

Speech at the Closing Ceremony of High-level Symposium on Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Urbanization

Qi Xiaoxia, Vice Mayor of Yangzhou Municipal People's Government

(December 18th, 2013)

Your Excellency Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo,

Respected Minister Kasenally,

Respected Ambassador Irene Giner-Reichl of Austria,

Respected Ambassador Esala Teleni of Fiji,

Representatives from United Nations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The High-level Symposium on Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Urbanization organized by United Nations DESA will soon conclude. It is our great honor to spend the past three days with friends from different countries. With your participation, the symposium successfully finished all its sessions. On behalf of Yangzhou Municipal People's Government, I would like to extend our highest respect and most sincere gratitude to the joint efforts of all the participating leaders, experts, guests and representatives, and our most cordial congratulations to the success of this High-level Symposium on Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Urbanization! As the symposium ends, I believe we all have the same feeling that people are persistently exploring the dream of sustainable

cities and sustainable urbanization. During these three days, we see the possibility of dreams becoming reality.

My dear friends, 2000 years ago, the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle asserted that people come to cities for living and live in cities for better life. A City is not just a pile of steel and concrete. It is a living thing. Economy is its vitality, environment its basis, culture its spirit, and service its crucial point. It is the symbol of human civilization and social progress, as well as the special carrier of advanced productivity. No city on the Earth is an isolated entity. The dream for better city life is the common wish and aspiration of human for long. However, cities all around the world are witnessing imbalance in sustainable development now. The fast-going urbanization has put more and more significant pressure on the demand of precious resources on the Earth. Many challenges, such as surging population, unbalanced development, deteriorating environment, financial crisis, climate change, energy and food safety, have posed threats to people's dream of beautiful urban life. Sustainable cities and sustainable urbanization have been, and will always be, a challenge for countries and cities of who are representing today. It calls on us to, under the leadership of United Nations DESA, strengthen our cooperation, extend our common ground and establish partnership relationship, so as to build up effective framework of sustainable cities and sustainable urbanization.

During the three days' meeting, we had in-depth discussions and communications on seven major topics: "Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Urbanization: Global Challenges and Opportunities", "City Planning and Slum Upgrading: Barriers and Response Strategies", "Meeting the Service Challenges: Best Practices and Lessons Learned", "Investment in Green Infrastructure: Urban Transport", "Urban Built Environment: Lessons Learned and Best Practices", "Dynamic Cities: How Cities Drive Balanced, Incentive, and Sustainable Growth", "Urban-Rural Dynamics-Building Seamless Rural and Urban Economies". We not only analyzed the general situation and existing problems of sustainable development of cities and urbanization, introduced advanced experiences from home and abroad, exchanged ideas on cutting-edge theories and major practices of sustainable cities and sustainable urbanization, and proposed many constructive ideas and suggestions on greener, more efficient, more balanced and more sustainable development for cities. These discussions made this High-level Symposium on Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Urbanization a brilliant dialogue, a clash of wisdom and a feast of thoughts. Guests and representatives here have shown amazing wisdom on sustainable cities and sustainable urbanization, moving efforts for building beautiful cities and inspiring enthusiasm in the future development of cities.

To make a city radiant with lasting glamour is a permanent theme

and beautiful dream that we all pursue. Therefore I firmly believe that the closing of this conference is not an end, but a new starting point. Let's build on our current status and look ahead into the future, and build a high-end and prudent platform for global communication and cooperation, to make our effective themes beneficial to sustainable development and to people who have been enjoying and will enjoy urban life. Dear friends, please allow me, on behalf of Yangzhou Municipal People's Government, to express again our sincere gratitude to the support and instruction of United Nations DESA for giving us this opportunity to host this High-level Symposium on Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Urbanization, and to the participation of all parties.

An old Chinese saying goes that there is no never-ending feast. Happy hours are always so short. I hope this High-level Symposium on Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Urbanization held in Yangzhou will leave an unforgettable impression on all the participating guests. I hope that all experts and city representatives present at this symposium can enhance friendship and strengthen cooperation, so that we can make joint efforts in pushing forward the sustainable development of cities and urbanization. We also sincerely hope that all distinguished guests here can explore the unique charm of Yangzhou during the field trip we organize for you. Here we have traditional culture, exquisite life and graceful living environment; here we have a harmonious co-existence

between tradition and modern, between new and ancient city and between human and nature. I am sure that once you come to the city of Yangzhou, you will fall in love with it. We look forward to meeting you again in the ancient city of Yangzhou soon. Thank you all!