**POSITION PAPER**

COUNTRY: CHINA

TOPIC: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Fragile States

COMMITTEE: Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

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China is the world's most populous country. It has a continuous culture stretching back nearly 4,000 years and originated many of the foundations of the modern world. The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949 after the Communist Party defeated the nationalist Kuomintang. China, officially the People’s Republic of China, is a single-party state controlled by its Communist party. Located in East Asia, China covers approximately 9.6 million square miles, making it the second largest state in the world in terms of land area, and is home to approximately 1.35 billion people, making it the world’s most populous state. With the largest combined land border in the world, China borders 14 countries.

PREVIOUS SITUATION: On September 25, 2015, the 193 Member States of the United Nations (UN) adopted a set of 17 global goals to “end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all” as part of a new global sustainable development agenda for 2030 (2030 Agenda). UN Member States are expected to use the goals to frame their national development agendas and policies over the coming decade. Companies, through their commercial and sustainability activities, have a crucial role to play in realizing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Because of China’s sheer size across all measures - population, production, consumption, energy use, carbon footprint, etc.—the global success of the 2030 Agenda will depend significantly on successes achieved in China and with China internationally.

 China President Xi Jinping’s long and stern speech at the recent 19th Party Congress (October 2017) strongly and repeatedly emphasized the essential role that sustainable development, spanning all aspects (environmental to social governance), will play in Chinese policy making going forward.

CURRENT SITUATION:

 China is pushing its sustainable development forward in three key areas; eradicating extreme poverty, building an “ecological civilization” and contributing to global climate and sustainability governance.

By committing to eradicate extreme poverty by 2020, China is working to lift the remaining more than 50 million people out of poverty in 5 years, through targeted policy measures. These measures will help identify people in real poverty and the roots that explain why they are still trapped. The results up to now have been remarkable. 700 million people in China have moved out of poverty with the country’s economic boom. Important measures have been taken to improve the use of government resources for better social protection and better facilitation of income generation. Meanwhile, maternal and neonatal mortality ratios have further declined, meeting the related SDG targets ahead of time. The gaps between urban and rural areas and between different regions in terms of infrastructure like roads and internet, are continuously narrowing, along with the expansion of the social security net, and improved universal public service.

PROBLEM: Meanwhile, rapid economic growth and social transformation have caused some challenges, e.g. low efficient utilization of energy and resources, air pollution, water scarcity and pollution, severe ecological degradation, as well as social fairness and rural development. There is little doubt that China is committed to sustain its economic growth. In the past decades, however, the rapid economic growth has been criticized as unsustainable as it does not fully take social and environmental costs into account. These matters, unless properly approached, perhaps hamper the realization of sustainable development in the future.

SOLUTION: Innovative local solutions based on local conditions are encouraged by the national sustainable development pilots programme. Sustainable development is an ongoing endeavour. China is still confronted with an uphill battle for development in the shift of growth drivers as well as structural adjustment and upgrading.

For example Taiyuan – where coal is the backbone of the economy – has been focusing on air and water pollution solutions and circular economy since being chosen as a national pilot for resource based cities.