

Second Meeting of the Kitakyushu Initiative Network
17 October 2003, Weihai, China
Opening Remarks

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Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends:

Good morning!

Initiated by Ministerial Level Conference for Asia and the Pacific Environment and Development, Meeting of the Kitakyushu Initiative Network has been successfully held once. It greatly improved environmental quality and accelerated economic and social development in Asia and Pacific region. As a member of the network, we feel proud and greatly honored to held the Second Meeting of the Kitakyushu Initiative. On behalf of Weihai Municipal Government and 2.5 million people, here I warmly congratulate the successful opening of the meeting and warmly welcome every guest.

Backed against mountains, facing the sea on three sides, and adjacent with land on one side, Weihai enjoys beautiful environment, pleasant climate, and fresh air, hence the important place for summer resort and recuperation in China. This excellent natural environment is one of the most important comparative advantages for Weihai's development of economy and society which will become a golden brand for development if it can be utilized thoroughly and efficiently. In recent years, great attention has been paid to environmental construction and protection by sticking to the policy of constructing opening advantage through environment advantage, to construct development advantage through opening advantage and achieve more wonderful environment through development advantage. Based on this strategy, Weihai Municipal Government has been keeping on a benign cycle between environmental protection and economic development all these years. In the past 15 years, our GDP has been growing at an annual rate of 18%. With GDP reaching 70.3 billion RMB and 3,400 USD per capita last year, Weihai ranked among the 50 strong cities in terms of comprehensive economic strength. The comprehensive index of city environmental quality of Weihai has ranked top all these years, though its urban area increased 2.4 times, urban population increased 5.7 times and its total volume of economy increased 19.7 times. It was awarded as the first National Hygienic City, the first National Model City Group for Environment Protection, one of the first National Garden Cities, one of the best tourist cities, and twice awarded the Dubai International Award for Best Practices in Improving Living Environment by the UN. Just on Oct. 6th, 2003 Weihai won the Scroll of Honor by UN-HABITAT, which is the highest prize in the regard of human settlement, and Weihai is the only municipal government winning this prize.

Regarding to environmental protection work, we mainly adhere to the following four principles:

1. Putting plan-making on top agenda, achieving the harmony and unification between urbanization and environment

Planning is the key for a city's development, the blueprint of construction and the basis of management. With a good plan, the environmental construction can get twice the result with half the effort. Therefore, in designing the city's construction, we adopt the policy of combining nature and city as well as the superior geographical situation, and divided the city into 9 parts according to the layout of coastline and the mountain body in which each part is divided and connected, which displays distinctive features as the city is surrounded by sea, mountains, and forest. In terms of the layout of the construction space, we insist on moderate height and reasonable size and distance, combining the buildings with green mountains and blue sea; in terms of the architectural style, the main part is in the Chinese red-tile roofs and some buildings also use the European style, which makes the unique architectural style. Meanwhile, we also require the three country-level cities to figure out their own distinctive characters in which Roncheng City is characterized by forest, Wendeng City by water and Rushan by green and now these characters

have now come into being.

Combined the whole planning of the city, we also establish the professional planning in terms of the land use, protection of surface water and the seashore, disposal of city sewage, and heat and gas supply. By exerting the function of programming in the city environment construction, we avoided the controlling after pollution. Meanwhile, according to the city programming, we have dismantled the former projects gradually and recovered their original appearances. In several years, 6 parks at the city seashore have been set up and constructions with an area of over 60,000 square meters have been dismantled, which maintain the solemnity of programming.

2. Setting green color as the basic tone and creating a coastal eco-city

In recent years, we have been paying special attention to the construction of the city's landscape engineering. According to the idea of "making parks green, making road sides green and making mountains green," we are utilizing means of "multi-layers, multi-seasons and multi-methods," to make desert mountains natural protection zones, coastal lines green galleries, and to join the green of the urban, rural and mountain areas together, and the ecological green system covering the whole city has been established. In terms of green distribution, we have stuck to dismantling more old houses and building less in the old district, and built green areas or parking places in vacated spaces. In terms of the development of the new district, buildings, roads and squares, green areas cover 1/3 respectively. We are building the city in gardens instead of building gardens in the city. We have decided to plant 100 million trees during the period of the tenth five-year plan and the green covering rate will be increased by 2% annually. The task of the first three years has been over-fulfilled. Until now, we have built four national level forest parks such as Liugong Island, 25 large comprehensive parks such as Weihai Park, 12 green squares such as People's Square. Public green areas have reached 1160 hectares. We have built more than 60 special green streets such as "the silk tree street" and "the pagoda tree street," more than 50 thematic green districts such as "cherry blossom garden" and "China rose garden." Seashore forest belt of 8000 hectares around the city has been built, forming a preliminary comprehensive system of coastal protection forest, green belt around the city, group green belt and agricultural ecological economic forest. The green covering rate of the whole city has reached 29.8%, and public green area is 17 square meters per capita. The quantities of mild animals such as swan and sika are increasing continuously. Biological species amounted to nearly 800 kinds.

3. Adhering to all round management and upgrading city's potential environmental quality

Beautiful environment is the business card for Weihai, and environmental protection is to protect Weihai's good image and its future. Thus, in the environmental protection administration, we took mainly the following three steps:

First, completing law and regulations system. In recent years, according to relevant law and regulations on natural environmental protection, series of local regulations were made such as "Decision on Attaching Importance on Environmental Protection," "Opinions on Strengthening Environment Protection Work in the Opening Process," "Administrations on Urban Planning of Weihai," "Urban Afforestation Method of Weihai," "Regulations of Weihai City Image and Environment Sanitation Administration," "Administration Method on Environment Protection of Weihai Construction," and so on. A feasible local administration regulation system, combining with the State and Provincial environmental protection laws and regulations, has been formed.

Second, implementing strict approval procedure. We applied treatment from source, and adopted the first examination right and veto right for environment protection conditions of new projects. We have rejected the projects with pollution, high-energy consumption, and heavy water consumption. We would rather bear lower development speed than increase new pollution sources. In the last few years, the city has rejected 400 pollutant industrial projects, approved 3000 projects meeting "three requirements," totally rejected foreign investment of USD 600 million and domestic investment of RMB 5 billion.

Third, redoubling efforts toward environmental improvement. We have carried out projects of "blue

sky," "clean sea" and "quiet city," enforced over-all treatment of polluting sources. 38 heavily pollutant factories in urban area have been shut down, 60 of them have been relocated. Over 500 enterprises have conducted waste gas and water treatment, over 700 sets of coal-fired boiler have been pulled down. Garbage bag-collection and seal-transport have been realized, clean fuel for mobiles has been applied by force, and noise pollution has been effectively controlled. At present, the air quality of urban district is superior to second grade of the nation's standard, areas reaching noise standard is about 80%, and all the industry reaches the sewage discharge standard.

4. Upholding the public participation and forming the situation of making joint effort to improve environment

First, we established a whole set of system of public participation, including the system of "three guarantees" for the environment sanitation in front of the gate, the system of voluntary cleaning day for the city looks, the system of contracting hills for the ecological green, the system of adopting the garden green, the system of making the matter known to the public for the key projects planning, etc. These systems have effectively strengthened the initiative of the public to participate in environmental protection.

Second, we carried out a series of creative activities. Since the beginning of 1990s, we have developed some activities in the urban area to establish "environmental civilized communities," "green families" and "civilized citizens," and summed up a set of good methods. We have developed some activities for environmental protection education in primary schools and middle schools, in order to educate a student, affect a family, promote a community and finally to influence the whole society. Up till now, we have set up three green schools in the urban area.

Third, we have worked out a supervision network for the public. We have offered a column for environmental protection or a program for a special topics in the news media, established a special website of environmental protection, and opened hotline of 12369 for environmental protection and the mayor's open phone has been welcomed by the citizens. With the attention of the public for environmental quality, we have regularly released the bulletin of environmental quality to the public since 1999. Within this year, we will release a prediction report of air quality on national news media.

Ladies and gentlemen, this meeting held in Weihai provides a good opportunity for us to learn more. We will insist on strategies of building a world model city and sustainable development, absorb the experiences of advanced cities, follow the international development course, further strengthen the work in order to make Weihai a coastal eco-city with reasonable design, complete facilities, clean and beautiful environment, benign cycle of ecology, comfortable and convenient life, healthy and longevity people, rapid growing economy, and a civilized society.

Finally, I wish Weihai could leave you a good impression. Meanwhile, I wish every one of you would put forward some valuable suggestions and proposals for Weihai's economic development and environmental protection cause.

Thank you very much!