

Notes for the President
The Chinese delegation Visit
November 9, 2000

Good afternoon.

It is a great pleasure for IDRC to welcome you all, as representatives of various government departments and offices in China through the China Association of International Exchange of Personnel. I understand that the purpose of your visit to Canada is to study the Canadian experience in program development and management in Canadian government and private-sector organizations active in international cooperation. IDRC is a unique organization, both here in Canada as well as internationally. We are delighted to have the chance to share our experience with you today.

While we are an integral part of Canadian efforts in international development cooperation, we differ from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and other government organizations that you may have visited already. IDRC was established by the Parliament of Canada in 1970, with a special mandate to support research for development and to strengthen capacity in developing countries. We have just celebrated our 30th anniversary. As a public corporation, we are accorded a certain autonomy from Canadian government foreign policies and are able to consult independently with CIDA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ODA agencies. We have an international board of governors. Almost a half of our 21 governors are from other countries, particularly developing countries. Our staff come from all over the world and they work here in Ottawa as well as in our seven regional offices, two of which are located in Asia.

You will hear more about our corporate structure, governance, and regional presence from the Director of Public Affairs, Jean-Marc Fleury. He will also outline our Corporate Strategy and Program Framework for the next five years. Within this framework, we focus on three program areas: Social and Economic Equity; Environment and Natural Resources Management; and Information and Communication Technologies. Sylvain Dufour, Director of Client Services, will then present our program delivery mechanisms, which take the forms of Program Initiatives and International Secretariats.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that China has been a special IDRC partner and that our relationship with various Chinese partners has been fostered over the last 20 years, particularly through our Southeast and East Asia Office in Singapore. Amongst others, we have worked closely with The Ministry of Science and Technology, the Chinese Academy of Forestry, and the Beijing Municipal Health Bureau. I myself had a chance to visit some of our partners and a number of project sites in China last November, and together we reflected upon the 20-year collaboration between China and IDRC. Just last month, we organized a meeting in Guiyang to convene all projects on Natural Resource Management in Asia to share project experiences and to provide feedback to IDRC program staff. Ronnie Vernooy, Senior Program Specialist and member of the Community-Based Natural Resource Management Program, will present to you

the highlights of this workshop. This will give you an idea of both the objectives and the operations of IDRC's program initiatives.

I hope that the information that you receive from our staff today will be helpful. Thank you for visiting our Centre.