**China's Parasports:**

**Progress and the Protection of Rights**

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**Preamble**

Sports are important for all individuals, including those with a disability. Developing parasports is an effective way to help persons with disabilities to improve physical fitness, pursue physical and mental rehabilitation, participate in social activities, and achieve all-round development. It also provides a special opportunity for the public to better understand the potential and value of the disabled, and promote social harmony and progress. In addition, developing parasports is of great importance in ensuring that persons with disabilities can enjoy equal rights, integrate readily into society, and share the fruits of economic and social progress. Participation in sports is an important right of persons with disabilities as well as an integral component of human rights protection.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) with Xi Jinping at the core attaches great importance to the cause of the disabled, and provides them with extensive care. Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, China has included this cause in the Five-sphere Integrated Plan and the Four-pronged Comprehensive Strategy, and taken concrete and effective measures to develop parasports. With the steady advance of parasports in China, many athletes with disabilities have worked hard and won honors for the country in the international arena, inspiring the public through their sporting prowess. Historic progress has been made in developing sports for persons with disabilities.

With the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games just around the corner, athletes with disabilities are once again drawing global attention. The Games will certainly provide an opportunity for the development of parasports in China; they will enable the international parasports movement to advance "together for a shared future".

**I. Parasports Have Progressed Through National Development**

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, in the cause of socialist revolution and reconstruction, reform and opening up, socialist modernization, and socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, along with making progress in the cause of the disabled, parasports have steadily developed and prospered, embarking on a path that carries distinct Chinese features and respects the trends of the times.

**1. Steady progress was made in parasports after the founding of the PRC.**With the founding of the PRC, the people became masters of the country. Persons with disabilities were granted equal political status, enjoying the same lawful rights and obligations as other citizens. The 1954 Constitution of the People's Republic of China stipulated that they "have the right to material assistance". Welfare factories, welfare institutions, special education schools, specialized social organizations and a positive social environment have guaranteed the basic rights and interests of disabled people and improved their lives.

In the early years of the PRC, the CPC and the Chinese government attached great importance to sports for the people. Parasports made gradual progress in schools, factories and sanatoriums. Large numbers of disabled people actively participated in sports activities such as radio calisthenics, workplace exercises, table tennis, basketball, and tug of war, laying the foundations for more disabled people to participate in sports.

In 1957, the first national games for blind youth took place in Shanghai. Sports organizations for people with hearing impairments were established all over the country, and they organized regional sports events. In 1959, the first national men's basketball competition for those with hearing impairments was held. National sports competitions encouraged more disabled people to participate in sports, improved their physical fitness, and increased their enthusiasm for social integration.

**2. Parasports progressed rapidly following the launch of reform and opening up.** Following the introduction of reform and opening up in 1978, China achieved a historic transformation - raising the living standards of its people from bare subsistence to a basic level of moderate prosperity. This marked a tremendous step forward for the Chinese nation - from standing upright to becoming better-off.

The CPC and the Chinese government launched a host of major initiatives to champion the progress of parasports and improve the lives of disabled people. The state promulgated the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, and ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As reform and opening up progressed, promoting the interests of disabled people evolved from social welfare, provided mainly in the form of relief, into a comprehensive social undertaking. Greater efforts were made to increase opportunities for disabled people to participate in social activities, and to respect and protect their rights in all respects, laying the foundations for the development of parasports.

The Law of the People's Republic of China on Physical Culture and Sports stipulates that society as a whole should concern itself with and support the participation of the disabled in physical activities, and that governments at all levels shall take measures to provide conditions for disabled people to participate in physical activities. The law also prescribes that disabled people should have preferential access to public sports installations and facilities, and that schools shall create conditions for organizing sports activities suited to the particular conditions of students who are in poor health or disabled.

Parasports were included in the national development strategies and in development plans for the disabled. Relevant work mechanisms and public services were improved, enabling parasports to enter a stage of rapid development.

In 1983, a national sports invitational for persons with disabilities was held in Tianjin. In 1984, the First National Games for Persons with Disabilities took place in Hefei, Anhui Province. In the same year, Team China made its debut at the 7th Paralympic Summer Games in New York, and won its first ever Paralympic gold medal. In 1994, Beijing hosted the 6th Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled (FESPIC Games), the first international multi-sport event for disabled people held in China. In 2001, Beijing won the bid to host the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games. In 2004, Team China led both the gold medal count and the overall medal count for the first time at the Athens Paralympic Summer Games. In 2007, Shanghai hosted the Special Olympics World Summer Games. In 2008, the Paralympic Summer Games were held in Beijing. In 2010, Guangzhou hosted the Asian Para Games.

Over this period, China set up a number of sports organizations for disabled people, including the China Sports Association for the Disabled (later renamed the National Paralympic Committee of China), the China Sports Association for the Deaf, and the China Association for the Mentally Challenged (later renamed Special Olympics China). China also joined a number of international sports organizations for the disabled, including the International Paralympic Committee. Meanwhile, various local sports organizations for disabled people were set up across the country.

**3. Historic progress has been made in parasports in the new era.** Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. China has built a moderately prosperous society in all respects as scheduled, and the Chinese nation has achieved a tremendous transformation - from standing upright to becoming prosperous and growing in strength.

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and president of China, has a particular concern for people with disabilities. He emphasizes that disabled people are equal members of society, and an important force for the development of human civilization and for upholding and developing Chinese socialism. He notes that the disabled are just as capable of leading rewarding lives as able-bodied people. He also instructed that no individuals with disabilities should be left behind when moderate prosperity in all respects was to be realized in China in 2020. Xi has committed that China will develop further programs for the disabled, promote their all-round development and shared prosperity, and strive to ensure access to rehabilitation services for every disabled person. He pledged that China would deliver an excellent and extraordinary Winter Olympics and Paralympics at Beijing 2022. He has also emphasized that the country must be considerate in providing convenient, efficient, targeted and meticulous services for athletes, and in particular, in meeting the special needs of athletes with disabilities by building accessible facilities. These important observations have pointed the direction for the cause of disabled people in China.

Under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at its core, China incorporates programs for disabled people into its overall plans for economic and social development and its human rights action plans. As a result, the rights and interests of people with disabilities have been better protected, and the goals of equality, participation and sharing have drawn closer. Disabled people have a stronger sense of fulfillment, happiness and security, and parasports have bright prospects for development.

Parasports have been included in China's national strategies of Fitness-for-All, Healthy China initiative, and Building China into a Country Strong in Sports. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Ensuring Public Cultural Services and the Regulations on Building an Accessible Environment provide that top priority shall be given to improving accessibility of public service facilities including sports facilities. China has built a National Ice Sports Arena for People with Impairments. More and more disabled people are engaging in rehabilitation and fitness activities, participating in parasports in their communities and homes, and taking part in outdoor sports activities. The Disability Support Project under the National Fitness Program has been implemented, and sports instructors for people with disabilities have been trained. People with severe disabilities have access to rehabilitation and fitness services in their homes.

Every effort has been made to prepare for the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games, and Chinese athletes will participate in all events. In the 2018 Pyeongchang Paralympic Winter Games, Chinese athletes won gold in Wheelchair Curling, China's first medal in Winter Paralympics. In the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Summer Games, Chinese athletes achieved extraordinary results, ranking top in the gold medal and medal tallies for the fifth time in a row. Chinese athletes have scaled new heights in the Deaflympics and the Special Olympics World Games.

Parasports have made enormous progress in China, demonstrating China's institutional strength in promoting programs for the disabled, and displaying its notable achievements in respecting and protecting the rights and interests of people with disabilities. Throughout the country, understanding, respect, care and help for the disabled are growing in strength. More and more disabled people are realizing their dreams and achieving remarkable improvements in their lives through sports. The courage, tenacity and resilience that disabled people show in pushing boundaries and forging ahead have inspired the whole nation and promoted social and cultural progress.

**II. Physical Activities for Persons with Disabilities Have Flourished**

China regards rehabilitation and fitness activities for persons with disabilities as one of the main components in implementing its national strategies of Fitness-for-All, Healthy China initiative, and Building China into a Country Strong in Sports. By carrying out parasports activities across the whole country, enriching the content of such activities, improving sports services, and intensifying scientific research and education, China has encouraged the disabled to become more active participants in rehabilitation and fitness activities.

**1. Physical activities for persons with disabilities are flourishing.** At community level, a variety of rehabilitation and fitness activities for persons with disabilities have been organized, adapted to local conditions in urban and rural China. To promote the participation of persons with disabilities in grassroots fitness activities and competitive sports, China has extended rehabilitation activities and fitness sports services to communities through government procurement. The participation rate in grassroots cultural and sports activities for persons with disabilities in China has spiraled, from 6.8 percent in 2015 to 23.9 percent in 2021.

Schools at all levels and of all types have organized specially designed regular physical activities for their disabled students, and have promoted line dancing, cheerleading, dryland curling, and other group-based sports. College students and those in primary and secondary schools have been encouraged to participate in projects such as the Special Olympics University Program and in Special Olympics Unified Sports. Medical workers have been mobilized to engage in activities such as sports rehabilitation, para-athletics classification, and the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program, and physical educators have been encouraged to participate in professional services such as physical fitness and sports training for the disabled, and to provide voluntary services for parasports.

China's National Games for Persons with Disabilities have incorporated rehabilitation and fitness events. The National Football Games for Persons with Disabilities have been held with multiple categories for persons with visual or hearing impairments or intellectual disabilities. Teams participating in the National Line Dancing Open Tournament for Persons with Disabilities now come from around 20 provinces and equivalent administrative units. A growing number of special education schools have made line dancing a physical activity for their main recess.

**2. Parasports events are carried out nationwide.** Persons with disabilities regularly participate in national parasports events, such as the National Special Olympics Day, Fitness Week for Persons with Disabilities, and Winter Sports Season for Persons with Disabilities. Since 2007, China has been organizing activities to popularize National Special Olympics Day, which falls on July 20 every year. Participation in the Special Olympics has tapped into the potential of persons with intellectual disabilities, improved their self-esteem, and brought them into the community. Since 2011, around the National Fitness Day each year, China has been organizing nationwide parasports activities to mark the Fitness Week for Persons with Disabilities, during which events such as wheelchair Tai Chi, Tai Chi ball, and blind football games have been held.

Through participating in rehabilitation and fitness events and activities, persons with disabilities have become more familiar with parasports, begun to take part in sports activities, and learned to use rehabilitation and fitness equipment. They have had the opportunity to demonstrate and exchange rehabilitation and fitness skills. Greater fitness and a more positive mindset have inspired their passion for life, and they have become more confident about integrating into society. Events such as the Wheelchair Marathon for the Disabled, the Chess Challenge among Blind Players, and the National Tai Chi Ball Championships for Persons with Hearing Impairments have developed into national parasports events.

**3. Winter sports for persons with disabilities are on the rise.**Every year since 2016 China has hosted a Winter Sports Season for Persons with Disabilities, providing them with a platform to participate in winter sports, and fulfilling the Beijing 2022 bid commitment of engaging 300 million people in winter sports. The scale of participation has expanded from 14 provincial-level units in the first Winter Sports Season to 31 provinces and equivalent administrative units. Various winter parasports activities suited to local conditions have been held, allowing participants to experience Paralympic Winter Games events, and take part in mass-participation winter sports, winter rehabilitation and fitness training camps, and ice and snow festivals. A variety of winter sports for mass participation have been created and promoted, such as mini skiing, dryland skiing, dryland curling, ice Cuju (a traditional Chinese game of competing for a ball on the ice rink), skating, sledding, sleighing, ice bikes, snow football, ice dragon boating, snow tug-of-war, and ice fishing. These novel and fun sports have proved very popular among persons with disabilities. In addition, availability of winter sports and fitness services for persons with disabilities at community level, and technical support, have been improved with the promulgation of materials such as A Guidebook on Winter Sports and Fitness Programs for Persons with Disabilities.

**4. Rehabilitation and fitness services for persons with disabilities keep improving.**China has introduced a series of measures to engage persons with disabilities in rehabilitation and physical activities, and to cultivate rehabilitation and fitness service teams. These include: launching a Self-improvement Fitness Project and a Sports Rehabilitation Care Plan, developing and promoting programs, methodology and equipment for rehabilitation and fitness of the disabled, enriching sports services and products for persons with disabilities, and promoting community-level fitness services for them and home-based rehabilitation services for persons with severe disabilities.

The National Basic Public Service Standards for Mass Sports (2021 Edition) and other national policies and regulations stipulate that the fitness environment for persons with disabilities is to be improved, and require that they have access to public facilities free of charge or at reduced prices. As of 2020, a total of 10,675 disabled-friendly sports venues had been built nationwide, a total of 125,000 instructors had been trained, and 434,000 households with severely disabled people had been provided with home-based rehabilitation and fitness services. Meanwhile, China has actively guided the construction of winter sports facilities for persons with disabilities with the focus on supporting less developed areas, townships and rural areas.

**5. Progress has been made in parasports education and research.** China has incorporated parasports in special education, teacher training, and physical education programs, and has accelerated the development of parasports research institutions. China Administration of Sports for Persons with Disabilities, the Sports Development Committee of the China Disability Research Society, together with parasports research institutions in many colleges and universities, form the main force in parasports education and research. A system for cultivating parasports talent has taken shape. Some universities and colleges have opened selective courses on parasports. A number of parasports professionals have been cultivated. Considerable progress has been made in parasports research. As of 2021, more than 20 parasports projects were being supported by the National Social Science Fund of China.

**III. Performances in Parasports Are Improving Steadily**

Disabled people are becoming increasingly active in sports. More and more athletes with disabilities have competed in sporting events both at home and abroad. They are seeking to meet challenges, pursuing self-improvement, demonstrating an indomitable spirit, and fighting for a wonderful and successful life.

**1. Chinese parasports athletes have given outstanding performances at major international sporting events.** Since 1987, Chinese athletes with intellectual disabilities have participated in nine Special Olympics World Summer Games and seven Special Olympics World Winter Games. In 1989, Chinese deaf athletes made their international debut at the 16th World Games for the Deaf in Christchurch of New Zealand. In 2007, the Chinese delegation earned a bronze medal at the 16th Winter Deaflympics in Salt Lake City of the United States - the first medal won by Chinese athletes at the event. Subsequently, Chinese athletes achieved outstanding performances at several Summer and Winter Deaflympics. They also took an active part in Asian sporting events for the disabled and won many honors. In 1984, 24 athletes from the Chinese Paralympic delegation competed in Athletics, Swimming and Table Tennis at the Seventh Summer Paralympics in New York, and brought home 24 medals, including two golds, generating an upsurge of enthusiasm for sports among disabled people in China. At the following Summer Paralympics, Team China's performance showed a marked improvement. In 2004, at the 12th Summer Paralympics in Athens, the Chinese delegation won 141 medals, including 63 golds, ranking first in both medals and golds won. In 2021, at the 16th Summer Paralympics in Tokyo, Team China claimed 207 medals, including 96 golds, topping both the gold medal tally and the overall medal standings for the fifth consecutive time. During the 13th Five-year Plan period (2016-2020), China sent disabled athletes delegations to participate in 160 international sporting events, bringing home a total of 1,114 gold medals.

**2. Influence of national parasports events keeps expanding.**Since China organized its first National Games for Persons with Disabilities (NGPD) in 1984, 11 such events have been held, with the number of sports increasing from three (Athletics, Swimming and Table Tennis) to 34. Since the third games in 1992, the NGPD has been listed as a large-scale sporting event ratified by the State Council and held once every four years. This confirms the institutionalization and standardization of parasports in China. In 2019, Tianjin hosted the 10th NGPD (together with the Seventh National Special Olympic Games) and the National Games of China. This made the city the first to host both the NGPD and the National Games of China. In 2021, Shaanxi hosted the 11th NGPD (together with the Eighth National Special Olympic Games) and the National Games of China. It was the first time that the NGPD had been held in the same city and during the same year as the National Games of China. This allowed synchronized planning and implementation and both games were equally successful. In addition to the NGPD, China also organizes national individual events for categories such as blind athletes, deaf athletes, and athletes with limb deficiencies, for the purpose of engaging more people with various types of disabilities in sports activities. Through these national sporting events for disabled people on a regular basis, the country has trained a number of athletes with disabilities and improved their sports skills.

**3. Chinese athletes show growing strength in winter Paralympic sports.**China's successful bid for 2022 Paralympic Winter Games has generated great opportunities for the development of its Winter Paralympic sports. The country attaches great importance to the preparation for Winter Paralympics. It has designed and implemented a series of action plans, pressed ahead with sporting events planning, and coordinated the creation of training facilities, equipment support, and research services. It has organized training camps to select outstanding athletes, strengthened the training of technical personnel, hired capable coaches from home and abroad, established national training teams, and promoted international cooperation. All the six Winter Paralympic sports - Alpine Skiing, Biathlon, Cross-Country Skiing, Snowboard, Ice Hockey, and Wheelchair Curling - have been included in the NGPD, which pushed forward winter sports activities in 29 provinces and equivalent administrative units.

From 2015 to 2021, the number of Winter Paralympic sports in China increased from 2 to 6, so that all Winter Paralympic sports are now covered. The number of athletes increased from fewer than 50 to nearly 1,000, and that of technical officials from 0 to more than 100. Since 2018, annual national competitions for sporting events in Winter Paralympics have been held, and these sporting events were included in the 2019 and 2021 NGPD. Chinese parasports athletes have participated in the Winter Paralympic Games since 2016, and won 47 gold, 54 silver, and 52 bronze medals. In the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games, a total of 96 athletes from China will take part in all 6 sports and 73 events. Compared with the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games, the number of athletes will increase by more than 80, the number of sports by 4, and the number of events by 67.

**4. Mechanisms for athlete training and support are improving.**In order to ensure fair competition, parasports athletes are classified medically and functionally according to their categories and the sports that are suitable for them. A four-tiered parasports athlete spare-time training system has been established and improved, in which the county level is responsible for identification and selection, the city level training and development, the provincial level for intensive training and games participation, and the national level for the training of key talent. Youth selection competitions and training camps have been organized for the training of reserve talent.

Greater efforts have been made to build a contingent of parasports coaches, referees, classifiers and other professionals. More parasports training bases have been built, and 45 national training bases have been nominated for parasports, providing support and services for research, training and competition. Governments at all levels have taken measures to address problems of education, employment and social security for parasports athletes, and to carry out pilot work for enrolling top athletes into higher learning institutions without examination. Measures for the Administration of Parasports Events and Activities have been issued to promote orderly and standard development of parasports games. Parasports ethics have been strengthened. Doping and other violations are forbidden so as to ensure fairness and justice in parasports.

**IV. Contributing to International Parasports**

An open China actively takes on its international responsibilities. It has succeeded in hosting the Beijing 2008 Summer Paralympics, the Shanghai 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games, the Sixth Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled, and the Guangzhou 2010 Asian Para Games, and made full preparations for the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games and Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games. This has given a strong boost to the cause of the disabled in China and made an outstanding contribution to international parasports. China is fully engaged in international sports affairs for the disabled and continues to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with other countries and with international organizations for disabled people, building friendship among peoples of all countries, including those with disabilities.

**1. Asian multi-sport events for the disabled have been staged successfully.** In 1994, Beijing held the Sixth Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled, in which a total of 1,927 athletes from 42 countries and regions took part, making it the biggest event in the history of these games at that time. This was the first time that China had held an international multi-sport event for the disabled. It showcased China's achievements in reform and opening up and modernization, gave the rest of society a deeper understanding of its work for the disabled, boosted the development of China's programs for persons with disabilities, and raised the profile of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons.

In 2010, the First Asian Para Games were held in Guangzhou, attended by athletes from 41 countries and regions. This was the first sports event held after the reorganization of Asian parasports organizations. It was also the first time that the Asian Para Games were held in the same city and the same year as the Asian Games, promoting a more barrier-free environment in Guangzhou. The Asian Para Games helped to display the sporting prowess of the disabled, created a sound atmosphere for assisting persons with disabilities to integrate better into society, enabled more disabled people to share in the fruits of development, and improved the level of parasports in Asia.

In 2022, the Fourth Asian Para Games will be held in Hangzhou. Around 3,800 parasports athletes from over 40 countries and regions will compete in 604 events across 22 sports. These games will vigorously promote friendship and cooperation in Asia.

**2. The Shanghai 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games were a big success.** In 2007, the 12th Special Olympics World Summer Games were held in Shanghai, attracting over 10,000 athletes and coaches from 164 countries and regions to compete in 25 sports. This was the first time that a developing country had held the Special Olympics World Summer Games and the first time the games had been held in Asia. It boosted the confidence of persons with intellectual disabilities in their efforts to integrate into society, and promoted the Special Olympics in China.

To mark the Shanghai Special Olympics World Summer Games, July 20, the opening day of the event, was designated as the National Special Olympics Day. A volunteer association named "Sunshine Home" was founded in Shanghai to help persons with intellectual disabilities to receive rehabilitative training, educational training, day care, and vocational rehabilitation. Based on this experience, the "Sunshine Home" program was rolled out nationwide to support care centers and households in providing services and help for persons with intellectual or mental disabilities and for the severely disabled.

**3. The Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games were delivered to the highest possible standard.**In 2008, Beijing hosted the 13th Paralympic Games, attracting 4,032 athletes from 147 countries and regions to compete in 472 events across 20 sports. The number of participating athletes, countries and regions and the number of competition events all hit a record high in the history of the Paralympic Games. The 2008 Paralympic Games made Beijing the first city in the world to bid for and host the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games at the same time; Beijing fulfilled its promise to stage "two games of equal splendor", and delivered a unique Paralympics to the highest possible standards. Its motto of "transcendence, integration and sharing" reflected China's contribution to the values of the international Paralympic Movement. These games have left a rich legacy in sports facilities, urban transport, accessible facilities, and volunteer services, representing a significant advance in China's work for persons with disabilities.

Beijing built a batch of standardized service centers named "Sweet Home" to help the disabled and their families to enjoy access to vocational rehabilitation, educational training, day care, and recreational and sports activities, creating conditions for them to integrate into society on an equal basis.

The public's understanding of provision for the disabled and their sports has increased. The concepts of "equality, participation and sharing" are taking root, while understanding, respecting, helping, and caring for the disabled are becoming the norm in society. China has delivered on its solemn promise to the international community. It has carried on the Olympic spirit of solidarity, friendship and peace, promoted mutual understanding and friendship among peoples of all countries, made the slogan of "One World, One Dream" resonate throughout the world, and won high acclaim from the international community.

**4. China is going all out to prepare for the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games.** In 2015, together with Zhangjiakou, Beijing won the bid to host the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. This made the city the first ever to host both the Summer and Winter Paralympics, and created major development opportunities for winter parasports. China committed to organizing a "green, inclusive, open and clean" sports event, and one that is "streamlined, safe and splendid". To this end the country has made every effort to proactively communicate and cooperate with the International Paralympic Committee and other international sports organizations in implementing all the protocols for Covid-19 control and prevention. Detailed preparations have been made for the organization of the Games and the related services, for the application of science and technology and for cultural activities during the Games.

In 2019, Beijing launched a special program to foster a barrier-free environment, focusing on 17 major tasks to rectify problems in key areas such as urban roads, public transport, public services venues, and information exchange. A total of 336,000 facilities and sites have been modified, realizing basic accessibility in the core area of the capital city, making its barrier-free environment more standardized, accommodating and systemic. Zhangjiakou has also actively nurtured a barrier-free environment, leading to a significant improvement in accessibility.

China has established and improved a winter sport system with ice and snow sports as the pillar, to encourage more disabled people to engage in winter sports. The Beijing Paralympic Winter Games will be held from March 4 to 13, 2022. As of February 20, 2022, 647 athletes from 48 countries and regions registered and would be competing in the Games. China is fully prepared to welcome athletes from all around the world to the Games.

**5. China actively participates in international parasports.**Greater international engagement is allowing China to play an increasingly important role in international parasports.The country has a greater say in relevant affairs, and its influence is growing. Since 1984, China has joined many international sports organizations for persons with disabilities, including the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), International Organizations of Sports for the Disabled (IOSDs), International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA), Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CPISRA), International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD), International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS), Special Olympics International (SOI), and Far East and South Pacific Games Federation for the Disabled (FESPIC).

It has established friendly relations with sports organizations for the disabled in numerous countries and regions. The National Paralympic Committee of China (NPCC), China Sports Association for the Deaf, and Special Olympics China have become important members of international organizations of sports for the disabled. China has proactively participated in important conferences on international sports for the disabled, such as the IPC General Assembly, that will chart the future course for development. Chinese parasports officials, referees, and experts have been elected as members of the executive board and special committees of the FESPIC, ICSD, and IBSA. In order to advance sports skills for the disabled, China has recommended and appointed professionals to serve as technical officials and international referees of relevant international sports organizations for the disabled.

**6. Extensive international exchanges on parasports have been carried out.** China first sent a delegation to the Third FESPIC Games in 1982 - the first time for Chinese athletes with disabilities to compete at an international sporting event. China has actively carried out international exchanges and cooperation on parasports, which are an important component of people-to-people exchanges in bilateral relations and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, including the Belt and Road Initiative and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

In 2017, China hosted the Belt and Road High-level Event on Disability Cooperation and issued an initiative for promoting cooperation and exchanges on disability among Belt and Road countries and other documents, and established a network to cooperate on sharing sports facilities and resources. This includes 45 national-level training centers for summer and winter parasports that are open to athletes and coaches from Belt and Road countries. In 2019, a forum on parasports under the Belt and Road framework was held to promote mutual learning among various sports organizations for persons with disabilities, providing a model for exchanges and cooperation in the field of parasports. That same year, the NPCC signed strategic cooperation agreements with the Paralympic committees of Finland, Russia, Greece and other countries. Meanwhile, a growing number of exchanges on parasports have taken place between China and other countries at city and other local levels.

**V. Achievements in Parasports Reflect Improvements in China's Human Rights**

The remarkable achievements of parasports in China reflect both the sportsmanship and sporting prowess of the disabled, and the progress China is making in human rights and national development. China adheres to a people-centered approach that treats people's wellbeing as the primary human right, promotes the all-round development of human rights, and effectively protects the rights and interests of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. Participation in sports is an important element of the right to subsistence and development for those with disabilities. The development of parasports accords with China's general development; it effectively responds to the needs of persons with disabilities and promotes their physical and mental health. Parasports are a vivid reflection of the development and progress of human rights in China. They promote the common values of humanity, advance exchanges, understanding and friendship among peoples around the world, and contribute China's wisdom to building a fair, just, reasonable and inclusive global governance order on human rights, and to maintaining world peace and development.

**1. China adheres to a people-centered approach and promotes the physical and mental health of persons with disabilities.**China upholds a people-centered approach in protecting human rights, and protects rights and interests of persons with disabilities through development. The country has included programs for persons with disabilities in its development strategies and achieved the goal of "building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, leaving no one behind, including persons with disabilities". Sports are an effective means of boosting people's health and meeting their desire for a better life. For those with disabilities, participating in sports can help build up fitness and mitigate and remove functional impairment. It can increase the individual's capacity to self-support, to pursue interests and hobbies, to increase social interaction, to improve life quality, and to achieve their life's potential.

China attaches great importance to protecting the right to health of persons with disabilities and emphasizes that "every disabled person should have access to rehabilitation services". Sports for the disabled have been incorporated into rehabilitation services. Governments at all levels have explored new ways of serving persons with disabilities at the grassroots, and carried out extensive rehabilitation and fitness activities by way of sports. In schools, students with disabilities have been guaranteed equal participation in sports in a bid to ensure their physical and mental health and promote their sound growth. The disabled have a stronger guarantee of the right to health through physical activities.

**2. China upholds equality and integration for persons with disabilities in the context of the national conditions.**China always applies the principle of universality of human rights in the context of the national conditions, and firmly believes that the rights to subsistence and development are the primary and basic human rights. Improving people's wellbeing, making sure that they are the masters of the country, and promoting their all-round development are key goals, and China works hard to uphold social equality and justice.

Chinese laws and regulations stipulate that persons with disabilities are entitled to equal participation in cultural and sport activities. In consequence, the disabled enjoy stronger protection of rights and are rendered special assistance. China has built and improved public sport facilities, provided related services, and ensured equal public sport services for persons with disabilities. It has also adopted other vigorous measures to create an accessible environment in sports - renovating sports venues and facilities to make them more accessible for the disabled, upgrading and opening stadiums and gymnasiums to all disabled people, providing necessary support in the convenient use of these facilities, and eliminating external barriers hindering their full participation in sports.

Sports events such as the Beijing Paralympic Games have led to greater participation of the disabled in social activities, not only in sports but also in economic, social, cultural and environmental affairs, and in urban and regional development. Major parasports venues across China continue to serve the disabled after the events are over, becoming a model for barrier-free urban development.

In order to raise the participation of the disabled in community art and sport activities, local authorities have also improved community parasports facilities, nurtured and supported their sport and art organizations, purchased diverse social services, and hosted sport activities involving both the disabled and those in good health. Relevant organizations and agencies have developed and popularized small-scale rehabilitation and fitness equipment suited to local conditions and customized for persons with various types of disability. They have also created and provided popular programs and methods.

The disabled can fully participate in sports in order to explore the limits of their potential and break through boundaries. Through unity and hard work, they can enjoy equality and participation and a successful life. Parasports promote traditional Chinese cultural values such as harmony, inclusion, cherishing life, and helping the weak, and inspire many more persons with disabilities to develop a passion for parasports and begin to participate. Demonstrating self-esteem, confidence, independence, and strength, they carry forward the spirit of China's sports. Showcasing their vitality and character through sports, they better secure their rights to equality and participation in society.

**3. China attaches equal importance to all human rights to achieve all-round development for persons with disabilities.**Parasports are a mirror reflecting the living standards and human rights of persons with disabilities. China guarantees their economic, political, social and cultural rights, laying a solid foundation for them to participate in sports, be active in other fields, and achieve all-round development. While building whole-process people's democracy, China has solicited suggestions from the disabled, their representatives, and their organizations, to make the national sports system more equal and inclusive.

Numerous services for persons with disabilities have been strengthened and improved: social security, welfare services, education, the right to employment, public legal services, protection of their personal and property rights, and efforts to eliminate discrimination. Outstanding athletes in the field of parasports are regularly commended, as are individuals and organizations contributing to the development of parasports.

Publicity to promote parasports has been intensified, spreading new concepts and trends through various channels and means, and creating a favorable social environment. The general public has gained a deeper understanding of the Paralympic values of "courage, determination, inspiration and equality". They endorse the ideas of equality, integration, and elimination of barriers, take a greater interest in undertakings concerning persons with disabilities, and offer their support.

There is wide social participation in events such as Fitness Week for Persons with Disabilities, Cultural Week for Persons with Disabilities, National Special Olympic Day, and Winter Sports Season for Persons with Disabilities. Activities such as sponsorship, volunteer services and cheering squads support and encourage persons with disabilities to take part in sports and share the benefits brought by social progress.

Parasports have helped to create a milieu encouraging society as a whole to better respect and guarantee the inherent dignity and equal rights of persons with disabilities. In so doing they have made an effective contribution to social progress.

**4. China encourages international cooperation and exchanges in parasports.**China upholds mutual learning and exchanges between civilizations, and regards parasports as a major part of international exchanges among the disabled. As a major sport power, China plays a growing role in international parasports affairs, vigorously promoting the development of parasports in the region and the world at large.

The boom in parasports in China is the result of the country's active implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. China respects diversity in other countries' cultural, sport and social systems, and promotes equality and justice in international sport activities and rules. It has made unconditional donations to the Development Fund for the International Paralympic Committee, and it has built a sports infrastructure and resource-sharing mechanism, and opened its national parasports training centers to disabled athletes and coaches from other countries.

China encourages persons with disabilities to engage in widespread international sport activities, so as to expand people-to-people exchanges, enhance mutual understanding and connectivity, bring people of various countries closer, achieve fairer, more rational and inclusive global human rights governance, and promote world peace and development.

China upholds humanism and internationalism, emphasizes that all those with disabilities are equal members of the human family, and promotes international parasports cooperation and exchanges. This contributes to mutual learning through exchanges between civilizations, and to the building of a global community of shared future.

**Conclusion**

The care that is provided for the disabled is a marker of social progress. Developing parasports plays a vital role in encouraging persons with disabilities to build self-esteem, confidence, independence, and strength, and pursue self-improvement. It carries forward the spirit of continuous self-renewal and creates an atmosphere that encourages the whole of society to understand, respect, care for and support disabled people and their cause. It encourages people to work together to promote the all-round development and common prosperity of the disabled.

Since the founding of the PRC, and especially following the 18th CPC National Congress, China has made remarkable progress in parasports. At the same time, it should be noted that progress remains imbalanced and inadequate. There is a huge gap between different regions and between rural and urban areas, and the capacity to provide services remains insufficient. The rate of participation in rehabilitation, fitness and sport activities needs to be increased, and winter parasports should be further popularized. There is much more work yet to be done in further developing parasports.

Under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at the core, the Party and the Chinese government will continue to uphold the people-centered development philosophy in building China into a modern socialist country in all respects. They will spare no effort to provide assistance to vulnerable groups, ensure that the disabled enjoy equal rights, and improve their wellbeing and their self-development skills. Concrete measures will be taken to respect and protect disabled people's rights and interests, including the right to participate in sports, in order to promote the cause of persons with disabilities and meet their expectations for a better life.