

Progress in China's Human Rights in 2012
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Contents

Foreword

- I. Protection of Human Rights in Economic Construction
- II. Protection of Human Rights in Political Construction
- III. Protection of Human Rights in Cultural Services
- IV. Protection of Human Rights in Social Development
- V. Protection of Human Rights in Ecological Progress
- VI. Foreign Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights

Foreword

Since the arrival of the 21st century, the Chinese people have been making constant efforts in advancing human rights protection along the path of building socialism with Chinese characteristics under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government.

It has been the will and action of the CPC and state organs at all levels to respect and protect human rights. After the concept of "human rights" was successively enshrined in China's Constitution, national economic and social development plans and the CPC Constitution, the 18th National Congress of the CPC, held in November 2012, set "respect for and protection of human rights" as one of the goals in the drive for building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. The Chinese government issued the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2009-2010) and the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2012-2015), and reviewed the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2009-2010). The cause of human rights in China has entered a stage of planned, sustainable, steady and comprehensive development.

In governance, the CPC and the Chinese government follow the fundamental and major principle of pursuing scientific development, promoting social harmony, improving the people's livelihood and promoting the wellbeing of the people. Guided by the Scientific Outlook on Development which puts people first and aims at comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development, China combines its human

rights endeavors with economic, political, cultural, social and ecological construction, prioritizes the people's rights to subsistence and development, and endeavors to promote the comprehensive and balanced development of their economic, social and cultural rights as well as their civil and political rights. After years of unremitting efforts, China has stepped up to a higher level in the people's living standard, democracy, rule of law, cultural development, social security and environmental protection.

China is a developing country with a vast population and fraught with larger regional differences and resource, environmental and ecological strains as well as conspicuous problems from unbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable development. Arduous efforts are still to be made to solve the numerous problems in the development of various undertakings that bear on the people's vital interests. It remains a tough task for China to better protect its people's human rights.

I. Protection of Human Rights in Economic Construction

China has a population of over 1.3 billion. For such a populous country, it would be impossible to protect the people's rights and interests without first developing the economy to feed and clothe the people. Development is the key to solving all existing problems and facilitating progress of human rights in China. Only by pursuing healthy and sustainable economic development can China consolidate the material foundation for the people's happiness and wellbeing, and protect their rights to subsistence and development. For many years, China has taken economic construction as the central task and, through economic growth, expanded rural and urban employment, increased the residents' income and family property income, provided the people with better food, clothing, housing, transportation and other daily necessities, safeguarded the rights and interests of disadvantaged groups, and effectively protected the citizens' economic rights and interests.

The people's living standards are constantly on the rise. Steady yet relatively rapid economic development has provided the foundation for a better livelihood for the Chinese people. Despite the slowdown of economic growth in the world's major economies and the manifestation of various risks, China's GDP grew by 7.8 percent in 2012 and the rise in the CPI (Consumer Price Index) fell back to 2.6 percent. China's annual grain output in 2012 reached 589.57 million tons, registering the second nine-year consecutive growth since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, topping the 500-million-ton mark for six years in a row. Food is people's paramount necessity. For a country with more than 1.3 billion people, a nine-year

consecutive growth in grain output was of particularly significant importance, as it laid a solid foundation for the Chinese people to live a happier and better life. The living and production conditions in rural areas have kept improving. From 2008 to 2012 China built or rebuilt 1.465 million km of rural roads, renovated 10.33 million rural houses in disrepair, solved the problem of drinking water safety for over 300 million rural residents, and provided power to 4.45 million people in areas previously devoid of access to electricity. At the same time, urban and rural residents' income has been growing relatively rapidly. The annual per-capita net income for rural residents reached 7,917 yuan in 2012, up 13.5 percent over the previous year or 10.7 percent in real terms. The annual per-capita disposable income for urban residents was 24,565 yuan, an increase of 12.6 percent or 9.6 percent in real terms year on year. The income growth of urban and rural residents in real terms outpaced the GDP growth, while the income growth of the rural residents in real terms surpassed that of the urban residents. In 2012 the Engel coefficients (i.e., the proportion of food expenditure in the total consumption spending) per rural and urban household were 39.3 percent and 36.2 percent, respectively. By the end of 2012 car ownership had reached 59.89 million, an increase of 20.7 percent over the previous year, among which 53.08 million were private cars, an increase of 22.8 percent. There were 21.5 cars for every 100 urban households, an increase of 15.5 over 2007. The combined number of fixed and mobile phone users reached 1,390.31 million, an increase of 118.96 million over that at the end of the previous year. There were 82.6 mobile phones and 20.7 fixed phones for every 100 people. There were over 564 million Internet users in China, among whom 420 million access the Internet via mobile phones. The Internet penetration rate reached 42.1 percent. The number of domestic tourists in 2012 totaled 2.96 billion, and the number of Chinese citizens making trips abroad reached 83.18 million, up 12.1 percent and 18.4 percent, respectively, over the previous year. Among them, those making trips abroad for private purposes reached 77.06 million, a year-on-year increase of 20.2 percent, accounting for 92.6 percent of the total. Active and steady efforts have been made to promote urbanization. From 2008 to 2012, a total of 84.63 million rural laborers moved to cities and towns, raising the urbanization rate from 45.9 percent to 52.6 percent and effecting a historic change in China's urban-rural structure.

Poverty reduction in rural areas enters a new stage. To constantly improve the living conditions of the impoverished population in rural areas, the Chinese government promulgated the Outline of Development-oriented Poverty Reduction for China's Rural Areas (2011-2020) in 2011, setting forth the general objective of providing

adequate food and clothing for poverty-stricken people while ensuring their access to compulsory education, basic medical services and housing by 2020. The state raised the national poverty line substantially to 2,300 yuan per person per year on average (calculated at 2010 constant prices), and by this criterion more low-income people have been included in poverty-reduction programs. In 2011 a total of 122 million people were covered by poverty-reduction programs all over the country, making up 12.7 percent of the rural population. In 2012 the central government spent 299.6 billion yuan on comprehensive poverty-reduction programs, an increase of 31.9 percent over the previous year, of which 33.2 billion yuan was special funds for poverty reduction. The state has launched regional development and poverty-reduction projects in 11 regions, including the Wuling, Liupan and Luoxiao mountainous areas, as well as plans to support the economic and social development of Tibet, Xinjiang, Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, and the Tibetan-inhabited areas in the provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai during the 12th Five-year Plan period (2011-2015). These efforts were aimed at alleviating deep-rooted poverty in these areas. In 2011 the average per-capita annual income for farmers in the counties which are key targets of the government's poverty-reduction work reached 3,985 yuan, an increase of 40.2 percent over 2009, a higher growth rate than that of the average level in China's rural areas. By the end of 2012 the size of the impoverished population in rural China had decreased to 98.99 million according to the new criterion, 23.39 million fewer than that at the end of the previous year. The state formulated the 12th Five-Year Plan for Village-based Development-oriented Poverty Reduction, planning to lift 30,000 impoverished villages in central and western China out of poverty, or 6,000 villages per year, in the five years from 2011 to 2015. At the same time, the living conditions of impoverished disabled people in rural areas have been further improved. In 2012 the State Council issued the Outline of Development-oriented Poverty Reduction for Disabled People in Rural Areas (2011-2020). In the same year the state rendered support to 2.299 million disabled people in poverty in rural China, provided training for 861,000 disabled people in practical skills and helped 132,000 poor families with one or more disabled members to renovate their houses.

People's living standards in poverty-stricken ethnic-minority areas are continuously improving. Based on the actual conditions in ethnic-minority areas, the Chinese government, adhering to the principle of combining assistance from the central government, support from developed regions and self-reliance of the ethnic-minority areas, has formulated a series of preferential policies to promote the ethnic-minority areas' economic growth and improve the living conditions of all

ethnic groups. The central government has been continuously increasing transfer payments to ethnic-minority areas. From 2010 to 2012 the total amount of transfer payments to eight ethnic-minority provinces (autonomous regions) reached 2.6055 trillion yuan, up from 24.3 percent to 25.7 percent of the total transfer payments from the central government to local governments. Meanwhile, transfer payments to ethnic-minority autonomous prefectures, counties and border areas have also been increased. The state formulated and promulgated the Plan for Supporting the Development of Ethnic Minority Groups with Fewer Populations (2011-2015), including six ethnic minority groups with populations ranging from 100,000 to 300,000 each in the recipients of assistance, and earmarked special funds to help them develop their economy and improve their production and living conditions. The state also rendered support to the economic and social development of border areas by formulating the Action Plan to Bring Prosperity to Border Areas and the People There (2011-2015). The state adopted policies to increase income for the herdsmen and promote the development of pastoral regions. Marked achievements have been scored in helping ethnic-minority areas and their people get rid of poverty and become relatively well-off. From 2005 to 2010 the number of impoverished people in the eight aforesaid provinces (autonomous regions) decreased from 23.384 million to 13.044 million, and the impoverishment rate dropped from 16.5 percent to 7 percent, nearly 5.5 percentage points faster than the national average impoverishment rate in the same period.

Urban and rural housing conditions are further improved. Since 2009, focusing on the two major themes of "ensuring that all the people enjoy the right to housing" and "obtaining sustainable development of residential areas in the process of urbanization," the Chinese government, while working hard to satisfy the people's diverse demands for housing by promoting market-oriented reform of the urban housing system and developing the commercial housing market, has also listed satisfying the basic housing needs of people in poverty as an important content of the basic public services to be provided by the government and carried out massive affordable housing projects to enhance housing security. The affordable housing projects in China cover the building of affordable housing in urban areas, the rebuilding of shanty areas and rural housing in disrepair, and the building of permanent housing for nomadic herdsmen. From 2008 to 2012 China built more than 18 million affordable suites of housing and rebuilt more than 12 million suites in shanty areas. By the end of 2012 China had provided housing for 31 million urban families, about 12.5 percent of the total urban households. In addition, the government had provided low-rent housing subsidies for nearly five million urban

low-income families. At the end of 2012 the per-capita living space in China's urban and rural areas reached 32.9 square meters and 37.1 square meters, respectively, up 2.8 square meters and 5.5 square meters compared with 2007. In order to regulate the expropriation of and compensation for buildings on state-owned land, protect the legitimate rights of the owners of such buildings as well as the public interest, the State Council promulgated and put into effect the Regulations on the Expropriation of and Compensation for Buildings on State-owned Land on January 21, 2011, and simultaneously abolished the Regulations on the Dismantling of Urban Houses promulgated on June 13, 2001.

Proactive efforts are made to boost employment. The steady and sustained economic growth has provided a guarantee for employment. The state implements an active employment policy to guarantee the citizens' right to work. From 2008 to 2012 China invested a total of 197.3 billion yuan in special employment funds, and helped 28 million college graduates and 8.3 million people in urban areas with employment difficulties find jobs. In 2012, against a backdrop of slowing economic growth, 12.66 million new job opportunities were created, 5.52 million laid-off workers were reemployed, and 1.82 million people with employment difficulties found jobs in urban areas of China. At the year's end, the registered urban unemployment rate was 4.1 percent, the same as the previous year. The total number of rural migrant workers was 262.61 million in 2012, up 3.9 percent from the previous year, among whom the number of rural workers employed away from their homes reached 163.36 million and the number of local rural workers reached 99.25 million, representing increases of 3 percent and 5.4 percent over the previous year, respectively. As China encourages farmers to find jobs in or close to their hometowns, 85,000 villages launched recreational agriculture and village tourism, providing jobs for 28 million farmers. In 2012 China helped an additional 329,000 disabled people in urban areas to find jobs, raising the total urban number of employed disabled people to 4.448 million; and in the rural areas, 17.703 million disabled people got stable jobs. In 2011, 22 million people took part in vocational training courses of various types provided by the government. In 2012 the central government appropriated 45.4 billion yuan in special employment funds to help implement policies intended to boost employment. From 2010 to 2012, taking advantage of the training programs of the "Sunlight Project," the Ministry of Agriculture provided agricultural skill training to 9.3 million farmers with 3.3 billion yuan of subsidy funds from the central government.

The basic rights of workers are guaranteed. The state has amended the Labor Contract Law and the Law on the Prevention and Treatment of Occupational

Diseases, and formulated the Special Rules on Protection of Female Employees and Interpretations (III) of the Supreme People's Court of Several Issues Concerning the Application of Law in the Trial of Labor Dispute Cases, so as to protect various rights of workers. More trade unions have been established, involving more employees. By the end of September 2012 the number of grassroots trade unions had increased to 2.666 million, covering 6.166 million enterprises and public institutions, up 34.9 percent and 42.8 percent over 2009, respectively, of which 1.855 million trade unions were set up in non-public economic organizations, an increase of 47 percent over 2009. The number of trade union members nationwide reached 280 million, among whom 160 million were from non-public economic organizations, up 16.7 percent and 16 percent over 2009, respectively. China actively promotes the collective negotiation system on wages to guarantee the employees' right to fair remuneration. By the end of September 2012 a total of 1.228 million special collective contracts had been signed throughout the country, involving 3.082 million enterprises and 150 million employees, up 140 percent, 241 percent and 142 percent over 2009, respectively. In 2012 labor security supervision organs at various levels investigated and handled 412,000 law-breach cases regarding labor security, and urged employers to sign labor contracts with 8.055 million employees. In the same year 24 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government) raised their local minimum wage standards, averaging a 22 percent annual hike. The per-capita annual wage for employees in the urban non-private sector increased from 24,932 yuan in 2007 to 42,452 yuan in 2011 and that for employees in the urban private sector increased from 18,199 yuan in 2009 to 24,556 yuan in 2011, representing an average annual increase of 14.23 percent and 16.16 percent, respectively.

Protection is offered for people's safety in life and production. In China great importance is attached to the people's safety in life and production safety in the course of economic development. China's urban living environment is constantly improving as the state has been working hard to build a well-established service system of urban public works and utilities in recent years. China has won the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honor Award 21 times. Seven Chinese projects have been awarded the Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment, 30 cities have been awarded the China Habitat Environment Prize, and 398 projects have been awarded the China Habitat Exemplary Environment prize. In 2011 some 90.6 percent of water supplies in China's 113 key environmental-protection cities were up to the state-set quality standards. By the end of 2012 China had established more than 30,000 water-quality monitoring sites, extending the monitoring network

for drinking water safety to all provinces. From 2010 to 2012 China solved drinking water safety problems for a total of 172 million rural residents and 23 million rural students and teachers. Since 2008 China has completed risk-removing reinforcement for 18,000 large, medium-sized and small key reservoirs. The state has endeavored to solve prominent issues and deep-rooted problems that hamper production safety, and improved the legislation and policies concerning safe production. It has issued production safety standards, stringently cracked down on illegal production, operation and construction, and corrected activities that breached relevant regulations. China has continuously carried out the "Production Safety Year" movement to ferret out and remove hidden dangers. In 2012 China investigated and dealt with 1.44 million cases of illegal production and construction that operate without licenses or lacking some of the licenses, plus 3.05 million cases of regulation violations. Every year China trained on average over five million safety managers, special operation personnel and persons in charge of high-risk industries, as well as 13 million migrant workers and 130,000 team leaders in coal mines. In addition, China has unveiled 1,022 key technologies for the prevention of major accidents and 355 new-type safe and practical products, and promoted 100 safety dynamic monitoring projects. Industrial accidents and their toll of life continued to go down. In 2011 the number of industrial accidents and their toll of life were down by 4.3 percent and 5.1 percent as compared with 2010, and further down by 3.1 percent and 4.7 percent in 2012 from that of 2011. The death rate per 100 million yuan GDP, death rate per 100,000 employees in coal mining, industrial and commercial sectors, death rate per one million tons of coal produced, and death rate of road traffic accidents per 10,000 vehicles in 2011 were down by 13.9 percent, 11.7 percent, 24.7 percent and 12.5 percent, respectively, as compared with 2010, and the figures in 2012 went further down by 18 percent, 13 percent, 34 percent, and 11 percent, respectively, from that in 2011.

II. Protection of Human Rights in Political Construction

The socialist road of political development with Chinese characteristics is the fundamental guarantee for the realization of civil rights and political rights in China. In recent years, China has actively yet prudently pressed ahead with political restructuring, expanded socialist democracy, accelerated the building of a socialist country under the rule of law, and developed socialist political civilization. China endeavors to improve the system of democracy, diversify the forms of democracy, expand citizens' orderly participation in political affairs, and ensure that citizens

exercise their democratic rights as prescribed by the law. China continues to deepen the reform of the administrative system, push forward the reform of the judicial system and work mechanisms, and ensure that people enjoy a wide range of rights and freedoms in accordance with the law. China continues to improve its legal system that protects human rights. Establishing a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics and protecting human rights in accordance with the law are the important foundation for China's human rights development. Thanks to unremitting efforts over the years, by the end of 2010 a multi-level socialist legal system with specific Chinese characteristics had been established. This system is based on the realities of China, adapts to the needs of reform and opening up and the socialist modernization drive, epitomizes the will of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people, centers around the Constitution, takes as its mainstay the Constitution-related laws, civil and commercial laws, administrative laws, economic laws, social laws, criminal laws, and litigation and non-litigation procedural laws of different categories, and comprises administrative and local regulations. By the end of 2012 China had enacted 243 active laws, including the current Constitution, 721 administrative regulations and 9,200 local regulations, which are complete in range and cover all relations in the society. Basic and major laws of each category have been formulated and supported with corresponding administrative regulations and local regulations, forming a legal system that is internally scientific, well-coordinated and unified. The formation of the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics is an important milestone in the development of China's human rights cause, and it ensures that the country's human rights protection is done within the framework of the law. In recent years, the state has paid great attention to proceeding from the requirement of protecting human rights to amend relevant laws and regulations. In 2012 "respecting and protecting human rights" was added to the newly amended Criminal Procedure Law and attention was paid to see it that the spirit of this clause was implemented in amendments and revisions made in the clauses regarding evidence, defense, compulsory and investigatory measures, review and prosecution, trial and execution, as well as newly added stipulations. This is a major progress in China's human rights cause, and of great significance in punishing crimes, protecting the people and safeguarding the citizens' litigation and other lawful rights. The 2012 amended Civil Procedure Law offers further protection to the litigation rights of parties to a lawsuit, and improves such procedures as prosecution and handling, preparation for trial, summary, trial supervision, execution of sentence, preservation, evidence and open documents of judgment. It also adds the system of

public interest litigation and the remedial procedure for the infringed parties indirectly related to a current case.

The Chinese people effectively exercise the state power through people's congresses at all levels. The system of people's congress is a fundamental political system of China. It is via the National People's Congress (NPC) and local people's congresses at different levels that the Chinese people are involved in managing state affairs and exercising the state power. The people's congresses exercise such functions and powers as legislation, supervision, decision-making, appointment and removal. Since 2010 the NPC and its Standing Committee have enacted and amended 45 laws, including the Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure Law, Electoral Law of the People's Republic of China on the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses, Law of the People's Republic of China on Deputies to the National People's Congress and Deputies to Local People's Congresses, State Compensation Law, Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees, and Administrative Compulsion Law, further improving the country's legal system for protecting human rights. In March 2010 the NPC approved the decision to amend the Electoral Law of the People's Republic of China on the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses, stipulating that the same percentage of deputies be elected in both urban and rural areas to the people's congresses to ensure that they are as widely representative as possible. This measure has further improved the electoral system, making it give better expression to equality among the people, between regions and among ethnic groups. China's legislature ensures the public's wide participation in legislation through multiple forms, such as releasing the draft of a law and holding hearings, demonstration meetings and symposiums. In 2011 when the Law of Personal Income Tax was being amended, China's legislature made the draft amendment to the public and sought the people's opinions. In just a little more than a month, a total of 230,000 opinions were collected. Of the people who expressed their opinions via the Internet, 83 percent said that they hoped to see the tax exemption threshold further raised appropriately on the basis of the initial plan. The NPC Standing Committee revised the draft by increasing the monthly tax exemption threshold from 2,000 yuan to 3,500 yuan. Since 2010 the NPC and its Standing Committee have intensified their supervisory efforts and enhanced the pertinency and effectiveness of such supervision. Since 2010 the NPC Standing Committee has launched 13 rounds of supervision over law enforcement, and reviewed 31 work reports on special topics from the State Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and made nine inquiries over specific topics.

Consultative democracy enables citizens to have more extensive rights in the management of state affairs. Socialist consultative democracy is an important form of democracy for the Chinese people. In recent years, China has continued to improve the consultative democracy and its work mechanisms, promoting its extensive, multi-level and institutionalized development. Through various channels, the CPC and the Chinese government conduct extensive consultation to pool wisdoms of the people over major issues in economic and social development and problems of immediate concern to the people's interests. Efforts are being made to adhere to and improve the CPC-led multi-party cooperative and political consultative system, and give full play to the people's political consultative conferences as an important channel of consultative democracy, incorporating political consultation into the decision-making procedure and making consultation an important part of decision-making. From 2008 to 2012, the 11th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) launched more than 420 consultative activities. Since 2010 the CPPCC National Committee has received 16,743 proposals, among which 882 came from the central committees of non-Communist parties and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce; the CPPCC National Committee has held six standing committee meetings and a number of consultative meetings on special topics, and went on 296 investigation tours. Political consultation with non-Communist parties is being constantly strengthened. Before making any major decisions, the CPC Central Committee invites major leaders of non-Communist parties and representatives of personages without party affiliation to democratic consultative meetings, small heart-to-heart meetings, or symposiums, giving them a briefing, listening to their opinions and discussing state affairs together with them. The CPPCC National Committee conducts investigations and research on the most specific problems of the utmost and immediate concern to the people. Its proposals on protecting the legitimate rights and interests of migrant workers, people left behind in the countryside as caretakers, the disabled, and employees of reorganized state-owned enterprises go a long way to promoting the people's livelihood. The CPPCC National Committee has made follow-up investigations on the poverty-reduction work in the Wuling mountains and some other regions that suffer from abject poverty, and then proposed increasing financial input in these regions' rural infrastructure, establishing and improving such mechanisms as capital input, ecological compensation and regional cooperation. These proposals were highly valued and adopted by the CPC Central Committee. Their proposals also played an important role in helping formulate and release the

Regional Development and Poverty-reduction Planning for the Wuling Mountainous Area.

Full guarantees are given to ethnic autonomous areas to exercise autonomy. Regional ethnic autonomy is one of the basic political systems of China and also the basic policy for settlement of domestic ethnic issues. Ethnic autonomous regions have been basically established in areas where people of ethnic minority groups live in compact communities. In recent years, the Chinese government has made unswerving efforts to continuously adhere to and improve this basic system, adopt effective measures to respect and protect the right of the organs of self-government in ethnic autonomous areas to exercise autonomy, and take into full consideration the realities of the ethnic minority groups and ethnic autonomous areas when formulating policies. Earnest studies have been made on new problems arising in the implementation of the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy. In accordance with provisions of this law, the state loses no time in formulating supporting laws, regulations, measures and methods and formulating or revising autonomy-related regulations and other special regulations, thus gradually bringing into place a complete system of laws and regulations concerning ethnic affairs with Chinese characteristics. By intensifying inspection and supervision over the implementation of the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy and targeted studies on and settlement of difficult issues and other outstanding problems of common concern to officials and people of various ethnic minority groups, the real virtues of the system of regional ethnic autonomy have been brought into full play. At present, all the 55 ethnic minority groups have deputies to the National People's Congress and members to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. An ethnic group having a population over one million has members on the NPC Standing Committee. Meanwhile, proactive efforts are made to train officials of ethnic minority origin and appoint them to the right posts. The central and local organs of state power as well as administrative, judicial and procuratorial organs have certain percentages of officials of ethnic minority origins. The chairpersons or vice-chairpersons of the standing committees of the people's congresses of all 155 areas where regional ethnic autonomy is exercised, as well as the heads of government of autonomous regions, prefectures, counties or banners are citizens of the ethnic group or groups exercising regional autonomy in the areas concerned.

Democracy building at the grassroots level further expands citizens' right to participate. Democracy at the grassroots level is an effective form for people to be masters of the country. It ensures the extensive and direct participation of all citizens in various social affairs via grassroots democracy mainly in the forms of

villagers' self-government in rural areas, community residents' self-government in urban areas and congresses of workers and staff in enterprises and public institutions. Elections of rural villagers' committees and urban community residents' committees have been institutionalized and standardized and conducted in line with established procedures. In October 2010 the NPC Standing Committee amended the Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees, further improving and standardizing the election and removal procedures for their members. By the end of 2012, eight or nine rounds of elections for new rural villagers' committees had been held in most of the country's provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government. Direct elections had been held for over 98 percent of the villagers' committees across the country, with villagers' participation reaching 95 percent. The proportion of female members in the villagers' committees increased slightly. Over 95 percent of villages had made their village affairs transparent; more than 90 percent of the counties had drawn up a list of village affairs that must be made known to all the villagers; and 91 percent of villages had set up bulletins where village affairs were made known to the public. Each year across the country about 1.7 million village officials report their performance to their fellow-villagers; more than 230,000 village officials have been subjected to audit of economic accountability; and nearly 2.09 million village officials have their performance commented by their fellow-villagers. Between 2010 and 2012, another round of elections for community residents' committees were carried out in most communities of Chinese cities, with the rate of direct elections topping 30 percent. The proportion of female members on urban community residents' committees reached 49.62 percent. Through such forms as consultation and democratic hearing at the residents' meetings, every member of a community is ensured to participate in public affairs and democratic decision-making on an equal footing.

Practical measures are taken to ensure citizens' right to know and right to be heard. With the deepening of reform and the rapid development of information technology, the Chinese people's scope of the right to know has been expanded, and so has the room for them to express their will. With the Regulations on Government Information Disclosure, the country's system for government information disclosure has basically taken shape. In 2003 China began to implement a system of announcement for audit results, and since 2010 governments at all levels have promoted the work of fiscal budget disclosure. In 2012 a total of 97 departments of central government publicly disclosed their budgets, 98 made public their final accounts, and 98 disclosed their expenses on official receptions, vehicles and overseas trips. In 2011 the various central government organs and departments took

the initiative to disclose more than 1.49 million pieces of government information; the government organs of the 31 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government) made public over 28.85 million pieces of government information. In 2011 the various central government organs and departments handled more than 3,000 applications requesting disclosure of relevant government information, and over 70 percent of these applications were granted in accordance with relevant regulations. And the government organs of the 31 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government) handled in total more than 1.3 million applications from the public requesting the disclosure of related government information, and of these applications over 85 percent were granted in accordance with relevant regulations. The CPC continues to press ahead with making Party affairs public, and has established a spokesperson system for Party committees. In 2012 the Party and government agencies above the provincial level held in total more than 2,200 press conferences. Meanwhile, the Internet has become an important channel for citizens to exercise their rights to know, participate, be heard and supervise, as well as an important means for the government to get to know the public's opinions. To safeguard online information security and protect the legitimate rights and interests of the citizens, legal persons and other organizations, the NPC Standing Committee approved the Decision on Strengthening Online Information Protection in December 2012. By the end of 2012, microblog users in China reached 309 million. According to a survey of China's top ten websites, each day more than three million forum messages and news comments are posted online, while over 200 million messages are posted and forwarded by microbloggers. The people's governments at all levels take concrete measures to implement the Regulations on Petition Through Letters and Visits, continuing to keep unblocked the channels of complaint through letters and visits and standardize such channels, handling such letters and visits conscientiously, and promoting and standardizing the use of green post, online complaint letters and visits, telephone hotlines, the handling of complaint visits via video, and complaint letters and visits handled by proxy, in order to guarantee and protect the people's right of expression. The construction and promotion of a national information system for complaint letters and visits are to be strengthened; the building of a national complaint-handling center is to be accelerated; and a comprehensive platform for rapidly and effectively handling people's complaints is to be built.

New progress is made in human rights protection in the judicial field. To effectively enforce the amended Criminal Procedure Law, the Supreme People's Court and the

Supreme People's Procuratorate have jointly issued the Rules on Several Issues Concerning the Enforcement of the Criminal Procedure Law; the Supreme People's Court has worked out the Interpretation Concerning the Application of the Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China; the Supreme People's Procuratorate has promulgated the revised Rules of Criminal Procedure for the People's Procuratorates (Trial); the Ministry of Public Security has fully amended the Rules of Procedure for Public Security Organs to Handle Criminal Cases. The people's procuratorates have continuously strengthened legal supervision over litigation activities. In 2012 the people's procuratorates gave suggestions for correction on law violations in the investigation of 55,582 cases, lodged 6,196 protests against criminal verdicts that they deemed to be wrong, and put forward suggestions for correction on law violations in criminal proceedings in 11,799 cases. China enforces strict controls over and prudently applies the death penalty. In February 2011 the NPC Standing Committee examined and approved Amendment VIII of the Criminal Law, which removed death penalty from 13 economic and nonviolent crimes, thus reducing the death penalty charges by nearly one fifth. The Amendment also adopted a restrictive regulation for the application of death penalty to offenders aged 75 or above at the time of the trial. In June 2010 the Supreme People's Court and Supreme People's Procuratorate jointly issued the Rules for Reviewing and Judging the Evidence in Handling Death Penalty Cases, adopting more rigorous standards for reviewing and judging the evidence in death penalty cases. The amended Criminal Procedure Law requires that all trials of second instance for death penalty cases be held in public and the supervision over the review of death sentences be tightened. Efforts are made to enlarge the scope of judicial openness and intensify legal supervision. In October 2010 the Supreme People's Court issued the Decision on Designating Model Courts of Open Judicial Practice, which designated 200 courts throughout the country in two batches as "model courts of open judicial practice" and released the criteria for such model courts. In October 2012 the Ministry of Public Security promulgated the Rules for Open Law Enforcement by Public Security Organs, which regularizes in a comprehensive way the open law enforcement by the public security organs, opens up the channels and enriches the ways for open law enforcement.

China protects the rights of detainees. In 2011 the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Health jointly issued the Basic Standards for Establishment of Clinics in Detention Centers to improve the accommodation, living and medical conditions of detainees. By the end of 2012, a detainee security risk assessment and ranking mechanism had been established in 2,391 detention centers, or 89.1 percent of the

national total; psychological counseling rooms for detainees had been established in 1,774 detention centers, or 66.1 percent of the national total; two-way online video meetings for inmates had been established in 1,893 detention centers, or 70.5 percent of the national total; and a complaints handling mechanism had been set up in 2,532 detention centers, or 94.3 percent of the national total. This mechanism had been employed in handling 2,633 complaints from the detainees. In addition, guest supervisors had been hired in 2,664 detention centers, or 99.2 percent of the total. In 2012 the procuratorates raised 32,165 suggestions for correction on law-breaking activities in penalty execution and in custody. The systems of lawyers and legal assistance keep improving. The amended Criminal Procedure Law clearly defines the role of lawyer as defender in litigation and requires that in the course of the investigation, prosecution and trial, if there is a lawyer, his or her advice should be sought and attached to the case files. This requirement has enlarged the scope of application of legal assistance to criminal proceedings. After the revision, legal assistance is offered not only at the trial stage but is extended to all the processes of investigation, prosecution and trial, and to more recipients. In 2012 more than 2.3 million lawsuits and 280,000 legal assistance cases were handled by lawyers acting on behalf of the parties concerned. In 2012 more than one million legal assistance cases were handled in China, and 5.68 million people received legal counseling, up 56.4 percent and 17.1 percent, respectively as compared to 2009.

III. Protection of Human Rights in Cultural Services

To fully ensure its citizens' right to cultural services is an important component of China's human rights development. In recent years, China has continued to deepen reform of the cultural system, liberating and developing cultural productivity to inspire cultural creativity in the whole nation. People are enjoying richer cultural entertainments and new development has been made to ensure the citizens' basic access to cultural services. Unprecedented progress has been made in protecting the Chinese people's right to enjoy cultural achievements, to participate in cultural activities and the management of cultural affairs, to cultural creation and to legal protection of their cultural property.

A service system to ensure Chinese citizens' cultural rights has been basically established. The state has improved the network of public cultural facilities step by step, and has basically attained the goal of having "libraries and cultural centers in counties and cultural stations in townships." By the end of 2012, there were 2,089 art performance troupes, 2,838 museums, 2,975 public libraries, 3,286 cultural

centers and 34,139 township cultural stations throughout China. A service network covering both urban and rural areas powered by a culture and information resource-sharing program has been developed. By May 2012 China had built one service center at the national level, 33 sub-centers at the provincial level, 2,840 branches at the county-level, 28,595 service stations at the township level, and 602,000 service outlets at the village level. The total volume of digital resources had reached 136.4 trillion bytes, providing services to more than 1.2 billion persons accumulatively. The digital library program has been carried out in 33 libraries at the provincial level and 185 libraries at the prefectural (city) level, and the total volume of digital resources has reached 560 trillion bytes. By the end of 2012, China had 2,579 radio and television broadcasting stations of various sizes. The total length of the cable TV network measured more than 3.3 million km, providing services to 214 million cable TV users (households) and 143 million cable digital TV users. About 97.5 percent of China's population had access to radio service, and the figure was 98.2 percent for access to television programs. In 2012 the country's total funds for culture, sports and media services provided by the public finances reached 225.145 billion yuan, an increase of 85.838 billion yuan as compared to 2009; and the floorage of cultural facilities per 10,000 people reached 221.2 square meters. By providing radio and television services to every village with more than 20 households and setting up libraries for farmers, the state has been working hard to meet the cultural needs of people in rural and remote areas. Currently, all China's administrative villages and 95 percent of villages with more than 20 households have access to telephone service. All townships have adequate infrastructure for Internet connection, and all townships and 88 percent of administrative villages have broadband Internet connection. By August 2012, the state had spent more than 18 billion yuan on the building of over 600,000 farmers' libraries under unified standards, equipping these libraries with 940 million copies of books, 540 million copies of newspapers and periodicals, 120 million audio-visual products and electronic publications, and over 600,000 sets of film and television projection equipment and reading apparatus. New achievements have been made in the fitness-for-all endeavor. The State Council issued the National Fitness Program (2011-2015). By the end of 2012, China had more than one million sports venues of various types, and the state had completed the building of 348,000 fitness stations for farmers and 261,000 outdoor fitness tracks.

New cultural products have been created to meet the citizens' cultural needs. To quicken the development of the culture industry and create more popular cultural products the people like, the CPC Central Committee adopted the Decision on Major

Issues Pertaining to Deepening the Reform of the Cultural System and Pressing Ahead for the Great Development and Prosperity of Socialist Culture. The Chinese government also released the Outline of the National Cultural Reform and Development Program during the 12th Five-Year Plan Period, Plan to Reinvigorate the Culture Industry, and other policies and measures related to cultural development, as part of the efforts to vigorously promote cultural progress and innovation. Currently, a framework of the culture industry has been basically developed, covering 11 culture industries such as entertainment, animation, games and digital culture. In 2011 the added value of China's culture and related industries grew 21.96 percent over the previous year to reach 1.3479 trillion yuan, accounting for 2.85 percent of the country's GDP during the same period. In 2012 China produced a total of 47.6 billion copies of newspapers, 3.4 billion copies of periodicals and 8.1 billion copies of books, and the total volume of electronic publications and the total output value of the printing industry ranked second and third in the world, respectively. In 2012 the country made 745 feature films and 148 other films, including popular science films, documentaries, animated cartoons and special-purpose films. By 2011 a total of 1,540,400 arts performances had been presented by various performance troupes. The value of China's entertainment market reached 56.618 billion yuan, and the total transactions on the art market were worth 195.9 billion yuan. There were 146,000 Internet cafes across the country and 452 companies doing Internet music business, and the market for online games had generated 46.85 billion yuan in revenue. Since the state launched the project to promote quality stage art works in 2002, the country has seen the staging of 100 leading plays and operas and over 200 other quality plays and operas in the theater. The national project for the creation of fine art works on major historical themes has brought about 104 pieces of top-notch artwork. Fine national art traditions have been preserved and promoted with the state making efforts to preserve, protect and support the art of Kunqu Opera, key national troupes of Peking Opera and Chinese music. The government has held the China Art Festival and Excellent Repertoire Awards, as well as staged prize-winning performances by private art troupes and quality modern drama plays. The state continues with the activities of "taking cultural services to the countryside" and "introducing classic art to campuses."

Public cultural services have been made more equitable. The state has provided extensive public cultural services to special groups, and made greater efforts to guarantee the cultural rights of migrant workers, senior citizens, minors, low-income groups, and disabled persons. The state has implemented the Promotion Program for Children's Songs, and held China Children's Choir Festival and China Choir Festival

for the Elderly, among other activities. In May 2010 the National Library of China formally opened its National Children's Library (National Children's Digital Library) to the public. In 2012 China Digital Library for Visually Impaired and China Digital Library for People with Disabilities provided barrier-free books, lectures, music and other cultural services to over a million disabled persons. The state has implemented the program to build public electronic reading rooms, and has completed the building of 28,612 such reading rooms in rural townships and urban communities to provide services to minors, senior citizens, migrant workers and other groups. In 2011 state departments concerned jointly issued the Opinions on Further Strengthening Cultural Services for Migrant Workers, which set the guidelines for migrant workers' cultural services relying mainly on the public cultural service system, and boosted the forming of a mechanism where the government assumes the leading role, enterprises contribute by joint development, and the whole society takes part. From 2010 the Ministry of Culture has been actively promoting trips by volunteers to bring cultural services to border areas. Over the past three years, more than 20 provinces (municipalities) and public institutions in China's more developed areas have organized 50 volunteers' groups comprising over 2,000 cultural volunteers to stage 450 art performances in 12 border provinces and autonomous regions inhabited by ethnic minorities in compact communities and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, provide more than 2,000 hours of professional training and hold a total of 600 days of cultural exhibitions, benefiting several hundred thousand people. Efforts have also been made to promote the adding of subtitles and sign language to TV programs and provide barrier-free live broadcasting service online with words and videos of major events, benefiting 70,000 people with hearing impairment. In 2012 the Ministry of Culture and the Office of Cultural and Ethical Promotion of the CPC Central Committee jointly released the Opinions on Carrying out Extensive Community-based Voluntary Cultural Services, which proposed to extensively carry out voluntary cultural services on the basis of public cultural facilities, cultural projects benefiting the people, major festivals and memorial days, and pair-up assistance between more developed areas and border areas.

The citizens' rights to the freedom of religious belief are protected. China upholds the policy of freedom of religious belief, and ensures its citizens' freedom of religious belief as an important part of their human rights. The Chinese government exercises administration over religious affairs by law, and protects the legitimate rights and interests of religious groups. It strives to promote religious harmony, and gives play to the active roles of religious personages and common believers in promoting

economic and social development. Based on the Regulations on Religious Affairs, the State Administration of Religious Affairs has enacted nine supporting regulations. The Chinese government proactively promotes the administration by law in the religious sector and strives to regulate its administrative power in this regard. In 2012 China canceled administrative approval on three items related to religious affairs and made adjustment to three other issues, and amended the Enforcement Regulations on Certain Issues Requiring Administrative Approval Regarding Religious Affairs. The state continues to help national religious organizations and religious institutions improve their working and teaching conditions. It properly handles social security insurance for religious staff and ensures that those entitled to social security get covered. The state handles, in accordance with the law, cases which hurt the feelings of religious believers, properly deals with the demolition of housing belonging to religious organizations and houses for holding religious activities in urban construction, and attaches importance to the protection of religious relics and distinctive religious cultural heritage. Currently, China has approximately 360,000 religious staff and 140,000 registered venues for religious activities that are open to the public, basically satisfying the needs of religious believers. There are in total 5,500 religious organizations carrying out their respective activities in an orderly manner. The state has approved the restoration and building of 97 religious institutions, and a relatively complete institution-based religious education system has been put in place. China supports the production and circulation of religious classics, periodicals and other publications according to law. By 2012 more than 100 million copies of the Bible had been printed in China, making it among the few countries in the world with the largest print-run of the Bible. The Chinese government supports exchanges in the field of religion: China hosted the International Daoism Forum in Hunan in October 2011 and the Third World Buddhism Forum in Hong Kong in April 2012.

The cultural rights of ethnic minority groups are protected. The state formulated and implemented the 12th Five-year Plan for Development of Undertakings Related to Ethnic Minority Groups. China's 55 ethnic minority groups have 515 of their representative cultural items included in the national intangible cultural heritage list, and have 524 individuals ranked as successors of their intangible cultural heritages. Five experimental zones on the protection of ethnic minority cultural ecology have been established, and 18 ethnic minority cultural items have been included in the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding of the UNESCO. By May 2012 there were 73 radio broadcasting stations in ethnic autonomous areas, airing

441 programs including 105 programs broadcast in local ethnic languages; and there were 90 television stations broadcasting 489 programs, including 100 in local ethnic languages. By the end of 2011 books were published in 23 ethnic minority languages nationwide. There were also 84 newspapers and 223 periodicals published in ethnic languages. A total of 50,834 cultural institutes of various types were operating in ethnic autonomous areas, including 653 libraries, 784 cultural centers, 8,153 cultural stations and 385 museums. The state holds national art shows and national sports events of the ethnic minority groups. Since 2009 China's central finance has invested a total of 510 million yuan in implementing the program for protecting and developing ethnic minority villages with unique characteristics, and pilot runs of the program have been initiated in 600 villages in 28 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government. The state pays special attention to the protection of ethnic minority languages. China National Radio and local radio stations broadcast in 21 ethnic languages on a daily basis. Bilingual teaching is done in the classroom in more than 10,000 schools around the country, using 29 languages of 21 ethnic groups together with mandarin, offering bilingual instruction to over six million students. In 2011, 3,665 titles of ethnic language textbooks were published, with a total print-run of over 47,030,000 copies.

Important progress has been witnessed in the protection and inheritance of cultural heritages. In 2011 the NPC Standing Committee enacted the Intangible Cultural Heritage Law, which provides a legal basis for the inheritance and promotion of China's fine traditional culture by legalizing the protection, preservation, inheritance and transmission of the country's intangible cultural heritages. In 2011 the state completed the third national survey of cultural relics, and verified and registered about 770,000 immovable cultural relics. The State Council announced 2,352 key national cultural relic protection units in six batches, including 119 historical cities and 350 towns and villages of historical and cultural value. It also announced 1,219 items of the state-class intangible cultural heritage list in three batches. The Ministry of Culture named 1,986 representative inheritors of national cultural heritages in four batches, and set up 15 national experimental zones for the protection of cultural ecology. By the end of 2012 China had altogether 41 world heritage sites, ranking third in the world. Twenty-nine of the country's intangible cultural heritages were included in the UNESCO's Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, seven were included in the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and one was included in the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices.

IV. Protection of Human Rights in Social Development

In recent years, China has kept strengthening its social development, effectively solving the most practical problems of the utmost and immediate concern to the people, and safeguarding their fundamental interests. People's rights to social security, health and education are thus better protected. In social development, the focus of attention has been placed on protecting and improving the people's livelihood, while further efforts have been made to improve the basic public services system, which has resulted in marked improvement in the basic public services level and equal access to such services, rapid progress of education, significant advance in social security, basic realization of universal coverage of medical care, accelerated construction of affordable housing, and a more harmonious and stable society.

The coverage of social insurance has been widened. The state has enacted the Social Insurance Law, and revised the Regulations on Work-related Injury Insurance. China has realized full coverage of basic old-age insurance and basic medical care for both urban and rural residents. Old-age insurance of various types now covers 790 million people, with 130.75 million senior urban and rural residents receiving pensions on a monthly basis. On the average, basic old-age pension for each enterprise retiree has been raised from 700 yuan in 2004 to 1,721 yuan per month now. Medical insurance of various types covers over 1.3 billion persons, among whom over 800 million have access to the new rural cooperative medical insurance. Now 189.93 million people have access to national work-related injury insurance, an increase of 12.97 million people as compared with 2011, among whom 71.73 million people are migrant workers. In addition, 152.25 million people are covered by unemployment insurance, an increase of 9.08 million people over 2011, and 154.45 million people are covered by maternity insurance, an increase of 15.53 million people over 2011. China has established a comprehensive system of pooling funds for old-age insurance at the provincial level, implemented the transfer of basic pension accounts across provinces, basically realizing the orderly transfer of pension accounts for all that have participated in basic old-age insurance, including migrant workers. A linkage mechanism has also been established between the standard of unemployment insurance allowances and the inflation level. The government subsidies for the new rural cooperative medical system and basic medical insurance for urban residents have been raised from 20 yuan and 40 yuan a year per person at the beginning to 240 yuan in 2012. The medical treatment cost of inpatients covered by urban employees' medical insurance, urban residents' medical insurance and the new rural cooperative medical insurance has been raised to over 75 percent, over 70 percent

and around 75 percent, respectively, with the payment cap raised to over six times of a local employee's average annual wage, over six times of a local resident's per-capita disposable income and over eight times of the average annual per-capita net income of farmers, and no less than 60,000 yuan, covering both outpatient and inpatient services. In 2012 while introducing pilot medical care programs for eight serious diseases such as uremia and childhood leukemia, the state also listed 12 other serious diseases such as lung cancer, esophagus cancer and gastric cancer into the pilot medical care programs, with the maximum reimbursement rate reaching 90 percent.

Citizens' right to social assistance is better protected. In terms of providing subsistence allowances, the state has issued a number of regulatory documents such as the Opinions of the State Council on Further Strengthening and Improving Work in Relation to Subsistence Allowances, and Measures for Examination and Approval of Subsistence Allowances (Trial). In 2012 the central finance appropriated 87.5 billion yuan as funds for the urban and rural subsistence allowances, an increase of 16.8 percent over 2011. By the end of 2012, there were altogether 21.425 million urban recipients and 53.41 million rural recipients of subsistence allowances. The average payment for urban and rural recipients is 330 yuan per person per month and 2,068 yuan per person per year, up 31.5 percent and 47.3 percent, respectively, over 2010. There were altogether 5.459 million rural people enjoying the five guarantees (food, clothing, medical care, housing and burial expenses) across the country, with those living in nursing homes receiving an average of 4,061 yuan per person per year, and those living on their own an average of 3,008 yuan per person per year, up 37.6 percent and 43.1 percent, respectively, over 2010. In terms of natural disaster relief, the state has implemented the Regulations on Natural Disaster Relief and National Emergency Plan for Natural Disaster Relief, and promulgated the Opinions on Strengthening Social and Psychological Assistance in the Wake of Natural Disasters. In 2012 the state allocated from the central budget 11.6 billion yuan for natural disaster relief and aid, up 34.3 percent over 2011, benefiting 78 million victims and effectively ensuring their necessities of life. In terms of medical aid, the state formulated the Opinions on Pilot Programs of Medical Aid for Major and Serious Diseases, and carried out the program in 273 pilot areas across the country. In 2012 the state earmarked 22.1 billion yuan for providing medical aid to 91.34 million people nationwide. In terms of aid to vagrants and beggars, the state promulgated the Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Assistance and Protection for Vagrant Minors, and embarked on a program of "sending vagrant children back home." By 2012 there were altogether 1,788 aid agencies (aid and relief centers, and aid and

protection centers for vagrant minors) all over the country. From 2010 to 2011, these agencies offered aid to 4,128,709 vagrants and beggars.

Citizens' right to health is better protected. China has established a medical care system that covers both urban and rural areas, which comprises the public health service system, the medical service system, the medical security system and the drug supply system. By the end of 2012 there were 950,000 medical institutions, 6.686 million medical workers and 2.619 million certificated (assistant) doctors, an average of 1.92 doctors for every 1,000 people. There were 2.5 million registered nurses - or 1.83 for every 1,000 people. There were 5.73 million beds in medical institutions - or 4.19 beds for every 1,000 people. In 2010 the average life expectancy of the Chinese people reached 74.8 years. The proportion of personal medical expenses paid in cash declined from 57.7 percent in 2002 to 34.8 percent in 2011. Marked improvement has been witnessed in equal access to basic public health services. The per-capita allowance for basic public health services was raised from 15 yuan in 2009 to 25 yuan in 2012. The state provides 41 types of basic public health services in ten categories gratis to all residents. In 2011 the national vaccination rate under the state immunization program reached 90 percent and higher, and the hospitalized delivery rate stood at 98.7 percent. In 2012 the NPC Standing Committee enacted the Law on Mental Health, aiming to protect the legal rights and interests of people with mental disorders, develop mental health services, ensure the mentally-ill to have access to medical treatment and promote citizens' mental health. China has formulated the Working Plan for the Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Diseases (2012-2015) and a series of other policy documents and guidelines on the prevention and treatment of such diseases. Patients infected with major infectious diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, schistosomiasis, echinococcosis, leprosy and malaria can get free medication. China has taken the lead in eliminating filariasis among 83 countries and regions where it is endemic. Since 2010 the state has poured 53.04 billion yuan into strengthening the building of a grass-roots medical health service system. By 2012 there were 912,000 grassroots medical and health care institutions, which included 8,176 community health service centers, 25,000 community health service stations, 37,000 town and township hospitals and 653,000 village clinics, with a total of 1.234 million beds. The state has also carried out a project to send 10,000 doctors to support rural medical work. From 2009 to 2011 over 1,100 Grade-A hospitals in cities gave assistance to 955 county hospitals, and medical institutions above Grade B in cities in central and western China gave assistance to over 3,600 town and township hospitals every year. By the end of 2012 the basic drug system had gained a full coverage, with all grassroots government-run medical and health

institutions supplying essential medicines without adding a surcharge for the resale of the drugs. This system is now being extended to the village clinics and non-government medical and health institutions.

Citizens' right to education is further protected. The state has promulgated the Outline of the State Medium- and Long-term Program on Education Reform and Development (2010-2020). Since 2010 the government spending on education has been increasing rapidly. The expenditure from public finance on education increased from 1.255 trillion yuan in 2010 to 2.1165 trillion yuan in 2012. The newly added educational expenditure goes mainly to the rural areas, with 246.5 billion yuan for rural compulsory education from the central budget. The state has successively put into force a program to ensure safety of all primary and secondary school buildings across the country and a program to upgrade rural schools with poor compulsory education conditions. The state has put in place a system of assistance to students with financial difficulties, covering every schooling stage from preschool to postgraduate education, with subsidies close to 100 billion yuan every year, benefiting about 80 million students. By 2012 about 120 million rural students receiving compulsory education benefited from exemption of all tuition and miscellaneous fees as well as free textbooks, and over 13 million rural boarders from poor families received subsidies. The state has also launched a nutrition-improvement plan for rural students receiving compulsory education. By the end of 2012 the central finance allocated a special fund of 19.1 billion yuan for the plan, benefiting about 30 million students. Since 2010 the central government has invested a total of 29.7 billion yuan to support more than 10,000 schools in building or renovating facilities such as student dormitories and dining halls. The nine-year compulsory education has been implemented in all counties in China, covering all the population and benefiting 160 million students. In 2012 the number of students graduating from primary and middle schools reached 91.8 percent of the total enrollment, and the average years of schooling for people above 15 reached over nine years, surpassing the world average level; the gross enrollment ratio of senior high schools was 85 percent, equivalent to the average level of developed countries; and the higher education gross enrollment ratio was 30 percent, with the on-campus student population reaching 33.2521 million, ranking first in the world. The number of students applying for admission into universities and colleges was 9.22 million and 6.91 million were admitted, with the national average admission rate standing at 75 percent. There are altogether 139,900 non-state-run schools (educational institutions) at different levels, with an on-campus student population of 39.1101 million. There are 13.9387 million children of rural migrant workers receiving

compulsory education in cities, accounting for 9.7 percent of all the students who are receiving compulsory education, and 80.2 percent of them attend government-run schools. Different kinds of complete educational systems from preschool education to higher education have been established in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities in compact communities, and the schooling years of ethnic minorities have been markedly increased. By the end of 2012, the total number of on-campus ethnic-minority students at all levels had reached 23.8448 million, 9.27 percent of the national student population. There are 15.1546 million ethnic-minority students receiving compulsory education, with those receiving secondary education accounting for 9.39 percent of the national total and those receiving elementary education accounting for 10.7 percent of the national total.

Children and women's rights are better protected. Since 2010 the state has constantly improved laws and policies on the protection of children and women's rights. The newly amended Electoral Law of the People's Republic of China on the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses, Organizational Law of Villagers' Committees, Regulations Concerning the Labor Protection of Female Staff and Workers and the newly formulated Social Insurance Law all pay high attention to the increase of female representativeness in politics, the promotion of maternity insurance and the creation of a safe and healthy working environment for female employees. The outline of the 12th Five-year Plan specially added two sections, i.e., "promoting women's development in an all-round way" and "giving priority to children's development." In 2011 the Chinese government issued the Outline Program for the Development of Chinese Women (2011-2020) and Outline Program for the Development of Children (2011-2020), to further implement the basic national policy of equality between men and women, and the principle of giving priority to children. The implementation of the National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking of Women and Children (2008-2012) and the Opinions on Punishing the Crimes of Abducting and Trafficking in Women and Children further strengthened the legal protection of women and children's rights. Women's health keeps improving and their average life expectancy has been further extended. In 2010 the average life expectancy of women was 77.37 years, 4.99 years longer than men, and an increase of 4.04 years over that of 2000. Women have more job opportunities. In 2011 the number of women who were employed reached 351.53 million across the country, and over the years women account for about 46 percent of all employees. Generally, women are having wider access to social security, and the coverage of maternity insurance for urban female workers is 95 percent. Women's representativeness in politics is increasing, and their awareness of social

participation is growing. At the end of 2011, there were females in 83.9 percent, 86.5 percent and 89.8 percent of the leading bodies at the provincial, city (prefectural) and county levels, respectively. Children's health is also improving. The infant mortality and mortality of children under five years old both keep declining. In 2012 the infant mortality was 1.03%, and the mortality of children under five years old was 1.32%, respectively, realizing one of the UN Millennium Development Goals ahead of schedule. The state is implementing an immunization program, and the free vaccination has been expanded from seven diseases prevented by five vaccines to 15 diseases prevented by 14 vaccines. Children's right to education is fully guaranteed. In 2011 the gross enrollment rate of kindergartens, net enrollment rate of elementary schools and gross enrollment rate of middle schools were 62.3 percent, 99.8 percent and 100.1 percent, respectively. The right of children with migrant families and disabled children to education is basically protected. The rights of vulnerable groups of children such as orphans, impoverished children, waifs and HIV-infected children are basically protected, and they are getting more care and assistance.

Social security and service system for the disabled keeps improving. In March 2010 the General Office of the State Council forwarded the Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Building of a Social Security and Service System for the Disabled. The development fund for the disabled earmarked by the central budget during the 12th Five-year Plan period is about four times that in the 11th Five-year Plan period. In 2012 the state carried out community-based rehabilitation services in 2,794 counties and districts nationwide, and helped 7.602 million disabled people become rehabilitated to various degrees through the implementation of key rehabilitation programs; 15,000 disabled children received preschool education funds from central and local governments; the state offered vocational training for 299,000 disabled people in cities and towns, and subsidized 141,000 impoverished households with at least one disabled member each to build barrier-free facilities. Legal aid and relief agencies at different levels provided legal services for 100,000 disabled people, and 2.391 million disabled people from urban areas and 363,000 disabled people from rural areas had been granted life allowances and home-care subsidies steadily. The state had granted fuel subsidies for the motor wheelchairs of 554,000 disabled people. By the end of 2012, some 10.705 million disabled people had been deemed eligible for subsistence allowances, with the assistance level for their families improving. Some 2.809 million disabled workers in towns and cities had been covered by various social insurance policies. Nationwide, 7,275 boarding homes and day-care centers for the disabled have been set up, providing services for 747,000

disabled people. Various activities such as culture weeks, fitness weeks and community culture shows have been organized for the disabled to enrich their cultural and sports lives. Social resources are pooled to create barrier-free standards for information accessibility. A website to serve the disabled (www.cdpsn.org.cn) provides barrier-free online services for them to search for information on news, employment, rehabilitation, assistance, etc.

Social organizations are playing a positive role in promoting the cause of human rights in China. In recent years social organizations are developing in a healthy and orderly way, demonstrating their further positive role in safeguarding and promoting the cause of human rights. By the end of 2012, there were 492,000 social organizations registered in accordance with the law, among which 268,000 were social groups, 221,000 were NGOs and 2,961 were foundations. The number of social organizations across the country had increased by 14.2 percent from 431,000 at the end of 2009; and the number of foundations had increased by 60.7 percent from 1,843 in 2009. The number of social organizations for every 10,000 people has increased from 3.2 in 2009 to 3.7 now. Representatives of national associations in China have taken leading posts in 152 international organizations, and became heads of special committees of 25 international organizations and directors of 92 international organizations. Making full use of their advantages, these social organizations are playing an important role in education, science and technology, culture, public health, social management, social welfare and charity work. According to incomplete statistics, over 60,000 industry associations nationwide have more than 20 million members (including individual business owners), 447,364 grassroots senior citizens associations cover the vast urban and rural communities, with 110 million members. Over 40,000 academic societies have kept regular touch with over 5 million experts and scholars, and over 40,000 rural special economic associations are responsible for contacting over 10 million households. There are over 100 million members of various professional associations. In 2012 China's social organizations attracted over 25 million volunteers to participate in charity work.

V. Protection of Human Rights in Ecological Progress

There is only one earth for human beings. Promoting ecological progress is of vital importance for humanity's future. Facing increasing resource constraints, severe environmental pollution and ecosystem degradation, China is working to raise the ecological awareness of the need to respect, accommodate and protect nature, give high priority to making ecological progress and incorporate it as one of the five main

goals for completing the building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. China is working hard to build a beautiful country and earnestly guaranteeing the citizens' environmental rights and interests.

The legal and policy framework has been established to protect citizens' environmental rights. China has adopted environmental protection as a basic national policy. Thanks to efforts made over the years, China has put in place a rather complete legal framework covering pollution control, resources conservation, and preservation of nature reserves and biodiversity. Since 2010 China has formulated a series of policy documents, including the National Plan on Environmental Protection during the 12th Five-year Plan Period, National Plan for Legislation on Environmental Protection and Formulation of Environmental Economic Policies during the 12th Five-year Plan Period, Plan on Prevention and Control of Atmospheric Pollution in Key Areas during the 12th Five-year Plan Period, Plan on National Soil Environment Protection during the 12th Five-year Plan Period, National Action Plan for Protecting China's Marine Environment from Land-based Pollution, Forestry Development Plan during the 12th Five-year Plan Period, Outline of the National Program on Forest Conservation and Utilization (2010-2020), Outline of the National Afforestation Plan (2011-2020), Comprehensive Plan for the Seven Major River Basins, Implementation Plan of the National Wetland Conservation Project during the 12th Five-year Plan Period, Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Preservation in China (2011-2030), Plan on Energy Conservation and Emission Reduction during the 12th Five-year Plan Period, and Water Function Zoning of the Major Rivers and Lakes of China. Moreover, China has also amended the Law on Water and Soil Conservation and Ambient Air Quality Standard (AAQS), and promulgated administrative regulations such as the Regulations on the Management of Ozone-depleting Substances and Regulations on the Administration of the Taihu Lake Basin. All of the above have improved China's legal system that safeguards Chinese citizens' environmental rights and interests, and helped build an eco-friendly country. The state keeps increasing its investment in environmental protection. During the 11th Five-year Plan period (2006-2010), China's fiscal investment in this sphere was 3.71 times that during the Tenth Five-year Plan period (2001-2005). In 2012 funds from the central and local coffers for environmental protection amounted to 293.2 billion yuan, an increase of 99.8 billion yuan or 51.6 percent over 2009. From 2008 to 2012 the central government earmarked a special fund of 13.5 billion yuan for rural environmental protection, supporting 26,000 villages or towns to carry out comprehensive environmental improvement and eco-friendly demonstration projects, directly benefiting 57 million rural residents.

Another special fund, totaling 7.5 billion yuan, was allocated between 2010 and 2012 to support the integrated prevention and control of heavy metal contamination in some key areas. The government appropriately handled a number of emergent environmental hazards that had serious impacts on people's health, and coped with in a positive and effective manner the secondary environmental issues in the aftermath of serious natural disasters, such as the Yushu Earthquake in Qinghai Province and the Zhouqu Mudslides in Gansu Province.

Citizens' rights to live in clean and hygienic environment have been further protected. Environmental assessment and monitoring have been further strengthened, which cover routine monitoring of environmental elements, such as surface water, air, acid deposition, impact of sand and dust storms, drinking-water source areas, offshore seas, urban noise and ecosystems, supervisory monitoring of pollution sources and early-warning monitoring of emergencies. National and local environment monitoring networks that cover all environmental elements have basically been established in China, and an environmental supervision system has been further enhanced. China has set up water resources protection bodies in its seven major river basins, established and improved the supervisory agencies of regional environmental protection and radiation safety. It has also built an early-warning system of environmental monitoring, a supervision system of environmental emergency response and law enforcement, and a nuclear and radiation safety supervision system. By the end of 2011, China had 144 environmental-assessment agencies, with one at national level, 28 at provincial level and 115 at prefectural level, employing some 2,000 professionals. Since China sent its HJ-1C satellite into space in 2012, fine particles (PM_{2.5} particles) have been included in the air quality index. China also monitors the acoustic environment in 316 cities, of which 3.5 percent are at the satisfactory level, 75.9 percent at the moderate level, 20.3 percent lightly polluted and the other 0.3 percent moderately polluted. Substantial progress has been made in urban pollution control. China's daily sewage treatment capacity increased by 46 million tons from 2008 to 2012. By the end of 2012, China had 3,340 urban sewage treatment plants, which could treat 142 million cubic meters of wastewater per day, an increase of 3.7 percent as compared with the end of the previous year. The treatment rate of domestic sewage had risen from 52 percent in 2005 to 84.9 percent in 2012. There were altogether 677 urban facilities for harmless treatment of domestic garbage in operation in China by the end of 2011, which could deal with 409,000 tons of garbage every day, and 79.84 percent of the garbage was made harmless after the treatment. Quantitative assessment has been enforced for all 661 cities in the country for comprehensive environmental

improvement, gaining satisfactory results in energy conservation and emission reduction. Since 2010 China has chosen 25 cities as pioneers for the "Electric Vehicles in Cities" project, to promote the large-scale application of hybrid, electric or fuel-cell vehicles in public transportation. Another project - "Urban LED" - advocates the use of semiconductor lighting technology in the public lighting systems of many pilot cities. Over 1.6 million LED lights have been used for the experiment so far, accumulatively saving 164 million kwh of electricity. From 2008 to 2012 China closed down many of its outdated production facilities, including iron works with a total capacity of 117 million tons, steel mills with a total capacity of 78 million tons and cement plants with a total capacity of 775 million tons. The energy consumption per unit of GDP fell by 17.2 percent in the same period, and the total chemical oxygen demand (COD) and sulfur dioxide emission decreased by 15.7 percent and 17.5 percent, respectively. China over-fulfilled its goal of closing down outdated production facilities in high-energy consumption and emission industries like iron and steel, cement and coking. During the 11th Five-year Plan period (2006-2010), the net coal consumption for thermal power generation fell by 9.5 percent, and the COD load per unit of product in the papermaking industry declined by 45 percent. The sulfur dioxide emission nationwide was reduced by 14.29 percent, and the total COD discharge went down by 12.45 percent.

Citizens' right to good eco-environment is further secured. From 2008 to 2012 China dredged 24,500 km of key medium and small rivers, and increased the water-saving irrigation area by 7.7 million hectares (ha). In 2011 and 2012, the central government earmarked a special fund of 2.4 billion yuan for supporting a pilot program for a balanced lake eco-system, increasing the initial eight lakes to 27 now. So far, 80,000 mu (about 5,333 ha.-tr.) of wetlands have been restored and 160,000 mu (about 10,667 ha.-tr.) of forest-covered area has been created in the first eight lakes of the pilot program, effectively improving the water quality and self-recovery capability of these lakes. China implements in full a mechanism for subsidization for grassland eco-system protection. In 2011 and 2012 the central coffer allocated 28.6 billion yuan to subsidize a grazing ban on 1.23 billion mu (about 82 million ha.-tr.) of pastureland and to reward efforts to achieve a balance between the forage yield and number of animals on 2.605 billion mu (about 174 million ha.-tr.) of pastureland. By 2012 the vegetation coverage of grasslands across China had reached 53.8 percent, an increase of 2.8 percentage points over 2011, and the fresh grass yield of natural pastures amounted to 1.05 billion tons, an increase of 4.7 percent over 2011. The comprehensive conservation of water and soil has been further improved. From 2008 to 2012 an additional 29.53 million ha. of land was planted with trees,

desertification was halted on 11.96 million ha. of land, soil erosion on 246,000 sq km of land was brought under control, and a total of 180,000 sq km of land was improved. The number of key counties halting stony desertification was increased to 300, and the project to control the sources of the sandstorms that hit Beijing and Tianjin was extended to include 138 counties in six provincial-level regions. The pace is accelerated in key regional eco-system development projects, such as the comprehensive treatment plan of the Tarim, Heihe and Shiyang river basins and the plan of water resources sustainable utilization for Beijing. The integrated project for rational utilization of water resources and ecological protection in Dunhuang has been going into full swing. China's urban green areas now total 2,242,861 ha., covering 39.22 percent of the total urban land, with the per-capita green area in public parks being 11.8 sq m. China now has 10,780 public parks, among which 63 are key national ones and 45 national urban wetland parks. Regional ecological treatment and protection has been constantly intensified. The state has set up the National Committee for Biodiversity Protection. By the end of 2012, there were 2,640 nature reserves of various kinds and at various levels in China (excluding those in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan regions), among which 363 were at national level, covering an area of 94.15 million ha., or 9.7 percent of China's total land area. Besides, China boasted 962 scenic areas, among which 225 were national ones, covering an area of 193,700 sq km, or 2.02 percent of China's total area. In order to improve the eco-system of the Qinghai Lake area, the state set up a 6,200-mu (about 413 ha.-tr.) experimental and demonstration zone for wetland protection and recovery, a 10,100-mu (about 673 ha.-tr.) demonstration zone for desertification control and a 14,650-mu (about 977 ha.-tr.) demonstration zone for deteriorated grassland recovery. A regional technical mode of ecological environment improvement was formed, effectively improving the eco-system of the lake area. Steady progress has been made in protecting its wetlands. The state has confirmed 11 national major wetlands and the total number of wetlands has reached 39. An additional 330,000 ha. of wetlands is put under state protection, and 23,000 ha. of wetlands is restored. It has introduced pilot projects for recovering the habitats of nearly 20 species of wild animals and implemented breeding projects for nearly 30 species of rare or endangered wild animals. Marine ecological environment protection has also been strengthened. In 2012 the State Oceanic Administration investigated and handled 176 cases that violated the marine environment law. The newly established 15 national marine conservation zones increased the total conservation area by 751 sq km. China has initiated a plan to create a red-line system in the Bohai Sea to delimit zones in which development is prohibited or

limited. It confirmed 21 marine eco-environment restoration projects and 70 island improvement and protection projects. Among the 301 offshore seawater quality monitoring points, 69.4 percent met the national Grade I or II standards for ocean water quality.

VI. Foreign Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights

China has long taken the initiative to have exchanges and cooperation with other countries in the realm of human rights. It plays a constructive role in the UN's human rights bodies, encouraging countries around the world to handle human rights issues fairly, objectively and non-selectively. It endeavors to promote the sound development of human rights on the international stage.

Constructively participating in UN human rights activities. In 2010 and 2011 China constructively engaged in the review of the UN Human Right Council (HRC), and encouraged the UN General Assembly to adopt the HRC's resolution on the review. From 2010 on, Chinese delegations attended the meetings of the Third Committee of the 65th, 66th and 67th sessions of the UN General Assembly, and the 13th to 21st sessions of the UN Human Rights Council, and participated in the seventh to 14th sessions of the HRC's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Team. When working in the organizations and participating in the meetings mentioned above, China plays a constructive role by upholding the basic purpose and principles stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations, performing its duties conscientiously, and proactively participating in reviews and discussions of human rights issues. China attaches great importance to technical cooperation with the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In 2011 China and the OHCHR jointly held the China-UN Legal Seminar, and discussed such issues as death penalty reform trend in the world. Both sides regarded the seminar as a positive move. China resolutely supports the programs of the OHCHR, and made donations of 20,000 U.S. dollars, 30,000 U.S. dollars and 50,000 U.S. dollars to it from 2010 to 2012. In December 2010 the HRC's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food visited China upon invitation, and fully affirmed China's efforts in improving the right to food.

Attaching great importance to the implementation of international human rights conventions. China has joined 27 international human rights conventions, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and actively works for the approval of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Chinese government has taken active measures to guarantee the implementation of its obligations as stipulated by the international human rights conventions it has

joined. In 2010 China submitted to the United Nations the second report of its implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the consolidated report of the third and fourth implementations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the first report of its implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. China also presented to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities the first report of its implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the same year, which passed the review of the committee in September 2012. Most committee members recognized China's achievements in guaranteeing the rights of persons with disabilities and its implementation of the Convention. In 2012 China submitted the consolidated report of the seventh and eighth implementations of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and organized a trans-department coordination team to set about drawing up the sixth report of its implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. From 2010 to 2012 members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) visited China to conduct on-site inspections of China's implementation of relevant conventions, and gave full recognition to China's work. Since 2010 China has continued its cooperation with the UN Children's Fund office in China, holding various forms of publicity activities and training for upholding the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2012 the Chinese government held celebrations to mark the 20th anniversary of its joining in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Taking an active part in formulating international human rights instruments and related rules. The Chinese government actively participates in and promotes the intergovernmental process of the UN General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system ("process of the General Assembly"). In November 2011 China submitted to the OHCHR the Opinions on Strengthening the Effective Functioning of the Human Rights Treaty Body System, and sent a delegation to the first unofficial consultation on the "process of the General Assembly" held in July 2012 to set forth its position and assertions on improving the human rights treaty body system. In 2010 and 2011 the Chinese government sent delegations to the Open-ended Working Group meetings for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Communications Procedure, and joined the consensus on the optional protocol at

the 17th session of the Human Rights Council and 66th UN General Assembly. In September 2011 the Chinese government put forward a written opinion to the Committee against Torture on the General Opinion on Article 14 of the Convention against Torture (working document) drafted by the committee. China also recommended its experts as members of the CESCR, Committee Against Torture, CERD and CEDAW.

Increasing mutual understanding and learning from each other's experience through dialogues on human rights. China upholds the principles of equality and mutual respect when carrying out bilateral dialogues and communication in the field of human rights with related countries. In the past three years China has held human rights dialogues with the United States, the European Union, Great Britain, Germany, Australia and Switzerland. It has sent legal experts to have dialogues with their US counterparts, held the EU-China Human Rights Seminar and conducted technical cooperation projects on human rights with Australia. Since 2010 the Chinese government has sent delegations to the 10th, 11th and 12th ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) Informal Seminar on Human Rights, and taken an active part in discussions of related topics. From 2010 to 2012 the China Society for Human Rights Studies, together with some other organizations, held the third, fourth and fifth sessions of the Beijing Forum on Human Rights, discussing the relations between human rights and development, culture, science and technology and the environment. The Forum has become an important stage for international human rights dialogues and exchanges involving both developing and developed countries.

Working closely with other countries, China will spare no efforts to promote the healthy development of human rights worldwide.