressing global challenges including climate change, and caring for the Earth, home for mankind, depend on unremitting efforts of each country and increasingly requires greater international cooperation. We advocate that each country in the world should strengthen dialogue with concerted efforts, adhere to the principle of "common but differentiated requirement", strive for comprehensive, effective and sustained implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, practically realize financial support and technological transfer from developed countries to developing countries and facilitate active achievements of the Cancun Conference on Climate Change.

Members and experts!

You have worked hard for the cause of China's environment and development for a long time with positive contributions. Policy recommendations such as national strategy for environmental protection and ecological development, ecological restoration of important land ecological systems, and strengthening science and technology innovation and support



put forward by CCICED Members and experts at this AGM are important references to the improvement of relevant national policy measures. Here, on behalf of the Chinese Government, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all Members and experts!

CCICED is a bridge and platform for international cooperation on environment and development, and it will have its 20th anniversary in 2011. I sincerely hope that at the new starting point, each Member and expert will understand the significance of the time, when China is accelerating the transformation of its economic development pattern, and continue carrying out in-depth study of key strategies, policy measures and implementation roadmaps in the field of environment and development based on China's national conditions and practical requirements. China will actively seek wisdom and insight on the development of a resource-saving and environment-friendly society in China, which will contribute significantly to China's comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable socioeconomic development.

Finally, I wish a complete success of CCICED's 2010 Annual General Meeting! I wish all Members and experts a pleasant stay and good health in Beijing!

Thank you!