



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
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PRESS RELEASE

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Remarks at the UN High-level Event on the MDGs

Wen Jiabao

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

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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Eight years ago today, the United Nations (UN) solemnly adopted the *Millennium Declaration*, offering new hopes to people living in poverty around the world.

China is the most populous country in the world. Since 1978, we have, mainly with our own efforts and through reform and opening-up, accelerated the pace of development. In less than 30 years, we have brought down the number of people in absolute poverty from 250 million to 15 million, achieved free nine-year compulsory education throughout China, particularly in the rural areas, and put in place a new type of cooperative medical care system mainly financed by the government, which has benefited the 800 million farmers. We have set up the system of village and community self-governance for rural and urban residents and introduced government transparency, democratic oversight and direct election at the community level.

In the final analysis, all that we do in China now serves but one purpose - to eradicate poverty and build on this basis to achieve modernization with prosperity, democracy, advanced culture and harmony.

China is a big and responsible developing country. Though not rich, it has honored its commitments to the *Millennium Declaration* and done what it can to help some least developed countries. By the end of June 2008, China had cancelled a total of RMB24.7 billion of debts for 49 heavily indebted poor countries and least developed countries in Asia and Africa, provided RMB206.5 billion assistance of various forms, including RMB90.8 billion free aid, and offered zero-tariff treatment to goods from 42 least developed countries. The number of tariff items enjoying such treatment ranges from 736 to 1,115, accounting for 98% of the export volume of least developed countries to China. China has trained 15,000 African professionals in various fields, sent medical teams and provided free anti-malaria medicine to Africa. China will continue to do so and will dispatch up to 100 senior agricultural experts to Africa and build 30 hospitals and 100 rural schools for Africa. To enhance Africa's capacity for independent development, China decided at the end of 2007 to provide RMB2.377 billion of free aid and RMB700 million interest-free loans to Africa.

Statistics released by the World Bank last year showed that over the past 25 years, China accounted for 67% of the achievements in global poverty reduction. The vision set out in the UN *Millennium Declaration* is being gradually turned into reality in the vast country of China. This is also the most important international responsibility that the Chinese today should fulfill.

We have to recognize, however, that about one billion people in the world still live below the poverty line and hundreds of millions suffer from hunger. China is also under pressure in terms of population, resources and the environment, and it faces such challenges as uneven development between urban and rural areas and between different regions, imbalance between economic and social development and a large low-income group.

Counting from today, we have only seven years to go before the end of 2015 to reach the goals in the *Millennium Declaration* of halving the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, and no more than 12 years before the end of 2020 to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

To attain the goals of the *Millennium Declaration* globally remains a long and uphill journey, and the difficulties cannot be underestimated.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope that, we, leaders present today, will join hands to shoulder greater responsibilities as statesmen and pay closer attention to and show more compassion for the poor regions and people in the world. To this end, I wish to suggest the following:

- It is important for governments to give top priority to development. Underdeveloped countries should make poverty eradication through development a central task, and developed countries should provide enabling conditions for the development of underdeveloped countries. Development is, first and foremost, economic development and educational, cultural and social development should also be high on the agenda.

- It is important to give encouragement and support to all countries in taking development paths suited to their national conditions and exploring development models conducive to their national development and poverty eradication efforts. Respect for the right of people of all countries to independently choose development paths and models should serve as a basis and precondition for democracy.

- It is important to resolve regional conflicts and ethnic strife through peaceful means rather than by force. We should promote democracy in international relations and encourage all countries to have consultations on an equal footing, seek common ground while reserving differences, pursue win-win outcomes and live in harmony with each other.

- It is important to step up international assistance. Developed countries in particular should assume the responsibility of helping underdeveloped countries. Assistance should be provided selflessly, with no political strings attached. It is particularly important to increase assistance for least developed countries and regions, with the focus on addressing hunger, medical care and education for children. I wish to propose that donor countries double their donations to the World Food Program in the next five years and the international community do more to cancel or reduce debts owed by least developed countries and give zero-tariff treatment to their exports.

- It is important to improve the working mechanisms for achieving the development goals in the *Millennium Declaration*. It is necessary to coordinate the efforts of international organizations to jointly overcome the difficulties facing developing countries, particularly the immediate challenges of financial and economic volatility and soaring oil and food prices, make plans, raise finance for assistance and implement the plans in real earnest.

To facilitate the attainment of the MDGs, China stands ready to take the following actions:

1. In the coming five years, China will double the number of agricultural technology demonstration centers that we build for developing countries to 30, increase the number of agricultural experts and technicians we send overseas by 1,000 to twice the original figure, and provide agricultural training for 3,000 people from developing countries in China.

2. China will contribute US\$30 million to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization to establish a trust fund for projects and activities designed to help developing countries enhance agricultural productivity.

3. China will increase food export and aid to countries short of food.

4. In the coming five years, China will give 10,000 additional scholarships to developing countries and offer training programs for 1,500 school principals and teachers from African countries. China will ensure that the 30 hospitals it builds for African countries are properly staffed and equipped and it will train 1,000 doctors, nurses and managers for the recipient countries.

5. China will cancel the outstanding interest-free loans extended to least developed countries that mature before the end of 2008 and give zero-tariff treatment to 95% of products from the least developed countries.

6. In the coming five years, China will build 100 small-scale clean energy projects for developing countries, including small hydropower, solar power and bio-gas projects.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Four fifths of the world's population live in developing countries while only one fifth in developed countries. Everyone has the equal right to survival. But if developing countries remain in poverty, this will show that today's world is neither fair nor harmonious. Such a world will inevitably be an unstable one.

If we have those poor mothers and their hungry babies crying for food

on our mind, then there is no difference that we cannot put aside and no obstacle that we cannot surmount. As long as governments have a strong sense of responsibility and mission, as long as people of all countries bring out the best of human sympathy and compassion, and as long as we unite to overcome difficulties, no matter where we come from and who we are, we will attain the Millennium Development Goals.

I look forward to the day when the poor people no longer suffer from hunger and are all able to lead a comfortable life through their own hard work and frugality. I look forward to the day when all children can go to school and everyone enjoys proper medical care. I look forward to the day when we all live in a democratic and free society in which everyone has the opportunity and right to pursue happiness. I look forward to the day when no one is discriminated against for his or her color, race or belief and the family of mankind lives in greater harmony.

I believe that this is not just a day that I look forward to, but a day that everyone present here today looks forward to. Let us work towards the goals of the *Millennium Declaration*, so that the day will come, and will come early.

Thank you!