

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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PRESS RELEASE

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STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR LI ZHAOXING, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF CHINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE PLENARY MEETING
OF THE 48TH SESSION OF THE UNGA FOR THE LAUNCHING
OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY

7 December 1993

Mr. President,

It is a great honour for me to speak today as the representative of the host country of the Asian and Pacific Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family.

We are glad to note that since the adoption of Resolution 44/82 by the General Assembly at its 44th session, a series of activities have been carried out in different regions to prepare for and celebrate the UN International Year of the Family proclaimed by the resolution.

At the invitation of the Chinese Government, the Asian and Pacific Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family was held in Beijing from 24 to 28 May 1993. Participants of the meeting include representatives or observers from 26 countries and regions, 17 UN agencies and NGOs, and officials from the UN headquarters, UN Office in Vienna and ESCAP.

At this meeting, Mr. Sokalski, Coordinator for the International Year of the Family, and Mr. Roy, Chief of the Social Development Division of ESCAP, read out respectively telegrammes of congratulation from Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, UN Secretary-General, and Mr. Ahmed, Executive Secretary of ESCAP. The Chinese Government attached great importance to this meeting. Madame Peng Peiyun, State Councillor and Chairman of the Commission on the Work of Women and Children of the State Council, spoke at the meeting on behalf of the Chinese Government, and Madame Chen Muhua, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, delivered a speech at the closing ceremony. In an actively and lively atmosphere, extensive discussions were conducted at the meeting on such issues as the family in the Asian and Pacific region, the preparation and commemorative activities for the Year by countries in the region and the region as a whole, and the follow-up actions. China and many other countries offered donations to the voluntary fund for the Year. The meeting also adopted Beijing Declaration on the Family in Asia and the Pacific and a report with 52 recommendations. During the meeting, participants also made field inspections at the Capital Iron and Steel Complex and its living quarters in Beijing, and visited some families to get first hand information. The meeting is both successful and fruitful and won high appraisal from the participants and relevant UN departments. As the host country, we feel greatly honoured to be able to contribute to the success of the meeting.

Beijing Declaration adopted at the meeting reaffirmed that the family is the fundamental unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state, and emphasized that every family is entitled to adequate resources and basic services to ensure the well-being of each of its members, thus guaranteeing it a quality of life. It was also convinced that gender equality, particularly women's equal participation in employment and the sharing of parental responsibilities by men and women, should be essential elements of family policy. The Declaration urged all Governments in the ESCAP region to direct their policies, plans and programmes towards promoting family development and strengthening the role and functions of the family in development, pursuant to the recommendations contained in the report of the meeting, and continue and further intensify their preparatory activities for the Year and undertake appropriate activities in commemoration of the Year. It also asked those Governments who have not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child to do so without delay and adopt measures to implement the above-mentioned Conventions. We believe that all these achievements of the meeting will play an important role in enhancing the activities in commemoration of the Year by the Asia-Pacific countries, and in strengthening the development of the family, thus promoting social progress and economic development.

Mr. President,

The Chinese Government always attaches great importance to

the role of the family and, in line with China's national conditions, has carried out many family related activities, such as the model family emulation and the family cultural build-up. All these have helped raise the quality of family and its members. We are of the view that the family is the cell of society bearing multi-facet social functions. China has more than 200 million families. The state affairs and family matters are mutually complementary. Happy and harmonious families are undoubtedly conducive to the maintenance of social stability, the development of civilization, the promotion of reform and development, and the enhancement of the national strength and the people's quality of life. The Chinese Government, therefore, appreciates and supports the UN International Year of the Family, approves of its purposes and principles, and is willing to actively participate in various commemorative activities and follow-up actions. We have set up a national commission for the Year and formulated national plan which is being actively implemented.

Mr. President,

In order to prepare for and celebrate the Year, countries in the Asia-Pacific region and other regions have already done a great deal of work. I wish to express congratulations to them and once again sincerely hope that work for the International Year of the Family in 1994 will be crowned with success.

Thank you, Mr. President.