

Address at the Opening Ceremony of the 5th International Yellow River Forum

H.E. Mr. Chen Lei

Minister of Water Resources, P. R. China

(September 25, 2012)

Distinguished guests,
Dear participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

During this pleasant season with refreshing autumn breeze and osmanthus fragrance, we are delighted to welcome the grand opening of the 5th International Yellow River Forum. Distinguished guests and forum participants from around the world have gathered in Zhengzhou city, Henan province, the home of Xuanyuan^① and center of the Yellow River basin. Under an overarching theme of *Ensuring Water Right of the River's Demand and Healthy River Basin Maintenance*, we will discuss important issues including strengthening water resources management and promoting sustainable socio-economic development. Taking this opportunity, on behalf of the Ministry of Water Resources, People's Republic of China, I would like to extend my congratulations on the convening of the Forum and present my sincere welcome to all the distinguished guests and participants.

^① Xuanyuan is a legendary figure in ancient China who unified the Chinese nation.

Water is the source of life, a necessity of production and the base for ecology. Under the intertwined impacts of global climate change and human activities, the world is currently facing increasingly severe water disasters and problems related to water resources and water environment, and countries around the world are challenged by common water crisis. As the largest and most populous developing country, China suffers from relative scarcity of water resources. Such factors as large population but little water, the uneven distribution of water in time and space, and the mismatch between water availability and production layout have become bottlenecks for China's sustainable socio-economic development. The Chinese government attaches high attention to water issues, and has set resources conservation and environment protection as basic national policy. While adhering to the principles of putting people first and maintaining harmony between human and nature, China strives to undertake rational development, efficient utilization, integrated training, optimal allocation, comprehensive conservation, effective protection and scientific management of water resources. With 6% of world freshwater resources and 9% of world arable land, China has successfully fed and clothed 21% of world population. With per capita water consumption at only 60% of the world average, China has supported the rapid growth of national economy, at a rate three times the world average. Overall, China has made an important contribution to world development and prosperity.

China is and will be in a crucial period in her efforts of building a well-off society in an all-round way and speeding up modernization process. The Chinese government is thoroughly applying scientific outlook on development, accelerating transformation of the mode of economic

development, strongly promoting green growth, circular economy and low-carbon development, and advocating a culture of resource conservation. In the context of complicated water situation and fragile ecology and environment, particularly with rapid industrialization and urbanization and increasing impact from global climate change, such problems as water shortage, serious water pollution and degraded water environment and ecology have become even more serious in China. Those resources and environment problems that once occurred throughout the long history of industrialization in the developed countries for over 200 years have seen concentrated outbreak in China. It took decades for industrialized countries to address those problems when their economies were highly developed. However, China needs to resolve them in relatively much shorter time, which is unprecedented in terms of the difficulty of the tasks. The Chinese government explicitly points out that implementing the strictest water resources management system is a strategic move for the transformation of the mode of economic development. The strictest water resources management system, which identifies three red-lines for water development and utilization control, water use efficiency control and pollutant bearing capacity of water function zones, aims to promote sustainable water utilization. Meanwhile, *The Opinion on Implementing the Strictest Water Resources Management System* issued by the State Council of China has made a holistic arrangement of the implementation of the system. These strategic measures have opened a new dimension for water resources management with Chinese characteristics, and have practical and far-reaching significance for resolving water issues, promoting sustainable water utilization and safeguarding sustainable socio-economic development in China.

The Yellow River is the mother river of the Chinese civilization. It breeds and nurtures the splendid Chinese civilization which has continued for more than 5000 years. Today, the Yellow River has fed 12% of the national population and irrigated 15% of the national arable land with only 2% of the national river runoff, playing a strategic role in China's socio-economic development. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese government and the Chinese people have undergone painful exploration and rendered unremitting efforts for the harnessing, development and protection of the Yellow River, and demonstrated a new model for harnessing and protecting big rivers of the world. Particularly, since the end of last century, when facing the grim water situation in the Yellow River basin, the Chinese government has intensified integrated water resources management and regulation, prioritizing domestic water use, rationally allocating water for agriculture, industry and service sector, and taking environment water use into consideration. Through a series of strong and effective measures, the Yellow River has realized non-running-dry for 13 consecutive years, and safeguarded sustainable socio-economic development in the basin with sustainable water utilization.

However, we are soberly aware that the Yellow River basin is the most water-scarce and ecologically-and-environmentally fragile area in China, challenged by the severest conflicts between water supply and demand. The Yellow River itself is among those rivers with the most complicated water situation. It faces most difficult harnessing and protection tasks. To ensure long-term security and sustainable utilization, all the measures to be undertaken should be grounded on the complicated and varied natural characteristics of the Yellow River. They should serve overall socio-economic development in the basin, focus on the crux of the matter

which is "too little water, too much sand and serious disproportions between water and sand", address the imbalance of water supply and demand in the basin, and relieve the threat of secondary suspended river in the downstream. The Chinese government will enrich and improve Yellow River management concept, plan and measures in the new period, speed up the development and improvement of water-sand regulation system, flood-defense and sediment-reduction system, comprehensive water-soil erosion prevention system, water efficient utilization and integrated regulation system, water resources and ecology protection system, and integrated river basin management system, so as to maintain the healthy life of the Yellow River, ensure its perpetual flowing and enable the Yellow River to bring more benefits to the people.

To achieve the aforementioned goals, the Chinese government will undertake the following tasks. *Firstly*, in terms of comprehensive harnessing of the Yellow River, we will correctly address the relations between the upstream and the downstream, between the left and right banks, and between the mainstream and tributaries. We will coordinate flood defense and drought relief, benefits promotion and harm prevention, water management and sand harnessing, and river development and protection. In line with the principle of "managing reservoirs in the middle-reach to store flood water, building dikes to contain flood water in the river channel and utilizing downstream detention areas to store flood water", we will improve the comprehensive flood-defense and drought-relief system comprising structural and non-structural measures, in order to ensure peace and safety of the Yellow River basin. *Secondly*, with regard to river basin water management, we will take both water for socio-economic development and water for environment into consideration, accelerate the implementation of the

strictest water resources management system, reinforce three red-lines for water development and utilization control, water use efficiency control and pollutant bearing capacity of water function zones, build a water-saving society in an all-around way to ensure sustainable utilization of water resources in the entire basin. *Thirdly*, with respect to water-soil resources protection and ecological construction, we will prioritize prevention, and combine it with protection, and give equal attention to engineering projects construction and ecological rehabilitation. Efforts will be focused on the harnessing of the origins of the Loess Plateau's coarse sand, the comprehensive management of slope farmland and construction of soil-retaining dams. Furthermore, the protection of the drinking water source areas, key ecological reserves, water source conservation areas, river origins and wetlands will be reinforced. The above-mentioned measures will serve as a defense for the ecological safety in the basin. *Fourthly*, regarding comprehensive basin management, we will strengthen integrated planning, allocation, regulation and management of the water resources of the entire basin, improve Yellow River water laws and regulations, strongly implement administrative law enforcement, and speed up the process of managing the river by law. *Fifthly*, concerning technological innovation, we will carry out in-depth study on the evolution patterns of wandering rivers, reinforce research and development of key technologies for Yellow River harnessing, development, protection and management, and upgrade informatization of flood-defense, drought-relief commanding and decision-making, water development, utilization and management, and water project management so as to promote the modernization of Yellow River management.

Ladies and gentlemen, the International Yellow River Forum is a grand meeting hosted by China in the water sector. It is also an important platform for China's exchange and cooperation with the rest of the world. Initiated in 2003, the International Yellow River Forum has been successfully held four times, and has received wide attention from government departments and international organizations around the world. The 5th International Yellow River consists of five sub-themes, including integrated river basin management, river health and environmental flow, climate change adaptation, tools and technology, and water governance. Twelve inter-governmental cooperation meetings and special sessions organized by international organizations will be held in parallel. We sincerely hope this Forum will serve as a useful platform for participants from around the world to exchange and share advanced concepts and new findings in water resource management and sustainable development, promote water science and technology research and project cooperation, build consensus and enhance friendship. Let's join hands to address global water crisis and open up a bright future for human civilization.

Finally, I wish the 5th International Yellow River Forum a great success!

Thank you!

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(Chinois)

在第五届黄河国际论坛开幕式上的致辞

Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 5th International Yellow River Forum

中华人民共和国水利部部长 陈雷

H.E. Mr. Chen Lei, Minister of Water Resources, P. R. China

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在第五届黄河国际论坛开幕式上的致辞

中华人民共和国水利部部长 陈雷

(2012年9月25日)

各位嘉宾、各位代表，女士们、先生们：

在这金秋送爽、丹桂飘香的美好时节，我们高兴地迎来了第五届黄河国际论坛的开幕。来自世界各地的众多嘉宾和代表汇聚轩辕故里、黄河之都，围绕“流域可持续发展及河流用水权保障”这一主题，共同探讨加强水资源管理，促进流域经济社会可持续发展等重大问题。借此机会，我代表中华人民共和国水利部，对本届论坛的召开表示热烈的祝贺！向出席论坛的各位嘉宾和代表表示诚挚的欢迎！

水是生命之源、生产之要、生态之基。当今世界，受全球气候变化及人类活动交互影响，水灾害、水资源、水环境问题日益突出，世界各国共同面临水危机的严峻挑战。中国是世界上人口最多的发展中国家，也是水资源相对短缺的国家。人多水少，水资源时空分布不均，与生产力布局不相匹配，已成为中国经济社会可持续发展的突出瓶颈。中国政府高度重视解决水问题，把节约资源、保护环境作为基本国策，坚持以人为本，坚持人与自

然和谐，对水资源进行合理开发、高效利用、综合治理、优化配置、全面节约、有效保护和科学管理。中国以占全球6%的淡水资源、9%的耕地保障了占全球21%人口的吃饭问题，以占世界平均水平60%的人均综合用水量保障了国民经济3倍于世界经济平均增长率的高速增长，这是对世界发展与繁荣作出的重大贡献。

当前和今后一个时期，是中国全面建成小康社会、加快推进现代化建设的关键时期。中国政府正在深入贯彻落实科学发展观，加快转变经济发展方式，着力推进绿色发展、循环发展、低碳发展，建设生态文明。中国水情复杂，生态环境脆弱，特别是随着工业化、城镇化快速发展和全球气候变化影响加大，水资源短缺、水污染严重、水生态环境恶化等问题十分突出。发达国家200多年工业化过程中分阶段出现的资源与环境问题，现阶段在中国集中显现出来。发达国家在经济高度发达后花几十年解决的问题，我们必须在较短的时间内加以解决，任务之重、难度之大前所未有。中国政府明确提出，把严格水资源管理作为加快转变经济发展方式的战略举措，实行最严格水资源管理制度，确立水资源开发利用控制、用水效率控制和水功能区限制纳污“三条红线”，促进水资源可持续利用。同时，出台了关于实行最严格水资源管理制度的意见，对实行最严格水资源管理制度作出系统安排。这些重大战略举措，开创了中国特色水资源管理的新途径，

对于破解水资源难题、促进水资源可持续利用、保障经济社会可持续发展，具有现实而深远的意义。

黄河是中华民族的母亲河，孕育和传承了五千年光辉灿烂的华夏文明。今天，黄河以占全国2%的河川径流量，养育了全国12%的人口，灌溉了全国15%的耕地，在中国经济社会发展中具有十分重要的战略地位。新中国成立以来，中国政府领导人民在黄河的治理、开发和保护方面进行了艰辛探索和不懈努力，为世界大河治理与保护提供了新的典范。特别是上世纪末以来，面对黄河流域水资源问题的严峻形势，中国政府进一步强化黄河水资源的统一管理与调度，优先满足群众生活用水，合理安排农业、工业、服务业用水，统筹考虑河流自身生态用水，采取一系列有力举措，保证了黄河连续13年不断流，以水资源的可持续利用保障了流域经济社会的可持续发展。

但是，我们也清醒地认识到，黄河流域是中国水资源最为紧缺、供需矛盾最为突出、生态环境最为脆弱的地区，黄河是世界上水情最为复杂、治理任务最为艰巨、管理保护难度最大的河流之一。确保黄河长治久安和水资源永续利用，必须立足黄河复杂多变的自然特性，着眼流域经济社会发展全局，紧紧抓住黄河“水少、沙多，水沙关系失调”这一突出症结，紧紧抓住流域水资源供需关系失衡这一突出矛盾，紧紧抓住下游“二级悬河”这

一突出威胁，进一步丰富和完善新时期治黄思路、方略和措施，加快构建和完善水沙调控体系、防洪减淤体系、水土流失综合防治体系、水资源高效利用及综合调度体系、水资源和水生态保护体系、流域综合管理体系，维护黄河健康生命，确保黄河安澜无恙、奔流不息，让黄河更好地造福中华民族。

为此，我们将着力做好以下重点工作：一是在黄河综合治理方面，正确处理上下游、左右岸、干支流关系，统筹防汛与抗旱、兴利与除害、治水与治沙、开发与保护，按照“上拦下排、两岸分滞”的方针，进一步健全工程措施与非工程措施相配套的综合防洪减灾体系，确保黄河岁岁安澜。二是在流域水资源管理方面，统筹流域经济社会发展用水保障与河流自身用水保障，加快落实最严格水资源管理制度，加强水资源开发利用控制、用水效率控制、水功能区限制纳污“三条红线”管理，全面建设节水型社会，确保流域水资源可持续利用。三是在水土资源保护和生态建设方面，坚持预防为主，预防与保护相结合、工程治理与生态修复相结合，突出抓好黄土高原粗泥沙集中来源区治理、坡耕地综合整治、淤地坝建设，着力强化饮用水水源区、重要生态保护区、水源涵养区、江河源头区和湿地的保护，构筑流域生态安全屏障。四是在流域综合管理方面，强化流域水资源统一规划、统一分配、统一调度、统一管理，健全黄河水法规体系，加大水

行政执法力度，加快流域管理法治化进程。五是在治黄科技创新方面，深入研究游荡性河道河势的演变规律，加强黄河治理、开发、保护、管理等方面的关键技术研发，进一步提高防汛抗旱指挥决策、水资源开发利用管理、水利工程管理信息化水平，以信息化带动黄河水利事业的现代化。

女士们、先生们！

黄河国际论坛是由中国主办的国际水利盛会，也是中国水利对外交流与合作的重要平台，自2003年以来已经成功举办了四届，得到了众多国家政府部门、国际组织机构的广泛关注。本届论坛围绕主题设立了流域综合管理、健康河流与环境流量、应对气候变化、流域管理工作和新技术、水管理与公众参与五大分论坛，并同时召开12个政府间合作及国际组织相关专题会议。我们热忱欢迎国内外水利界人士借助黄河国际论坛，进一步分享水资源管理与可持续发展的先进理念与最新成果，进一步加强水利科学技术交流与项目合作，进一步凝聚共识与增进友谊，让我们共同携手应对全球水危机，共同开创人类文明发展的美好未来。

最后，预祝第五届黄河国际论坛取得圆满成功！

谢谢大家！

