

(Translation)

Work Together to Promote Asian Cooperation in the New Century
Speech by Premier Wen Jiabao at the Opening Ceremony of
The 3rd ACD Foreign Ministers Meeting

Qingdao, 22 June 2004

The Honourable Prime Minister Thaksin,
Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Third Asia Cooperation Dialogue Foreign Ministers Meeting is formally open in Qingdao, China. Based on the consensus reached in the two previous meetings, this meeting will further identify the principles, contents and patterns of Asian cooperation, and publish the *Declaration on Asian Cooperation*. It will also hold in-depth discussions on Asian energy security and issue the *Qingdao Initiative*. This is an important meeting that will review the past, plan the future and promote Asian cooperation in the new century. I wish to extend, on behalf of the Chinese Government, my warmest congratulations on the meeting and my sincere welcome to all distinguished guests present here.

Asia is home to us all. On this vast and rich land, our ancestors created splendid ancient civilizations. Since modern times, Asia has experienced vicissitudes and suffered many tribulations. However, the dauntless and determined Asian people have overcome all hardship and adversities in their endeavours for economic development and social progress. As we can see in today's Asia, some countries have already ranked themselves among the developed countries; more and more countries have achieved economic "take-off" and sustained rapid growth; and some other countries have made gratifying achievements in their fight against poverty. We have reason to be proud of the progress and prosperity of Asia.

Entering the 21st century, Asia is now facing historic opportunities to enhance cooperation and achieve common development. This is because: first, while the world today is far from tranquil, peace and stability remain the themes of our times. This is also true in Asia. Second, economic reform in many Asian countries has further integrated them into economic globalisation and regional cooperation. Third, Asia enjoys rich natural resources, abundant workforce, vast market and huge potentials in regional economic cooperation. Fourth, Asian countries generally value

family, education, hard work and thrifty, and such shared philosophy has reinforced the inherent drive for regional cooperation. Fifth, through years of efforts, regional and sub-regional cooperation in Asia has made new and steady headway, featuring robust regional dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation. All these factors have laid a solid foundation for even more extensive and advanced cooperation among Asian countries.

In the meantime, we must be aware of the difficulties and challenges in Asian cooperation. The region is faced with many problems left over by history, and certain hotspot issues are yet to be addressed properly. The uneven economic and social development of Asian countries has limited the potential role of regional cooperation, and there is not enough rational and orderly intra-regional flow of goods, capital, technology and personnel. More efforts are needed for Asian regional cooperation to develop both in magnitude and scope and in mechanism building. In the wave of economic globalisation and regional integration, carrying out regional cooperation and development is just like sailing against the current. We must continuously forge ahead or we'll be swept downstream. Only by strengthening cooperation, can we Asian countries all share the opportunities; only by working together like crossing a river in the same boat, can we be strong enough to conquer all difficulties; and only by uniting our strengths, can we remain invincible in the fierce global competition.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Promoting Asian cooperation in the new century is both a grand cause full of hopes and an arduous task placed before us. Here, I would like to make five proposals:

First, we should adhere to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and safeguard peace and stability in Asia. Development calls for stability while cooperation cannot be achieved without peace. We should respect the reality of Asia's diversity, carry forward the tradition of Asian cooperation, treat each other candidly and as equals, settle disputes through dialogue and seek security through cooperation. For those problems left over by history or controversial issues, we should focus on the larger picture, conduct consultation on an equal footing, and handle them properly through mutual understanding and accommodation. To some of these issues, the principle of "shelving differences and going in for joint development" can be applied.

Second, we should let economic cooperation and trade spearhead

all-round cooperation in Asia. Economic cooperation and trade are the core of regional cooperation, therefore it is important to further explore the establishment of regional free trade arrangement and investment protection mechanism. In the meantime, more emphasis should be laid on strengthening: agricultural cooperation to ensure food safety in Asia; energy cooperation to meet the energy needs of Asian development; fiscal and financial cooperation to safeguard financial security in Asia; cooperation in environmental protection to build a “Green Asia” together; cooperation in information industry to narrow the “digital gap”; cooperation in public health to improve disease prevention and control in Asia; and cooperation in education to improve the capacity of Asian citizens.

Third, the mechanism for Asian cooperation should be improved on the basis of the existing channels of multilateral cooperation. A full-fledged mechanism is the platform and guarantee for enhanced regional cooperation. Facts have shown that organizations like ASEAN, SAARC, AL, 10+3 and SCO have played an important role in promoting regional cooperation. We should attach great importance to and vigorously support these mechanisms in playing their full role. Meanwhile, we should strengthen the interaction and coordination among various multilateral cooperation mechanisms so that they will become institutionalized and can work on a regular basis.

Fourth, people-to-people contact should be increased among Asian nations in order to enhance mutual understanding, trust and friendship. People-to-people contact is an important bond and basis for cooperation between states. We should vigorously expand our cooperation in tourism and conduct multi-channel and diversified cultural exchanges; initiate and promote friendly exchanges among young people; maximize the positive role of business communities, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and the media of all countries in promoting Asian cooperation.

Fifth, we should adhere to the principle of openness, accommodation and tolerance, and take the Asian cooperation to a higher level. Asian cooperation should not be exclusive, nor should it target against any third party. Asia cannot achieve rejuvenation in separation from the world, and it needs to learn the experience of other countries and regions in development and cooperation. We should maintain communication and coordination with countries and organisations outside the region, achieve development by opening up to the rest of the world and make progress in global cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To strengthen regional cooperation is not only an important component of China's foreign policy in the new era, but also the requirement of China's own development. China is a developing country with a population of 1.3 billion and handling things well in China goes further to contribute to peace and development in Asia. At present, China's macro economic performance has come to the attention of the international community. I can tell you responsibly that China's overall economic situation is good. Since last August, in response to some outstanding contradictions and problems in economic performance, the Chinese Government has taken a series of prompt and resolute macro control measures, which have already yielded noticeable results, and China's national economy has maintained a steady and rapid growth. We are fully confident of achieving the goal of "soft landing" of our macro economy.

Enhanced energy cooperation is necessary to safeguard Asian energy security and promote economic development in all countries. Therefore, the Chinese Government is actively pushing for the publication of the *Qingdao Initiative*. Regarding energy development and cooperation, the Chinese Government stands for setting store by the overall interests, namely, to accommodate the interests of others while safeguarding a country's own interests, and to achieve common development through consultation and cooperation. We stand ready to conduct energy dialogue and cooperation with other countries in Asia and the world at large on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. Since China has a large population and its economy has sustained rapid growth, its energy production and consumption has kept increasing. We will mainly rely on the development of domestic resources, and step up the development and utilization of coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear energy and various types of new energy. We will also take energy saving and building an energy-saving society as an important state policy, promote technological progress and encourage rational consumption through economic restructuring.

China's development cannot be separated from the support and help from all Asian countries. The Chinese Government will play a more active part in various multilateral processes that are aimed at promoting Asian cooperation. We will honour our commitments and fulfil our responsibilities. While strengthening cooperation with East Asian countries, we will further expand our cooperation with South Asian, Central Asian and West Asian countries. China will never pursue

hegemony.

We will continue to value and support Asia Cooperation Dialogue. The Chinese side highly appreciates the contributions made by Prime Minister Thaksin and the Thai Government in this regard, and will make concerted efforts with all parties to turn this dialogue into a bridge for enhancing communication and increasing mutual trust among Asian countries.

China will unswervingly uphold the policy of “building an amicable, tranquil and prosperous neighbourhood”. We hope to see our friends and neighbours better off. What China craves for is an Asia and a world full of the beauty of spring.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Asian cooperation is the trend of our times. It arises from the need of all countries for development, and is the only way leading to the rejuvenation of the whole Asia. Let us join hands and work together to promote Asian cooperation in the new century.

Thank you!