
Promote the Development of Human Rights in China in the Process of Comprehensively Deepening Reforms

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The *Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization* (hereinafter referred to as the “*Resolution*”), which was reviewed and adopted at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, is a major strategic measure to promote Chinese modernization and the great cause of national rejuvenation. From the perspective of human rights, the *Resolution* is of particular significance to promoting the development and progress of China’s human rights cause and promoting the free and well-rounded development of people. Here, I would like to present three main points.

I. Reform and Opening-Up have Greatly Promoted the Development of China’s Human Rights Cause

We have many successful experiences in the development of China’s human rights cause, but the most important and key one is reform and opening-up. It can be said that without reform and opening-up, China would not have made such achievements in the development of human rights. This is a solid truth proven by history, a summary of experiences, and a sublimation of reason. It is in the historical process of reform and opening-up that we have forged a path that is in keeping with the times and the conditions of China, and have made historical achievements in the development of human rights.

There are many facts to prove that reform and opening-up have promoted the development of China’s human rights cause, among which the following four points are the most convincing.

First, it is in the process of reform and opening-up that China has solved the problem regarding basic understanding of human rights. China has recognized that “human rights” is a “great term” and has included “respecting and protecting human rights” in the Constitution of China and the Constitution of the CPC, making it the value and firm will of the CPC and the country. General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed that “Human rights are a symbol of human civilization progress” and emphasized that “It is the pursuit of all societies to protect the life, value, and dignity of every person and ensure their entitlement to human rights.”

Second, it is in the process of reform and opening-up that China has put forward a series of human rights concepts and notions that are consistent with the universality of human rights, and are also in keeping with the times and the

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conditions of China. These include: the right to subsistence and the right to development are the basic and primary human rights; living a life of contentment is the ultimate human right; and China will protect human rights through security, support human rights through development, and advance human rights through cooperation, which have enriched the ideology and wisdom of human rights in human civilization.

Third, it is in the process of reform and opening-up that China has actively participated in the development and governance of global human rights. China has actively learned from the outstanding achievements of other civilizations, including human rights, to build the modern civilization of the Chinese nation. China has successively ratified or joined a total of 29 international human rights documents, including the six core UN human rights treaties, and has played an active role in international human rights affairs, promoting the establishment of a more just, fair, reasonable, and inclusive system of global human rights governance.

Fourth, it is in the process of reform and opening-up that China has greatly improved its human rights protection. According to the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Report, China's Human Development Index (HDI) has increased from 0.501 in 1990 to 0.788 in 2022, and has consistently risen over time, moving from the low human development category to the medium and then to the high human development level, close to the "very high" category with an HDI score above 0.800, signifying significant progress in areas such as life expectancy, education level, and quality of life across the country.

II. The *Resolution* Fully Reflects the Logic of Protecting and Promoting Human Rights in the Course of Development

Human rights are rooted in history and are developmental, concrete, and based on current realities. Since the launch of reform and opening-up, a valuable experience for the continuous development and progress of China's human rights cause is to take the development-oriented approach to human rights, protecting and promoting human rights in the course of development. The *Resolution* adheres to the people-centered approach, respects the principal position of the people, and systematically integrates development with people's happiness and the promotion of people's all-round development, which fully reflects the logic of protecting and promoting human rights in the course of development.

First, the *Resolution* upholds the people-centered concept of human rights, and strives to base and center development on seeking happiness for the people. The most salient feature of human rights in China is the people-centeredness. The *Resolution* adheres to putting the people first, and plans and promotes reform based on the overall, fundamental, and long-term interests of the people. On the necessity of further comprehensively deepening reform, the *Resolution*

emphasizes that reform and opening-up have been crucial to the cause of the Party and the people, enabling the country to catch up with the times in great strides, and that it is vital that we continue to advance reform to live up to the new expectations of the people, and to see that the gains of modernization benefit all people fairly. On the necessity of further comprehensively deepening reform, the *Resolution* emphasizes that we must adhere to a people-centered approach, respect the principal position and pioneering spirit of the people, and make our reform measures highly responsive to the call of the people, so as to ensure that reform is for the people and by the people and that its fruits are shared among the people.

Second, the *Resolution* emphasizes ensuring and improving people’s well-being in the course of development, which highlights the primary importance of the right to subsistence and the right to development. Ensuring people’s well-being reflects the most basic and realistic human right. Ensuring and improving people’s well-being in the course development is an important measure to improve the level of human rights protection. The *Resolution* emphasizes that in line with the principle of doing everything within our means, we will refine the systems of basic public services, with the focus on providing inclusive services, meeting essential needs, and providing a safety net for those most in need. We will strive to resolve the most practical problems that are of the greatest and most direct concern to the people so as to meet people’s aspirations for a better life. The *Resolution* regards greater social fairness and justice and increased well-being of the people as the ultimate goal, and proposes a series of major reform measures for improving the income distribution system, improving the employment-first policy, improving the social security system, further reforming the medical and healthcare systems, and improving the systems for supporting population development and providing related services. These reform measures highlight the key role of ensuring and improving people’s well-being in improving human rights protection.

Third, the *Resolution* makes major arrangements for comprehensively deepening reforms from multiple aspects, reflecting the desire to coordinate and promote the well-rounded development of human rights. The *Resolution* proposes a series of major reform measures such as improving China’s whole-process people’s democracy, promoting socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics, deepening reform in the cultural sector, ensuring and improving the people’s well-being, deepening reform in ecological conservation, and modernizing China’s national security system and capacity. These play an important role in promoting the protection of basic rights, including civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, environmental rights, security rights, and the right to peace. The *Resolution* reflects the positive practice of human rights from a broad, comprehensive, and specific perspective, and aims to coordinate and promote the well-rounded development of human

rights.

III. Chinese Modernization Opens Up a New Realm of Human Rights Civilization

People-centeredness is the fundamental difference between Chinese modernization and other models of modernization. On the people-centeredness of Chinese modernization, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: “We must put the people first and ensure modernization is people-centered. The people are the creators of history and are the strongest bedrock and force in advancing modernization. The ultimate goal of modernization is people’s free and well-rounded development. For a modernization path to work and work well, it must put the people first. Modernization is not only about indicators and statistics on paper but more about the delivery of a happy and stable life for the people.”

The five features of Chinese modernization are prominent in its people-centeredness and rich in human rights connotations: the modernization of a huge population means respecting and safeguarding the fundamental interests and specific demands of all people; the modernization of common prosperity for all means seeing that the gains of modernization benefit all the people fairly; the modernization of material and cultural-ethical advancement means promoting comprehensive enrichment of things and the well-rounded development of people; the modernization of harmony between humanity and nature means coordinating a favorable ecological environment with the sustainable development of people; the modernization of peaceful development means protecting human rights through security and supporting human rights through development. In short, the people-centeredness of Chinese modernization determines that the human rights it pursues are for all, benefiting all fairly, featuring harmonious coexistence and all-round development.

The *Resolution* makes major strategic plans for promoting Chinese modernization in the spirit of comprehensively deepening reform. Carefully studying the spirit of the *Resolution* shows the human rights civilization map presented by Chinese modernization. It is composed of the following: adhering to a people-centered approach; taking the right to subsistence and the right to development as the basic and primary human rights; regarding living a life of contentment as the ultimate human right; making coordinating and promoting all-round development of human rights as the overall strategy, and promoting the free and well-rounded development of people as the ultimate goal. This is a new human rights map outlined by the new concepts and notions of human rights development, which is different from the traditional socialist outlook and Western capitalist outlook on human rights. It is a new form and new realm of human rights in human civilization.