US-China Renewable Energy Forum Luncheon Address

By Mr. Xu Guan Hua
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Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Friends,

I am very pleased to join you for this luncheon meeting today.

First of all, please allow me to express my appreciation for the warm welcome and excellent organization provided by the United States Department of Energy. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to all the colleagues and friends who have contributed great efforts to promote cooperation and information exchange on renewable energy development between the United States and China.

The size of the Chinese delegation present here today shows the high priority we place on renewable energy development and the high expectations we have regarding further cooperation between the United States and China in this field. We hope this event will contribute to the promotion, and to the deepening of our cooperation.

Since the Environment and Development Conference of 1992, many countries in the world have realized the importance of promoting sustainable development in the fields of Energy and the Environment. Clean energy technologies utilization has become a global trend in worldwide energy development.

In China, since the beginning of the reform programs 20 years ago, economic development has grown rapidly, bringing about an increase in energy consumption from 0.57 billion tce in 1978 to 1.36 billion tce in 1998. The massive use of fossil fuel has seriously damaged the environment, and China is facing great challenges in monitoring the impacts of its social and economic development.

We are committed to developing our social and environmental resources in a sustainable manner, and sustainable energy development is one of the very important components of our overall strategy. The Government of China has formulated a series of regulations, policies and legislation to develop renewable energy. It has also allocated funds to stimulate renewable energy research and development, to multiply technology demonstrations, and to encourage wide scale adoption of renewable energy technologies. Over the course of the last 20 years, renewable energy development in China has achieved great progress.

However, compared to the more developed countries, renewable energy development in China is still in its early stages both in terms of technology and of economic demand. I believe that this Forum and the related solar thermal exhibition

will be very valuable for us to learn about renewable energy development in the United States, and that it will help us explore opportunities for future cooperation in this field. These two events will also provide a good chance for the United Sates counterpart to learn more about the great market potential in China for renewable energy development.

Senior officers of China's State Council are paying great attention to clean energy development, and they have emphasized many times the need to develop research activities for a sustainable energy and environment interface.

Following the instruction of the State Council, the Ministry of Science and Technology, associated with 13 other ministries including the State Environment Protection Administration, has issued a "Clean Air Program" composed of two key action plans: the Clean Vehicle Action Plan and the Clean Energy Action Plan.

The general objective of the "Clean Air Program" is to eliminate the bulk of urban air pollution by controlling emissions from vehicles and by reducing the massive use of coal in power generation. The program relies heavily on high technology and on Research and Development, on the development of demonstration projects, and on the introduction of a comprehensive monitoring mechanism. The program is expected to improve the air quality in the main cities of China in a period of 3 to 5 years. The Clean Vehicle Action Plan is under implementation and the Clean Energy Action Plan will also be started very soon.

In addition to these, the Government of China is formulating a Western Region Development Plan designed to develop rural electrification for the farmers and herdsmen living in the Western isolated areas of China. One set objective is to electrify all the farms and herdsmen living in the Aili Region of Tibet within a 2 years period.

International cooperation in the energy field is one of the most active in the world. In March 1999, I led a Chinese delegation to Belgium composed of more than 100 delegates to participate in the Third Sino-Europe Energy Cooperation Conference. This week I am leading a delegation of nearly half a hundred members to participate in the present US-China Renewable Energy Forum. This shows the great attention we place on energy issues and demonstrates our active commitment to international cooperation in the energy field.

Our target is to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation with the international counterpart in order to improve our energy utilization level, and to rationalize our efforts on pollution control.

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Friends:

Energy is the basis for life, and energy development and utilization will have a great impact on living conditions for both our generation and the next. May I request

from everybody present here today to keep working together in the future, and to join efforts in preserving a clean environment for our younger generations.

Finally, let me wish the Forum to have a very successful outcome.

Thank you