

Progress in China's Human Rights Cause in 2000

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Foreword

The year 2000 was a year of milestone-like significance in the course of China's development along modern lines, and also a year that witnessed continued advance in China's human rights cause. In 2000, the Ninth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development was successfully completed, the development of the western region got off to a good start, the economy developed in a healthy way, the democratic and legal systems were continuously strengthened, and the human rights situation maintained a good momentum of development.

I. The Improvement of the People's Rights to Subsistence and Development

The Chinese government continued to put the safeguarding and promotion of the people's rights to subsistence and development on the top of its agenda, and spared no effort to develop the economy, enhance the comprehensive national strength and improve the people's access to subsistence and development. In 2000, China rid itself completely of the influence of the Asian financial crisis, the national economy began to reverse the sliding trend, the growth rate obviously went up, and the GDP reached 8,940.4 billion yuan, breaking through the US\$1,000 billion mark for the first time, marking an increase of 8.0 percent over the figure for the previous year. At the

same time, the GDP per capita exceeded US\$ 800, overfulfilling the task of quadrupling 1980's GNP per capita, and successfully realizing the second-step strategic objectives of the modernization drive. In 2000, China's overall import and export volume reached US\$474.3 billion-worth, or an increase of 31.5 percent over that of the previous year. At the end of 2000, the state foreign exchange reserve reached US\$165.6 billion, or an increase of US\$10.9 billion over that at the beginning of 2000. To date, China's GDP has increased from the 11th in world ranking in the 1970s to the seventh. In the 1970s, the total import and export volume and foreign exchange reserve ranked 32nd and 39th, respectively, in the world, but now they rank eighth and second, respectively. China ranks first in the world in the output of major industrial and agricultural products, such as iron and steel, coal, cement, chemical fertilizer, TV sets, grain, cotton, meat and aquatic products. With sufficient commodities, China's effective supply ability has been greatly improved.

The income of urban and rural residents has gone up steadily, and their standard of living has continued to improve. The Chinese people nationwide have jumped from the stage of having enough to eat and wear to that of living a better-off life. In 2000, the disposable income per urban resident came to 6,280 yuan, or an increase of 6.4 percent over that of the previous year, in real terms; the net income per rural resident reached 2,253 yuan, or a growth of 2.1 percent over that of the previous year, in real terms. During the Ninth Five-Year Plan period (1996-2000), savings deposits of urban and rural residents more than doubled, and by 2000 had topped 6,400 billion yuan, or an increase of more than five times compared to what it had been eight years previously. The consumption level has been constantly improved, and the average annual growth rate of the volume of total retail sales of consumer goods during the Ninth Five-Year Plan period reached 10.6 percent.

The structure of consumption has been optimized: The proportion of the expenditure for clothes, food and daily necessities has decreased by a large margin, and the proportion of the expenditure for housing, communications and telecommunications, medical and health care, culture, education and recreation has gone up rapidly. In 1999, the consumption expenditure of urban and rural residents, excluding that for clothing, food, housing and daily necessities, made up 29.3 percent and 21.6 percent of their total consumption expenditure, respectively, or an increase of 8.2 percentage points and 6.2 percentage points, respectively, over the figures for 1995. In 2000, the Engel's coefficient of urban residents (the proportion of food expenditure in the total consumption expenditure) was about 40 percent, or a drop of close to 10 percentage points from that in 1995, and a decrease of 18 percentage points from that in 1978. Meanwhile, the Engel's coefficient of rural residents was about 50 percent, or a decrease of about 8 percentage points from that of 1995, and approximately 19 percentage points lower than that of 1954. As for food consumption, grain consumption has decreased, and that of aquatic products, meat, domestic fowls, eggs, milk and other foodstuffs related to domestic animals has increased substantially. At present, for every 100 urban households there are 116.6 color TV sets, 90.5 washing machines, 86.7 refrigerators, and 30.8 air-conditioners -- close to the level of developed countries. For every 100 rural

households there are 38.24 color TV sets, 24.32 washing machines and 10.64 refrigerators, increases of 21.32, 7.42 and 5.49, respectively, over the figures for 1995. Not so long ago, almost no Chinese family owned a household computer, video camera, microwave oven or VCD player. In 1999, however, for every 100 urban households there were 5.91 household computers, 1.06 video cameras, 12 microwave ovens and 25 VCD players.

Housing conditions have been continuously improved. The living space per urban resident increased from 8.1 sq m in 1995 to 9.8 sq m in 1999; and the living space per rural resident grew from 21 sq m to 24.2 sq m. In 2000, 510 million sq m of floor space of urban residential buildings were completed; and the construction of rural residential buildings totaling a floor space of 850 million sq m was completed. Hence, housing conditions have been further improved.

While improving the people's living standards across the board, the Chinese government has attached great importance to ensuring that poverty-stricken people have enough to eat and wear. Since the initiation of reform and opening-up in 1979, China has engaged in a large-scale, development-oriented aid-the-poor drive nationwide in a planned and organized way. By the end of 2000, the incidence rate of poverty in rural areas had dropped from 30.7 percent in 1978 to about 3 percent. The net income per farmer in the 592 poverty-stricken counties at the top of the state aid-the-poor agenda, increased from 648 yuan in 1994 to 1,348 yuan in 2000. More than 97 percent of the townships in the poverty-stricken areas nationwide are now accessible by bus and have electricity; and 98 percent of such townships have small hospitals. The problem of ensuring that the poverty-stricken people have enough to eat and wear has basically been solved, and their quality of life has been greatly improved, forming a striking contrast with the situation worldwide in which the absolutely poverty-stricken population keeps increasing. The UN Development Program holds that China's achievements in the development-oriented aid-the-poor work have provided a model for the developing countries, and even for the whole world.

Medical care and the physique of the people have constantly improved. At the end of 2000, China had 325,000 medical centers (including clinics), 3.18 million hospital beds and 4.49 million medical personnel. Some 89.8 percent of villages had medical centers, with 1.32 million rural doctors and other medical personnel. Meanwhile, physical culture has developed vigorously, a nationwide health-building drive has been launched, and the physique of the Chinese people throughout the country has improved greatly. In the past three years, the State Administration of Sport and all the provinces, autonomous regions and centrally administered municipalities have invested in the construction of nearly 10,000 special health-building outlets. In addition, China has constructed a total of 1,939 health-building projects for the whole people. All these have provided favorable conditions for the launching of the health-building drive across the country. In 2000, the Chinese government set up a people's physique monitoring system, planning to include the people's physique monitoring targets in the state's comprehensive social development appraisal

targets. China has mounted the stage of world sport in all its sectors and joined the front ranks of sports internationally. At the 27th Olympic Games, held in 2000, Chinese athletes won 28 gold medals, 16 silver medals and 15 bronze medals, ranking China third in the world at the Sydney Olympics. In domestic and international games in 2000, Chinese athletes won 110 world championships, and 14 athletes and two teams chalked up a total of 22 world records on 30 occasions.

The drastic improvement of the people's living standards has greatly raised the level of the people's health. The death rate of the Chinese population decreased from 33 per thousand before 1949 to 6.46 per thousand in 1999. The people's life-expectancy on average was raised from 35 years before 1949 to 71.8 years in 2000, or 10 years longer than that of the developing countries and reaching the level of the moderately-developed countries.

II. The Guarantee of Citizens' Political Rights

China has actively promoted the building of democracy and the legal system, constantly perfected the people's congress system and the multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and made great efforts to strengthen the building of democracy at the grass-roots level and earnestly safeguard citizens' political rights.

The people's congress system is China's fundamental political system. All power in China belongs to the people. The organs through which the people exercise state power are the National People's Congress (NPC) and the local people's congresses. The NPC is the supreme organ of state power. It decides state policies and principles, and exercises the state legislative power. Since the Third Session of the Ninth NPC, the NPC and its Standing Committee have examined 30 proposed laws, of which 18 have been approved. The Legislation Law of the People's Republic of China, promulgated for implementation in 2000, is an important law concerning the state legislation system, and is of great significance in perfecting that system, safeguarding its unification, setting up and improving the law system with Chinese characteristics and promoting the building of democracy and the legal system.

The NPC and its Standing Committee have vigorously reinforced the implementation of the laws and the supervision over the administrative, judicial and procuratorial organs, and notable results have been achieved. In 2000, the NPC Standing Committee organized a law-enforcement inspection group, which has checked the implementation of four laws, such as the Criminal Procedure Law and the Organic Law of the Urban Neighborhood Committees, thus effectively supervising the implementation of these laws. The NPC Standing Committee supervises the work of the State Council, Supreme People's Court and Supreme People's Procuratorate by various means, such as inspection, law-enforcement examination, and hearing and deliberating work reports. To strengthen the supervision of the budget and economic work, the NPC Standing Committee adopted the Resolution on Strengthening the Examination and Supervision of the Central Budget in February

1999, and the Resolution on Strengthening the Supervision of Economic Work in March 2000. In addition, the NPC Standing Committee is working out a Supervision Law. Deputies to the NPC have increased their enthusiasm for participating in the exercise of state power. At the Fourth Session of the Ninth NPC held in March 2001, the deputies raised 1,040 proposals, a record number since the Sixth NPC.

The multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC is an important component of China's democratic political system. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) consists of representatives of the CPC, democratic parties, personages without party affiliation, people's organizations, ethnic minorities and other walks of life, as well as representatives of compatriots from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, returned overseas Chinese and specially invited individuals. Hence, the CPPCC has extensive representation. The committees of the CPPCC at all levels and the democratic parties are playing a more and more important role in political consultation, democratic supervision, and participation in the deliberation and administration of state affairs. Now the chairmen of the central committees of the eight democratic parties, the chairman of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce and 13 other people from the democratic parties, personages without party affiliation and non-Party personages from all walks of life, totaling 22, serve as vice-chairmen of the NPC Standing Committee or vice-chairmen of the CPPCC National Committee. Twenty-seven democratic party personages and personages without party affiliation serve as vice-governors, vice-chairmen, vice-mayors or assistants in the country's 31 provinces, autonomous regions and centrally administered municipalities; nearly 10,000 democratic party personages and personages without party affiliation hold leading posts in the governments, government departments and judicial organs at or above the county level; more than 140,000 democratic party personages and personages without party affiliation have been elected deputies to the people's congresses at different levels; and more than 220,000 democratic party personages and personages without party affiliation are members of the CPPCC committees at different levels.

In 2000, the CPPCC National Committee actively participated in the deliberation and administration of state affairs, offered advice and suggestions, organized CPPCC National Committee members to make special investigations and inspections of a number of important issues concerning economic and social development during the 10th Five-Year Plan period (2001-2005), held special forums and symposiums, and submitted to the CPC Central Committee more than 10 reports, such as Opinions on Promoting the Readjustment of the Economic Structure During the 10th Five-Year Plan Period, and the Proposal on the Need for the 10th Five-Year Plan to Embody Systems Innovation, thus providing important reference material for the state's formulation of the Outline of the 10th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development. On the basis of special research, the CPPCC National Committee has raised many opinions and suggestions to the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on implementing the strategy for the all-out development of the western region, speeding up the project to divert water from the south to the north,

perfecting the social security system, quickening the reform of the distribution system, promoting the building of communities, deepening the reform of the judicial system, and guaranteeing judicial fairness and social stability.

The channels for the CPPCC committees at all levels, all democratic parties and all personages without party affiliation to engage in democratic supervision have been further widened. Now, tens of thousands of democratic party personages and personages without party affiliation serve as special advisors to the people's procuratorates, and to supervision, auditing, education, land resources, taxation, personnel and public security departments, participating in legal and administrative supervision. Members of CPPCC committees at all levels reflect the opinions and demands of the masses of all walks of life and exercise their right to democratic supervision through discussing significant issues, criticizing the work of state organs and their work personnel, making suggestions and other means. In 2000, members of CPPCC committees throughout the country attended the symposiums on strict, fair and civilized law enforcement held by the public security organs, more than 130,000 person-times, and inspected public security organs 11,000 person-times, thus playing a powerful supervision role in impartial law enforcement.

Building democratic politics at the grass-roots level in rural areas with democratic election, decision-making, administration and supervision as the basic contents has been promoted in an all-round way, and developed steadily. Since the implementation of the Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees, which was revised in November 1998, the building of the systems of democratic election, discussion of village affairs by the villagers themselves, and making village affairs public has been constantly improved. Twenty-three provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities in China have worked out the new electoral procedures for the villagers' committees; 17 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities have adopted the measures for implementation of the Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees; many cities and counties have worked out the implementation guidelines for villagers' self-government work; and almost all villages have formulated or revised their village regulations and agreements, and regulations on villagers' self-government. The villagers' committees in 27 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities have been re-elected with some 600 million farmers participating directly in the elections, representing an attendance rate of more than 80 percent. The villagers' self-government level as a whole has markedly improved. Meanwhile, making township political affairs public has been promoted in an all-round way. Since 2000, 35,000 townships throughout the country have made their political affairs public, making up well over 80 percent of the total number of townships. Thus, remarkable progress has been made in the building of democratic politics at the township level.

III. Judicial Guarantee for Human Rights

Attaching great importance to safeguarding human rights through perfecting legislation, ensuring an impartial judiciary and strictly enforcing the law, China has made considerable progress in building a judicial guarantee for human rights.

It is a principle of the Chinese Constitution and the basic program of managing state affairs of the Chinese government to run the country according to law. Over 390 laws and decisions involving legal problems have been formulated by the NPC and its Standing Committee, more than 800 administrative laws and regulations by the State Council, and 8,000-plus local laws and regulations by the local people's congresses since the initiation of reform and opening-up. As a result, a fairly complete legal system has taken shape, with the Constitution as the core. There are laws covering all fields of social life, providing a comprehensive judicial guarantee for the various human rights of the citizens. To improve the legal sense of the administrative law executors and judicial personnel at various levels and the sense of the rights and duties of the citizens, China has actively carried out publicity stressing the rule of law and mass activities promoting knowledge of the law. Some 750 million people in China have participated in activities involving the study of laws, over 280 special lectures on the legal system for leaders at the provincial or ministerial level have been held with an accumulative total of 12,000 participants, and 184,000 leaders at the prefectural or departmental level have received regular legal training in the past five years.

China punishes criminal offenses in accordance with the law, and protects the safety of citizens' lives and property and other human rights from infringement. In 2000, the public security and judicial organs adopted forceful measures to crack down on serious crimes of violence in accordance with the law, such as crimes with gangster connections and characteristics, crimes involving the use of guns and explosives, and gang-related crimes, as well as frequently occurring criminal activities such as theft and robbery. They also punished, according to law, a handful of criminals who caused deaths or gathered people to upset the public order by organizing and using the Falun Gong cult, effectively safeguarding social stability and the people's lives and property.

To deepen the reform of the judicial system, courts at various levels have strengthened the administration of justice and law enforcement, actively implemented the system of choosing and appointing presiding judges and individual jurors, fully carried out the system of public adjudication, perfected the judicial rehabilitation system, and further intensified the internal supervisory and circumscribing mechanism of the courts and the mechanism for correcting errors, thereby effectively safeguarding impartial justice. In 2000, China's courts tried or handled over 560,000 criminal cases at the first instance, in which more than 640,000 criminals were sentenced; over 3.41 million civil cases at the first instance; more than 1.31 million cases involving economic, intellectual property and maritime affairs; 2,447 cases involving state compensation; 86,614 administrative lawsuits, including 13,635 cases involving the revocation of inappropriate administrative practices by administrative organs, or 15.74 percent of the total number; and cleared over 138,000 cases exceeding the trial time-limits, and some 475,000 long-

pending cases, basically liquidating the arrears of cases and effectively safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of citizens, legal persons and other organizations. To earnestly guarantee that persons in financial difficulty can exercise their litigation rights according to law, the Supreme People's Court formulated the Regulations on Providing Judicial Assistance for Litigants Actually in Financial Difficulty in July 2000 to improve the judicial assistance system. According to the Regulations, in dealing with civil and administrative cases involving litigants actually in financial difficulty, especially the elderly, women, minors, the disabled persons and laid-off workers pressing for payment of alimony, the costs of maintenance and upbringing, pensions for families of deceased persons and old-age pensions, or for payment of medical costs and acquisition of material compensations for victims of traffic or industrial accidents and faulty medical treatment, payment of litigation costs may be postponed, reduced or remitted in accordance with the law. In 2000, courts across the country made decisions on such costs in more than 190,000 cases.

Procuratorial organs have reinforced litigation supervision according to law to improve the quality of handling cases and safeguard the legitimate rights of citizens. In 2000, procuratorial organs throughout the country placed 4,626 criminal cases involving misconduct by judicial personnel on file for investigation according to law; put forward 14,349 rectification opinions against public security organs adopting improper mandatory measures and other law-violating actions; corrected cases of exceeding the time-limit of summoning criminal suspects for detention at the investigation, suing and adjudication stages, 64,254 person-times; protested 3,798 court decisions and rulings on criminal cases, which were regarded as wrong, and 16,944 court decisions on civil administrative cases; and put forward rectification opinions against illegal commutation, release on parole or medical parole, 9,318 person-times. In the meantime, procuratorates have actively carried out nationwide a system of the main-suit procurator assuming full responsibility for handling cases, selected main-suit prosecutors through competition, and based on this, carried out the reform of public prosecutions, and trial-implemented the systems of public investigations of non-prosecution cases and the demonstration of evidence before the court -- all these have gone a long way toward safeguarding impartial justice and the legitimate rights and interests of criminal suspects.

The lawyer system and the system of legal assistance have been constantly improved, and are playing an increasingly important role in safeguarding the rights of citizens and promoting impartial justice. At present, there are over 9,500 lawyers' offices and more than 110,000 lawyers in China. In addition, 92 foreign law firms and 28 Hong Kong law firms had been allowed to set up offices on the Chinese mainland by July 2000. In 1999, lawyers throughout the country handled 1,364,000 lawsuits; in 2000, they participated in the defense of over 310,000 criminal cases, and provided legal assistance for criminal suspects at the criminal procedure and investigation stage in more than 170,000 cases. By the end of 2000, China had established 1,853 legal assistance organs at various levels, with 6,109 full-time personnel in their employ. In 2000, more than 170,000 cases of legal assistance were handled in China, in which over 228,000 persons received assistance, and 830,000 persons were

offered consultancy on law-related problems, thus protecting the legitimate rights and interests of the poor, weak and disabled and other litigants.

China protects, in accordance with the law, the legitimate rights of prisoners, and has achieved remarkable results in reforming criminals. The recurrence rate of prisoners released at the end of their terms has remained between 6 and 8 percent for many years, a very low rate compared to those of other countries. To strengthen the supervision of the law enforcement of prison staff, the people's procuratorates at various levels have further improved the system of establishing resident agencies and offices in prisons throughout the country. In 1999, the Ministry of Justice began to carry out a three-year education program to improve the basic qualities of the prison police. As a result, their level of law enforcement has been markedly improved.

IV. The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Citizens

In 2000, the Chinese government made new efforts and achieved new progress in the protection of workers' economic, social and cultural rights.

The government promulgated and implemented the Regulations on the Administration of the Labor Market in accordance with the Labor Law in 2000, providing a guarantee for workers' right to employment from the angle of standardizing the labor market. According to statistics, by the end of 2000, employees in China totaled more than 710 million, an increase of 5.64 million over the figure for the previous year, including over 210 million employees in cities and towns, an increase of 2.6 million. Last year, 3.61 million workers laid off by state-owned enterprises found new jobs through various channels. The registered urban unemployment rate was 3.1 percent by the end of 2000. To better solve the employment of rural labor, the Chinese government has carried out a three-year program for the overall planning of urban and rural employment since 2000, retraining rural workers, promoting the development and employment of the rural labor force in the western region, and encouraging and supporting migrant laborers to return to their home villages to start businesses.

China has worked hard to develop job training with a view to enhancing workers' job skills and quality and improving their capabilities of finding employment and adapting to job changes. In 2000, the Chinese government formulated the Regulations on Employing Skilled Workers and the Procedures for Implementation of the Training of Labor Reserves. According to statistics, there were 4,098 secondary technical training schools nationwide with an enrollment of over 1.5 million in 2000; more than 3,000 training centers, with an annual admission to 4.08 million; and 16,000 training centers run by social sectors, with an annual admission to 3.6 million. A total of 4.5 million jobless persons and laid-off workers received new skill training, 300,000 people received guidance for and training in starting businesses, and 750,000 junior and senior middle school graduates in urban areas who failed to continue further studies received training under the "training of labor reserves" program. In 2000, 4.25 million students were admitted to various secondary

vocational and technical schools, bringing the enrollment of such schools to the grand total of 12.95 million; and 96.42 million people received training at the adult technical training schools. To date, approximately 30 million people have obtained professional credentials in China.

The state guarantees the workers' right to obtain payment for labor, and their wages have been on the increase. In 2000, the government formulated the Guidelines on Further Deepening the Reform of the Internal Distribution System of Enterprises and the Trial Measures on Settling Wages Through Collective Negotiations, to strengthen the guidance for the wage-related work of enterprises. In 1999, the wages of workers in cities and towns totaled 987.55 billion yuan, an increase of 6.2 percent over the figure for the previous year; and their per capita wage was 8,346 yuan, an increase of 11.6 percent over the previous year, and a 13.1 percent growth in real terms, allowing for price fluctuations. By the end of 2000, all the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, except Tibet, had established and improved a minimum-wage guarantee system, readjusted and issued the standards for minimum wages in their own areas.

To safeguard the social security rights of workers, China has preliminarily established a social insurance system, mainly covering basic pension insurance, basic medical insurance and unemployment insurance for workers in cities and towns. It had enhanced the level of the basic livelihood guarantee of workers laid off by state-owned enterprises, the level of unemployment insurance, and the level of ensuring a minimum standard of living for urban residents. By the end of 2000, the system for ensuring a minimum standard of living for urban residents had been established in all cities and towns where the people's governments at the county level are located, benefiting 3.818 million urban residents; 15 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities had established such a system for rural residents, benefiting three million villagers with a total of 730 million yuan. In 2000, the cost of social insurance increased substantially in the state financial expenditure, and the social security costs, such as old-age pension, unemployment insurance, the basic livelihood guarantee for laid-off workers, and the minimum-standard-of-living guarantee for urban residents arranged by the central budget reached 47.8 billion yuan, an increase of 86 percent over 1999. By the end of 2000, a total of 104.08 million workers in China had participated in the unemployment insurance program, with a monthly average of 1.88 million receiving unemployment insurance; 104.47 million workers and 31.7 million retirees had participated in the basic pension insurance program; 43 million workers had participated in the basic medical insurance program; over 2,000 counties and cities had established the system of insurance against injuries at work, covering 42 million workers; 27 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities had tried out childbirth insurance, and 1,412 counties and cities introduced the childbirth insurance mutual assistance program, in which approximately 30 million workers participated.

China has increased its investment in education to create favorable conditions for citizens to exercise their right to receive education. During the Ninth Five-Year Plan period, the education fund increased at a rate of 15.56 percent annually on average,

which was higher than the growth speed of the national economy. The proportion of the national financial education fund in the GDP increased continuously, rising from 2.41 percent in 1995 to 2.79 percent in 1999. The nation's total education fund in 1999 was 1.8 times that of 1995. The central and local governments raised an 11.6-billion-yuan special education fund for 852 poverty-stricken counties following the introduction of the "project for compulsory education in poverty-stricken areas." The state formulated the Regulations on the Administration of State Loans for Students (for trial implementation) and the Regulations on the Operation of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China State Loans for Students (for trial implementation), so as to comprehensively institute the student loan system to guarantee students with financial difficulties the right to receive education. By the end of 2000, China had virtually made nine-year compulsory education universal, covering 85 percent of the population, and basically wiped out illiteracy among the young and adults, reducing the rate of young and adult illiterates to less than five percent. Statistics show that there were 22.44 million children in kindergartens in China in 2000; over 130 million pupils in primary schools, the attendance rate of school-age children reaching 99.1 percent; 62.56 million students in junior middle schools, the gross attendance rate reaching 88.6 percent; 12.01 million students in 14,600 senior middle schools; 5.56 million students in 1,041 institutions of higher learning; 3.54 million students in 772 adult institutions of higher learning; 301,000 students in 738 institutions for training postgraduates; and 378,000 students in special education schools.

Cultural undertakings have developed rapidly, and the people's cultural life has become increasingly rich and colorful. By the end of 2000, China had 2,622 performing art troupes; 2,911 cultural centers; 2,769 public libraries; 1,373 museums; 3,816 archive establishments; national and provincial newspapers with a circulation of 20.3 billion copies, magazines with a circulation of 2.85 billion copies, and books with a circulation of 6.35 billion copies; 732 medium- and short-wave broadcasting transmitting and relay stations, covering 92.1 percent of the population; and 1,313 TV transmitting and relay stations each with more than 1,000 watts, covering 93.4 percent of the population. China has 79.2 million users of cable television, ranking first in the world.

Telecommunications have advanced by leaps and bounds. The second-biggest three-dimensional communications network in the world linking the whole country and the rest of the world has been established, and the number of telephone subscribers ranks second in the world. By the end of 2000, there were 230 million telephone subscribers nationwide, including 85.26 million subscribers of mobile phones, second only to the United States; for every 100 urban residents there are 39 telephones on average, and telephone service covers 80 percent of the administrative villages. Digital and multi-media communications networks now cover all prefectures and cities, and some counties. Automatic roaming through the networks of the China Mobile Communications Corporation and the China Unicom reaches 84 countries and regions. The users of the Internet have risen from 10,000 in 1994, when China joined the Internet network, to well over 22.5 million. There are more than 27,300 websites in China at present.

V. Protection of Women and Children's Rights

Sustained efforts have been made to promote and effectively protect Chinese women's rights in the political, economic, social, educational, marital, domestic and other spheres. The extent of Chinese women's involvement in the management of state and social affairs has markedly increased. The ratios of women deputies to the Ninth NPC and women members on the CPPCC Ninth National Committee have risen by 0.8 and 2 percentage points, respectively, as compared with the NPC and CPPCC National Committee of the last terms. At present, women civil servants account for one third of the country's total. Women hold leading posts in the Party committees and governments of 30 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, an increase of 46.47 percent over the figure five years ago. In the 668 cities of China, there are 463 women mayors and vice-mayors. Among the leaders of the federations of trade unions of each province, municipality and autonomous region, there are one to two chairwomen or vice-chairwomen.

The number of employed women has continuously grown, and their work involvement has become rational. By October 2000, the number of women employees had reached 330 million, accounting for 46.7 percent of the total number of employees in China. The employed women have tended to shift to tertiary industry from conventional industries. The ratio of women engaged in agriculture, and the extractive, manufacturing and building industries is declining, while the ratio in culture, education, science and technology, health care, finance, insurance, transportation, posts and telecommunications, state organs, mass organizations and other sectors, is increasing. Such a shift facilitates the comprehensive development of women in economic activities, since it is more suited to women's physiological characteristics. In 2000, a total of well over 40 million women in China's rural areas received agricultural high-tech training, five of whom won the "Prize for Women's Creativity in Rural Life" of the Women's World Summit Foundation.

Women's educational level has risen further. According to statistics, in recent years both the incremental extent of the length of education enjoyed by women above the age of 15 and the declining extent of their illiteracy rate are larger than men's, and the gap in the educational levels of the two sexes is further narrowing. In 2000, the average length of education enjoyed by women exceeded 6.5 years, and the length gap between adult men and women in this regard narrowed from 1.7 years in 1995 to less than 1.5 years. In the past few years, China has helped nearly three million illiterates each year to learn how to read and write, among whom 65 percent were women. By the end of 1999, the illiteracy rate of adult women was 21.6 percent, and the illiteracy rate of women between 15 and 45 years old was 7.2 percent. In the year 2000, the ratio of primary school attendance for girls throughout China reached 99.07 percent, almost equal to the 99.14 percent for boys. Female students in kindergartens, primary schools, vocational secondary schools, regular secondary schools, secondary normal schools, secondary technical schools and regular institutions of higher learning made up 46.08 percent, 47.60 percent, 47.17 percent,

46.17 percent, 67.49 percent, 54.63 percent and 40.98 percent of the total number of students attending schools of the same kind, respectively. Among the nation's professionals, more than 110 million were women, constituting 40.6 percent of the total, or an increase of 14.8 percent over 1995. Among those female professionals, 3.263 million and 436,000 have professional titles of middle and senior ranks, respectively. Furthermore, currently there are 70 female academicians at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chinese Academy of Engineering, making up 6 percent of the total, which is a fairly high ratio internationally.

Women's health conditions have constantly improved. In 2000, there were 609 hospitals specially for women and children, employing 72,000 medical personnel, and 2,598 clinics for women and children, employing 75,000 medical personnel. By 1999, the ratio of health care for pregnant and puerperal women throughout the country had exceeded 86 percent, and 95.4 percent of rural women had access to the modern method of midwifery. The mortality rate of pregnant women and women in labor dropped to 56.2 per 100,000 from 61.9 per 100,000 in 1995. Beginning in 2000, the Chinese government has practiced a two-year special plan in the western region and impoverished rural areas with 200 million yuan earmarked to combat the maternal mortality rate and eliminate trismus nascentium. In October 2000, the China Poverty Relief Fund formally started the Strategic Plan of "Action 120 for the Safety of Mother and Baby," committing itself in establishing health and first-aid organs for women and children at the county, township and village levels in the poverty-stricken areas in the six provinces and one municipality in the central and western parts of China, to improve the health care of poor mothers and babies, and eliminating the mortality rate of babies, pregnant women and women in labor. An estimated 32 million yuan is to go to this 10-year campaign.

The state has adopted measures to effectively protect women's rights against infringement. To curb domestic violence, bigamy and taking concubines more effectively, perfect the family property system and protect women's rights in marriage and the family against infringement, the NPC mobilized people of various circles to conduct serious research for the revision of the Marriage Law, and publicized the draft amendments to the Marriage Law in January 2001 for public discussions. So far, the people's congresses and governments at all levels have formulated over 20 local regulations and policies for preventing and curbing domestic violence. By the end of October 2000, 13 provinces and 47 prefectures, cities and counties throughout the country had established the system of joint conference for protecting women's rights, attended by many departments, to regularly coordinate, supervise and examine the work of protecting women's rights and interests. The court system has set up 544 collegiate panels for safeguarding the rights and interests of women and children, employing 4,266 full-time cadres from women's organizations as people's assessors to directly participate in the trial of cases involving women's rights and interests. Between April and July 2000, the public security organs launched a nationwide movement to crack down on crimes of abducting and trafficking in women and children, in accordance with the law, and uncovered some 20,000 such cases, which involved 7,600 criminal gangs, saving or

making proper arrangements for the resettlement of a large number of women and children who had been abducted and sold.

The rights of children have been effectively protected. China has constantly upheld the prophylactic immunization filing system for children to prevent and control pneumonia, diarrhea, rickets and iron-deficiency anemia. China has also conducted a baby-friendly campaign, advocated breast feeding, built baby-friendly hospitals, provided health care services such as children's nutrition guide, monitoring of children's growth, examination of newborn infant diseases, and preschool education for children, increasingly improving children's growth level and nutrition conditions. In 2000, child mortality dropped by one third as compared with 1990, and the rate of malnutrition among children dropped by 50 percent. To promote the healthy development of children, the Program for the Safe and Healthy Development of Chinese Children was initiated in October 2000. The basic tasks of this program are, through a series of publicity activities and providing training and services, to create a favorable social environment for the sound development of children, help children to stay away from dropout, disease, injury and crime, and effectively protect the rights and interests of children. By the end of 1999, the "Hope Project" had received a total of 1.84 billion yuan in donations, with which it had helped the construction of 7,812 "Hope" primary schools and aided 2.3 million dropouts. In 2000, the Children's Foundation of China raised some 81 million yuan to support the implementation of the "Spring Buds Program," helping a total of 1.05 million girl dropouts return to school.

VI. Equal Rights and Special Protection for Ethnic Minorities

In China, ethnic minorities enjoy not only all the rights citizens are entitled to by the Constitution and laws as the Han people do, but also the special rights enjoyed only by ethnic minorities according to law. To guarantee the equal rights and special rights and interests of ethnic minorities, China practices a system of regional ethnic autonomy in ethnic minority areas. In February 2001, the Standing Committee of the Ninth NPC made amendments to the Law Governing Regional Ethnic Autonomy, upgrading the system of regional ethnic autonomy as part of the basic political system of China. New stipulations added in the Law include: carrying out necessary special policies in the ethnic autonomous areas, and increasing investments in and accelerating the development of these areas, which have further strengthened the legal guarantee of autonomy in the autonomous areas. According to statistics, the 55 ethnic minorities in China have a combined population of more than 100 million, or 8.41 percent of the country's total population, of which 75 percent enjoy regional ethnic autonomy.

The right of ethnic minorities to participate in the administration of state affairs on an equal footing and the autonomous right to manage their own regions and affairs are safeguarded by law. In the NPC and the CPPCC National Committee of successive terms, the percentage of ethnic minority representatives has far exceeded the proportion of the ethnic minority population in the national population, and each of

the 55 ethnic minorities, no matter what their populations, has its own representatives. There are altogether 428 ethnic minority deputies to the Ninth NPC and 257 ethnic minority members on the CPPCC Ninth National Committee, accounting for 14.37 percent and 11.7 percent of the total, respectively. Among the chairperson or vice-chairpersons of the standing committee of the people's congress of an autonomous area there shall be one or more citizens of the ethnic group or groups exercising regional autonomy in the area concerned. The head of an autonomous region, autonomous prefecture or autonomous county shall be a citizen of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy in the area concerned, and the other members of the people's governments of these regions, prefectures and counties shall include members of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy as well as members of other ethnic minorities so far as it is reasonable. By the end of 1999, there were altogether 2.824 million ethnic minority cadres. In 2000, there were over 50, 000 ethnic minority cadres in the Tibet Autonomous Region, and Tibetan cadres accounted for over 70 percent of the total number of cadres there. Tibetan deputies and those of other ethnic minorities exceeded 80 percent of the total number of deputies to the people's congresses of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

The state implements an assistance policy toward the economic and social development of the minority regions, by providing funding, technology and personnel to promote the economic and social development and the improvement of the people's living standard in those regions. In 2000, the GDP of these regions increased by an average of 8.1 percent, compared with the previous year. This rate has been higher than that of the national average since 1997. The financial revenue of these regions increased by 14. 2 percent over that of the year before; and the total volume of retail sales of consumption goods increased by 9.0 percent over that of the previous year. From 1994 to 1999, the minority regions had solved the problems of food and clothing for over 30 million poverty-stricken people. In recent years, the annual financial set- quota subsidy from the Central Government to Tibet has been over 1. 2 billion yuan annually. The 62 aid-Tibet projects with a total investment of 4.6 billion yuan and another 716 projects, with a total investment of 3.2 billion yuan from ministries, commissions and other central government institutions, and 15 provinces and municipalities have been completed and put to use. According to statistics, the length of highways in Tibet has reached 25,000 km; the total installed capacity of electricity has reached 340,000 kw; and all counties in Tibet have set up telephone systems connected with the national one. An infrastructure suited to the development of a market economy is now in initial shape in Tibet. The GDP of Tibet has surpassed the ten billion yuan mark, and the growth rate of the region's economy has exceeded the national average for six years running, at 10.7 percent annually. There have been bumper harvests for the past 13 years, and now the Tibetans can support themselves with the grain, oil and meat produced by themselves. Nowadays, 98 percent of the commodities in Tibet are in excess of demand, a sharp contrast to the old days when 80 percent of needed goods in Tibet had to be transferred from the inland areas. The number of absolutely

poor people in Tibet has been reduced from the 480,000 in 1994 to the present 70,000. Most of the people in Tibet today are fast on their way to living a relatively comfortable life.

The state makes great efforts to support the ethnic minority regions in developing education, and has set aside special subsidies and funds for this purpose. In 2000, the government began to carry out the "Project for Schools in Eastern Regions to Aid Schools in Poverty-Stricken Areas in the West" and the "Project for Large and Medium Cities in the West Aiding Schools in Poverty-stricken Areas in Their Own Provinces (Autonomous Regions or Municipalities)." Besides, the government worked out the "Proposals on Accelerating the Reform and Development of Vocational Education in Ethnic Minority Regions and Regional Ethnic Autonomy Areas," demanding that measures be taken to establish and perfect an effective system and safeguard mechanism for investment in vocational education development in ethnic minority regions and to train teachers and management personnel for these regions. According to statistics, in 2000 there were 925,000 full-time ethnic minority teachers and 18.5249 million ethnic minority students in schools of all levels and types across the country. Minority students in primary schools, middle schools and colleges accounted for 9.08 percent, 6.77 percent and 5.71 percent, respectively, of the total number of students in those schools. Now all the 55 ethnic minorities have their own college students, and some even are master's and doctor's degree holders. Since the peaceful liberation of Tibet in 1951, the state has poured over one billion yuan into the development of education in Tibet. The state has not only set up Tibetan secondary and primary schools in inland regions, and Tibetan classes at inland universities, but it has also set up four universities and more than 1,000 secondary and primary schools in Tibet, bringing the attendance rate of Tibetan school-age children to 85.8 percent from less than 2 percent before 1951, and has trained over 30,000 personnel in various skills for Tibet.

The state safeguards the freedom of the ethnic minorities to utilize and develop their own languages. The organs of self-government in autonomous areas may use one or several languages commonly used in the locality, according to law, in performing their functions, in film, radio and television, and in books, newspapers and magazines. Since the 1950s, the Chinese government has helped over 10 ethnic minorities create and improve scripts of their own choice on the principle of voluntariness. Nowadays, 53 of the 55 ethnic minorities across the country have their own languages, including over 80 dialects; 21 ethnic minorities have a total of 27 scripts of their own in current use, which are all computer-readable; and many of the minorities have radio, film, television, books and periodicals in their own languages. The state helps the minority regions to institute teaching in the local languages or bilingual teaching and to enhance the editing of teaching materials in minority languages. Primary and middle schools in Tibet teach in the Tibetan language or in both the Tibetan and Chinese languages, and all the 181 textbooks, 122 teaching reference books and 16 syllabi of 16 courses used in schools from the primary to the senior high have been translated into Tibetan. After the

establishment of the Mongolian Language Net, the first Tibetan language net in the world -- the Tongyuan Tibetan Language Net -- was established in December 1999 at the Northwest Institute for Ethnic Minorities in Lanzhou, Gansu Province.

The Chinese government sets store by protecting and developing the traditional cultures of ethnic minorities, and respects their folkways and customs in such aspects as diet, marriage, funeral, festival celebration and religious belief. In February 2000, the Ministry of Culture and State Commission of Ethnic Affairs jointly promulgated the "Proposals on Further Strengthening Ethnic Minority-related Cultural Work," stressing the need to protect the unique traditional cultures and rich cultural heritages of all the ethnic minorities and set up ethnic minority cultural and ecological preservation zones where possible, at the same time demanding that the Han-inhabited eastern developed regions increase their assistance to the minority-inhabited western regions in their projects for cultural development. To date, 24 art universities and colleges across the country have opened classes specially for training artists of minority origin, and all the colleges for ethnic minorities and some middle schools and colleges in autonomous areas have also offered special courses of study on minority literature, music, dance and fine arts. Since the 1990s, the central and local budgets have earmarked special subsidies and funds for building, extending or repairing a number of libraries, cultural centers, cultural clubs, museums, cinemas and theaters. In recent years, the central and Tibetan regional governments have spent nearly 300 million yuan to repair and protect the Potala Palace, Sakya Monastery, Jokhang Temple and Drepung Monastery, the Guge Kingdom ruins in Ngari, and other important cultural and historical sites. At present, there are over 50 Tibetan studies institutes nationwide with over 2,000 researchers, and more than 10 Tibetological periodicals in the Tibetan, Chinese and English languages. The first four Tibetan-language volumes of the Tibetan epic King Gesar, the highest achievement of ancient Tibetan culture, have been published. The College of Tibetan Medicine, the biggest and most authoritative of its kind in China, has trained over 650 undergraduate students and students of junior college level and 10 master's degree students.

Due to the influence of natural, historical and other factors, the western region, where ethnic minorities are concentrated, lags far behind the south eastern seaboard region economically -- a fact which, to a large extent, restricts the improvement of the conditions for the subsistence and development of the minority peoples. To solve this problem once and for all, the Chinese government began in 2000 to implement a strategy for the all-out development of the west, at the same time intensifying its assistance to the minority regions in policy-related matters, funds and personnel. This will forcefully promote economic and social development in these regions, and the full realization of the equal rights of ethnic minorities.

VII. Actively Carrying Out International Exchanges and Cooperation in the Realm of Human Rights

The Chinese government always respects the purpose and principle of the Charter of the United Nations for promoting and protecting human rights, supports the UN efforts in this regard and actively participates in the UN activities in the realm of human rights.

The Chinese government has always attached great importance to the positive role of international conventions on human rights in promoting and protecting human rights, and has approved or acceded to 18 such conventions. The Chinese government signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in October 1997 and October 1998, respectively. On February 28, 2001, the former covenant was deliberated and ratified at the 20th meeting of the Ninth NPC Standing Committee. This fully demonstrates the Chinese government's positive attitude toward carrying out international cooperation in human rights as well as China's firm determination and confidence in promoting and protecting human rights. In September 2000, the Chinese government signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, becoming one of the first signatory countries to this Convention. China has always taken seriously those international conventions on human rights it has ratified, adopted various measures to fulfill its duties under these conventions and submitted timely reports on their implementation, as stipulated by related conventions, for deliberation and discussion by related UN organs. In 2000, the Chinese government submitted to the UN its eighth and ninth reports on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and, in a timely manner, presented to the UN its report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. These have helped the UN concerned departments and the international community to gain a better understanding of the human rights situation in China.

China attaches importance to the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in promoting and protecting human rights, and has actively cooperated with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In March 2000, the Chinese government and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights together successfully sponsored the Eighth Symposium on Human Rights in the Asian-Pacific Region in Beijing, with representatives from over 40 Asian-Pacific countries attending. Chinese President Jiang Zemin wrote a letter congratulating the opening of the symposium, and Vice-Premier of the State Council Qian Qichen attended and spoke at the symposium. Mary Robinson, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, made a special trip to China to attend the symposium. In November 2000, Mary Robinson visited China again on invitation. During her stay in China, President Jiang Zemin and Vice-Premier Qian Qichen met with her, respectively, and the Chinese Foreign Ministry signed with her the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and the United Nations Office of the High

Commissioner for Human Rights on the Mutual Agreement to Cooperate in the Development and Implementation of Technical Cooperation Programs. It is defined in the Memorandum that China will carry out project cooperation with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the two coming years in the fields of judicial administration, human rights education and legal system, as well as the fulfillment of the right to development and the economic, social and cultural rights. China has actively carried out cooperation with the special rapporteurs and working groups on thematic issues of the UN Commission on Human Rights. It has twice invited the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the UN Commission on Human Rights to visit China, and the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance has also visited China on invitation. China has, in a timely and earnest manner, answered the letters on human rights transmitted by the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights and other UN human rights mechanisms, clearing up a number of facts and helping the UN and international community toward a better understanding of China. In addition, China and the UN Development Program also jointly sponsored an international symposium on the problem of cults, to carry out exchanges and explore on how to deal with cults and safeguard human rights by various countries.

China has consistently advocated carrying out dialogues and exchanges by all countries on the human rights issue on the basis of equality and mutual respect so as to enhance understanding, promote consensus and reduce differences. In February and September 2000, respectively, China held the ninth and tenth dialogues on human rights with the European Union. China and the European Union held the fourth and fifth judicial symposiums in May and December, respectively. In February and October respectively, China and Britain held the fourth and fifth dialogues on human rights. In August, China held its fourth human rights dialogue with Australia. In October, China and Canada held the sixth dialogue on human rights. In May, China and Norway jointly held the fourth round-table meeting on human rights and the rule of law. In June, China, Canada and Norway held the Third Symposium on Human Rights in Bangkok, Thailand. In 2000, China held consultations and exchanges on human rights with Cuba, Laos and many other developing countries. In October, China successfully held the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation -- Ministerial Conference Beijing 2000 in Beijing, with Chinese President Jiang Zemin and four heads of state from Africa, nearly 80 ministers from 45 African countries and leaders of related international and regional organizations attending. In the Sino- African Cooperative Forum Beijing Declaration adopted at the meeting, it is emphasized that the principle of universality of human rights and basic freedoms should be respected, and the diversity of the world and the principle of seeking common ground while reserving differences must be safeguarded; that each country has the right to choose different ways and modes of promoting and protecting human rights domestically; and that politicalizing the issue of human rights and attaching human rights conditions to economic aid are themselves violations of human rights, and therefore should be firmly opposed.

The progress of human rights is an important aspect of the social development of all countries, and it is a historical process of continuous advance. China is a developing country with a huge population. Due to restrictions of nature, history, level of development and other factors, the human rights cause in China is in the process of developing, and there is still much room for further improvement in its human rights situation. In the light of China's national conditions and according to the people's wishes, the Chinese government aims to build a democratic and modernized country with a high level of civilization under the rule of law, actively learn from the beneficial experiences and cultural achievements of other countries, and, while maintaining social stability, expedite development, strengthen the democratic and legal systems, promote social ethical progress, and continuously push forward the development of the human rights cause in China. At the same time, China will, as always, actively participate in international activities in the realm of human rights, carry out wide-ranging cooperation and exchanges with other countries, and make its due contribution to promoting the healthy development of the international human rights cause.