

## **China's Progress in Human Rights 2003**

**By Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China  
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### **Foreword**

The year 2003 was an important and unusual year for China's development. It was also a year of great, landmark significance for progress in human rights in the country. In 2003, the Chinese government did a good job in tackling the sudden outbreak of SARS and curbing its spread, as well as in tackling frequent natural disasters. Persisting in taking economic construction as its central task, and striving for the coordinated development of material, political and spiritual civilizations, it achieved new breakthroughs in its reform, opening-up and modernization efforts. China maintained political stability, and achieved rapid economic growth and overall social progress. Moreover, further improvements were witnessed in the people's living standards and new progress was made in human rights cause.

The Chinese government gives top priority to the people's life and health and basic human rights. Adopting the attitude of holding itself accountable to the people, acting in their interests and accepting their supervision, the Chinese government has formulated the principles of government, that is, "governing the country for the people," and "using the power for the people, sharing the feelings of the people and working for the interests of the people."

It has put forward the scientific view of development characterized by putting people first and promoting the progress of society and overall development of the people. It has established the concept of governing the country by guaranteeing the implementation of the Constitution, establishing a government under the rule of law and creating political civilization.

In practice, it has adopted a series of distinctively epochal measures for respecting and safeguarding human rights. It has made great efforts to acquaint itself with the

feelings of the people, to reflect such feelings, to reduce the people's burdens and practice democracy. These efforts have markedly improved China's human rights conditions and won universal acknowledgement from the international community.

In 2003 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) proposed amendments to the current Constitution by adding the provision that "the state respects and safeguards human rights," among others. Not long ago, the Second Session of the Tenth National People's Congress (NPC) examined and adopted the amendments to the Constitution.

The added contents include stipulations on promoting the coordinated development of material, political and spiritual civilizations, establishing and improving the social security system, and respecting and safeguarding human rights. The amendments also include improvements to the land requisition system and the system for the protection of citizens' lawful private property, fully demonstrating that revisions to the Constitution are made to benefit the people and guarantee human rights.

Of particular importance is the formal addition, for the first time ever, of "the state respects and safeguards human rights" to the fundamental law of the state, indicating that respecting and safeguarding human rights has been upgraded from the level of Party and government policy and stand to the level of a constitutional principle, from an idea and value of the Party and government regarding its governance and administration to an idea and value inherent in state construction, thus further confirming the prominent status of human rights protection in China's legal system and state development strategy and opening wider prospects for the overall development of China's human rights cause.

Despite the fact that China has made great efforts to promote and safeguard human rights, there is still much room for improvement of the human rights conditions, as China is a developing country with a big population and natural, historical, development-level and other limitations. The Chinese government attaches great importance to existing problems, and will continue to take active and effective measures to steadily improve China's human rights conditions and earnestly raise the level of human rights enjoyed by the Chinese people.

To help the international community toward a better understanding of the human rights situation in China, we hereby give an overview of the developments in the field of human rights in China in 2003.

## **I. The People's Rights to Subsistence and Development**

In 2003 China's economy observed a rapid and healthy growth, and the people's rights to subsistence and development were further improved. Over the past year the country's gross domestic product (GDP) reached 11,669.4 billion yuan, an increase of 9.1 percent over the previous year. Calculated at the current rate of exchange, the GDP per capita surpassed US\$1,000 for the first time, a major step up.

The general living standard of the people continued to rise. In 2003 the per-capita disposable income of urban residents was 8,472 yuan, an increase, in real terms, of 9 percent over the previous year after deduction for inflation. The net per-capita income for rural residents was 2,622 yuan, an increase of 4.3 percent in real terms.

The consumption pattern of the society showed that it was gradually changing from one of basic living to one of modern living. In 2003 China's retail sales of consumer goods totaled 4,584.2 billion yuan-worth, an increase of 9.1 percent over the previous year. The proportion of urban and rural residents' expenditure on clothing, food and other daily necessities kept declining, while the proportion of their expenditure on high-grade daily-use articles, cars, housing, medical care and entertainments was increasing.

In 2003 the Engel coefficient (i.e. the proportion of food expenditure in the total consumption spending) per urban and rural household decreased by 0.6 percentage point from the previous year. In urban areas, the figure dropped to 37.1 percent from 57.5 percent in 1978, and in rural areas it dropped to 45.6 percent from 67.7 percent in 1978.

In 2003 China produced 2.02 million cars, an increase of 85 percent over the previous year. By the end of 2003 private cars owned by individuals had reached 4.89 million, an increase of 1.46 million cars over the previous year.

In 2003 an additional 49.08 million households had telephones installed in their residences, bringing the total number of households with telephones to 263.3 million at the year's end. Also in 2003, new mobile phone users increased by 62.69 million, bringing the total number to 268.69 million at the year's end. The number of fixed and mobile phone users combined reached 532 million at the end of 2003. There are now 42 telephones for every 100 people, putting China among the top countries in terms of the pace and scale of development.

By the end of 2003 there were 30.89 million computers throughout the country connected to the Internet, and the number of households logging on came to 79.5 million, ranking China second in the world.

The housing conditions and living environment for urban and rural residents steadily improved over the past year. Housing construction has increased at an annual rate of 20 percent in the past few years. The per-capita housing area was 22.8 square meters by the end of 2002, and in rural areas it increased to 26.5 square meters. In urban areas privately owned housing makes up at least 72 percent. Ninety-four percent of the newly constructed houses in urban areas were purchased by individuals. The standards for house decoration, decoration quality, indoor air quality and housing environment are rising steadily.

In the meantime, China made continuous efforts to solve the food and clothing problem of the impoverished population. The state input for development-oriented poverty reduction programs in rural areas increased from 24.8 billion yuan in 2000 to 29.9 billion yuan in 2003. This input was used to improve the production conditions for agriculture and animal husbandry in impoverished areas, to build roads, to

spread compulsory education and eliminate illiteracy, to train farmers in practical technology, to prevent and cure endemic diseases, to construct farm fields, to build water conservancy projects and to provide drinking water for both people and animals.

The per-capita income of farmers in the major poor counties that the government aims to help increased from 1,277 yuan at the end of 2001 to 1,305 yuan in 2003, and the size of the impoverished population without adequate food and clothing in rural China decreased from 250 million at the beginning of China's reform and opening-up program in 1978 to 29 million in 2003.

China attaches great importance to protecting the health and safety of its citizens. In 2003, faced with the sudden outbreak of the SARS epidemic, the Chinese government made the people's health and safety its top priority. It adopted a series of resolute and effective measures, including the promulgation of the Emergency Regulations on Public Health Contingencies and Measures for the Prevention and Treatment of the Infectious Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, timely release of information on SARS cases, and improvement of the SARS case reporting system and measures for prevention and control of the epidemic.

State leaders went to SARS-affected regions many times to investigate the epidemic conditions and console SARS patients as well as doctors and nurses, and mobilized the whole nation to join in the fight against SARS. The central and local governments earmarked more than 10 billion yuan to purchase medical equipment, medication and protective gear, and to reconstruct hospitals.

SARS patients, both farmers and townspeople who had financial difficulties, were treated free of charge, making sure that all SARS patients were given hospital treatment. These measures effectively reduced the death rate of confirmed SARS patients on the Chinese mainland to 6.5 percent, lower than the world's average of nine percent.

In tackling the outbreak of the highly infectious bird flu (avian flu) early this year, the Chinese government adopted many effective measures, such as the killing and compulsory vaccination of fowls. As a result, the disease was confined to the infected areas before it could spread to other areas and infect human beings. By March 16, 2004, the 49 cases of highly infectious bird flu incidents across China had been eliminated, and people's life and health had been effectively protected.

Meanwhile, the state adopted policies to give reasonable compensation to poultry farmers who had suffered financially during the epidemic. It also provided support to the poultry industry and poultry enterprises with respect to loans, bank interest discount and taxation, effectively protecting the interests of the farmers.

China has strengthened the prevention and treatment of AIDS. It has established the State Council coordination meeting system for the prevention and treatment of AIDS and venereal diseases. It has also worked out China's Medium- and Long-Term Plan for the Prevention and Control of AIDS (1998-2010) and China's Action Plan for the Control, Prevention and Treatment of AIDS (2001-2005).

In the four years starting 2003, the Chinese government will invest 1.75 billion yuan on the prevention and treatment of AIDS. The state provides free anti-AIDS medicine to patients among farmers and to other patients in straitened circumstances. In AIDS-prevalent areas people can receive anonymous examinations free of charge, and pregnant women with the AIDS virus can receive free medical screening to prevent them from spreading the virus to the baby. Orphans of AIDS patients are exempted from paying any fees required to attend school. Financial support is given to needy AIDS patients.

On World AIDS Day, i.e., December 1, 2003, China's Ministry of Health and a UN AIDS team jointly issued the Joint Evaluation Report on AIDS in China, describing the spread of AIDS and efforts for its control in China. On the same day, Premier Wen Jiabao visited AIDS patients in hospitals, shook hands with them and talked to them. This was designed to guide the public to correctly understand and control AIDS, and eliminate prejudice against AIDS patients.

At the same time, the state worked out and implemented the Plan for the Establishment of a National Public Health Monitoring and Information System and the Plan for the Establishment of a Medical Treatment System in Case of Public Health Contingencies. These plans helped establish a sound early warning and emergency mechanism concerning public health contingencies, a disease prevention and control system and a health care law enforcement supervision system, thus further improving the basic health care conditions for urban and rural residents.

According to statistics, by the end of 2003 China had 305,000 health care institutions, 2.902 million hospital and clinic beds, 4.24 million medical professionals, and 3,600 disease prevention and control centers (anti-epidemic stations) with 159,000 medical personnel. Moreover, there were 755 health care supervision and examination institutions with 15,000 medical personnel, and 45,000 township clinics with 668,000 beds and a 907,000-strong professional staff.

As health care conditions improved, people's health has also improved greatly. The average life expectancy of the Chinese people has increased from 35 years before the birth of New China in 1949 to the present 71.4 years. The maternal mortality rate dropped from 1,500 out of 100,000 in the early 1950s to 43.2 out of 100,000 in 2002, and the infant mortality rate from 200‰ before the birth of New China to 28.4‰. At the same time, the incidence and death rates of infectious, local and parasitic diseases have dropped drastically.

## **II. Civil and Political Rights**

China sets great store by the development of democracy and the building of political civilization. It has endeavored to widen the scope of citizens' orderly political participation, and to safeguard their civil and political rights in accordance with the law.

The Chinese Constitution stipulates, "All power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people." The NPC and the local people's congresses at various levels are the organs through which the people exercise state power. The NPC is the highest organ of state power, deciding on the major policies and exercising the legislative power of the state.

From early 1979 till now, the NPC and its Standing Committee have passed 451 laws, interpretations of laws, and decisions concerning legal issues; the State Council has enacted 966 administrative statutes; the local people's congresses and their standing committees have drawn up some 8,000 local statutes; and the ethnic autonomous areas have enacted over 480 regulations on the exercise of autonomy and other separate regulations. Now, a comparatively complete legal system centered on the Constitution has initially been formed, so that there are basically laws to go by for every aspect of social life.

Following the principles of putting people above all else and legislation for the people, the NPC and its Standing Committee have strengthened their legislative work and improved the quality of legislation in the past year or more. The Second Session of the Tenth NPC, held not long ago, examined and approved amendments to the Constitution, which made partial revisions to the current Constitution and included in it "the state respects and safeguards human rights" and other provisions closely related to the people's vital interests.

In 2003, the NPC Standing Committee examined and adopted 10 laws and decisions concerning laws, including the Law on Residents' ID Cards, Law on Road Traffic Safety, Law on Administrative Approval and Law on the Prevention and Control of Radioactive Pollution. All these display the basic spirit of serving the people, facilitating the people and benefiting the people, as well as respecting and safeguarding their human rights.

In the past year, the NPC and its Standing Committee have strengthened its inspection of law enforcement and supervision over the administrative, judicial and procuratorial organs. The NPC and its Standing Committee have heeded, examined and deliberated the work report of the State Council; the work reports of the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate; the work reports of the State Council on the control of SARS, on the guarantee of senior citizens' rights and interests, on employment and re-employment, and on the project to divert water from the south to the north.

The NPC and its Standing Committee have also made a thorough examination to clear up the government-invested projects that owed construction fees and payment to migrant workers, and examined the enforcement of five laws, including the Law on Rural Land Contracts, Construction Law and Law on the Protection of Minors. All this has effectively prompted the state organs concerned to administrate according to law and to exercise fair jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, the NPC Standing Committee has paid great attention to petitions from ordinary people, receiving some 31,000 visits and handling more than 57,000 letters

from them. As a result, many practical problems of concern to citizens have been solved under its supervision, helping safeguard the legal rights and interests of the people.

The system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC has further played its role in China's political life. The National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) has performed its functions of participating in the discussion and administration of state affairs, exercised democratic rights and carried out democratic supervision through its regular work of making proposals, inspections, and reflecting public opinion.

In the past year, the various special committees of the CPPCC National Committee made in-depth investigations into specific issues, such as rural poverty-relief work in the new stage, the defining of government functions in employment, and the increase in farmers' income in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, resulting in 37 investigative reports and 114 proposals in specialized fields.

They have organized 23 inspection groups composed of over 500 CPPCC National Committee members and members of its Standing Committee for inspection tours across the country, culminating in the submission of 22 reports on their inspections.

The central committees of all the democratic parties and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce submitted 84 proposals and passed on to concerned quarters 1,674 pieces of public opinion and information through the CPPCC channel.

Along with the full-scale democratic construction at the rural grass-roots level, the democratic rights of the masses there have been respected. At present, 28 provinces, autonomous regions and centrally administered municipalities have worked out or revised the measures for implementing the Organic Law of Villagers' Committees and 31 of them have formulated the procedures for the election of villagers' committees.

The election of villagers' committees of the fifth or sixth terms have been completed in most of the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities throughout the country, with the average rate of participation in the elections being above 80 percent, and the rate even exceeding 90 percent in Guangdong, Hainan, Sichuan, and Hunan provinces.

Making village affairs known to the villagers, referred to as the "Sunlight Project" by the people, has been practiced across the country. So far, over 90 percent of villages have set up bulletin boards for such purposes, giving timely reports to villagers of village, financial and administrative affairs concerning their interests.

The legal protection of citizens' lawful private property has been further improved. The revised Constitution states clearly that citizens' lawful private property is inviolable; that the state protects citizens' rights to private property and to its inheritance in accordance with the law; and that the state may, in the public interest, and in accordance with the law, expropriate or requisition citizens' private property for its use and shall make compensation for the private property expropriated or requisitioned.

Citizens' freedom of information, of speech and of the press, as prescribed by law, has been further protected. In 2003, the press spokesperson system was successively set up by people's governments at all levels, and the related information publicizing system was improved, thus greatly helping make the government's administrative affairs better known and enabling citizens to enjoy more rights to information, supervision and participation in public affairs.

At present, the Measures for Protecting the Copyright of the Information Network is in the process of investigation prior to being put into law. The newly revised and promulgated Publications Administration Regulations and Regulations Governing the Administration of Audio-Visual Products have made further stipulations on citizens' freedom of speech and of the press. The Publications Administration Regulations prescribe that "citizens may, in accordance with these Regulations, freely express in publications their opinions and expectations of state affairs, economic and cultural undertakings and social affairs, and freely publish the results of their scientific research, literary or artistic creations and other cultural pursuits."

The state energetically promotes undertakings of the press, providing favorable conditions for citizens to enjoy freedom of speech and of the press. By the end of 2003, China had 282 radio stations, 744 medium- and short-wave radio transmitting and relay stations, 320 TV stations and 62 education TV stations, and published national and provincial newspapers with a print run of 24.36 billion, periodicals with a print run of 2.99 billion, and books with a print run of 6.75 billion.

Employees' rights to participate in and organize trade unions are protected. By the end of September 2003, the total number of grass-roots trade union organizations had increased 79.1 percent as compared with the figure five years ago, and the number of trade union members nationwide had risen 38.8 percent over that five years ago. There were 808,000 non-public enterprises with trade union organizations, boasting a membership of 29.601 million, which accounted for 32.7 percent of the total staff.

Among all enterprises and institutions, 351,000 had established the employees' conference system, 263,000 had their employees' conferences carry out the evaluation of the performance of the enterprise or institution leaders, and 291,000 practiced the publicizing of enterprise or institution affairs.

Of the 56,000 enterprises and institutions that had grass-roots trade union organizations and the boards of directors, 29,000 had trade union chairmen on the boards of directors. Of the 44,000 enterprises and institutions that had grass-roots trade union organizations and supervisory committees, 25,000 had trade union chairmen on the supervisory committees. Some 118,000 non-public enterprises in China practiced the publicizing of enterprise affairs.

Citizens enjoy the freedom of religious belief in accordance with the law and normal religious activities are protected. According to incomplete statistics, there are more than 100,000 venues for religious activities in China, with a clergy of about 300,000,



and over 3,000 national and local religious organizations, and 74 religious colleges and schools.

Each religion publishes its own scriptures or classics, books and magazines, among which the print run of the Bible alone has reached 30 million. Chinese religious organizations have established relations with religious organizations and personnel in more than 70 countries and regions.

### **III. Judicial Guarantee for Human Rights**

In 2003, China further beefed up its judicial reform, claiming significant progress in judicial guarantee for human rights.

China has cracked down on various criminal offenses in accordance with the law to protect citizens' life and the safety of their property. In 2003, the Chinese public security organs vigorously combated gang-related crimes, homicide, robbery, rape and kidnapping, and other serious violent crimes and criminal offenses, investigating and cracking 2.341 million criminal cases.

The people's courts concluded the investigations of 634,953 criminal cases of first instance, of which 57,505 were criminal cases involving the jeopardizing of public security, 184,018 were cases of infringement on citizens' rights of the person or their democratic rights, and 278,969 were cases of property infringements, effectively protecting the victims' legitimate rights and interests.

The Chinese government has carried out a major reform in its social assistance program, replacing the Measures for the Sheltering and Send-off of Urban Vagrants and Beggars with the more humane and law-based Measures for Assisting and Managing Urban Vagrants and Beggars with No Means of Livelihood.

Public security organs have practiced strict enforcement of the law and emphasized law enforcement in the interests of the people. They have promulgated the Provisions on Procedures of Handling Administrative Cases by Public Security Organs; tightened law-enforcement procedures; strengthened internal supervision over law enforcement; firmly dealt with violations of human rights involving the extortion of confessions by torture, the abuse of guns and police instruments and other coercive measures; actively conducted on-site supervision and special supervision; and seriously dealt with law and discipline violations, so as to ensure that law enforcement by public security organs is strict, just and humane, and to protect and guarantee human rights.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Public Security has made great efforts to improve administrative management and publicized 30 measures for facilitating and benefiting the people, involving household register, traffic, entry and exit, and fire control that are closely related to the people's vital interests - to the acclaim of the people nationwide.

Preventing and correcting cases of extended detention to protect the legitimate rights and interests of the suspects and the accused. In 2003, the Supreme People's

Court, Supreme People's Procuratorate and Ministry of Public Security jointly issued the Notice on the Strict Enforcement of the Criminal Procedure Law, and on the Conscientious Prevention and Correction of Extended Detention, which provided for a strict system for investigating and dealing with extended detention. The Supreme People's Procuratorate set up special telephones and e-mail addresses for handling reports on extended detention by procuratorial organs, so as to strengthen public supervision and to gradually put in place a mechanism for preventing and correcting extended detention.

In 2003, cases of extended detention involving 25,736 people were corrected, basically rectifying such deviations. This was a clear-up of extended detention, the most extensive in scope, the biggest in scale and the largest in number of people involved in the nation's judicial experience. Thereby, the judicial guarantee for human rights was greatly strengthened.

The people's courts have improved their work of judicial interpretation and the administration of justice concerning administrative and state compensation. In 2003, the Supreme People's Court formulated 20 documents of judicial interpretation related to criminal law, civil law, administration and law enforcement. Among them, the Interpretations of Some Questions Related to the Concrete Application of the Law in Handling Criminal Cases That Impair the Prevention and Control of the Sudden Onset of Infectious Diseases and Other Disasters, and the Interpretations of Certain Questions Related to the Application of the Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China, Part Two provided a guarantee to the legitimate rights and interests of citizens in a more practical way.

In 2003, the people's courts concluded the investigations of 88,050 administrative lawsuits of first instance, in 10,337, or 11.74 percent, of which improper administrative actions were annulled. The people's courts also handled 3,124 state compensation cases, where a compensation sum totaling 89.74 million yuan was ordered. All this has served to protect the legitimate rights and interests of citizens, legal persons and other organizations that had fallen victim to illegal exercise of power by government functionaries.

Procuratorial organs have exercised their power of legal supervision, and strengthened legal supervision over infringements at various links of lawsuits. In 2003, among the cases prosecuted by procuratorial organs, 259 were cases of illegal detention, 29 of illegal search, 52 of extorting confessions by torture, and 32 of abusing prisoners or detainees. Procuratorial organs appealed against court judgments of 2,906 criminal cases that they deemed incorrectly tried, and offered 1,184 written proposals for correction regarding infringements by the courts in handling criminal cases.

By the end of June 2003, procuratorial organs at all levels had set up 3,329 procuratorial offices at prisons, detention houses and reeducation-through-labor centers, established 75 procuratorates at large prisons, and provided procuratorial

services through representative offices at 92 percent of the nation's prisons, detention houses and reeducation-through-labor centers.

In 2003, the Supreme People's Procuratorate carried out a special clear-up of complaints by prisoners at procuratorates at all levels, continuously strengthened its efforts in handling cases of criminal compensation, and went all out to remove obstacles to access by people with complaints, thus protecting the people's legitimate rights and interests in a practical way.

Legal aid has been implemented effectively, ensuring citizens' right to receive legal aid. The Regulations on Legal Aid, formulated and promulgated in 2003, are the first administrative statute to be ever issued in China. They established a basic framework for China's legal aid system, and defined the scope of citizens' right to legal aid.

By the end of 2003, there were 2,774 legal aid agencies in China, or 356 more than in the previous year, with 9,457 workers, or 1,172 more than in the previous year, providing legal aid services in 166,433 cases, or 36,658 more than in the previous year.

The people's courts further strengthened their legal aid work. In the same year, they reduced lawsuit fees in 4,860 cases, exempted lawsuit fees for 16,926 cases, and allowed delayed payment of lawsuit fees in 206,496 cases, where the litigants had real financial difficulties. The total amount of reduced and exempted lawsuit fees was 141 million yuan, and that of delayed payment of lawsuit fees was 916 million yuan. In this way, the people's courts ensured that people whose legitimate rights and interests had been infringed upon but had financial difficulties could afford to press lawsuits.

The legitimate rights and interests of criminals are also protected. In 2003, the Ministry of Justice, based on the Law on Prisons, formulated and implemented the Regulations on Reform Through Reeducation in Prisons, Regulations on the Procedures for Applications by Prisons for Commutation and Parole, and Regulations on Visits to and Correspondence of Foreign Prisoners, which further defined the legitimate rights of prisoners in custody.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice is actively seeking to reform the ways of imposing punishment in prisons and the ways of prison management, practicing open prison management in an all-round way, promoting the institution of law-based prison work, and making efforts to build a new type of prison system that is just, incorruptible, free of abuses and highly efficient, to guarantee prisoners' legitimate rights and interests in accordance with the law.

#### **IV. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

In 2003, adhering to the principle of putting people first, the Chinese government made new efforts to promote the all-round development of the urban and rural areas, regions, economy and society, and to enhance the people's economic, social and cultural rights. These efforts were crowned with marked success.

Emphasizing employment as the basis of people's livelihood, the Chinese government has made positive efforts to establish a responsibility system for employment and re-employment, formulating mutually supporting policies, creating job opportunities, increasing fund input, and improving employment services, so as to provide a fairly adequate guarantee for people's right to work.

In 2003, the central government appropriated an additional special subsidy of 4.7 billion yuan to support employment and re-employment, which greatly increased employment. At the end of 2003, there were 744.32 million people in employment in China, 6.92 million more than the number at the end of 2002. They included 256.39 million urban people, an increase of 8.59 million from the previous year. In 2003, 4.4 million people laid off from state-owned enterprises were re-employed. At the end of 2003, the nationwide registered urban unemployment rate was 4.3 percent.

To guarantee the legitimate rights and interests of people sustaining work-related injuries, in 2003 the Chinese government strengthened its efforts and increased financial input for legislation and law enforcement in the field of labor security.

Regulations were formulated and promulgated, such as the Regulations on Insurance for Work-related Injuries, and supplementary regulations such as the Procedures for Confirming Work-related Injuries, Measures for Casualty Compensation Paid in One Lump Sum by Illegal Employers, and Regulations on Identification of Dependents of Employees Who Incurred Work-related Death.

Coverage of insurance for work-related injuries has been extended to include enterprises of all types throughout China, as well as private businesses with hired workers. It is clearly stipulated that all employers in urban and rural areas alike shall sign for the insurance scheme on work-related injuries to guarantee that employees receive timely medicare and compensation when they are injured in accidents on the job or when they contract occupational diseases, thus promoting the prevention of work-related injuries and vocational rehabilitation.

Social security has been improved. The newly amended Constitution stipulates clearly, "The state establishes and improves a social security system compatible with the level of economic development."

In 2003, the central government spent 70 billion yuan, 19.9 percent more than the previous year, to ensure that the basic living allowances for laid-off employees from state-owned enterprises and pensions for retired employees from enterprises were paid on time and in full, and to guarantee the issuance of basic living allowances to laid-offs from state-owned enterprises, the access to unemployment insurance, and the implementation of the scheme of a minimum standard of living for urban residents.

Of the 70 billion yuan, 9.2 billion yuan were used for subsidizing urban residents for a minimum standard of living, as compared to 4.6 billion yuan spent in the previous year. According to statistics, in 2003 154.9 million people nationwide enjoyed basic old-age insurance, 7.54 million more than in the previous year; basic pensions issued

totaled 313.1 billion yuan, which basically ensured that retirees from enterprises received their pensions on time and in full.

There were 29.33 million retirees from enterprises covered by socialized management and services, accounting for 84.5 percent of the total, and an increase of 41 percentage points over the previous year. Nearly 60 million people have been covered by the rural old-age insurance scheme, and close to 1.4 million farmers were paid pensions.

At the end of 2003, there were 108.95 million people around China covered by medical insurance, an increase of 14.95 million as compared with the figure at the end of 2002; 103.73 million people covered by unemployment insurance, an increase of 1.91 million; 45.73 million people covered by work-related injury insurance, an increase of 1.67 million; and 36.48 million people covered by child-bearing insurance, an increase of 1.6 million.

There were 4.15 million people enjoying unemployment insurance benefits, 250,000 fewer than in the previous year; 1.95 million laid-off employees from state-owned enterprises registered at the re-employment service centers, 1.44 million fewer than in the previous year, all of them having received their basic living allowances on time and in full and had their social insurance fees paid.

In total, 22.35 million urban residents throughout China received minimum standard of living allowances from the government, an increase of 1.7 million over the previous year.

The state attaches great importance to the protection of the legitimate rights and interests of migrant workers from rural areas. In 2003, the State Council issued the Notice on Properly Carrying Out the Work of Management and Services for Rural Migrant Workers in Urban Areas, which clearly provides for handling the issues concerning rural migrant workers in urban areas, delayed wage payment to those workers, schooling of their children, improvement of their working and living conditions, and job training for them.

The government launched a special campaign to protect rural migrant workers' rights and interests around the country. This campaign, aimed at protecting the labor rights and interests of rural migrant workers, included distributing free Manual of Protection of Laborers' Rights; setting up hotlines for their complaints; solving the problems of delayed wage payment, poor working environment and faulty social security; and guaranteeing wage payment on time and in full. The fact that the Premier of the State Council personally ordered the payment of rural migrant workers' arrears of wage vividly reflects the government's great concern about the problem of failure to pay rural migrant workers' wages and the protection of their rights and interests. According to statistics, from November 2003 to February 2004, a total of over 24 billion yuan of overdue wages was paid to rural migrant workers.

The state protects farmers' legitimate rights and interests in accordance with the law. In 2003, the state promulgated the newly amended Law of the People's Republic of China on Agriculture, thus strengthening efforts in guaranteeing farmers'

rights and interests. The chapter "Protection of Farmers' Rights and Interests" in the Law on Agriculture stipulates clearly that farmers' right to contractual operation of land shall not be infringed upon, and that such activities as qualification, upgrading and checking, equal sharing out of tax payment, imposing illegal education charges on farmers, and holding back or diverting compensation fees for requisitioned land are forbidden.

At the same time, it standardizes the procedures for raising funds and recruiting rural labor, and provides corresponding administrative or judicial aid measures to be taken when farmers' rights and interests are infringed upon. The Law on Rural Land Contracts, effective as of last year, furnishes farmers with a long-term, guaranteed land-use right, and clearly describes their legal rights to the use of contracted land, to proceeds from the land, to the transfer of the contracted operation right, to independent organization of production and disposal of products, to inheritance of the proceeds from contracted operation, and to proper compensation when the contracted land is requisitioned in accordance with the law. Special provisions have been made to protect female farmers' right to contract land.

At present, China is drafting a Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Farmers' Rights and Interests, which will go a step further toward providing all-round legal protection to farmers' rights and interests.

In 2003, the central and local governments made a series of decisions aimed at encouraging farmers to increase their incomes and become prosperous. The state adopted various measures, including sci-tech training for farmers, establishment of a sci-tech service system in rural areas, and aid to the impoverished through sci-tech development. Great amounts of manpower and funds were put into the work to help farmers shake off poverty and attain prosperity.

To reduce farmers' burdens, the government has carried out a reform of rural taxation. Taxes on agricultural specialties other than tobacco will gradually be cancelled. From 2004, the rate of agricultural tax will be reduced yearly by more than one percentage point until it is cancelled five years later.

In the meantime, the government will take further steps to increase input in public welfare undertakings in rural areas, solving the difficulties in rural children's access to primary and secondary school education and in farmers' medicare; to speed up the reform of the rural economic system, increase input in agricultural infrastructure, improve rural production and living conditions and promote the development of the agricultural economy; to comprehensively solve the issues of farmers' old-age pension and insurance according to the minimum standard of living scheme for city residents; to reform the household registration system in rural areas and protect farmers' right to migration and choice of work.

On February 8, 2004 the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council promulgated the Proposals on Several Policies to Increase Farmers' Incomes, which clearly provides for readjustment of the agricultural structure, expansion of farmers' employment, promotion of sci-tech progress, deepening of rural reform, increase of

agricultural input, and strengthening of support and protection for agriculture according to the demands of comprehensive economic and social development in urban and rural areas, and in pursuit of the principle of "giving more, taking less, and being flexible."

These measures, aimed at increasing farmers' incomes at a higher speed, and reversing the trend of widening the gap between urban and rural residents' incomes as soon as possible, fully embody the Chinese Government's determination to protect farmers' rights and interests. They are bound to bring blessing to the country's 900 million farmers.

The state puts great efforts into the development of education, to ensure citizens' right to receive education. From 1997 to 2002, appropriations for education nationwide increased by 59 billion yuan annually on average, at a yearly rate of increase as high as 16.7 percent.

In 2002, the total input in education nationwide was 548 billion yuan, and the proportion of the government's financial appropriation for education in the GDP increased from 3.19 percent in 2001 to 3.41 percent, representing the highest increase since 1989.

According to statistics, 2,478 counties (cities and districts) in China have basically introduced nine-year compulsory education and eliminated illiteracy among young and middle-aged people, of which number 51 were added in 2003.

Meanwhile, the national illiteracy rate among young and middle-aged people shrank to below five percent. In 2003, the UIS of UNESCO published the latest statistics on the elimination of illiteracy worldwide in the past decade, which shows that among the 40 countries surveyed, China had made the greatest achievements in this field.

In 2003, ordinary institutions of higher learning around China admitted 3.822 million students and 269,000 graduate students, 617,000 and 66,000 more than in the previous year, respectively.

The state is speeding up cultural restructuring to promote cultural development. In 2003, the Regulations on Public Cultural and Sporting Facilities officially went into effect. A number of key basic cultural projects were completed, and some public cultural facilities were built, rebuilt or expanded, including libraries, museums, cultural centers, cinemas, theaters and music halls.

According to statistics, from 1998 to 2002, total appropriations for cultural undertakings in China reached 32.42 billion yuan, 2.7 times that during the period of the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1991-1995). In 2002, there were 972 projects of fixed assets investment in the cultural sectors around the country, with completed investment totaling 3.09 billion yuan. In 2003, the appropriation from the central budget for cultural undertakings totaled 537 million yuan, a record figure in China.

At the end of 2003, there were 2,587 art troupes, 2,892 cultural centers, 2,708 public libraries and 1,519 museums in China. In the same year, 140 feature films and 61 films on science and education, documentaries and animated cartoons were produced. These developments have met the demands of the people for cultural life.

## **V.The Rights and Interests of Women and Children**

The state protects the legitimate rights and interests of women and children in accordance with the law. Since 2000, the state has successively enacted or revised laws and regulations, including the Marriage Law, Law on Population and Family Planning, Law on Rural Land Contracts, Regulations for the Administration of Family Planning Technology and Services, Implementation Procedures for the Law on Health Care for Mothers and Infants, and Regulations for Premarital Health Care Work.

In 2001, the Chinese government promulgated and put into effect the Outline for the Development of Chinese Women 2001-2010 and Outline for the Development of Chinese Children 2001-2010. Currently, the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests is being revised. The formulation, revision and implementation of these laws, regulations and policies have enhanced the protection of the rights and interests of women and children in respect to children's survival and growth, and women's health care, education, employment, marriage and family.

Women's right to participate in the administration of state affairs is protected. Currently, among the 29 ministries and ministerial-level commissions and agencies of the State Council there are 22 female officials of the ministerial rank. Among the deputies to the Tenth NPC, women make up 20.24 percent of the total; among the NPC Standing Committee members, 13.2 percent; and among its vice-chairpersons, 18.8 percent. The Tenth NPC elected one female vice-premier and one female state councilor. Among the Party and government leaders at all levels in 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government there are more than 5,000 women.

Job opportunities for women keep growing, and women have become increasingly independent economically. In 2002, some 335.52 million women were employed, or 45.5 percent of the total female population. The net increase of employed women over the past five years was 5.65 million. From January to September in 2003, 1.31 million laid-off women were re-employed, or 37.43 percent of the total number of laid-off women.

The number of urban women employees makes up 38 percent of the total number of the urban employed. The proportion of women employed in the primary and secondary industries has been on the decline, while in the new industries and technology- and knowledge-intensive industries, the proportion of women has increased remarkably.

The educational gap between men and women is narrowing, and the ratio of women in education at all levels has been on the rise. By 2002, the enrolment rate of school-age children in primary schools was 98.58 percent, and that of girls 98.53 percent.

Female students currently in primary schools, ordinary middle schools, secondary vocational schools and ordinary institutions of higher learning were 47.2 percent, 46.7 percent, 51.86 percent and 43.95 percent, respectively, of the total student



body in those schools. The rate of illiterate young and middle-aged women had dropped to less than 5 percent. In 2002, there were 78 female academicians in the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering, representing 6.2 percent of the total number of academicians.

Health care for women and children has been improved. Recently, the Chinese government has conducted a general survey and provided medical treatment for gynecological diseases and a systematic health examination for women in pregnancy and confinement recently throughout the country.

In addition, measures for the prevention and treatment of common gynecological diseases are regularly carried out. By the end of 2002, the rate of nationwide medical examination for pre-marriage women and prenatal examination for pregnant women was respectively 68.03 percent and 90.14 percent, which were increases of 3.48 percent and 0.78 percent, respectively, compared with the figures for 2000. In 2002, there were 3,067 maternity and child care establishments in China. The rate of adoption of modern midwifery in rural areas reached 97.2 percent that year.

Over a long time in the past, the state has instituted a planned immunity, prevention and vaccination system, carrying out activities to prevent and cure juvenile pneumonia, diarrhea, rickets and iron-deficiency anemia. It has launched a baby-friendly drive, promoted breast-feeding, established baby-friendly hospitals, and provided health services, including nutrition guidance, monitoring of the growth and development of children, screening of infantile diseases and children's early-stage education, so as to continuously enhance the level of children's physical development and nutrition.

In 2002, the rate of serious malnutrition in children below the age of five was 2.83 percent, or 0.26 percentage point lower than the figure for 2000. In 2002 there were altogether 178 children's welfare homes, 52 more than in 2000, and social welfare institutions took in 55,000 children, over 10,000 more than in 2000. Some 51,400 handicapped children were given rehabilitation training, over 10,000 more than in 2000.

The state has taken special measures to crack down on abducting and selling and other criminal activities against women and children in accordance with the law, to protect women and children's rights from infringement. In 2003, public security organs have rescued well over 2,000 abducted women and children from the clutches of human traffickers. In 2002, the State Council revised and implemented the Regulations on Prohibiting the Use of Child Labor, and effectively curbed this abuse.

## **VI. Equal Rights and Special Protection for Ethnic Minorities**

In China, citizens of all ethnic minorities enjoy all equal civil rights specified in the Constitution and laws, as well as various special rights granted them, in accordance with the law.

Ethnic minorities enjoy equal rights to participate in the administration of state affairs and the rights to independently manage the affairs of their own regions and their own ethnic communities. Among the deputies to the Tenth NPC, there are 415 of ethnic-minority origin, representing 13.91 percent of the total number of deputies. Each of China's 55 ethnic minorities has its own deputy(ies).

By 2003, all principal leading positions of the local autonomous governments at all levels and of all kinds in China had been entirely assumed by citizens of the ethnic group(s) exercising regional autonomy in the areas concerned. A large number of people of ethnic-minority origin also served in leading positions in working departments in organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas.

The training of ethnic-minority cadres has been further promoted. In the past three years, the number of such cadres who attended the training sessions sponsored by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission alone reached 4,000. Most of the 42,000 ethnic-minority cadres at the county (division) level or above have attended training courses of one kind or another.

The economy in ethnic-minority areas has been developing rapidly, and the local people's living standard has improved greatly. In 2003, the gross output value in those areas exceeded 1,100 billion yuan, an increase of 11.1 percent over the previous year, which was higher than the nation's average. Of these regions, the gross output value of Tibet and Ningxia exceeded 11.5 percent, while that of Inner Mongolia reached 16.3 percent, ranking first in the country.

Since the beginning of 2004, funds for helping the poor provided by the central government will be increased by 60 million yuan, to be used primarily in programs for invigorating the border areas, enabling the poor to become comfortably off and accelerating development in border areas inhabited by ethnic minorities.

The state has, for the first time, listed poverty relief for ethnic minorities with relatively small populations as a focus of the state's development-oriented poverty reduction program. A special help-the-poor policy is adopted for a total of 630,000 people of 22 ethnic-minority groups, the population of each of which is smaller than 100,000. Within three to five years, great efforts will be made to assure them of relatively great improvement in production, living standard, infrastructure, culture and education, medical and health care, telecommunications and transport.

The state has listed Muslim food in the Catalogue of Goods Specially Needed for Ethnic Minorities, and 345 enterprises have been designated to engage in the production of these foodstuffs specially for China's 20 million Muslims.

In 2003, 400 million yuan was earmarked as development funds for ethnic minorities, to solve special difficulties in their production and daily life. Through preferential policies toward ethnic-minority peoples, 600 million yuan was channeled to ethnic minorities to develop trade and enterprises producing special articles used by them.

The state has increased its input in education for ethnic minorities and is striving to solve the most difficult problems that hinder the development of their education,

with the aim of enhancing the educational level of citizens of ethnic-minority origin. Special educational funds allocated by the central budget and key educational projects organized and implemented by the state are all oriented to the ethnic-minority areas.

In the application and distribution of various special educational funds, local governments have also adopted preferential policies toward education for ethnic minorities. Beginning in the autumn of 2003, the central and local governments jointly earmarked funds to provide textbooks free of charge to poverty-stricken students at the stage of compulsory education in 56 counties of Xinjiang, and exempted them from all school fees.

Commencing in 2004, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region will invest 4.858 million yuan each year on top of an annual 8.703 million yuan for classes for ethnic-minority students in boarding schools. Hubei Province will, as one of its major tasks on its poverty reduction program for ethnic minorities-inhabited areas, build 100 primary and middle boarding schools for students of the compulsory education period in rural areas. This will solve the problem of accommodation for 30,000 ethnic-minority students from poor families.

In higher education, the state has adopted a preferential policy toward ethnic-minority students. In the enrolment of institutions of higher learning, the policy of giving priority to ethnic-minority students is being continued. By the end of 2003, of 699 administrative areas at the county level in ethnic autonomous areas in China, 405, or 32 more than in 2002, had by and large realized the goal of nine-year compulsory education and eliminated illiteracy among the young and middle-aged.

The state has all along paid attention to research, protection and development of traditional ethnic-minority cultures, organized collection, editing, translation and publishing of the cultural heritages of all ethnic minorities in a planned way, protected scenic spots, historical sites, valuable cultural relics and other important historical and cultural heritages of the ethnic-minority people, and formulated special preferential policies in respect of cultural facilities improvement, training of literary and artistic talents, cultural exchanges with foreign countries and protection of cultural relics.

The state has spent a large amount of money on the protection of cultural relics in the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. Some cultural relics in Qinghai Province as well as Tibet Autonomous Region and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region have been repaired. For five years starting in 1989, the state allocated over 55 million yuan for the renovation of the Potala Palace, and more than 200 million yuan has been planned for all-round maintenance of the Potala Palace in the future.

The state has strengthened efforts for the collection, editing and rescue work of ethnic languages and scripts, including those of the Manchu, She, Hezhen, Jing, Gelo and Tujia. The government regularly sponsors national ethnic-minority cultural activities and large-scale traditional sport meets of ethnic minorities to promote the development of their cultures and sports.

## VII. The Rights and Interests of the Disabled

There are 60 million disabled people in China, accounting for about 5 percent of the total population. The Chinese government puts great stress on the protection of the rights of the disabled, and is going all out to implement the Outline of the Tenth Five-Year Plan for the Disabled in China (2001-2005). By way of taking important measures such as improving the legal system, implementing state programs, mobilizing social forces and providing equal opportunities, the Chinese government endeavors to give special help to the disabled, establish and gradually improve the system for the protection of human rights of the disabled, encourage them to participate in social life on an equal footing, and share the material and cultural achievements of society.

The state will continuously improve its socialized rehabilitation service system, implement the key rehabilitation projects, and help disabled people to improve their physical functions, self-reliance in daily life, and social adaptability.

In 2003, a large number of disabled people overcame their handicaps to varying degrees: 570,000 people suffering from cataracts received operations to recover their sight; 31,000 people suffering from poor sight were provided with visual aids; 18,000 deaf children received training in hearing and speaking; 77,000 physically handicapped persons and children suffering from cerebral palsy and mental handicaps participated in rehabilitation training; 2.43 million people suffering from serious mental diseases underwent comprehensive medical treatment and rehabilitation training; more than 3,800 persons suffering from leprosy-related handicaps received corrigent surgical operations; and a total of 1.22 million devices for aiding the disabled were supplied.

The disabled persons' right to receive education has been better protected. The Chinese government has included education for handicapped children in the state compulsory education system, and implemented such education according to overall planning.

Currently, the number of special education schools for blind, deaf and mentally handicapped children has reached 1,655, and that of special education classes attached to ordinary schools is 3,154, with a total student body of 577,000 in both.

Some disabled students from poor families have received financial support. More than 10,000 handicapped children, for example, have been given financial aid for schooling under the two programs "Aid the Disabled for Schooling" and "Enrolling Blind Children for Schooling in the Central and Western Regions." In 2003, more than 3,000 disabled students were admitted to institutions of higher learning, and 490,000 disabled people went in for vocational education and training.

The state protects the rights of the disabled to labor and social security. According to statistics, now 1.09 million disabled people are employed in urban entities specially set up for the handicapped; 1.236 million are employed by social sectors under

specified apportioning; and still another 1.7 million work on their own account or find employment in entities organized by themselves of their own accord.

In rural areas, 16.85 million disabled people engage in crop cultivation, fish breeding and poultry raising or household handicraft making. The rate of employment for the disabled has increased year by year. In 2003, 1.23 million poverty-stricken disabled people in rural areas no longer had the problem of having enough to eat and wear through the help-the-poor projects.

At present, there are 2.59 million disabled people in China who benefit from the minimum living standard program. Four hundred and forty thousand disabled people live in welfare homes or homes for the aged, or enjoy the government-sponsored "five guarantees" (of food, clothing, medical care, housing and burial expenses) program, or live at separate homes of residents having regular links with welfare homes or homes for the aged. Some 2.46 million disabled people receive temporary relief or subsidies and 1.03 million are covered by social security schemes.

The cultural and sports life of the disabled has become increasingly rich and active. In cultural centers, libraries, gymnasiums and stadiums, more and more conveniences and services have been provided for disabled people. Nationwide, 1,618 cultural venues for the disabled and 131 art troupes made up of disabled people have been established. TV and radio stations, newspapers and magazines give wide coverage to the lives of disabled people, including special programs and topics.

A national comprehensive sports training center for the disabled is being in preparation for construction. In 2003, China successfully held the Sixth National Sports Meet for the Disabled. Besides, disabled athletes from China have won 177 gold medals in important international sports meets.

The state endeavors to create a social environment of care and help for the disabled. The National Help-the-Disabled Day, the third Sunday of May each year, has been observed for 13 years, with a rich variety of activities. In recent years, help-the-disabled activities in various forms have been carried out, such as "Volunteers for Helping the Disabled," "Red Scarf Movement for Helping the Disabled," "Cultural Circles' Help for the Disabled," "Help for the Disabled from Science and Technology Circles" and "Legal Assistance for the Disabled."

More than 40,000 liaison offices of help-the-disabled volunteers have been established throughout the country. Today, the number of registered young volunteers is upwards of 1.86 million.

Much headway has been made in building easy environments for the disabled. A large number of sloping passages, paths for the blind, handrails and audio traffic signs and other facilities for the disabled persons' convenience have been either built or renovated on the major roads, in shopping centers, hospitals, hotels, cinemas, theaters, museums, airports, railway stations and residential areas in the large and medium-sized cities. Many news programs on TV are accompanied by sign language. More and more TV programs and films have subtitles.

For years, the great efforts and achievements made by China for the protection of the human rights of the disabled have won wide attention and appreciation from the United Nations and the international community.

### **VIII. International Exchanges and Cooperation in Human Rights**

China has all along been supportive to and actively participated in activities in the field of human rights sponsored by the United Nations. Since 1981, China has been consecutively elected and appointed a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

In 2003, Chinese delegation attended the 59th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the Substantive Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the Third Committee Meeting of the 58th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. China sent specialists to attend the 55th Session of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the 2nd Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

At these meetings, Chinese delegates and specialists actively participated in examination and deliberation of issues concerning human rights, expounded China's principles and stand on human rights issues, safeguarded the purpose and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, strove to promote international cooperation and exchanges in the field of human rights and made positive contributions to the healthy development of the international human rights cause.

China has been actively involved in formulation of legal documents concerning international human rights. In January and September 2003, the Chinese government sent specialists to attend the first meeting and the informal consultation, respectively, of a UN working group in respect of drafting the Legally Binding Normative Instrument for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, and to attend the meeting of the special committee for the formulation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In November 2003, China organized the inter-government conference in Beijing for the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for drafting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and adopted the Beijing Declaration. The conference played a positive and promotional role in the progress of the formulation of the Convention.

China supports the strengthening of international cooperation in the field of human rights. It advocates full consideration for and application of existing United Nations laws, human rights documents and supervision mechanism, full respect for the internal laws of all nations and their functions, and at the same time, due consideration for the protection of human rights and the preservation of the normal judiciary functions of nations.

China has been actively involved in and promoted the activities of the second "Asia and Pacific Decade of the Disabled (2003-2012)" and striven to improve the conditions of its own disabled people. On December 10, 2003, Julian Hunte, chairman of the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, presented the United Nations Human Rights Award to Deng Pufang, chairman of the China Federation of the Disabled. It was the first time such an award had been given to a Chinese as well as the first time it had been presented to a handicapped person. It was an expression of high appreciation for Deng Pufang personally by the United Nations on his outstanding contribution to the protection of disabled persons' human rights and his tenacious efforts for promoting the development of world disabled people's movement. It was also an appreciation of the international community for years of efforts made by China in promoting and protecting human rights.

The Chinese government cherishes the important role of international human rights documents in promoting and protecting human rights. It has, to date, acceded to 21 international human rights conventions, and has taken every measure to honor its obligations under those conventions.

In 2003, the Chinese government submitted, as scheduled, its first compliance report to the United Nations with respect to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The report gave an overall account of the efforts made by China in promoting and protecting the economic, social and cultural rights of the people in recent years. In addition, China also submitted to the United Nations its second compliance report with respect to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the combined 5th and 6th report concerning the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

These reports introduced in detail, respectively, the legislative, judicial and administrative measures taken and progress made by China from 1996 to 2001 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, as well as actions taken by China in eliminating discrimination against women from 1998 to 2002. These reports also dealt with the implementation of the Beijing Action Program and also with the implementation of the results of the 2000 Special Session of the UN General Assembly (United Nations Conference) on Women's Affairs. Moreover, the reports indicated China's attention to performing her obligations under the conventions in the field of women and children, and expounded her stand on carrying out relevant international cooperation and exchanges.

China has actively participated in cracking down on cross-border organized crimes and terrorism. In 2003, the NPC Standing Committee of China approved 13 international treaties China acceded to, including the Amendment to Article 1 of the Convention on Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized

Crime, and Cooperative Covenant on Cracking on Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism Between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Kyrgyz.

The Ministry of Public Security of China and the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Labor Organization have jointly carried out an international cooperative project of preventing and cracking down on the abducting and selling of women and children.

China has actively carried out dialogues and cooperation with countries throughout the world with regard to human rights on the basis of equality and mutual respect. In 2003, the Chinese government held dialogues, discussions or exchanges in respect of human rights respectively with the European Union and Australia, Canada, Britain, Germany, Holland, Norway, Switzerland, Austria and Belgium; hosted the fifth China-Canada-Norway human rights forum; and hosted, jointly with the European Union, the China-EU judiciary seminar. Those dialogues, exchanges and cooperation helped China and the relevant countries and organizations toward a better mutual understanding on the human rights issue, reduced disagreements and expanded consensus.

Simultaneously, non-government-sponsored dialogues and exchanges on human rights were very active. Non-governmental organizations (NGO) such as the China Human Rights Society and the China Human Rights Development Fund have sent many delegations to a number of countries in Europe, North America, Oceania and Africa, invited human rights organizations and officials of certain countries to visit China, and carried out extensive exchanges and cooperation with regard to human rights, which have greatly increased mutual understanding and trust.

The China Human Rights Society has translated and published human rights works in cooperation with the Human Rights Institute of Norway's Oslo University and the Human Rights Research Center of Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh College of Political Science. In October 2003, the China Human Rights Society submitted, as required, its first work report to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

China holds that the development of human rights is an important mark of the continuous progress of the civilization of human society, and an important part of the progressive current of world peace and development. Full realization of human rights is the common goal of countries throughout the world as well as an important target for China in her efforts to build a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way, as well as her "peaceful rise" in the world.

China will, as always, devote herself to promoting the human rights cause, actively carry out exchanges and cooperation with the international community according to the provisions of the Constitution of China and the need for modernization of the country, and make her contributions to promoting the healthy development of the international human rights cause.