

Welcome Speeches by  
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Ladies, Gentlemen and Friends,

First of all I want to thank the Organizing Committee for inviting China to attend the Leeds Conference and allowing me to say some words. In this Conference, policy makers and experts from various countries will discuss the linkage of SRH and health system development. I would also like to give a brief introduction on China's population and family planning program to make you understand more about the Chinese situation.

As everybody knows, since the opening and reform two decades ago, China has undergone rapid changes. This has first and foremost been in the economic area, where China is moving from a planned economy to a market economy. Entry into the WTO has accelerated this process in recent years. In the year 2002, the Chinese Government set up strategic objectives for building a "well-off" society in an all-round way and has taken "To further develop the economy, improve democracy, advance science and education, enrich culture, foster social harmony and upgrade the texture of life for the people" as indicators to measure the goals. These indicators have the same content with HDI. This shows that the Chinese Government has realized that development must go beyond economic growth and contain more social and cultural development objectives, for instance poverty alleviation, improvement of quality of life, and increased access to better education and health care. China's population has a close linkage with its economic and social development. At the same time, the population issues also have a central influence on socio-economic trends in China. Therefore, the Chinese Government attaches great importance to the population issues. Since the implementation of family planning in the 1970s throughout the whole country, China has achieved remarkable success in stabilizing population growth, improvement of population quality in terms of education and health, as well as promotion of social and economic development. Since the 1990s, the total fertility rate of Chinese women has remained at around 1.8. The life expectancy has reached 71 years old. In the decade from 1990 to 2000, the maternal and infant mortality rates have reduced from 88.9/100 thousand and 50.2/1000 to 53 and 32.2. The population reproductive pattern has transferred from one that is characterized by a high birth rate, low mortality rate and high natural growth rate to one with a low birth rate, low mortality rate and low natural growth rate.

Since 1994, the Chinese Government has earnestly implemented the ICPD Program of Action and vigorously integrated family planning with poverty alleviation, increased access to better education and health care, providing quality services, HIV/AIDS prevention, improvement of the social welfare system and gender equality with human-centered principle. In the implementation of the RH/FP program, the following approaches have been encouraged, such as multi-sector coordination, information/

education/communication, comprehensive services, scientific management and to set up management and service system under market economy. Meanwhile, the Chinese Government has attached great importance to the roles of NGOs, private sectors and civil society, since they take different responsibilities with the government in promoting the country's development. The Chinese Government has formulated a series of policies, law and regulations that are favorable to the coordinated development of the population, society and economy. The Population and Family Planning Law issued in 2002 regulates not only the obligations of citizens but also 8 reproductive rights for citizens. This shows the Chinese Government has continued to improve and reform its family planning programs.

The Chinese population has been confronted with serious challenges: the continued growth of total number of population, faster increase of ageing population and urbanization lagging far behind. With the deepening economic reforms, China is experiencing a rapid social transition. Social traditions and values are rapidly changing, not least in the area of reproductive and sexual health. This change has been influenced by economic development, information exchanges, increased population mobility and urbanization. People's needs for sexual/reproductive health and family planning have increased. In the new century, the major population and family planning task is to further stabilize the low fertility level, promote life quality, including HIV/AIDS prevention, improve the balance of sex ratio at birth, and adopt measures to tackle the ageing problem, floating population and employment.

Due to the large population of China, the needs of development are complicated. Thus the Chinese Government has allocated large resources to meet the needs. Meanwhile international cooperation in the field of population and family planning yielded fruitful results. The National Population and Family Planning Commission has set up exchanges and cooperation relationships with many international organizations and foundations such as UNFPA, WHO, IPPF, Marie Stopes International, JOICFP in the field of RH/FP, Quality of Care, adolescent sexual health, HIV/AIDS prevention. The cooperation has not only introduced advance concepts and management methods but also promotes the development of the Chinese population and family program.

Please allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to DFID on its invitation to us to attend such an important conference. I am confident that DFID will play very important roles as always in global population and family planning. It has promoted Chinese advancement in the field of social development through the cooperation on economy, education, health and environment with the Chinese Government.

2004 will be the ten-year anniversary of ICPD. I believe the Leeds Conference will further promote the international community to move forward to the goals of ICPD. Let us further develop our communication and cooperation under the principle of being equal and mutually beneficial, mutual development, and devote our efforts to the building of a prosperous and peaceful human homeland of ours.

I wish the success of the conference.

Thank you.