Joint Statement
Sixth Meeting of the EU-China Round Table
(Stockholm, 28 October 2009)

1. The EU-China Round Table held its sixth meeting in Stockholm, Sweden from 27 to 28 October 2009.

2. The Round Table was co-established by the China Economic and Social Council (CESC) and the EU Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in accordance with the Joint Statement of the 9th China-EU Summit released in Helsinki on 9 September 2006.

3. The organized civil society dialogue through the EU-China Round Table is part of EU-China comprehensive strategic partnership and contributes to people-to-people friendship and mutual understanding.

4. During the meeting, delegates from both sides held extensive discussions on the themes "Economic and social rights in China and in the EU" and "Sustainable Development and Water".

5. A tripartite workshop on sustainable urban development was held in Stockholm, with the participation of the Swedish Presidency. The organisation of this workshop demonstrates the need to involve civil society in the reflection on sustainable urban development.
6. **On Economic and Social Rights in China and the EU**

7. The Round Table recalls that building a harmonious society and a peaceful world is the shared goal pursued by both sides, in which the respect and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights for all plays a central role.

8. The Round Table notes that the crisis should be taken as an opportunity to carry out the necessary reforms of the international economic and financial systems and to promote balanced development based on equality, social justice and decent work. The financial markets should be reoriented so as to serve the real economy and the economic recovery has to go hand in hand with adequate social development to meet the interests of people.

9. At the international level, the Round Table urges the relevant authorities to take into account the protection of economic and social rights of the most vulnerable groups, especially in developing countries, when adopting new policies to address the impact of the financial and economic crisis. For that reason, various forms of protectionism must be avoided.

10. Migrant workers should benefit from special attention and preferential treatment, being the first victims of the crisis. Other vulnerable categories of the population such as unemployed, women, ethnic minorities, elderly, children, young people and university graduates should also benefit from specifically targeted policies.

11. The Round Table also calls on the relevant authorities to reinforce their social security systems as well as minimum income levels.

12. The Round Table stresses the importance of social dialogue as a tool to promote harmonious industrial relations, decent work and good governance.

13. The Round Table considers that social dialogue means that employers and employees select their representatives by themselves, and choose the topics for negotiation on their own. The government should create an enabling environment for social dialogue and collective agreement.

14. The Round Table calls on the relevant authorities to take positive measures to promote this social dialogue and other effective forms of civic participation taking into account their
respective national conditions, in order to ensure the avoidance of conflict and peaceful conflict resolution.

15. The right to organize and collective bargaining are basic rights and should be seen as an opportunity to deal peacefully with the major challenges in the labour market and social policy, to the benefit of all.

16. The members of the Round Table call on the relevant authorities to promote joint EU-China civil society projects, in order to develop and foster mutual understanding through exchanges of good practices and through research. This will lead to the establishment of common action principles and agendas on economic and social rights and in particular on social dialogue.

17. Sustainable Development and Water

18. The Round Table insists that water must remain a public good and a fundamental element of countries' sovereignty. Ensuring fair access to water for all, including future generations, at fair prices should guide all water policy, in an integrated approach to water resources management.

19. The implementation of water policies should be founded on the developing and proper enforcement of a legislative framework and be based on the principles of openness and transparency. It should encourage the participation of stakeholders in the drafting of planning documents and packages of measures.

20. Water is a global issue and is one of the major elements to be taken into account for a sustainable development. The degradation of our ecosystems not only lowers the quality of life for people today and for future generations, but also impedes our progress towards sustainable long-term economic growth. Water related problems have been particularly affected by the onset of climate change and subsequent extreme events of drought and rainfalls.

21. Agriculture, as a productive sector, suffers acutely from the effects of water scarcity and drought, while at the same time playing an important role in the sustainable management of available water resources.
22. The Round Tables notes that a key condition for sustainable land-use planning is that all agricultural production, including irrigation and biomass production and that all economic activities related to land should be adapted to the amount of water available.

23. Significant potential remains for better water-efficient practices and technologies, including in recycling and reducing water use. Consumers have a major role to play in the sustainable use of water resources. Education about water management and water-saving should help raise awareness of the need to preserve water resources in terms of both quality and quantity.

24. The Round Table recommends increased cooperation between the EU and China in areas such as improving water use efficiency, waste water discharge and purification, river basin management as a means of achieving the sustainable use of water resources. The participation of civil society is important to the success of sustainable water management.

25. A dialogue at EU-China civil society level in the field of water management should be established and a cooperation mechanism should be set up to promote bilateral exchanges and technical assistance.

26. Both sides agree that the seventh meeting of the China-EU Round Table will take place in Chongqing in April 2010 and focus on two issues: "Water Resources and Sustainable Development" and "Children’s Rights".

27. The present Joint Statement shall be submitted to the upcoming China-EU Summit.

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