

**Eco-Forum Global Annual Conference,**

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**Statement by**

**H.E. Professor Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai**

**Chairman of the Asian Peace and Reconciliation Council (APRC)**

**Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of**

**Thailand**

**on**

**“Eco-agriculture and Food Safety”**

Your Excellency Mr. Niu Dun , Vice Minister of Ministry of Agriculture of China,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure and honour to address this Ecological Agriculture and Food Safety Forum 2014. Not only is this forum such an important event in its own right but the fact that it is organized as part of the Eco-Forum Global Annual Conference Guiyang 2014 with the aim to join hands and leverage reforms to bring forth a new era of eco-civilization illustrates that China is a forefront world's leading country in making genuine and serious efforts to make our world a better place for our children and the generations to come. It also provides a showcase to the world that China regards the growth of China and the promotion of sustainable development to build eco-civilization the inseparable part and parcel of each other.

As the most populous country of the world, China has no choice but to ensure that food producing, agricultural produces, food imports-exports and the food supply chain to her people be given the highest priority. This was well reflected in Premier Li Keqiang's statement at a State Council meeting in 2010, "Food is essential, and safety should be a top priority. Food safety is closely related to people's lives and health and economic development and social harmony." Once China leads the way in this matter of world concern, the rest of the world must pay a serious attention.

It is undeniable that our earth faces increasing global environmental and food security crisis. A paradigm shift is sought to redress the forthcoming resources and food crisis. Eco-agriculture and food safety are not only important for China and her population but must be equally important for all nations and peoples of the world.

Eco-agriculture and food safety are so closely related to sustainable development and the building of eco-civilization because they require the development and real implementation of resource-efficiency and environmentally-friendly economic policy. A great number of nations, therefore, look upon china to lead the way. If the

fastest growing and soon-to-be the world's number one economy can do it, why can't they?

That is why it is so gratifying that China, particularly the present administration is taking such serious and genuine steps and measures to cope with the growing concern in Chinese agriculture and food safety. President Xi Jinping, Vice President Li Yuanchao and Prime Minister Li Keqiang have all sent unanimously unequivocal messages to the Chinese and the world on the priority this present administration has attached to these issues. And since the State Food and Drug Administration was created in 2003, a number of legislations have been passed. Every effort has been made so that agricultural produces meet the safety requirements and standards. All efforts are being made to turn the agriculture in China into eco- agriculture to protect men, nature and the future of our earth. Efforts are made by the Chinese administration not to allow any food safety problems or scandals be ever repeated.

However, these tasks are gigantic. And I do not believe that legislations and regulations alone are adequate to help achieve this noble goal. A paradigm shift must not only be on the legal, administrative and bureaucratic framework. That's why joining hands by the government, enterprises and civil society as the theme of this year's conference suggests is so crucial. The question is: what would be the effective ways to do so? What can we ask our friends in the government, enterprises and civil society to do apart from enforcing the law and regulations to ensure food safety and eco-agriculture?

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, to me, as a buddhist, I also believe that green development is also a result of the green mind. Buddhism encourages the training and the exercise of the mind. Mindfulness, moderation and the middle path are the quintessential principles to lead a peaceful and happy life. The devastating damages to the environment, the health, the climate, and everything around us today that hinder the achievement of green and sustainable development and the future of the world our children and their children should deserve are the result of the lack of mindfulness and moderation.

May I reflect the sage Mahatma Gandhi who said that "The world has enough for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed". And in Buddhism, human beings are described to exercise two types of consumption, namely, consumption with greed and consumption with wisdom. Confucius too wrote: He who will not economize will have to agonize.

So we have the meeting of minds in the oriental wisdom of those whose teachings we, in the east, revere and respect that the world of any generation, let alone ours, cannot sustain if its inhabitants do not learn to exercise mindfulness to understand and practice moderation. The paradigm shift therefore must be directed to the hearts and minds as well.

Reflect this in today's eco-agriculture and food safety issues and we will find that enforcements of legislations and regulations in the areas of eco-agriculture and food safety and the reliability on modern technology will not guarantee us the desired results. They must be coupled with the cooperation of all hands from all walks of life to ensure that we train our mind for moderation. Or else, the path towards green development will be hijacked by human greed.

We shall certainly owe it to our children and their children should this appalling prospect of the future of the world where the environment is badly degraded, the food supply chain is running low and even intoxicated, natural resources are badly depleted, be passed over to them without clear signs of changes being made in our generation.

Some of you may begin to doubt how could we train mindfulness? How could we train the mind? This is where the joining hands becomes most crucial. The joining of hands must create the networking for the joining of the hearts and minds. Each of us, in our own way, should go out to retrain our mind in accordance with our oriental wisdom, individually or collectively. Learn to moderate. Learn to live a harmonious coexistence with nature. Cultivate the mind to become the means to curb not the means to create destructive behaviour. Though it takes time but gradually, we shall succeed. There are already several examples in many communities including those in Thailand where

changes in the environment of the community can be concretely measurable after the local people have gone through the new paradigm of their behaviour based on this oriental wisdom of mindfulness.

When the mind is trained and the greed is tamed, collective responsibility and social harmony will arise. The desire to make the world a better place for today and for the future comes automatically from the mind.

Then our agriculture will become more ecological, and our food be safer to consume.

Attempts for iron-fist enforcements of the laws and regulations will only partly be successful to create the paradigm shift in agriculture and food safety in the new era of Eco-Civilization. But the challenges are in the mindfulness of all of us. Should we fail to start it now, we shall have no excuses for our children and grandchildren who inherit the civilization we created. For their sake, join hands for the new paradigm today for the green world tomorrow.

Thank you for your kind attention.