



## PRIME MINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

### Opening statement. Seminar on Industrial Development

Beijing, 7 November 1995,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the beginning of this century, Norway belonged to the poorest countries of Europe. While Norway is old as a nation, we have been a fully sovereign country only since 1905.

Our industrial development came late compared to other European countries. We developed by harnessing our natural resources, in particular our abundance in hydroelectric power potential.

We depended on foreign capital.

By means of legislation, we retained sufficient national control of our resources and the industrial base. We developed our democracy in parallel, introducing women's suffrage in 1913, and by adopting initial legislation protecting the work-force.

State owned industries were the back-bone of Norway's industrial growth in the decades of reconstruction after the Second World War.

Today, Norway is fully integrated into the world economy. Fifty per cent of our national production is exported - and fifty per cent of national consumption is imported. We are an integral part of the European internal market where the same rules, rights and obligations apply to all economic operators of Western Europe.

We work to realize our aims for the future economic and social development of Norway by means of macro-economic measures and administrative regulations rather than by relying on protectionism and state ownership, though the latter still has a significant place in our country. Today, our state owned companies are fully competitive on the international market.

It is our experience that sound, sustainable economic growth, and an equitable distribution of the benefits of growth, are best attained by means of a mixed economy. We rely on a strong and effective public sector, and on harnessing the market forces rather than on suppressing them.

The market is effective in directing resources. But the market is less effective in promoting equity, equal opportunity and environmental requirements. These are needs which are not articulated by market forces alone. These are needs defined by people and their political representatives.

An equitable educational system allows us to harness the potential of all our people, regardless of their background or financial situation. In today's knowledge based economy, providing equal access to education is a

prerequisite for ensuring equal rights and opportunities on the labour market.

Knowledge about each other's economic policies and systems is essential for expanding our economic cooperation. Increasing that knowledge is an important part of the purposes of this visit.

The dialogue between China and Norway on economic and social policies is not new. These issues were discussed when vice-premier Zhu Rongji visited us in 1992. Our Minister of Finance visited China in 1993 and meetings on economic policy were held the year after.

Today's seminar is a continuation and expansion of previous contacts. We have included in our delegation representatives of companies which have opted for long term strategies in China. They are here to invest in your people, share experience and develop the potential for cooperation.

Together, Government and industry have developed a strategy for economic cooperation with China and the other Asian countries. A particular emphasis is put on the economic sectors where we have our strongest base; energy, shipping, information technology, environmental technology and fish.

We are aware of Chinas plans to liberalize the state owned enterprises and giving them greater freedom. These plans are expressed in the Ninth-Five Years Plan for 1996-2000 and in the Long-Term Target for the year 2010. I chose to include Chinas Agenda 21-document in these plans for the future.

It is our hope that the continued dialogue between us will benefit both sides. The Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry (NHO) have for years cooperated with China Enterprise Management Association (CEMA) in training management personnel. The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions is represented in our delegation, and it will now be resuming the contacts with their Chinese counterpart, contacts which have been deactivated for some years.

Our cooperation will be expanding further when we sign the agreement between the Fudan University of Shanghai on a business management program later this week.

In depth knowledge of Chinas economic life will be of long-term benefit for us. We thank you for having the desire to be working with Norway.

The ultimate beneficiaries will be the people of Norway and China, their futures and life conditions.