

## Speech at the Opening Ceremony

Børge Brende, Vice Chairperson of CCICED,  
Secretary General of Norwegian Red Cross

**Respected Minister Zhou, Madam Chairperson, friends and colleagues,**

According to Confucius, “Our greatest glory is not in never falling but in rising every time we fall.”. The quote serves to understand perhaps some of the driving forces behind China’s remarkable development in recent years. Despite the global economic downturn, despite the continuous struggle of lifting millions out of poverty, despite the grave consequences following natural disasters like recently in Gansu Province, China continues to grow. China’s influence is growing, China’s economy is growing and China is continuously striving for policies that make growth more sustainable. The power shift from west to the east, the global financial crisis and the frequent natural disasters afflicting the world have gradually made it clear to everyone that China’s position is of key importance. Gradually we realize that China is needed to handle the biggest task in our generation, to decouple economic growth from environmental pressure. We must learn from you in many fields where China is taking the lead. When you address outstanding environmental problems at home, we should offer our partnership.

Internationally, China must be on board if we are to succeed in solving common challenges. China has reached further in much shorter time. Your determination to become a world leader in green technology is nothing less than impressive.

The recent launch of powerful market incentives to create an electric car industry in 20 pilot cities is an example. China already is the world’s leading manufacturer of solar cells, and we have a lot to learn. Likewise, your ambitious targets of reducing the carbon intensity rate, reducing the energy use per GDP unit, and raising the share of renewable energy are examples to be followed by others.

But despite the many steps taken in the right direction, like the efforts to set aside more than 15% of land and fresh waters as nature reserves and the decision to increase forest coverage by 14 million acres, a number of significant domestic challenges remain, like those



underlined by the Vice Premier at the start of the meeting.

As pointed out in one of the papers before us, China's rising ecological footprints have implications for vulnerable ecosystems throughout the country. It is of vital importance that China's future competitiveness will be driven by a low carbon economy and that you will succeed in establishing patterns of development that will lead to an ecological civilization. We should offer our partnership.

China should be on board along with all other nations aiming at multilateral agreements that are so urgently need. The latest progress under the Stockholm Convention on POPs leading to the highly successful outcomes of the recent COP 10 CBD meeting have made me more optimistic than before the post-Copenhagen negotiation on climate change in Cancun.

Respected Minister Zhou, Madam Biggs, friends and colleagues, China is steadily growing stronger, steadily more influential. Yet you remain open about environmental challenges ahead, willing to take advice from your partners and willing to share with us your extensive knowledge.

I feel privileged to be a Member of the China Council. Sustainability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will depend on our capability of achieving more with less. In China, unprecedented growth rate calls for unprecedented efforts to decouple growth from environmental pressures. You have done it in the past. I am sure you will do it in the future to demonstration that a win-win situation is possible.

Thank you!