

Statement by Dr. Liu Yuyin at the intergovernmental preparatory meeting
for CSD 17 on the question of Africa
Feb. 26, 2009 New York

Madam Chairman,

The Chinese delegation would like to thank the Secretary General for his report on the question of Africa. It associates itself with the statement made by the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

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As the continent with the largest number of developing countries, Africa has long suffered from various constraints such as backward infrastructure, weak foundation of agricultural production, degradation of land and ecological environment, frequent natural disasters, low industrial output, poor sanitary conditions, unfair trade environment and heavy debt burden, all of which have seriously hampered its effort to realize food security and eradicate poverty. For the majority of African countries, the realization of the MDGs is an arduous task and sustainable development an elusive dream.

The sustainable development of Africa requires not only the efforts of the African countries themselves, but also the greater support of the international community in the spirit of global development partnership. Here, I'd like to stress the following three points:

First, it is necessary to create an external environment favorable to the realization of development of the African countries. In formulating the relevant economic, financial and trade regulations and policies, the international community should take into full consideration the special situation of Africa and give the African countries a greater representation and a bigger say so that they can have the ability and opportunity to integrate in the world economy and gradually grow stronger. The developed countries should effectively increase assistance, open their markets, provide debt relief and cut back on strings attached. At the same time, it is necessary to bear in mind the needs of the African countries, ensure that assistance go to the right priorities, improve the quality of assistance and help the African countries with capacity building so as to enhance their ability to attract foreign direct investment and to raise funds by themselves.

Secondly, it is necessary to provide genuine help to the African countries in developing agriculture and maintaining food security. The international community should increase support for African agricultural development to help the African countries establish and improve infrastructure, upgrade farming technology, spread the use of improved variety of crops and chemical fertilizers, promote crop diversification, increase food production and improve food storage technologies. The major developed countries should drastically reduce their trade distorting agricultural subsidies to give African agricultural products access to the international market, thus creating an environment of fair competition for the agricultural production of the African countries. It is also necessary to take measures to help the African countries strengthen management and improve their capacity for reproduction.

Thirdly, it is necessary to help the African countries enhance the ability to respond to climate change and to combat desertification. The international community should continue to uphold the basic framework established by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, adhere to the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities”, promote international cooperation in the field of climate change and fulfill commitments in financial assistance and technological transfer to the developing countries, including the African countries. We must fully recognize the severity of the problem of desertification in Africa, take practical measures to integrate closely efforts to eradicate poverty, respond to climate change and combat desertification, increase investment by large amounts, extend applicable technologies and mobilize the participation of all sectors to help the African countries get out of the vicious circle of poverty and desertification.

We hope that the discussions at this session will produce practical and effective policies and provide positive help to the sustainable development of the African countries.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.