

(Translation)

Jointly Build A New Asia Pacific of Sustainable Development

Remarks by Assistant Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu
Under Item 8 at the 69th Session of the United Nations
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Bangkok, 29 April 2013

Mr. Chair,
Madam Executive Secretary,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to begin by extending, on behalf of the Chinese government, congratulations on the opening of the 69th Session of the Commission. My thanks go to the government of Thailand and the Secretariat of ESCAP for their thoughtful arrangements for the meetings.

This session, themed on “building resilience to natural disasters and major economic crises”, is important and relevant. On 20 April, a magnitude-7.0 earthquake hit Lushan County of Sichuan Province, causing heavy casualties and property losses. In the wake of the disaster, the Chinese government immediately launched full-scale relief operations, and people from all walks of life rushed to help. With relief operations unfolding in an orderly manner, the quake-hit areas have maintained stability and local people are beginning to resume their normal life. After the earthquake, the international community expressed sympathy and offered assistance to the Chinese government and people. Some countries have offered support in various forms. The Secretariat of ESCAP and several member states helped us with post-quake assessment by swiftly providing support in information, communication and space technology. The Chinese government and people fully appreciate these.

As an Asia-Pacific country with frequent occurrence of natural disasters, China has in recent years overcome a number of major natural disasters. And we have taken an active part in the global efforts to tackle the international financial crisis. Our experience of responding to multiple crises has made us truly see how important and imperative it is to enhance resilience and promote regional and international cooperation. Here, I wish to make the following proposals:

First, regional peace and stability is the fundamental precondition. Asia Pacific is stable on the whole. But hot-spot issues keep emerging, so do traditional and non-traditional security concerns that undermine regional peace and stability. Against this backdrop, countries in this region need to cherish the hard-won peaceful situation, appreciate the value of peace, reject the zero-sum mentality, act in the spirit of comprehensive security and cooperative security, and resolve disputes and differences through dialogue and consultation. In so doing, we will be able to foster a harmonious and secure environment for durable peace and stability in this part of the world.

Second, promote economic recovery, growth and job creation is the firm foundation. Asia Pacific, while leading global recovery and growth, faces a daunting task of economic transformation and development. Asia-Pacific countries need to strengthen macro-economic policy coordination, transform growth models, adjust economic structures, improve the quality and efficiency of development, and address prominent issues and problems through development. The biggest bottleneck to the world economic development, namely, the North-South gap, must be addressed as a priority.

Third, deeper reform of the international financial and economic governance systems is a strong guarantee. We need to work for a more just, equitable, sound and orderly global economic governance system and increase the representation and voice of developing countries in particular. Asia-Pacific countries need to actively implement relevant consensus on reform, strengthen region-wide financial policy coordination and practical cooperation, and provide solid funding support for further integration and common development of this region.

Fourth, an open, balanced, inclusive and win-win trading system is an enduring driving force. Opening-up serves as the solid foundation and unfailing impetus for the growth of trade and economy. We should firmly oppose and reject all forms of protectionism and reduce various trade and investment barriers. In recent years, much progress has been made in the development of free trade areas within the region. All countries should further open our markets and promote market integration by adhering to open regionalism and the principles of openness, inclusiveness and transparency.

Fifth, sustainable development is a natural choice. In the face of such major challenges as expanding population, unbalanced development,

depleting resources and environmental degradation, Asia Pacific should be firmly committed to sustainable development. We should support all countries' independent choice of sustainable development paths suited to their own national conditions, adhere to the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", and actively explore an effective model for green economy. We should strike a balance between economic growth and environmental protection and shoulder the dual responsibilities for promoting sustainable development and global economic recovery.

Sixth, joint response to natural disasters is an effective way. Asia Pacific has been hit by frequent natural disasters in recent years. Only by joining hands to fight natural disasters can we achieve common development and prosperity. We need to enhance cooperation on disaster reduction and relief, share best practices and lessons, improve our ability to prepare for and fight natural disasters, explore effective natural disaster risk management models and increase the efficiency and capacity of post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction. Special efforts should be made to forestall compound crises triggered by concurrent natural disasters and economic and social risks.

Mr. Chair,

We are glad to see that despite severe challenges posed by the international economic and financial crisis, Asia Pacific has remained one of the most dynamic and promising regions in the world, maintaining sound economic momentum and making important contribution to global economic recovery and growth. With a 500 million-strong middle class, and with region-wide flow of capital, information and personnel reaching a considerable level and regional division of labor taking shape, Asia has seen initial success in boosting demand. The advent of a new revolution in science, technology and industry is accumulating capital, technology and human resources for Asia Pacific. On the other hand, however, the region will encounter various risks and challenges in the process of recovery and growth. As indicated by the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific* released by ESCAP this month, economic growth in Asia Pacific is still impeded by inadequacy of inclusive and sustainable growth. Other prominent problems include unstable basis for recovery, uncoordinated economic policies, uneven development course, unfair distribution of resources and unsound security system.

As UN's most important agency dedicated to Asia-Pacific economic and social development, ESCAP has devoted itself to improving people's wellbeing, promoting development and advancing the sustainable

economic and social development of the region. It has closely followed the region's economic and social developments and put forward policy analyses, proposals and project initiatives, producing positive results in disaster prevention and reduction, poverty alleviation, connectivity, trade facilitation, social security, old age health and food security. Madam Executive Secretary, under your capable leadership, ESCAP has also conducted institutional reform and made headway in improving organizational structure, increasing operational efficiency and strengthening project implementation and management. These efforts are supported by all sides. And China highly appreciates such progress.

As Asia-Pacific countries strive to promote development, improve people's wellbeing and pursue cooperation, ESCAP could play a unique, important role in regional cooperation by leveraging its strengths and blazing new trails. First, it is advisable to give more attention to global issues. Forward-looking and targeted studies may be conducted and the voice of Asia Pacific should be heard on major issues such as global economic governance, international development cooperation, climate change, energy security and food security. Second, it is important to heed the needs of countries in this region. The focus should be on cooperation projects on connectivity and financing for infrastructure development, and enhancing the sharing of resources and best practices. Efforts should be made to test run some strategic, cross-year and cross-mechanism cooperation projects in developing countries, particularly least developed countries to boost their capacity for independent development. Third, it is important to make concrete efforts in promoting the implementation of the UN MDGs and, on the basis of a full review and assessment of the outcomes of the MDGs, formulate a post-2015 agenda. It needs to be pointed out that poverty eradication and sustainable development must be at the core of the post-2015 international development agenda and there should be no deviation from the theme of development.

Mr. Chair,

In recent years, in the face of devastating natural disasters and the global financial crisis, the Chinese government, with steady and decisive actions, has introduced a series of policies and measures and actively participated in the international efforts to tackle the financial crisis, thus maintaining domestic economic and social stability and making important contribution to global economic recovery. As an important member of the international community, China has, with its concrete actions, delivered its responsibilities and commitments and contributed to prosperity and stability in Asia Pacific and facilitated regional integration.

China has achieved a good start for economic and social development in 2013. The economy continues to grow steadily and summer grain and oil crops are growing well. Domestic consumption has increased steadily, investment as well as export and import have been expanding fairly fast and prices have been stable on the whole. China's urban unemployment rate is kept at a low level, reform and opening-up has further deepened and structural adjustment continues to move forward. The service and high-tech industries are developing rapidly, business profits are regaining their lost ground and energy intensity continues to decline. Moreover, the income of urban and rural residents is rising at a fast pace. China will continue to work in line with the 12th Five-Year Plan to ensure the continuity and stability of its macroeconomic policies, actively expand effective domestic demand and deepen reform and opening-up so as to upgrade the Chinese economy. To this end, China will focus its efforts in the following areas:

--Stay committed to adjusting the economic structure and transforming the economic growth model. We take the pursuit of development in a scientific way as the underlying guideline and accelerating the change of the growth model as a major task. We will continue to focus on making progress while maintaining stability and give greater importance to ensuring steady growth. Economic structural reform will be deepened across the board so as to advance strategic adjustment of the economic structure. We will pursue growth driven by innovation and consumption and establish a long-term mechanism to boost consumer demand. We will also adjust the pattern of national income distribution to narrow income gaps. In so doing, we will strive to transform and upgrade the Chinese economy.

--Stay committed to improving people's wellbeing and upholding social fairness and justice. We will give high priority to ensuring and improving people's wellbeing so that our people will have clean air, safe water and food and enjoy their rights to education, employment, medical and old-age care and housing. We will introduce institutions to create opportunities for all individuals and enterprises to have fair competition and development, promote private investment and startups, expand employment, and make our enterprises more competitive, so as to unleash the potential in economic and societal sectors.

--Stay committed to making ecological progress. We will raise our awareness of the need to respect, accommodate to and protect nature. By adhering to the basic state policy of conserving resources and protecting

the environment, we will strive for green, circular and low-carbon development, shape the system of zoning, the industrial structure, the way of production and the way of life accordingly and promote modernization that features harmonious development between man and nature.

--Stay committed to promoting coordinated and harmonized development of industrialization, IT application, urbanization and agricultural modernization. Efforts will be made to promote the integration and interaction of progress in all these areas. We will focus on integrating urban and rural development and take concrete steps to improve the level and quality of urbanization. We will build a new type of relations between industry and agriculture and between urban and rural areas in which industry promotes agriculture, cities support rural development, agriculture and industry benefit each other and there is integrated urban and rural development. In this way, we will be able to gradually narrow the gap between urban and rural areas and between the rich and the poor.

Mr. Chair,

Last November, the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was convened, and two main goals were set out at the meeting, namely, completing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects and doubling China's 2010 GDP and per capita income for both urban and rural residents by 2020, and turning China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious country by mid century. These two big goals embody the Chinese dream for the great renewal of the nation. The Chinese dream will not only benefit the 1.3 billion Chinese people, but also contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in Asia Pacific and beyond.

The future and destiny of China, Asia Pacific and the world are more closely linked to each other than ever before. China will work hard to expand and deepen its common interests with the rest of Asia Pacific and the world, adhere to the basic national policy of reform and opening-up and unswervingly abide by a win-win strategy of opening-up. As always, we will continue to enhance practical cooperation with ESCAP and other Asia-Pacific countries to jointly build a resilient and dynamic Asia Pacific. And the realization of the Chinese dream will surely contribute to our efforts in building a new Asia Pacific that enjoys sustainable development.

Thank you.