

**Second Meeting of the Kitakyushu Initiative Network (Mayors' Segment)
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Weihai, People's Republic of China**

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Mr. Ravi Sawhney, The Honorable Mr. Liu Mingxin, Deputy Mayor of Weihai City, Professor Hidefumi Imura, Mr. Aslam Khan, and all distinguished participants:

On behalf of the State Environment Protection Administration (SEPA) of China, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the success of the Expert Group Segment and the Mayors' Segment of the Second Meeting of the Kitakyushu Initiative Network.

I'd like to take this opportunity to make three points about this meeting.

The "Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment" is a meaningful activity and we have a great interest in the programme. The environmental state in China is still very serious and we need to learn from the experiences and lessons of other countries and cities. As you know, it has been 20 years since the Cultural Revolution, and as we have been developing at about 9 % economic growth rate, the urbanization rate has also accelerated to its present level at about 37%. At the current rate, the urbanization level of China will reach 46% in 2010 and 55% in 2020. Many environment problems have arisen due to high economic growth and rapid urbanization. Compared with developed countries, the main feature of present-day environment problems in China are complex ones which have been generated in the process of rapid industrialization, and are difficult to solve.

China is in a new phase at present, and the government announced a policy to realize a holistic wealthy society. This policy has four aims; among these, two aims will have impact on environment. The first aim is to raise GDP by four times by 2020; the second aim is to realize "industrial expansion, affluent lifestyles, ecological well-being, and increase in the capacity for sustainable development." For this aim, we have to set the goal of environment protection to the level along with integrated strategies to realize a holistic wealthy society. Thus, we sincerely wish to learn the experiences and lessons of other countries and cities.

At the same time, we would like to introduce the experiences we have accumulated in the process of environment protection to other cities. Environment protection in China has made drastic progress and numerous good methods and experiences have been accumulated. China is building its urban environment management capacity in the progress of urban environment protection. Though per capita GDP is about USD 1,000 in China, we can avoid serious environmental pollution, unlike developed countries which had experienced this in the process of rapid urbanization. China has been successfully combating environment pollution, and in many cities such as Weihai, the environmental quality has improved significantly. When we see environment protection in China from the viewpoint of policy, we are emphasizing not only North-South cooperation (cooperation with developed countries) but also South-South cooperation (cooperation with developing countries). Most of the cities and experts participating in the Kitakyushu Initiative Network are from developing countries. We would like to cooperate with participants in this field.

Secondly, I think today's Mayors meeting is very meaningful because one of the most important experiences in Chinese environment protection is the necessity of enthusiasm to carry out environment protection. The Mayors' awareness and positive attitude to environment protection is essential. Comparing the process of environmental protection in developed countries with one of developing countries, the role of mayors and governments at different levels is very important. Developing countries have adapted the so called "bottom-up" system. That means that citizens and NGOs have been promoting environmental protection by lobbying the government. On the other hand, we have adapted a "top-down" system because we are in beginning stage of development and our awareness of environment is insufficient. That means that citizens deal with the systematic environmental protection under government's guidance. From the

China's experience, it is obvious that such method is effective in developing countries. On the other hand, it is our great pleasure that the citizens' and organizations' awareness and enthusiasm towards environmental protection is becoming larger. For example, new systems such as environmental information disclosure and public participation have been introduced and positive attitudes towards environmental protection have become prevalent. Consequently, this Mayors' meeting is very meaningful to promote environmental cooperation among the cities in the Asia-Pacific region.

Thirdly, I think that the venue of this meeting, Weihai, is the best choice. One reason is that Weihai has realized development balanced between the environment and economy under the early stage of socialism. It is my personal opinion that Weihai has achieved significant sustainable development. There are many clean cities like Weihai on east coast of China, but these cities has been cleaned up after experiencing pollution. Unlike these cities, Weihai has placed considerable emphasis on environmental protection in the early stage of development as a new type of city; environmental protection had priority in the social economic development plan. Accordingly, in the process of development in Weihai, they have not experienced serious pollution and have been developing in harmony between the environment and the economy. As Weihai has many methods and experiences, it can cooperate with other cities without difficulty. Another reason is that Weihai has the ability to promote international cooperation at a high level, which I can see by this meeting. There is no difference with meetings held in Beijing. It was a good choice to select Wei-hai as the venue of this meeting.

Last but not least, based on this meeting, I hope that the Third meeting of Kitakyushu Initiative Network will have good results and progress. I wish today's Mayors' Meeting success.

Thank you very much.