

## The People's Republic of China

### Positions for the General Assembly Plenary

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#### I. Communicable Diseases: Countering the Threat of the Ebola Virus Disease

Alarmed with the recent outbreak in West Africa, China urges the international community to continue and increase its efforts to combat the Ebola virus disease (Ebola for short). Ebola has sickened more than 23,000 people and killed more than 9,000. The recent outbreak has struck fear into the people of Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo and has grabbed the attention of the international community. West Africa's predominantly poorly-equipped health care facilities and lack of sanitation and infrastructure make the region the perfect host for the Ebola virus. Cultural norms, mixed with limited access to necessary facilities, have allowed for the rapid spread of Ebola in many countries throughout West Africa. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), stressed, "[t]his is not just an outbreak. This is not just a public crisis. This is a social crisis, a humanitarian crisis, an economic crisis, and a threat to national security well beyond the outbreak zones". China is mindful that in order to combat the Ebola virus we must have the full support of the international community and therefore urges Member States to share their experiences in epidemic control, resources, and expertise with the affected countries, as well as with WHO and the African Union.

In the unfolding Ebola crisis, global attention has focused on the relief efforts of Western countries. The People's Republic of China is proud to have launched one of its largest aid operations ever. As a veteran of successful efforts in recent years to contain the H7N5 and H7N9 strains of avian influenza, China has willingly taken on a leadership role in this relief effort. Already, nearly 4,000 medical workers and advisers from China have been stationed in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea. As of January 2015, China's financial assistance for fighting Ebola to date—including grants to the WHO, the U.N. Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund, and other organizations—totals over \$123 million. In addition, China has also dispatched a team of 200 Chinese health workers to Liberia, where they are due to staff a new \$41 million Ebola-specific clinic that will be built and fully run by Chinese personnel. Lin Songtian, director-general of the Chinese Department of African Affairs stated, "[o]ur aid to Africa in fighting Ebola has been the most sustained campaign and among the largest financial contribution [for international relief efforts] in our history." As a strong supporter of the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), The People's Republic of China is confident in our efforts to combat the Ebola Virus by providing aid in West African Member States to stop the spread, treat the infected, and prevent further outbreaks. Furthermore, H.E. Ambassador Yang Yanyi, Head of the Chinese Mission to the European Union remarked at the High-Level Conference on Ebola on March 3rd, 2015, "[w]hile there are encouraging signs that the worst of this unprecedented Ebola outbreak may be behind us, there is still great need for constant vigilance and coordinated global response to ensure that the promising decline is not reversed and sustained".

With that in mind, China proposes an Annual Summit on Communicable Disease Epidemics (ASCDE) that will initially be hosted in Beijing. The yearly summit is targeted to achieve the goal of zero new Ebola cases and the long-term socio-economic development of affected countries, as well as addressing the procedures of Member States when dealing with communicable diseases more generally. ASCDE will focus on key issues when dealing with epidemics such as, transition into the recovery phase, commitment to active surveillance, case management, community engagement, cross-border collaboration, financial assistance, resident primary health-care capacity and health-care systems, education, food and nutrition security and broader livelihoods, and economic recovery.

The rapidly spreading Ebola outbreak can be stopped. All countries can look to Senegal and Nigeria as templates for how to treat the virus as both were recently declared Ebola free by the World Health Organization. China urges Member States to focus on the three key steps taken by these success stories: tracking people who have the virus, isolating them, and treating the patients at the first sight of symptoms. It is vital to educate each country about Ebola and provide necessary tools as well as medical personnel to help stop the disease from spreading. The virus will continue to spread if not treated immediately in an isolated facility.

Having dealt with SARS and the Avian Flu in the past, China believes that its expertise in virus and disease control can be of great use in this situation. China advises that hospitals and isolation beds not just be placed in densely populated areas, but dispersed throughout the country. Those that cannot travel to the hospitals in cities that deal with the disease during the twenty-one day incubation period, are more susceptible to spreading the disease to others. It is not only vital that health care facilities be built, but that nations are prompt about communicating with

the public about when an outbreak has occurred, and what measures citizens should be taking to prevent the disease. By taking these steps, China believes it is possible for the Ebola outbreak to be contained.

## II. Enhancing Water Quality Management and Sustainability

Only in 2010 did the global community belatedly acknowledge access to water as a basic human right. Today, nearly one billion people do not have access to a clean, sustainable water source on a daily basis. In an era buffeted by climate change, increasing population, and rapid growth in agriculture, we must seek new and innovative ways to manage and sustain quality water in order to improve sanitation, hygiene, and disease prevention. It is clear that the world will not be able to meet Millennium Development Goal 7.C: to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation between 1990 and 2015. As of 2012, 748 million people do not have improved drinking water, and 2.5 billion people lack improved sanitation. The World Health Organization reports that nearly a quarter of deaths in developing Member States are attributed to poor water quality, availability, and sanitation or related issues. With over a billion people still practicing open defecation, there is still much progress to be made.

As a country that has long struggled with providing safe access to potable water, China understands many of the frustrations that Member States meet with in trying to secure such access. Standing by A/HRC/27/L.11/Rev.1, we implore the international community to acknowledge the importance of access to clean water. China appreciates its unique position as a nation able to combine firsthand experience with difficult water access issues with the financial and technical capacity to develop and fund national, regional and international projects aimed at increasing access to water worldwide. As an endorser of the *International Decade for Action, "Water for Life" 2005-2015* (A/C.2/69/L.12/REV.1) and the *Implementation of the International Year of Water Cooperation* (A/RES/67/204), we are committed to ensuring water resources are rationally developed and utilized. With nearly 60,000 deaths and 190 million people suffering from grave illnesses due to domestic water access struggles, hygienic drinkable water has become one of China's top priorities. The Chinese government has embarked on a five year, \$66 billion program to deliver clean drinkable water to the entire population, reaffirming the development of 92,300 kilometers of mains pipes and water treatment plants. The People's Republic of China sincerely hopes that we will strengthen exchanges and cooperation and share successful experiences with other countries in the field of water storage, meet challenges, and ensure sustainable socioeconomic development on the basis of sustainable utilization of water resources.

Water shortages, the deterioration of the environment and a decrease in reserves are the key issues facing both China and many other Member States. In order to solve these problems, water management practices need to change. China recommends the following as potential broad-based principles: (1) practicing water accounting with better measurement and control of the water use index, (2) establishing a voluntary, but reasonable, water-pricing system to encourage a positive water saving attitude amongst Member States, and (3) strengthening and promoting the social consciousness on saving water.

For more technical solutions, the People's Republic of China urges continued focus on efforts related to infiltration of rainwater, river water and reclaimed waste water, as rainwater harvesting produces great economic, social and environmental benefits. China would urge Member States to consider a new approach to urban rain water management, based on successful programs in China. The focus would be on a "Five-Sharing" distribution where rainwater would be shared between the (1) natural river system, (2) human beings, animals, plants, (3) runoff and infiltration, (4) the upper and lower reaches, and (5) the rainy season and the dry season. Research from China University of Mining and Technology shows that urban rainwater management can bring us many social, economic and ecological benefits, including achieving a sustainable clean water source to all. We further urge broader use of the three core principles of rainwater management: separation of rainfall from sewage, limited utilization, and decentralization. Utilizing previous successful methods of achievements made towards clean water access and management, China believes that urban areas can be rehabilitated through rainwater management which demonstrates a great importance for sustainable development of our cities.

Lastly, The People's Republic of China will continue its commitment to the Asian Development Bank's Water Financing Partnership Program (WFPF) by contributing three billion dollars in 2015. As the the 2015 deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals approaches, Member States are rushing to reach the water target. Though progress on drinking water in Asia has been on track, water quality is still questionable and requires immediate attention. Investments in water are crucial in meeting broader MDG targets, such as halting the incidence of poverty, halving the proportion of the world's poor who suffer from hunger, and reducing child and maternal mortality, among others. The People's Republic of China calls upon all Member States and the international community for integrated, cross-sectoral approaches to water managements and development.