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China

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



I. Methodology, consultation process and background

A. Methodology and consultation process

1. The present report was compiled on the basis of the general guidelines for the preparation of information under the universal periodic review, as set forth in Human Rights Council decision 17/119: Follow-up to the Human Rights Council resolution 16/21 with regard to the universal periodic review (A/HRC/DEC/17/119). It highlights progress in human rights in China, the implementation of recommendations received at the time of the third-cycle review and challenges and future goals. In accordance with the “One Country, Two Systems” principle, the reports separately prepared by the governments of the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions (SARs) of China are presented in Chapters V and VI below.

2. To compile the present report, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed up a special interdepartmental working group comprising 29 legislative, judicial and administrative organs of the Government (see list in annex I). Forty non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions were also consulted, orally and in writing (see list in annex II), and public opinion was broadly solicited via the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

B. Follow-up to the third-cycle review (recommendations 30 and 31)

3. The Chinese Government accepted 284 of the 346 recommendations put forward by various countries in the course of the third cycle of the universal periodic review. China attaches great importance to follow-up work. Immediately after the review, the Government brought the relevant domestic departments up to date via a cross-sectoral coordination mechanism, clarifying the division of labour and implementation of programmes among the various departments. It prepares regular overview reports on the status of implementation, paying particular attention to hearing the views of non-governmental organizations. The resulting advances are reflected in this report.

C. The development, theoretical system and accomplishments of human rights in China (recommendations 36, 105 and 115)

4. China upholds respect for and protection of human rights as a task of importance in State governance, fostering historic achievements in the cause of human rights in China. On schedule, we have achieved an historic solution to the problem of absolute poverty, thereby attaining our first centenary goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. We will continue to develop whole-process people’s democracy, promote the protection of human rights and the rule of law and resolutely uphold social equity and justice. We have built the largest education, social security and health-care systems in the world, significantly improving the quality of the people’s living environment. In vigorously responding to the COVID-19 outbreak, we protected the people’s living security and physical health to the greatest degree possible. We uphold the equality of all ethnicities, respect the religious beliefs of the masses and guarantee the lawful rights and interests of all ethnic groups. We are cracking down on all types of illegal and criminal behaviour in order to maintain the long-term stability of society.

5. The Twentieth National Congress of the Communist Party of China drew up a grand blueprint for the full establishment of a great modern socialist power in all respects and the comprehensive promotion of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization. It has made clear that “[China] will follow a Chinese path of human rights development, actively participate in global human rights governance and promote the comprehensive advancement of human rights.” Chinese-style modernization is a modernization of a huge population, a modernization of common prosperity for all, a modernization that harmonizes material and spiritual civilizations, a modernization of harmony between humanity and nature, and a modernization that follows the path of peaceful

development. The process of promoting Chinese-style modernization in China is essentially a process of achieving social equity and justice, and of continuously promoting the development of the cause of human rights.

6. In bringing about the development of that cause, China has embarked on a path of human rights development that is in keeping with the trend of the times and appropriate to its national conditions. This path follows the leadership of the Communist Party of China in ensuring that the people are the masters of the country, and upholds the equal enjoyment of human rights so as to promote the comprehensive development of human rights of all kinds. We uphold respect for the dominant role of the people, guarantee the people's democratic rights, fully stimulate the enthusiasm, initiative and creativity of the masses, and allow the people to be the main participants, promoters and beneficiaries of the development of the cause of human rights. We adhere to the Chinese practical approach, combining the principle of universality of human rights with Chinese practice, and promoting the development of the cause of human rights in the light of the national conditions in China and of the needs of its people. We uphold the right to life and the right to development as the primary basic human rights, with the complete, accurate and comprehensive implementation of the new development concept, and adhere to a people-centred development ideology in which development is for the people, depends on the people, its results are shared by the people, and is focused on resolving the issues of the people's most immediate and practical concern. We uphold the protection of human rights in accordance with the law, maintain the equality of all persons before the law, ensure respect for and protection of human rights throughout all aspects of legislation, law enforcement, justice administration and compliance with the law, and are accelerating the improvement of a legal system that embodies fairness in rights, opportunities and rules. We will continue to actively participate in global human rights governance, promote the common values of all humanity, practice true multilateralism, put forward the Global Development, Global Security and Global Civilization Initiatives, and call on all parties to protect human rights through security, advance human rights through development, promote human rights through cooperation, and foster the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

II. Legislative and institutional framework for promoting and protecting human rights

A. Human rights legislation (recommendations 57, 65, 85–90, 131, 152, 155, 157, 173, 174, 197, 212, 223, and 332)

7. China continues to improve the development of a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics, with the Constitution as its core and the laws, including administrative regulations, local regulations and other normative documents, as its backbone. Since the previous review, China has enacted 51 new laws, including the Civil Code, the Legal Aid Law, the Personal Information Protection Law and the Barrier-free Environment Creation Law, and has revised 113 laws, including the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests and the Law on the Protection of Minors. The 298 laws currently in effect in China provide a more solid foundation for the development of human rights.

B. Fulfilling international human rights obligations (recommendations 1, 4, 9, 16, 100, 117, 126, 133, 135, 140, and 144)

8. Since the previous review, China has acceded to the 1930 Convention on Forced Labour, the 1957 Convention on the Abolition of Forced Labour, and the Marrakech Treaty. To date, China has ratified or acceded to 29 international human rights instruments (see annex III) and has always participated in the reviews of the implementation of human rights treaties in an open, transparent and responsible manner.

9. China actively participates in international cooperation to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, established by China, has implemented more than 110 development cooperation projects in

nearly 60 developing countries, on such themes as disaster relief, health, women and children, refugees and environmental protection.

10. China has actively implemented the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and has established a China network under the United Nations Global Compact. Chinese textile, mining, overseas engineering contracting, communications and other industries have formulated implementation guidelines for each industry. Thousands of Chinese companies voluntarily release corporate social responsibility reports.

C. Institutional safeguards for human rights

1. Political system/institutions (recommendation 121)

11. China adheres to the political system and development path chosen by the Chinese people, upholds the leadership of the Party, the people's mastery of the country, and the organic law-based governance of the country, and pursues the improvement and development of the system of people's congresses. China is fully developing whole-process people's democracy, and implements democratic elections, consultation, decision-making, management and supervision by the whole people in accordance with the law.

2. Judicial safeguards for human rights (recommendations 214, 215, 217, 219 and 220)

12. China has incorporated respect for and protection of human rights into the Constitution of the Communist Party of China and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, upholds the equality of all before the law, and continuously raises the security level for the legalization of human rights. We will continue to deepen the comprehensive reform of the judicial system and fully implement the judicial responsibility system. About 130 reform initiatives and more than 220 reform tasks specified in the comprehensive reform programme for deepening the judicial system of the people's courts have been basically completed.

13. China continues to strengthen its restraint and oversight of public authority. Through amendments to the Constitution and enactment of the State Supervision Law, national and local supervisory committees have been constituted to achieve full coverage of public officials. The people's congresses at all levels and their standing committees, courts and procuratorial organs each exercise the powers of administrative supervision, administrative trial and administrative procuratorial supervision in accordance with the law. Local governments at all levels have set up a series of public service platforms to provide public monitoring and reporting channels that are staffed 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

3. Human rights development planning (recommendations 72–74 and 108–111)

14. China has completed all of the 168 goals and tasks set out in the National Human Rights Action Plan (2016–2020) and is now in the process of implementing the National Human Rights Action Plan (2021–2025), making China one of the few countries that have continued to draft and implement four national human rights action plans in succession. The Outline for Women's Development in China (2021–2030), the Outline for Children's Development in China (2021–2030), the National Medium- and Long-Term Strategy for Actively Addressing Population Ageing, the Protection and Development Plan for Persons with Disabilities under the Fourteenth Five Year Plan and other medium- and long-term plans have been formulated and are being implemented, making important arrangements for the protection of the rights of the groups concerned.

4. Human rights education (recommendations 75–81)

15. Human rights education has been integrated into the curriculum standards of primary and secondary schools, and "Respect and protect human rights" content is included in courses on ethics, the rule of law and history in primary and secondary schools. Human rights education continues to be integrated into national rule-of-law advocacy plans. From 2019 to 2022, the Press Office of the State Council of China, along with the judiciary, relied on 14 national human-rights education and training bases to conduct more than 230 national human

rights training courses, with a total of more than 25,000 trainees. China continues to carry out legal-literacy work for the population as a whole; it is currently implementing its eighth five-year universal legal-literacy plan, giving full play to the role of the law in protecting human rights.

5. Civil society participation (recommendations 206–208, 210, 211, 255, and 337–342)

16. The Chinese government actively protects citizens' freedom of association. As of the end of 2022, some 890,000 social organizations had been registered and were active in the fields of education, technology, cultural health, public welfare and charity. The Law on the Administration of Activities of Overseas Non-Governmental Organizations within the Territory of China provides legal safeguards for the activities of foreign non-governmental organizations in China. More than 1,700 foreign NGOs from more than 70 countries and regions have registered to carry out activities in China in accordance with the law.

17. Chinese NGOs actively participate in meetings of the United Nations Human Rights Council and its subsidiary mechanisms, and play a constructive role in the participation of China in national human rights reviews, as well as reviews of the implementation of human rights treaties and the implementation of national human rights action plans.

III. Achievements and practices in the promotion and protection of human rights

A. Economic, social and cultural rights

1. Rights to subsistence and to development (recommendations 92–96, 98–104, 107, 112, 116, 118–120, 240 and 241)

18. Survival is the foundation for the enjoyment of all human rights, and a happy life for the people is the greatest human right. Since 2018, China has maintained steady and sound economic and social development. The overall economy reached 121 trillion yuan RMB in 2022, and GDP per capita reached 85,698 yuan. Innovative nation building has made significant progress, with the ranking of China rising from 34th to 11th place on the Global Innovation Index.

19. Through a targeted poverty alleviation strategy, China has lifted nearly 100 million rural poor out of poverty, and achieved the poverty reduction target of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ten years ahead of schedule.

20. The country's food production has steadily developed, with the land area sown for grain production as well as grain production itself steadily rising and stabilizing at more than 650 million tons for eight consecutive years, and has achieved a bumper harvest for the nineteenth year in a row.

2. Rights to work and to form trade unions (recommendations 244–248 and 329)

21. Employment is of paramount importance for the people's livelihood. China attaches great importance to safeguarding the equal employment rights and interests of workers, and provides employment support and assistance to all categories of workers without discrimination. According to a national survey of urban households, the year-end unemployment rate remained within 5.5 per cent from 2018–022.

22. An assessment mechanism for the minimum wage has been established and improved. The average monthly minimum wage has increased by about 3.7 per cent on an annual basis since 2018.

23. Malicious wage arrears, illegal overtime work and other labour violations are subject to significant oversight. A total of 723,000 labour-law monitoring bodies have been established by trade unions at all levels throughout the country, with 1.4 million labour law monitors.

24. We continue to provide public-welfare legal services for migrant workers. Since 2017, benefits have been extended to migrant workers in more than 29 million instances; 141,000 labour dispute cases have been mediated, assisting in the recovery of more than 4 billion yuan in economic losses.

3. Right to social security (recommendations 222, 224, 225, and 237–239)

25. China has built the largest social security system in the world, basically providing security to all those entitled to it. From 2018 to 2022, the system has guaranteed subsistence allowances for more than 40 million people and nearly 5 million especially impoverished people, along with 10 million instances of temporary assistance, and provided dynamic monitoring and normalization assistance to more than 66 million low-income people. By the end of 2022, the average national monthly urban subsistence allowance stood at 752 yuan per capita and the yearly rural subsistence allowance standard stood at 6,985 yuan per capita, increasing by 29.7 per cent and 44.5 per cent respectively from the end of 2018.

4. Right to housing (recommendations 233–236)

26. We insist on the position that “houses are for living in, not for speculation”, and continue to improve a housing system that ensures supply through multiple sources, provides housing support through multiple channels, and encourages both housing purchase and renting. Over the past ten years, China has completed a cumulative investment of 14.8 trillion yuan, building more than 59 million units of affordable housing and slum rehabilitation housing of various types, thereby basically ensuring that disadvantaged and low-income families can share in realizing the dream of 140 million people for a peaceful life.

5. Right to education (recommendations 259–274 and 330)

27. China ranks first in the world in the scale of its education. In 2022, there were 518,500 schools at all levels and of all types throughout the country, with 293 million students enrolled in academic programmes. China implements nine years of compulsory education free of charge. Between 2014 and 2022, the national net rate of enrolment in primary schools increased from 99.81 per cent to 99.9 per cent, and the gross enrolment rate in junior secondary schools remained above 100 per cent.

28. Since the implementation of the national student loan policy in 1999, China has issued more than RMB 400 billion in loans to over 20 million students from families in financial difficulty.

6. Cultural rights (recommendations 275–278)

29. China is committed to building a powerful cultural country, continuously improving the public cultural-services system, vigorously developing cultural undertakings and the cultural sector, and ensuring that people fully enjoy their cultural rights. Nationwide, there are 3,303 free public libraries and 45,623 cultural libraries or cultural centres. We are further improving radio and television coverage and service quality, and the overall radio and television coverage of the population has steadily increased from 98.71 per cent and 99.07 per cent in 2018 to 99.65 per cent and 99.75 per cent respectively.

30. We attach great importance to the protection and transmission of ethnic-minority culture. Projects from all 56 ethnic groups in China have been included on the national-level list of representative intangible cultural heritage projects. China has identified a total of 3,057 national level representative intangible cultural heritage successors in five groups at the national level, of which 848 or 27.64 per cent are members of ethnic minorities, exceeding the proportion of ethnic minority members in the population.

7. Right to health (recommendations 228, 249–256 and 331)

31. China upholds the primacy of the people and the primacy of life, and is implementing the “Healthy China” strategy to improve the health of citizens throughout their life cycles. The main health indicators are at the forefront of those of the middle- and high-income countries. By the end of 2022, nearly 980,000 primary health-care facilities of all kinds had

been built nationwide, with 90 per cent of households in the country being able to reach the nearest such facility within 15 minutes.

32. China's basic health insurance enrolment rate has stabilized at more than 95 per cent, the proportion of hospital-expenses reimbursement in the scope of the employee health insurance and residents' health insurance policies have reached 80 per cent and 70 per cent respectively, and the average insurance reimbursement for major illness under basic health insurance has increased by 18 percentage points.

33. We are continuously improving the maternal and child health service system, which provides basic maternal and maternal health services and child health services free of charge to urban and rural women and children. In 2022, the national maternal mortality rate declined to 15.7 per hundred thousand, the infant mortality rate to 4.9 per thousand, and the under-5 mortality rate to 6.8 per thousand.

8. Environmental rights (recommendations 130–139, 141–143 and 242)

34. The implementation of “Lucid Waters and Lush Mountains” in China reflects the concept that the environment is an invaluable asset. We firmly uphold the goals, principles and regimes set out in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement, declare that CO₂ emissions will peak before 2030, strive to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060, and proclaim that no new overseas coal power projects will be built. In vigorously promoting the green transformation of industry and energy restructuring, we have achieved a number of global firsts: the largest-scale reforestation in the world, accounting for one quarter of the global total; the largest-scale renewable energy development and utilization in the world, with wind power and installed solar energy capacity accounting for more than one third of the global total; and the largest-scale production and sales of new energy vehicles in the world. The quality of the hydro-ecological environment has been steadily improving; in 2022, the mainstream Yangtze River reached Class II water quality for the third consecutive year, while the mainstream Yellow River reached Class II water quality for the first time. The Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China establishes public participation as one of the basic principles of environmental protection and guarantees citizens' rights to information, participation and oversight.

B. Civil and political rights

1. Rights to life and to security (recommendations 145–148 and 154)

35. China attaches equal importance to preventing and combating terrorist activities and to safeguarding human rights; in accordance with the law, it punishes those who commit terrorist activities and educates and rescues those who commit minor criminal or illegal acts, and no violent terrorist activities have occurred in China for more than six consecutive years. China has been lawfully combating drug-related criminal activities, and drug cases have declined for seven consecutive years since 2016. We are effectively combating human trafficking; the number of cases of trafficking in women and children across the country fell by 86.1 per cent in 2022 compared with 2013. With the establishment by the Ministry of Public Security of a platform for the urgent release of information on missing children, the recovery rate for missing children has reached 98.5 per cent.

2. Civil rights (recommendation 58)

36. China is comprehensively developing whole-process people's democracy, clarifying major ideas and specific systems, ensuring that the people are the masters of the country, and enabling the people to enjoy broader, fuller and more comprehensive democratic rights. We have established and are improving a working mechanism for communication with National People's Congress representatives, by means of setting up grassroots contact points, representative liaison stations and other ways to open channels of communication with the people. We have amended the Legislation Law of the People's Republic of China to make clear that the laws should respect and protect human rights, and are carrying out in-depth implementation of the Open Government Information Regulation on information disclosure to protect the people's rights to information, participation, expression and oversight.

37. Many cities in China have opened ‘12345’ Government services telephone hotlines to transmit citizens’ complaints about administrative services to the competent authorities in the shortest possible time. According to statistics, both the complaint resolution rate and the response satisfaction rate exceed 90 per cent.

38. We have strengthened and improved the handling of public complaints and proposals, formulated the Regulation on Handling Public Complaints and Proposals, improved the system for collecting proposals from the people and opened an online channel for that purpose, connecting more than 100,000 administrative units throughout the country via the Internet, greatly improving the efficiency of public complaints and proposals processing, and resolving a large number of issues of great concern to the people.

3. Right to a fair trial (recommendations 170, 171, 216, 218, 220 and 221)

39. China is committed to giving the people a sense of fairness and justice in every judicial case. We are deepening the reform of the trial-centred criminal procedure system, resolutely applying the principles of legality and presumption of innocence, and preventing torture and coercion of confessions by means of such measures as audio and video recording of interrogations, full coverage by defence lawyers in criminal cases, and the exclusion of unlawful evidence. Between 2018 and 2022, 53 people were lawfully acquitted in 26 cases of major criminal wrongdoing, and defendants in 2,675 public prosecution cases and 2,097 private prosecution case defendants were declared innocent in accordance with the law.

40. The corps of lawyers in China has grown to more than 600,000 persons and is an important force in building a country governed by the rule of law. China fully protects the rights of lawyers to meet, communicate, read case documents, take evidence and mount defences, as well as their rights to seek professional remedies and protections. To foster lawyers’ participation in the litigation system, we have established a disposition mechanism to safeguard the right of lawyers to practice law and improve their participation in the litigation system, by ensuring that violations of their rights as lawyers are promptly recognized, investigated, disposed of and feedback provided.

41. China has established a legal aid system to provide pro bono legal services to people in difficult economic circumstances and other parties who meet the legal conditions. China extends public coverage to all stages of trial implementation work, making public a cumulative total of over 100 million judicial documents and more than 6.1 billion items of information regarding trial processes, building the world’s largest repository of judicial trial information with an aggregate total of more than 218 million items of information on cases.

4. Rights to freedom of religion and belief (recommendations 182–188 and 192–198)

42. China guarantees citizens’ right to freedom of religious belief in accordance with the law. There are currently nearly 200 million religious citizens, more than 380,000 members of the clergy, some 5,500 religious groups, 144,000 places of religious activity and 95 religious educational institutions.

5. Freedom of speech and of the news media / the press (recommendations 199–202, 204, 205 and 209)

43. In accordance with the law, China guarantees the lawful right of journalists in the news media to conduct interviews and monitor public opinion. According to statistics, there are currently more than 580 book publishing entities in China, more than 1,800 news publications and tens of thousands of periodicals, as well as more than 2,500 radio and television broadcasting organs. As of June 2023, the number of Internet news and information services in China had reached 3,498, that of Internet users had reached 1.079 billion, and that of users of instant messaging, network video, and short videos had reached 1.047 billion, 1.044 billion and 1.026 billion respectively.

C. Rights of special groups

1. Women's rights (recommendations 60, 64, 82, 83, 91, 113, 251, 258 and 279–295)

44. We adhere to the basic State policy of equality between men and women. The Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests has been amended to include a definition of discrimination against women. Since the implementation of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law in 2016, China has established and improved mechanisms for cooperation among multiple Government departments and has continuously strengthened the implementation of the system of discovery reports, written warnings, and personal safety protection orders. The level of education and employment of women in China continues to improve. The proportion of female students in undergraduate and postgraduate education exceeds that of male students, and women account for 55 per cent of Internet entrepreneurs and 45.8 per cent of women tech workers.

2. Children's rights (recommendations 114, 156, 231, 243 and 296–305)

45. China views the proper upbringing of more than 298 million children as a strategic and foundational task. We have amended the Law on the Protection of Minors and the Law on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, defined the principle of "upholding the best interests of minors," and are maintaining a policy of "zero tolerance" for crimes against minors. The funding standard for the basic subsistence allowance for orphans through a specialized funding mechanism of the central Government was increased by 50 per cent in 2019, extending the scope of protection to such areas as rehabilitation, medical care, and education. We are also building a system of care services for children left behind in rural areas; some 667,000 village children's-affairs directors and 55,000 township children supervisors are working to strengthen children's welfare at the grassroots community level throughout the country.

3. Rights of the elderly (recommendations 229, 230 and 250)

46. China strives to allow the elderly to share the achievements of reform and development and enjoy a happy old age. By the end of 2022, the number of service institutions and facilities for the elderly had reached 387,000 nationwide, with a total of 8.294 million beds. The establishment of advanced-age allowances, financial hardship service subsidies and care subsidies for the disabled elderly had benefited 3.4064 million, 5.749 million and 944,000 people respectively by the end of 2022. Public cultural facilities at all levels are free or concessionary for the elderly; senior citizens can enjoy free or half-price preferential fares on public transport. Senior community residents enjoy "community cafeterias", assisted bathing, medical assistance and other services. The University of the Third Age is booming, and carries out "Senior Appreciation Month" activities in October every year, reflecting steady progress in the construction of an elderly-friendly society.

4. Rights of the disabled (recommendations 55, 306, 307, and 309–316)

47. China adheres to the idea that people with disabilities can also live a wonderful life, and provides living subsidies for people with disabilities in financial difficulty and nursing care subsidies for people with severe disabilities to 27 million persons in those categories. The coverage of basic rehabilitation services and assistive adaptive services for people with disabilities exceeds 80 per cent; the enrolment rate in compulsory education for children with disabilities exceeds 95 per cent, and more than 10,000 students with disabilities are enrolled in institutions of higher learning each year. The State has established the first college of rehabilitation. The number of people with disabilities working in urban and rural areas exceeds 9 million. About 6,600 persons with disabilities and persons who work with the disabled are serving as members of people's congresses and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress at all levels and participate in the management of public affairs. The Barrier-free Environment Creation Law was officially implemented in September 2023.

5. Rights of ethnic minorities (recommendations 94, 195, 226, 268, 320–324 and 326–328)

48. China guarantees all ethnic groups equal enjoyment of rights in all areas in accordance with the law. According to the Seventh National Population Census (conducted in 2020), the ethnic-minority population was about 125 million, an increase of more than 11 million since the Sixth Population Census (conducted in 2010). In 2022, GDP in eight provinces and regions of China with significant ethnic-minority populations had increased by 22.1 per cent from the 2018 level at comparable values, with an average annual growth of 5.1 per cent, 0.2 percentage points higher than the overall national figure for the same period. By the end of 2021, 34.7705 million students from ethnic minorities were enrolled in schools of all types and levels throughout the country, accounting for about 11.43 per cent of the total number of enrolled students nationwide and exceeding the proportion of ethnic minorities in the population overall. Free education from kindergarten to high school has been achieved in parts of Tibet and Xinjiang. The Chinese Government regularly organizes major national festivals of ethnic-minority arts and literature, such as the National Ethnic Minority Literature and Arts Conference, the National Traditional Ethnic-Minority Games, and creativity awards for selected ethnic-minority literary works.

D. Participation in international human rights cooperation

1. Cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms (recommendations 24, 33, 37–39 and 41)

49. Since 2018, China has actively participated in global human rights governance and launched a series of initiatives in such fora as the Human Rights Council. We conduct constructive exchanges and cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the special procedures and the human rights treaty bodies. We have invited the former High Commissioner for Human Rights [Michelle] Bachelet, as well as the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, and others, to visit China, and we respond to the communications of the special procedures in a conscientious and timely manner.

2. Multilateral exchanges and cooperation on human rights (recommendations 43–54, 122, 128 and 129)

50. China has long provided development assistance to a wide range of developing countries with no political strings attached. For over 70 years, China has provided assistance to more than 160 countries and international organizations to help recipient countries strengthen their ability to develop independently, improve their people's lives and promote economic development and social progress. China continues to advance the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as providing new opportunities for the world through its own new development. In the past ten years, China has created 420,000 jobs in Belt and Road countries and lifted nearly 40 million people out of poverty.

51. Since 2018, China has held human rights dialogues and exchanges with more than 30 countries and regions, and organized such international human rights conferences as the "Forum on Global Human Rights Governance" and the "South-South Human Rights Forum" to promote enhanced exchanges and mutual learning among all parties.

IV. Challenges and future goals

A. Difficulties and challenges

52. For a major developing country with more than 1.4 billion people, problems of inadequate and imbalanced development remain prominent in China. There are many obstacles and bottlenecks to promoting high-quality development, and our ability to innovate in science and technology is not yet strong. We also face many major problems in ensuring reliable food, energy, supply chain security and financial risk preparedness. The gap in development and income distribution between urban and rural areas remains large. The

masses face many difficulties in employment, education, medical care, childcare, pensions and housing. The task of protecting the ecological environment remains daunting, and there is still a gap between the level of judicial capacity on the one hand and the requirements of Chinese-style modernization and the growing demand of the people for fairness and justice on the other.

B. Future goals

53. Looking to the future, China will continue to raise the level of human rights protections and promote the free and comprehensive development of the people as it promotes the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization.

54. China will adhere to the philosophy of people-centred development, uphold the protection and improvement of the people's livelihood in development, and steadily advance common prosperity. China will develop whole-process people's democracy, improve the institutional system through which the people exercise their mastery of the country, expand their orderly political participation, and protect their enjoyment of broad rights and freedoms in accordance with the law. China will strengthen equal protection of and special support for the rights and interests of specific groups. China will actively participate in global human rights governance, advocate dialogue and cooperation, promote the work of the United Nations human rights mechanisms in a just, objective, non-selective and non-politicized manner, and advance the development of global human rights governance in a fairer, more equitable and more inclusive direction.

V. Promotion and protection of human rights in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

A. Background

55. This report was prepared by the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) after careful consideration of comments received during three weeks of public consultation in June 2023.

B. Framework and measures for promoting and safeguarding human rights

56. The HKSAR fully and faithfully implements the "One Country, Two Systems" policy. The constitutional order of the Special Administrative Region, based on the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (the "HKSAR Basic Law"), operates in a stable and robust manner and the rights and freedoms enjoyed in accordance with the law by Hong Kong residents are fully protected. The HKSAR participates in reviews of the implementation of international covenants on human rights, pursuant to arrangement by the Central Government.

57. In June 2020, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress enacted the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the "HKSAR National Security Law"), whose immediate promulgation and implementation in the HKSAR effectively ended a violent, destructive and chaotic situation. In March 2021, the National People's Congress made appropriate and necessary adjustments to the electoral system of the HKSAR to ensure that the principle of "patriots governing Hong Kong" is implemented. Since the promulgation of the HKSAR National Security Law and the improvement of the electoral system, the situation in Hong Kong has marked a major turn from chaos to governance and has moved towards a new phase of stability and prosperity. Hong Kong society has put the volatile situation behind it, and the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents are better protected in a safer and more orderly environment.

C. Practices in the promotion and protection of human rights (recommendations 205 and 343–346)

58. During the third-cycle review, the Chinese Government accepted the five recommendations made by countries concerned regarding the HKSAR, and the HKSAR has been implementing appropriate and effective measures.

59. The HKSAR protects the freedoms of press and expression of Hong Kong residents. The media may exercise their freedom of expression in accordance with the law, and comment on or even criticize the work of the HKSAR government. The number of local, mainland Chinese and overseas media organisations registered with the Press Service of the Information Services Department of the HKSAR government has increased by 39 per cent compared with 2018. The public continues to enjoy freedom of peaceful assembly and association. The number of registered trade unions and trade union federations increased by 60.7 per cent between the end of 2018 and June 2023. Even as it facilitates the expression of views by people at gatherings and marches, the HKSAR is also responsible for maintaining national security and public order. The police always handle public activities in accordance with the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245) and relevant laws. The HKSAR consistently upholds the rule of law, its courts conduct trials independently, and the Court of Final Appeal exercises the power of final adjudication of the HKSAR. The Court of Final Appeal may invite judges from other common-law jurisdictions to take part in its proceedings, as required. There are currently 11 non-permanent overseas judges from the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada taking part in the proceedings of the Court of Final Appeal on occasion. Hong Kong residents continue to participate in public affairs (including public elections).

60. The HKSAR attaches great importance to protecting the rights and interests of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs), who are covered by the Employment Ordinance and enjoy the additional benefits provided for in the Standard Employment Contract (ID 407) established by the government. The Labour Department of the HKSAR government set up a specialized unit to provide “one-stop shop” support for FDHs in 2020.

61. The Hong Kong Commission on Children was established in 2018 to provide comprehensive oversight of children’s affairs and formulate policies, strategies and work priorities on children’s development and growth, as well as monitor their implementation. In June 2023, the HKSAR government submitted a bill to the Legislative Council on the mandatory reporting of child abuse, aimed at early detection and intervention in child abuse cases and strengthening child protection.

D. Challenges and future goals

62. The HKSAR is making every effort to accelerate, increase and improve the supply of public housing and to reduce the waiting time for units to become available. It has published blueprints for the development of youth, scientific and technical entrepreneurship, and primary medical care, is focusing on increasing the supply of labour to support the economy, and is setting short, medium and long-term relief measures on different issues to benefit the people and build a people-centred society together.

VI. Promotion and protection of human rights in the Macao Special Administrative Region

A. Methodology and consultation process

63. The government of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) prepared the present report on the basis of extensive information collected from all relevant departments along with comments solicited from the public from 9 June 2023 to 10 July 2023.

B. The legislative framework for the protection of human rights

64. The legislative framework for human rights in Macao is composed of the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (the "MSAR Basic Law"), the international human rights conventions as applied in Macao, and local laws. The MSAR participates in reviews of the implementation of international covenants on human rights, pursuant to arrangement by the Central Government.

65. Within the framework of the MSAR Basic Law and the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, the MSAR enjoys executive and legislative powers, as well as independent judicial and final adjudication authority. Various committees, composed of representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations, assist the MSAR government in formulating policies for the protection of human rights. The Commission Against Corruption oversees the work of the public sector. The Commission for Disciplinary Control of the Security Forces and Services has been given greater social representation and powers since 2019 to assist the Chief Executive in monitoring the law enforcement departments.

C. Progress in promoting and protecting human rights

66. Since the previous review cycle, the MSAR has continued to promote legislation on the rule of law and human rights guarantees, formulate various policy measures and safeguard public participation in the formulation of policies or legislative processes. At the same time, human rights law activities have been carried out on an ongoing basis, in cooperation with NGOs, to promote human rights awareness among different communities, and to provide human rights training to government officials, magistrates, teachers, etc.

67. The MSAR optimized the court system and improved judicial efficiency through the adoption in 2019 of amendments to the MSAR Law on Judicial Organization and the introduction in 2022 of electronic measures in legal proceedings; the MSAR Law on Minimum Wage for Employees was also enacted to further protect the rights of employees and give equal importance to the rights of foreign employees.

68. Since 2018, the Macao SAR has implemented a two-tier social security system. The first level of social security ensures access to basic social security protections for residents, while the second, a non-mandatory central provident fund system, supports more favourable life protections post-retirement. The provision of various types of support and financial assistance to economically disadvantaged families is ongoing, and measures and amounts of assistance are adjusted in a timely manner to meet the conditions of socioeconomic development. A five-step housing policy has been set up to optimize the application process for low-cost housing.

69. The MSAR has formulated the MSAR Medium- and Long-Term Planning for Non Tertiary Education (2021–2030) to improve the free, compulsory and special education systems, and has drafted a Plan for Macao Women's Development Goals (2019–2025) to ensure fuller protections and equal development opportunities for women in all social spheres. A childcare services planning programme was implemented for 2018–2022, and continues for 2023–2025, providing needed services for young children and their families. Conditions for persons with disabilities to claim disability benefits have been relaxed, and we are promoting inclusive education for and facilitation of employment of persons with disabilities.

D. Challenges and future goals

70. The Macao SAR will strive to promote the development of key sectors, including health, modern finance, high and new technologies, trade conventions and exhibitions, and sports and culture, while continuously improving the level of human rights protection in all fields as it advances economic and social development.