

Enlightenment of the Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind for Global Human Rights Governance

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Abstract: *As a core component of Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law and Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, the concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind plays three pivotal roles in advancing human rights: cognitive guidance, value-based evaluation, and actionable framework. It offers a normative compass for resolving human rights disputes by establishing four key value benchmarks — prioritizing common interests over parochial concerns, upholding peace and cooperation, honoring commitments, and adhering to the principle of proportionality — thereby enabling a more coherent ranking of diverse human rights perspectives. Serving as the overarching value lens for observing and analyzing human rights issues, this vision provides a robust reference framework for constructive human rights discourse. In practice, it outlines a clear actionable framework for human rights implementation, urging countries to act in the interest of individual development and collective human progress, mitigate inter-state antagonism and fragmentation, and advance human rights across five critical dimensions: peace, security, development, inclusiveness, and environmental protection. Rooted in the wisdom of traditional Chinese culture and drawing on China's experience in global governance, the concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind constitutes a guiding ideological system with profound implications for the global human rights cause.*

Keywords: a community with a shared future for mankind ♦ global human rights governance ♦ human rights ♦ cognitive guidance ♦ value-based evaluation ♦ actionable framework

I. Introduction

The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind proposed by China presents distinctive judgments and expectations regarding global governance and the international rule of law,¹ and has attracted much attention.² As an institutional expression and ideological manifestation of people's aspirations for a better and happier life, human rights occupy a pivotal position in both domestic governance and global governance. In particular, human rights play a guiding role in

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¹ Xi Jinping, *On Upholding and Promoting the Building of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind* (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2018), 206, 414-426; *Selected Readings from the Works of Xi Jinping*, (vol. II) (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2023), 48.

² A noteworthy phenomenon is that, in the English academic works (such as those found in online bookstores in the U.S., UK, and Germany) and journals (like the Heinonline database) accessible to the author, all authors writing directly related papers are Chinese scholars or have collaborated with Chinese scholars. This suggests that foreign scholars have not yet produced academic results on this concept, and further expansion of overseas communication and international influence is needed.

setting directions and objectives³ in the process of “promoting global good governance through good international laws.”⁴ This means that the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind is closely intertwined with the development of the human rights cause, especially with international human rights governance. It is precisely in view of the importance of human rights in global governance, as well as their close connection with the idea of a community with a shared future for mankind,⁵ that we can understand why Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, has repeatedly emphasized promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind when discussing the development of the human rights cause, particularly the construction and advancement of international human rights.⁶ At a time when human rights have become a commonly used discourse in international negotiations and deliberations,⁷ an in-depth exploration of the catalytic and balancing effects of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind on human rights governance clearly possesses significant theoretical and practical value. China’s academic circles have already conducted some useful explorations of this relationship, offering preliminary explanations of the interaction between the two.⁸ Research has addressed issues such as the links between a community with a shared future for mankind and human rights, and the status of this community within the field of

³ Xi Jinping, *Selected Works of Xi Jinping on the Rule of Law* (vol. 1) (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2025), 348.

⁴ Ye Chuanxing, “On the State Governance Function of Human Rights,” *Human Rights* 3 (2015): 34-56.

⁵ The China-proposed Global Governance Initiative clearly advocates “putting people first, improving and perfecting the global governance system to ensure that the people of all countries can participate in global governance and share in its outcomes, better responding to the common challenges faced by human society, bridging the north-south development gap, and safeguarding the common interests of all countries.” This highlights the core belief of putting people first. Xi Jinping, “Pooling the Strength of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to Improve Global Governance — Statement at the ‘Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus’ Meeting” (Tianjin, September 1, 2025), *People’s Daily*, September 2, 2025, 2nd edition.

⁶ “Letter to the First ‘South-South Human Rights Forum’ (December 7, 2017),” in *Selected Letters of Xi Jinping* (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2021), 136; “Letter to the Symposium Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (December 10, 2018),” in *Selected Letters of Xi Jinping* (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2021), 208; “Xi Jinping Emphasizes Steadfastly Following the Chinese Path to Promote Further Progress in Human Rights at the 37th Group Study Session of the Political Bureau of the 19th CPC Central Committee,” *People’s Daily*, February 27, 2022, 1.

⁷ Anthony J. Langlois, “Human Rights: The Globalisation and Fragmentation of Moral Discourse,” *Review of International Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002): 479-496.

⁸ Related studies, see Zhou Li, “Human Rights Promotion and Protection under the Discourse of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind: China’s Concepts and Experience,” *Human Rights* 2 (2017): 12-18; Zhang Weihua, “The Human Rights Dimension in Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” *Human Rights* 5 (2017): 7-19; Xiao Junyong, “Promoting Global Human Rights Governance with the Concept of a ‘Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,’” *Human Rights* 1 (2018): 15-20; Hao Yaming and Yang Wenshuai, “An Essential Review of Global Human Rights Governance Led by the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” *Academics* 2 (2024): 93-102.

human rights.⁹ However, there remains substantial room for further inquiry into the systemic development and overarching impact that this community brings to international human rights governance — especially in terms of comprehensive theoretical analysis from epistemological, axiological, and practical methodological perspectives. This indicates that a deeper examination of the relationship between a community with a shared future for mankind and international human rights governance is still not only necessary, but also of great significance for refining and clarifying understanding, inspiring and guiding practice, and summarizing and articulating a Chinese discourse on human rights. In light of this understanding, this paper undertakes a further analysis and exploration of the relationship between the two from a macro, systematic, and holistic perspective.

II. The Projection of the Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind in the Field of Human Rights

As an important component of Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law and Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind embodies the key ideas and goals of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. It represents an advanced understanding and an upgraded proposal of Chinese modernization in global affairs. Exploring the profound implications of this concept within contemporary Chinese and international human rights systems is crucial for a deeper analysis of how it motivates adjustments and transformations in the cognition, ideas, and practice of human rights.¹⁰ From the perspective of human rights, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind articulates a series of propositions that are both timely and distinctive.¹¹

A. Expanding the vision of human rights subjects to all humanity

Before emphasizing the Earth as a shared home and humanity's common risks and challenges, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind first establishes a fundamental understanding of humanity as a subject. It transcends the early conception of the individual as the sole subject of human rights at the moment of their emergence, and also goes beyond the increasing emphasis by the Third World and the Global South on the state as a subject of rights claims in international society. It ensures that issues are considered from the perspective of shared human experience, shared perceptions, shared decision-making, and cooperation. When reflecting on the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind in the context of human

⁹ For example, He Zhipeng, "The Contribution of the Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind to Human Rights Theory," *Human Rights* 5 (2017): 1-6; Liao Fan, "Human Rights and Sovereignty in the Context of the 'Community with a Shared Future for Mankind'," *Jilin University Journal (Social Sciences Edition)* 6 (2018): 25-35.

¹⁰ "The concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind reflects China's rethinking of the social foundation of international law, brings fine traditional Chinese culture into global governance, develops Marxist theory of community, emphasizes the unity of human society as a whole and individuals, highlights the ultimate issues of international society, and stresses the unity of international social differences and interdependence." Zhang Hui, "The Community with a Shared Future for Mankind: Contemporary Development of the Theory of International Law's Social Foundation," *Social Sciences in China* 5 (2018): 43-68.

¹¹ Li Buyun, "The Scientific Connotation and Significance of 'Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind'," *Jilin University Journal (Social Sciences Edition)* 4 (2018): 15-21.

rights, a key question must be addressed: from a perspective oriented toward reality and the future, whose rights are human rights?¹² Chinese scholars have debated this question from different perspectives and standpoints.¹³ In the field of human rights, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind establishes a philosophy that moves from individualism toward humanism.¹⁴ Human beings share many common rules. Gao Qinghai has pointed out that humanity's practical nature determines that human beings are "species-beings" whose essence lies in their belonging to a collective species.¹⁵ As a species-subject, human beings can understand and communicate with one another on both the individual and collective level in order to respond to common external risks. The aspiration for a better life is a universal dream shared by all, extending from individuals to groups and ultimately to humanity as a whole.¹⁶

Human rights are, first and foremost, individual rights. On the basis of recognizing this premise, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind expands the scope of concern in the human rights vision to encompass all of humanity, taking humanity as a whole as the core concern and primary focus of institutional construction — something that transcends both individuals and the people. Traditional Chinese culture has long embraced ideas such as *tianxia datong* (great harmony under heaven) and *xiehe wanbang* (harmonious coexistence among all states).¹⁷ The Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China also explicitly states that one of its purposes is dedicated to world harmony.¹⁸ Accordingly, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind draws nourishment from traditional Chinese views of humanity and reflects the worldview of the CPC as a political party committed to communist ideals. It regards humanity as an integrated whole — a community that faces outward together.¹⁹ In terms of the subjects and objects of contemporary human cognition and action, this concept represents the broadest possible subject domain that human legal systems can

¹² Sonia Tascon and Jim Ife, "Human Rights and Critical Whiteness: Whose Humanity?" *International Journal of Human Rights* 12 (2008): 307-327.

¹³ Zhang Wenxian, "On the Subject of Human Rights and the Human Rights of the Subject," *China Legal Science* 5 (1991): 26-34.

¹⁴ Cong Riyun, "The Intellectual Origins of Modern Human Rights Doctrines," *Journal of Liaoning Normal University* 1 (2000): 110-112.

¹⁵ Gao Qinghai, *Selected Writings of Gao Qinghai on Species-Philosophy* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2019), 57.

¹⁶ Yuan Zushe and Liu Huaqing, "The Three-Dimensional Value Pursuit of the Spiritual Life in the New Era," *The Journal of Shandong Social Sciences* 8 (2019): 5-10.

¹⁷ Fu Shouxiang, "Chinese Wisdom and Civilizational Awareness in the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind," *Seeking Truth* 3 (2017): 14-19.

¹⁸ "The Communist Party of China is dedicated to pursuing happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation. It is also dedicated to human progress and world harmony." Xi Jinping, "Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects," *Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China* (October 16, 2022), in *Selected Readings from the Works of Xi Jinping* (vol. I) (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2023), 18.

¹⁹ Liu Fangping, "Marx's Thought on Community and the Construction of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind," *Journal of Central South University (Social Sciences)* 2 (2019): 105-113.

contemplate, and it encompasses the widest range of potential interests that global governance can address — far exceeding the scope covered by the notions of the individual or the people.²⁰ From the perspective of human rights, this means that the level of analysis advances not only from the development of the individual person to that of collective persons, but further to humanity as such.²¹ By emphasizing the integrity of humanity²² and approaching human rights issues from the standpoint of humanity's shared circumstances, shared needs, and shared actions,²³ the concept enables us to transcend, to a considerable extent, the longstanding tensions between human rights and sovereignty.²⁴ It seeks humanity's common interests and pursuits beyond the framework of sovereign state interests, achieving a highly comprehensive and systematic integration of rights and interests, and thereby possessing a high degree of legitimacy.

B. Guarding against the impact of extreme notions such as animal liberation on humanity's status as the subject of human rights

Within the current framework of human survival and development, all ideas, legal institutions, modes of production, and forms of life in human society serve humanity. They cannot transcend humanity, nor should they do so. For human beings, all considerations in human rights theory, ethical policymaking, and theoretical inquiry must ultimately be grounded in the realization of human well-being.²⁵ Human well-being constitutes the ultimate criterion and highest value by which the appropriateness and legitimacy of all social arrangements are to be judged. Human rights do not possess an independent value detached from humanity; just as without human beings, animals and plants, soil and stone, forests and grasslands, mountains and rivers, lakes and sands cannot meaningfully be said to have value. Some scholars advocating animal liberation²⁶ or "Land Ethic"²⁷ argue that, in addition to human beings, other species — and even non-living entities — should be included as subjects

²⁰ Zhang Huabo and Deng Shuhua, "Marx's Development of the Idea of Community and Its Implications for Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind," *Studies on Marxism* 11 (2017): 29-37.

²¹ Ren Shuaijun, "A Study on the Ideology of Human Rights Value Measurement," *Hubei Social Sciences* 10 (2016): 5-13.

²² Cai Tuo, "The Logic and System of Cosmopolitanism," *Nankai Journal (Philosophy, Literature and Social Science Edition)* 6 (2017): 144-156.

²³ Liu Jianping, "Achieving Humanistic Value Consensus Through World Politics: The Relationship Between Sovereignty and Supranational Power in the UN Charter," *Yinshan Academic Journal* 3 (2009): 81-84.

²⁴ Yang Zewei, "On the International Protection of Human Rights and National Sovereignty," *Science of Law* 6 (2003): 95-104.

²⁵ Jiang Chang and Pan Congyi, "Xi Jinping's View of Happiness and the Promotion and Transcendence of Traditional Chinese Views of Happiness," *Wuhan University Journal (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 4 (2018): 5-12.

²⁶ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation Now: The Definitive Classic Renewed* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2023), 1-29; Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics (3rd Edition)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 16-154.

²⁷ Roberta L. Millstein, *The Land is Our Community: Aldo Leopold Environmental Ethic for the New Millennium* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2024).

of moral and legal consideration.²⁸ While such views have attracted a certain degree of attention and influence in academic circles,²⁹ they are fundamentally inconsistent with the basic characteristics and operating principles of human society. Considerations of animal rights, plant rights, or the rights of non-living entities must all be grounded in human interests.³⁰ From the perspective of rights protection and realization in practice, such interests include human aesthetic interests, human needs for companionship, human demands for a convenient life, and human aspirations for a favorable living environment. Even when protecting animals, plants, or non-living natural entities such as mountains, rivers, lakes, beaches, forests, and grasslands, such protection must be carried out by human beings.³¹ It is untenable to assume that these non-human entities possess a dignity superior to that of humanity or can advance independent claims. It is difficult for human beings to conceive of a system of social governance in which no humans participate, and even more difficult to accept a world in which humanity has ceased to exist while only animals and plants flourish amid magnificent mountains and seas. In this sense, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind reminds us that anthropocentrism is a fundamental principle that must be upheld in human reflection on and governance of the world.³² Anthropocentrism may be moderated, but it cannot disappear. At the same time, understanding and evaluations of scientific and technological development — such as attitudes toward generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), as well as the application of genetically modified and gene-editing technologies — must take into account both the present conditions and future prospects of human survival. Views that advocate granting artificial intelligence legal subjectivity, or that claim technological development follows an autonomous logic capable of transcending human morality, represent a deviation from the proper path, or may reflect deliberate misguidance by technologically driven capital interests.

C. Exploring the possibilities of human coordination and cooperation in the face of major hardships and threats

²⁸ Lin Hongmei, “A Comparison of Animal Liberation Theory and Previous Animal Protectionism,” *Journal of Southwest University (Social Sciences Edition)* 4 (2006): 100-103.

²⁹ Liu Fangping, “Marx’s Thought on Community and the Construction of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” 5-13.

³⁰ Li Shouping suggests that under the guidance of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind concept, international law reform should further enrich and innovate international law’s basic principles, such as the principle of state sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, and international cooperation, establish human-centered, cooperative, win-win, and inclusive development ideas, and improve and develop international legal systems regarding human rights protection, environmental protection, humanitarianism, and the use of global public domain resources, thereby jointly enhancing human shared interests. See Li Shouping, “The Concept of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind Leading International Legal Reform: Logical Justification and Realistic Path,” *Studies in Law and Business* 1 (2020): 44-56.

³¹ He Zhipeng, “How Are ‘Rights of Nature’ Possible?” *Law and Social Development* 1 (2008): 102-119.

³² He Zhipeng, “‘Rights of Nature’ and the Development of Rights Theory,” *Anhui University Law Review* 2 (2006): 99-119.

The development of human rights must confront both global and national processes of modernization.³³ Human rights must be observed, evaluated, planned, and designed from a global perspective, and must also be understood within the historical and contemporary context of international relations.³⁴ Because survival resources are scarce within a shared living space, competition, suspicion, mutual attacks, persecution, and deception frequently arise among different human groups.³⁵ At a time when humanity needs to rely on the concept of human rights to enhance solidarity and mutual assistance, some states instead choose to politicize human rights,³⁶ treating them as instruments for suppressing and attacking others, thereby exacerbating divisions within the international community. Many international legal instruments, including the *Charter of the United Nations* and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, profoundly recognize the necessity of human unity.³⁷ In particular, the appeasement policies pursued by certain countries during World War II, to a significant extent, enabled the unchecked expansion of fascism and planted the seeds of catastrophe for those who endured life-and-death trials and immense suffering during the war. These historical experiences represent the grave consequences of policies that disregard the common interests of humanity.³⁸ Such legal instruments remind us that only unity and cooperation can secure a sustainable future for humankind. Some scholars have even argued that cooperation should be regarded as a fundamental principle of international law.³⁹ Regrettably, humanity has not fully internalized the lessons of history. When confronted with disasters and threats, some states have failed to approach issues from the standpoint of addressing shared human dangers, focusing instead on how to extract advantages for themselves. For example, during the global public health crisis from 2020 to 2023, certain countries did not prioritize effective responses to the pandemic or draw lessons after the crisis subsided; instead, they actively pursued abusive litigation related to the pandemic and shifted responsibility onto other states.⁴⁰ This is clearly neither a mindset nor a pattern of behavior that regards humanity as a community of shared destiny. Similarly, some territorially small states, rather than acknowledging objective conditions of regional resource scarcity or exploring ways to enhance resource

³³ Wang Xigen, "On the Chinese Path of Human Rights Development in the Context of Chinese Modernization," *Social Sciences in Chinese Higher Education Institution* 1 (2023): 32-40.

³⁴ Huang Jinrong, "Reconstructing the Concept of Human Rights amid the Trend of Human Rights Inflation: An International Human Rights Law Perspective," *Zhejiang Social Sciences* 10 (2018): 24-35.

³⁵ Wu Zhicheng and Li Jiaxuan, "China's Perspective on Governing the Global Trust Deficit," *CASS Journal of Political Science* 6 (2020): 24-36.

³⁶ China Society for Human Rights Studies, "U.S. Politicization of Human Rights Undermines the Foundations of Good Human Rights Governance," *People's Daily*, December 28, 2021, 17.

³⁷ *Charter of the United Nations*, Art. 1; *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Preamble and Art. 28.

³⁸ Wang Yubo, "An Analysis of British Appeasement Policy," *Jianghai Academic Journal* 5 (1996): 144-149.

³⁹ Gu Shengkai, "Legal and Policy Reflections on International Human Rights Dialogue and Cooperation," *International Forum* 4 (2000): 19-24.

⁴⁰ Li Qingming, "An Analysis of the Illegality of False Accusations and Abusive Litigation During the U.S. COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Law Application* 21 (2020): 59-68.

efficiency and establish cooperative decision-making frameworks and mechanisms, have instead resorted to armed attacks against neighboring countries.⁴¹ Such retaliatory and cyclical modes of thinking are likewise incompatible with the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind. As a result, although the spirit of “one human family” enshrined in international legal instruments is frequently articulated, it often remains merely aspirational, failing to be institutionalized as concrete mechanisms or translated into the realities of the international order.

With respect to internal relations within human society, although competition over resources and opportunities may be unavoidable at a micro level, from a broader perspective, humanity’s inability to learn cooperation may itself become the foundation of a disastrous destiny. Models of action based on cooperation, shared responsibility, and collective resilience are more conducive to addressing human risks and challenges in a comprehensive, thorough, and sustainable manner, and better enable humanity at large to resolve deep-seated and practical problems. For this reason, such approaches are especially vital to sound governance. Exploring and analyzing this foundational idea further helps to clarify the status and significance of a community with a shared future for mankind. In the current configuration of human society, not only does each individual face a series of opportunities, challenges, and developmental needs, but each state does so as well. States confront threats and competition from one another, yet they also jointly face shared sources of instability and even danger within international society — challenges that require collective engagement, consultation, and resolution by humanity as a whole. These issues, which demand a common response and cooperative deliberation, constitute the highest-priority concerns within the broadest temporal and spatial horizon of contemporary human society.

In 2025, China put forward a Global Governance Initiative aimed at “working with all countries for a more just and equitable global governance system and advancing toward a community with a shared future for mankind.” Its specific propositions include advocating a people-centered approach, ensuring that the global governance process upholds the principle of extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit. By fostering a collaborative posture, we can better address the common challenges facing human society — such as peace, security, development, and ecology — particularly by narrowing the wealth and technology gaps through development cooperation and bridging the North-South development divide. Only by genuinely realizing people’s participation and people’s sharing can we better safeguard the common interests of all nations worldwide.

III. The Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind as a Cognitive Guidance for Global Human Rights Governance

The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture and exerts a guiding influence at the level of ideas. To a considerable extent, this concept is projected as a community of human rights

⁴¹ For example, the armed conflicts in 2025 between Israel and several neighboring states, as well as between India and Pakistan, seriously departed from the basic international law principle of consultation and cooperation.

perspectives. In summary, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind reshapes human rights cognition by influencing how ideals and reality are distinguished and integrated, and how commonality and individuality are understood.

A. Setting lofty ideals while keeping in mind the bottom line of reality

Human rights embody not only a high-order ideal of enjoying a better life, but also a low-order recognition of the shared risks and crises confronting humanity. The aspiration to live a happy and better life constitutes the ideal pole of human rights, while the various risks, hardships, and challenges that humanity have to confront form their real-world pole. The human rights cause consists precisely in striving for ideals on the basis of realistic bottom lines. If one fails to recognize the constraints and predicaments of human rights and instead pursues ideals in a one-sided manner, human rights discourse risks becoming detached from the actual conditions of human society. At its core, human rights represent a dynamic process in which the world is transformed through sustained effort and improved through practice, ultimately in pursuit of the goal of a better life. Every individual aspires to a better life, and some scholars have argued that enjoyment of a better life has itself become a form of human right.⁴² They propose the “right to a better life” as a moral right inherent to human beings — an idea that bears a distinctively Chinese foundation, characteristics, and cultural orientation.⁴³ At the level of international human rights concepts and institutions, ideality and reality must likewise coexist. While human rights ideals possess powerful moral appeal, their realization is often constrained by uneven development, resource scarcity, and fragmentation in global governance, resulting in a gap between ideals and reality.⁴⁴ International human rights evolve through a spiral interaction between ideality and reality, and it is precisely through this tension that they continually renew their vitality.

The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind takes human destiny as its premise and thus strongly reflects a sense of being more mindful of potential dangers.⁴⁵ The fundamental reason this concept provides directional guidance for the development of the human rights cause lies in its simple yet profound insight into the conditions of human existence, offering international relations a form of baseline thinking.⁴⁶ From the perspective of a community with a shared future for mankind, the many difficulties and problems confronting today’s world are explicitly acknowledged and emphasized.⁴⁷ Humanity exists within a fragile ecological system.

⁴² Wu Peipei and Bao Qingde, “A Review of Contemporary Western Studies on Animal Rights,” *Studies in Dialectics of Nature* 1 (2013): 73-78.

⁴³ Fan Jinxue, “On the Right to a Better Life under Xi Jinping’s Thought on a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” *Law Science* 5 (2021): 3-17.

⁴⁴ Liu Xuebin and Cai Jianfang, “A Preliminary Study of International Human Rights under the Rule of Law,” *Jilin University Journal (Social Sciences Edition)* 2 (2011): 146-153.

⁴⁵ Wang Gonglong and Han Xu, “An Analysis of the Four Dimensions of the Thought of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” *The Journal of Shanghai Administration Institute* 3 (2016): 96-104.

⁴⁶ Shen Xiangping and Wang Huaixiu, “On the Baseline Values of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” *Theoretical Exploration* 5 (2020): 48-53.

⁴⁷ Zhang Yonghong and Yin Wengui, “The Birth, Value, and Realization of the Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” *Ideological and Theoretical Education* 8 (2017): 31-37.

The fragility of this system arises not only from external factors capable of inflicting devastating harm, but also from the possibility that improper human activities may themselves produce catastrophic consequences. For example, humanity faces the risk of global destruction resulting from the misuse of weapons of mass destruction;⁴⁸ the threat posed by cyber viruses and the paralysis of global information networks generated by technological advancement, which can inflict severe losses on governments, enterprises, and individuals worldwide;⁴⁹ the possibility that deficiencies in the design or operation of AI algorithms may generate systemic difficulties and major accidents; the rise in global unemployment brought about by economic recession, accompanied by heightened social anxiety and intellectual confusion; the mutual suppression among states and ethnic groups resulting from incompatibility and misunderstanding between civilizations; and the worldwide threat of floods, landslides, and other disasters caused by increasingly extreme climate conditions. Moreover, global climate change and rising sea levels endanger the territorial integrity and even the continued existence of some states. Accordingly, humanity should maintain a constant sense of being more mindful of potential dangers, remain alert to risks originating both from nature and from within human society itself, and thereby foster governance arrangements that are sound and continuously improving. In the face of such difficulties and challenges, humanity should neither succumb to pessimism nor stagnate, but instead strive to identify pathways toward a brighter, more hopeful, and more promising future. In this sense, the awareness of risk, consciousness of crisis, and baseline thinking embedded in the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind offer important insights for reflection on human rights.

B. Respecting diverse paths of development while expanding shared thinking

The cognitive foundation of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind lies in the gradual convergence of human living needs and governance structures, as well as in the close interdependence among states in economic, political, and cultural terms.⁵⁰ This concept affirms the commonality of humanity: human beings live within a shared environment, and as social life becomes increasingly interconnected — namely, as it unfolds within a globalized social context — interpersonal interactions more frequently transcend national borders, while exchanges and mutual learning among states continue to deepen.⁵¹ Under such conditions, human rights norms are likely to display an increasing tendency to converge. If, from the mid-20th century to the early 21st century, the common global understanding of human rights principles largely remained at an introductory stage — one in which states broadly accepted the fundamental idea that human rights must be

⁴⁸ Wang Hongwei, “Risks and Responses to International Nuclear Terrorism,” *Defense Science & Technology Industry* 3 (2007): 64-66.

⁴⁹ Chen Xiuzhen, Zheng Qinghua, Guan Xiaohong, and Lin Chenguang, “A Hierarchical Quantitative Assessment Method for Network Security Threat Situations,” *Journal of Software* 4 (2006): 885-897.

⁵⁰ He Zhipeng, “International Rule of Law: Defining a Concept,” *Tribune of Political Science and Law* 4 (2009): 63-81.

⁵¹ David Held et al., *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*, Yang Xuedong et al. trans. (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2001), 589-602.

sincerely respected and actively protected, yet differed significantly on which rights should be protected, how they should be protected, and how priorities among rights should be determined — then, with the growing diversity and intensity of cross-border interactions and with states increasingly drawing upon one another’s governance experience,⁵² shared understandings regarding the concrete protection of human rights will continue to expand. To a considerable extent, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind reveals this dimension of human commonality. From a community perspective, it demonstrates that peoples across the world can gradually develop shared conceptions of human rights. The process of globalization may thus be understood as one in which cultural differences gradually diminish while mutual understanding and respect among cultures steadily increase.⁵³ More importantly, as living conditions converge and modernization advances, similarities among national and cultural human rights institutions will progressively intensify.⁵⁴

At the same time, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind recognizes not only the possibility of institutional convergence, but also the diversity of human civilizations. In other words, institutional convergence among human societies emerges organically from human practice rather than from coercive, subjective, or wishful imposition. This implies that the formation of common human rights standards is necessarily a gradual process, and that diversity in human rights practices will persist over the long term. Just as scholars of globalization observe phenomena such as the “regionalization of the global” and the “globalization of regions” in the course of globalization, the interaction between national human rights mechanisms and regional and global human rights systems likewise gives rise to a diversity of global human rights civilizations. As human rights legal institutions continue to develop, these diverse human rights civilizations will gradually draw closer to one another within the broader process of globalization, generating increasing commonalities. This globalizing process of diversified human rights civilizations accords with the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, and moreover reflects the Marxist conception of practice.

C. Advocating multilateralism and resisting unilateralism

From a legal and jurisprudential perspective, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind offers the following insights for the development of human rights: it acknowledges genuine multilateralism⁵⁵ and guides people towards greater acceptance of inclusive peace, security, and development, as opposed to their exclusive counterparts.⁵⁶ On a planet as limited in size as Earth, if states fail to

⁵² David Held and Anthony McGrew, ed., *Governing Globalization: Power, Authority and Global Governance*, Cao Rongxiang et al. trans. (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2004), 3-35.

⁵³ Li Shuangyuan and Li Zan, “A Review of Legal Development Theories in the Process of Globalization,” *Studies in Law and Business* 5 (2005): 153-160.

⁵⁴ Yao Lu, “‘Symbiotic Security’ in International Relations,” *International Review* 1 (2019): 51-66.

⁵⁵ Liu Qing, “The Global Security Initiative and Its Implications for Global Human Rights Governance,” *International Studies* 4 (2023): 1-16.

⁵⁶ Wu Zhicheng and Liu Peidong, “The New Type of International Relations in Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy,” *Northeast Asia Forum* 2 (2022): 3-18.

engage in sufficient cooperation and instead persist in mutual suspicion, unrestrained suppression, and sanctions against one another, the result may well be collective destruction. The epistemological significance of this concept for human rights lies in its recognition that, from perspectives of opposition and competition, the development of human rights must take into account claims made by individuals against governments, by collectives or regional minorities against states, and even by states against the international community. Beyond these dimensions, however, it is also necessary to consider cooperation among individuals and among groups. Humanity must jointly plan for a better future and collectively construct a more just and humane human rights order.

The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind requires close attention to the finite bounds of the Earth, and on this basis, acknowledge the reality and diversity of the risks and challenges confronting humankind. Guided by such baseline thinking, we can understand that the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind does not amount to a one-sided pursuit of compromise or tolerance; rather, it requires clear moral judgments, refusing to accommodate individuals or groups that undermine the survival and development of others while pursuing only their own continuation. Such actors must be firmly confronted, and their conduct must be met with effective sanctions.⁵⁷ To this end, the international community must establish rules oriented toward the good, in order to prevent the spread of harm. The fundamental requirement for all rules is the minimal level of coexistence. For example, acts such as attempting to murder others; seeking to eliminate or harm entire groups; provoking hatred between races or nations; inciting hostility and violent conflict; or, when a country encounters developmental obstacles, refusing to seriously examine their causes and instead shifting responsibility and transferring crises onto others — these practices all violate the basic conditions of coexistence. Accordingly, with respect to human rights, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind possesses not only the value for constructive promotion, but also a clear restraining and deterrent function.

It must be acknowledged that self-interest constitutes a basic, intuitive mode of thinking and cognition for many states.⁵⁸ Some states go out of their way to exploit natural resources and energy reserves to maximize their own economic gains, while competing with others for territory, maritime space, and other domains in order to expand the foundations of their survival and development. Others adopt policies, laws, or concrete actions that harm other states, or selectively extend preferential treatment to certain quasi-allied countries while imposing containment and suppression measures on others. To a certain extent, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind can awaken empathy and compassion among national populations — especially among political leaders — in the conduct of international relations. It can help to prevent the objectification and demonization of other countries and

⁵⁷ Sun Meng, “China’s Participation in UN Human Rights Mechanisms and the Enhancement of International Human Rights Discourse Power,” *Foreign Affairs Review (Journal of China Foreign Affairs University)* 3 (2019): 29-55.

⁵⁸ Ustinia Dolgopol and Judith Gardam, ed., *The Challenge of Conflict: International Law Responds* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2006), 37.

peoples, and discourage approaches that disregard the interdependence and coordinated socioeconomic development of states and societies in favor of narrow national will and interests alone. Ultimately, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind seeks to free people from parochial perspectives and interests, encouraging them to think about and analyze modes of national governance and interstate interaction from broader and more long-term perspectives.

IV. The Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind as a Value-based Evaluation Framework for Global Human Rights Governance

The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind emphasizes human interdependence and highlights the risks and challenges confronting human survival, thereby exercising a guiding function in the construction of human rights values.⁵⁹ The notion of cooperation embedded in this concept offers important insights for the development of the human rights cause. Several key domains emphasized by the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind are of guiding significance for global human rights governance.

A. Value principles embedded in the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind

From the various governance propositions advanced under the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind and their projection in the field of human rights, several principles can be derived that should guide international human rights affairs and global human rights governance.

First, the principle of prioritizing common interests over parochial concerns. The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind first establishes the highest epistemological pursuit: all ideas, plans, and actions conducive to safeguarding the common survival and development of humanity conform to the requirements of the good, whereas all ideas, plans, and actions detrimental to humanity's shared survival and development may be defined as evil. The interests of animals and non-living entities must yield to human interests.⁶⁰ In considering humanity's shared destiny, observation, reflection, decision-making, and action must not be confined to narrow regional or partial interests, but must instead take overall and collective interests into account. This principle also reflects the major orientation of intra-generational and inter-generational equity within the concept of sustainable development.

Second, the principle of upholding peace and cooperation. In the overall order and operation of human society, except in the case of extremely harmful individuals, groups, ideologies, or actions — those grounded in zero-sum, life-or-death confrontation — it is necessary to actively promote consultation and dialogue, approach conflicts from a more moderate perspective, and seek cooperative solutions to problems. Accordingly, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind generally supports the peaceful settlement of disputes and advocates

⁵⁹ Zhang Zhuo, "A Community with a Shared Future for Mankind and the Transformation of the Global Governance System," *Socialism Studies* 6 (2021): 140-147.

⁶⁰ Yang Tongjin, "Basic Concepts of Environmental Ethics," *Morality and Civilization* 1 (2000): 6-10.

cooperative responses to crises and predicaments. It is within such an atmosphere of international relations that human rights can receive the most effective protection.

Third, the principle of honoring commitments. Given that trust is exceedingly difficult to establish among individuals, groups, and states, yet very easy to destroy, it is essential, under normal social conditions, to require and emphasize the observance of commitments. Breaches of commitments may generate negative consequences for human society that persist across generations and cannot easily be absorbed or remedied. Such breaches may even cause internal disintegration, preventing humanity from acting in unity to confront shared risks and challenges. The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind thus requires the establishment of stable structures of trust between individuals and states, as well as among states themselves, which in turn necessitates firm punishment of those who violate commitments.

Fourth, the principle of proportionality. All human ideas, norms, and actions should remain moderate and appropriate to their specific contexts. They must neither be excessively harsh or brutal — approaching fascism — nor passive, inefficient, or ineffective. The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind does not advocate unprincipled compromise, nor does it endorse bottomless concession. As advocated in ancient Confucian thought, virtue should be repaid with virtue, and grievances addressed with rectitude, so as to properly handle conflicts and misunderstandings among individuals, groups, and states. To better clarify this point, this paper emphasizes the notion of “appropriateness” in international human rights governance — what is commonly referred to as the “proportionality” element of the proportionality principle,⁶¹ or, in Chinese cultural terms, the “doctrine of the mean” (*zhongyong*).⁶²

From the foregoing analysis, it is not difficult to reach the following conclusion: ethical standards governing human conduct should never be abstract, but must always be concrete, taking into account diverse temporal and spatial conditions. While basic principles of legitimate action can be derived by abstracting from specific circumstances within a given spatiotemporal setting, once these principles are applied to concrete facts, they must be reintegrated into that specific context.⁶³ Questions concerning the legitimacy of rights, the appropriateness of conduct, and the boundaries of interests must all be examined within a defined spatiotemporal framework, as well as in light of the authority legitimately held by the actor and the expectations that others reasonably place upon that actor. The spatiotemporal setting determines the concrete background of action, the scope of authority possessed by the actor, and the rationale for the actor’s conduct. Only through consideration and

⁶¹ The principle of proportionality is a legal concept widely discussed in both Chinese and foreign legal academia. See Liu Quan, “Reconstructing Legitimate Purpose and the Principle of Proportionality,” *China Legal Science* 4 (2014): 133-150; Matthias Klatt and Moritz Meister, “Proportionality — A Benefit to Human Rights? Remarks on the I-CON Controversy,” *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 10, no. 3 (2012): 687-708.

⁶² Confucianism perceives human rights as having instrumental value, serving as a crucial backup mechanism to safeguard fundamental human interests and needs. Chen Zuwei and Kuang Zhao, “Confucian Thought and Human Rights,” *Academic Monthly* 11 (2013): 32-40.

⁶³ Hu Xianxin, “From Group Ethics to Species Ethics — The Historical Trend of Ethics,” *Marxism and Reality* 5 (2003): 31-35.

analysis of such concrete conditions can meaningful and valuable evaluations be achieved.

B. Establishing a value hierarchy among diverse human rights perspectives

Once the foregoing set of principles is applied to concrete facts, abstract norms must necessarily be situated within specific spatiotemporal contexts.⁶⁴ Such contexts define the concrete background of conduct, the scope of authority possessed by the actor, and the reasons motivating the actor's actions. Only by incorporating consideration and analysis of these concrete conditions can evaluation acquire genuine significance. Questions concerning the legitimacy of rights, the appropriateness of conduct, and the boundaries of interests must all be examined within a given spatiotemporal setting, and in light of such factors as the authority legitimately granted to the actor and the expectations that others reasonably hold toward that actor.

Legal affairs — and, by extension, many matters within human society — are fundamentally debates about legitimacy.⁶⁵ More specifically, they consist of a series of challenges and counterarguments concerning reasons for action and the grounds of claims.⁶⁶ When one party believes that its conduct is justified while the other considers that justification flawed, the two sides engage in argument over whether sufficient reasons exist to support the conduct.⁶⁷ Similarly, when one party advances a claim that the other regards as insufficiently grounded, debate arises over the deeper foundations of that claim.⁶⁸ At a superficial level, such debates are confined to the domain of legal norms, tracing upward from specific and concrete rules to the norms that authorize them, and ultimately to the highest-level norms within a given legal field. When inquiry at the level of positive law reaches its limit, discussion may transcend positive law and turn to whether an action or claim possesses reasons and justifications beyond formal legal rules.⁶⁹ At the endpoint of this chain of reasons and grounds, a norm or proposition occupying the highest level of priority is required to deliver a final judgment. This ultimate norm — the most fundamental and overarching one — is the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, which reflects upon human affairs from the breadth of humanity as a whole, the depth of shared destiny, and how interconnected a community should be.

In the process of human rights protection and remedy, when conflicts or contradictions arise, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind can serve as a standard for distinguishing right from wrong and identifying good and evil.

⁶⁴ Zhang Yan and Xi Fengqin, "On the Paradox of Choice in the New Era's Better Life and Its Transcendence," *Ideological and Theoretical Education* 6 (2018): 24-30.

⁶⁵ Guan Yu, "Defining the Right to Defense from the Perspective of Criminal Procedure," *Tribune of Political Science and Law* 6 (2007): 136-144.

⁶⁶ Wu Fei, "Judicial Thinking: Dogmatism or Deliberation?" *Legal Methodology* 2 (2009): 232-240.

⁶⁷ Zheng Zejin and Zhang Guoxiang, "Foundations, Conditions, and Practical Standards of Fairness and Justice," *Theory Front* 4 (2009): 23-24.

⁶⁸ Ni Yong, "On Standards of Justice," *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy* 1 (2000): 105-109.

⁶⁹ Friedrich, "My Philosophy of Law," Bing Yi trans., *Modern Foreign Philosophy and Social Science Digest* 3 (1962): 4-7.

This concept operates on two levels: a macro-level worldview and a meso-level vision for the development of international affairs.⁷⁰ At the macro level, it recognizes the reality of human interdependence⁷¹ and acknowledges the objective condition that humanity's living and developmental environment cannot be substantially expanded in the short term. It calls for cherishing the environment in which humanity exists and for preventing situations in which some individuals or groups build their survival, development, and happiness upon the suffering, decline, or even extinction of others. It rejects zero-sum thinking that seeks to shift burdens onto others, urging instead both the protection of the shared planet and the promotion of shared survival and development. At the meso level of constructive vision, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind articulates expectations across five dimensions: lasting peace, universal security, shared prosperity, openness and inclusiveness, and a clean and beautiful world.⁷² Viewed through these two levels of understanding, the concept is intrinsically connected with human rights. It not only affirms that all political, economic, and cultural activities in human society should be oriented toward human security, prosperity, and sustainable development, but also makes clear that the development of human rights does not take place in a context of unlimited resources.⁷³ Rather, it must account for the constraints facing humanity, and within those constraints, encourage mutual consideration within the human family, reduce hostility and confrontation, and adjust positions and conduct in pursuit of relatively stable, secure, and sustainable human development. In the protection of human rights, the rights to subsistence, security, and development occupy foundational and central positions. Without development, peace and security cannot be sustained; peace and security, in turn, constitute the preconditions for development. Moreover, peace, security, and development depend to a large extent on mutual understanding among peoples and states. Where understanding and respect prevail, hostility and suppression can be reduced, giving rise to a stable condition of coexistence. Likewise, when the natural environment and the environment of production and daily life are properly protected, people living in a clean and beautiful society are less likely to develop antagonism toward one another. A sound environment also facilitates open communication, mutual tolerance, and shared development among people of different races, ethnicities, and religions. For these reasons, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind offers comprehensive inspiration and normative guidance in the field of human rights.

C. Resolving disputes in human rights governance through the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind

⁷⁰ Li Baogeng, "A Community with a Shared Future for Mankind in Universal Interaction," *Social Sciences in China* 4 (2020): 4-26.

⁷¹ Liu Bo, "The Responsibility to Protect in International Human Rights Protection Mechanisms," *Journal of University of International Relations* 4 (2011): 40-47.

⁷² Peng Bingbing, "On the Substance, Connotation, and Significance of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind," *Guizhou Social Sciences* 4 (2017): 11-16.

⁷³ Niu Qingyan, "Ecological Ethical Spirit in the Context of Globalization," *Studies in Ethics* 1 (2017): 115-120.

When disagreements arise within the international community concerning the scope, methods, and pathways of human rights protection, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind can provide a set of justificatory reasons for resolving such disputes. For example, with respect to human rights claims grounded primarily in individual freedom, their legitimacy and rationality may be examined under the guidance of this concept. If individual freedoms pose a threat to humanity's overall peace and security — such as through the development of highly dangerous weapons, and AI and genetic technologies capable of destroying humanity — such claims may be opposed from the perspective of a community with a shared future for mankind. Likewise, when a state frames its own human rights claims in opposition to other states—by invoking fabricated security concerns or advancing development claims that benefit itself at the expense of others — those claims may be assessed and rejected according to the same standard.

If we acknowledge the existence of natural law in the world — understood as a rudimentary, intuitive sense of justice inscribed in human nature — then such natural law cannot be expected to be detailed or sophisticated. Rather, it consists of a small number of broad, vague, and simple principles that admit numerous exceptions in real life.⁷⁴ Although limited reasoning based on logic and practical rationality can be applied to these exceptions, ultimate justification for action — especially judgments concerning legitimacy — must be grounded in specific spatiotemporal contexts rather than relying solely on simplistic and indeterminate notions of natural law. Through social interaction and communication, human beings develop more explicit norms of conduct, providing more refined interpretations of these relatively coarse and preliminary natural law principles. It should be emphasized, however, that the elaboration of natural law — particularly the identification of exceptions and implementation principles — does not entail that authoritative institutions within human society may arbitrarily establish or alter people's basic and intuitive sense of justice. Rather, such elaboration reflects generally accepted norms of conduct formed under specific spatiotemporal conditions, based on widely shared principles governing social interaction. This process resembles what philosophers have described as an “overlapping consensus.” These socially recognized rules in concrete contexts refine and particularize abstract natural law, delineating its boundaries and leaving adequate space for human action. The ultimate concern of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind is the common destiny of human society — namely, shared existential threats and the highest collective interests of humanity as a whole. This constitutes the final ground of legitimacy for human action. Ethical principles and their exceptions, as well as disputes over ethical principles, ultimately hinge on the requirement that every claim be supported by a justifying reason. When that ultimate justification is traced back to humanity's shared destiny, all other reasons must yield.

V. The Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind as an Actionable Framework for Global Human Rights Governance

Although human rights originate as ideas, they must ultimately be realized through institutions. The continuous modernization of the human rights cause is a

⁷⁴ Costas Douzinas, “The End of Human Rights,” Jiang Xingjing trans., *The Jurist* 2 (2009): 1-11.

process of ongoing interaction and mutual feedback between ideas and institutions.⁷⁵ The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind occupies a foundational position in the value structure governing the operation of human rights and provides directional guidance for the development of the human rights cause.

A. Impacts at the national and international decision-making levels

The guiding role of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind in concrete human rights practice is largely manifested in its capacity to promote the formation of a collective action framework for global human rights governance within the international community — that is, a human rights community of action shaped by this concept. Practice has demonstrated that advancing and promoting human rights protection requires not only ideas and norms, but also concrete action. The guiding and facilitating role of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind in advancing human rights protection can be understood from at least three dimensions.

First, the concept provides baseline thinking support and basic domain-oriented planning guidance. The baseline lies in humanity's shared destiny: living on a common planet and constrained by a shared global environment. The protection of human rights must take common risks and threats as the minimum baseline considerations. On the basis of these baseline considerations, states are better able to delineate which aspects of human rights should be protected, to what extent protection should be provided, and which mechanisms should be employed. In the operation of human rights institutions, timely feedback, reflection, and strategic adjustment are essential. In the context of China's human rights efforts, this requires integrated consideration of rule-of-law issues, diplomatic concerns, and economic factors, actively safeguarding core national interests and the interests of the people, while simultaneously advancing China's contribution to the global human rights cause.⁷⁶

Second, the concept promotes the optimization of human rights institutions. The development of human rights must engage with both global and national processes of modernization.⁷⁷ Human rights should be observed, assessed, planned, and designed from a global perspective, while also being examined in light of their historical evolution and current conditions.⁷⁸ As discussed earlier, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind contributes to the formation of a community of human rights perspectives. On this basis, it further guides the development of a community of human rights norms — that is, the identification of fundamental human rights standards and the formation of basic consensus and action thresholds for human rights protection. Moreover, when projected onto human rights organizational structures, this concept supports the creation of institutional communities that transcend the boundaries of sovereign states. In order to effectively realize human

⁷⁵ Li Lujun, "On Chinese Human Rights Modernization," *Law and Social Development* 5 (2023): 29-48.

⁷⁶ Liu Huawen, "On the Core Essence of Contemporary Chinese Views on Human Rights: An Interpretation Based on Xi Jinping's Series of Statements on Human Rights," *Journal of Comparative Law* 4 (2022): 1-16.

⁷⁷ He Zhipeng, "How Are 'Rights of Nature' Possible?" 32-40.

⁷⁸ He Zhipeng, "'Rights of Nature' and the Development of Rights Theory," 24-35.

well-being, it is necessary to establish basic institutions capable of protecting and implementing human rights across borders, thereby constructing a genuinely effective foundation for human rights governance. Through the platform function of such organizations, states can achieve greater convergence in human rights remedies and implementation, enabling victims of human rights violations to effectively restore their rights.

Third, the means of protecting human rights must be assessed through cost-benefit analysis. The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind provides the highest justification and ultimate foundation for human rights governance. It must be repeatedly emphasized and constantly borne in mind that human rights are not, in themselves, the ultimate purpose of human life and development. For a substantial portion of human history, there existed neither awareness of human rights, nor human rights concepts, theories, institutions, or discourse. Yet people nonetheless lived within their respective social contexts — striving and struggling, experiencing frustration and helplessness along their journeys, enduring pain and sorrow, and also enjoying happiness and fulfillment. Human rights, as a concept that emerged in the West after the Middle Ages and as an institutional framework established following the formation of European and American nation-states, represent one pathway toward achieving well-being and a happy life. Over several centuries of historical development, this pathway has been widely regarded as relatively reasonable, compatible with the basic structure of human society, and well-suited to general patterns of human interaction and governance. Its relative success has contributed to the elevation of human rights as one of the dominant discourses in contemporary human society.⁷⁹ There are many paths to human rights, but ensuring human security is paramount. If the cost of protecting a particular human right is the endangerment of humanity's security, then such means of protection are inherently unreasonable, and the corresponding "human right" becomes a false or hypocritical human right. For example, some Western states have invoked the protection of human rights in Iraq and Libya as justification for the use of military force and regime change — actions that clearly violate the cost-benefit logic of human rights protection and have thus become negative exemplars in international politics. In this respect, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind offers meaningful guidance for selecting appropriate methods of human rights protection.

B. Curbing divisive actions justified in the name of human rights

Human happiness can serve as a measure and criterion for assessing human rights, but human rights cannot, in themselves, measure or determine human happiness. Even if human rights constitute one of the pathways toward achieving human well-being and a fulfilling life, they remain merely instruments employed within domestic political, economic, and cultural activities, as well as in international relations, to promote human happiness and human emancipation, rather than

⁷⁹ Qu Xinru, "Historical and Cultural Reflections on Differences Between Chinese and Western Human Rights Concepts," *Journal of Northwest University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 4 (2006): 18-22.

constituting an ultimate goal or an absolute standard of evaluation. This implies that societies should not be fragmented internally, nor should states be divided externally; hard-won trust and unity must not be undermined. Human rights must not be used as a pretext to suppress or contain other states and peoples, nor should the banner of human rights be wielded to destroy the peaceful lives people already enjoy or to deprive them of opportunities to pursue happiness. Some states, under the guise of “concern” for human rights in China’s Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, have adopted measures such as banning the use of high-quality cotton produced there. These actions reveal not only a lack of understanding of the relationship between cotton production and the well-being of the people of Xinjiang, but also an indifference to the harm that such arbitrary and reckless measures inflict upon their rights and interests. Yet such actions are self-righteously celebrated in the media. In essence, they reflect no genuine commitment to the spirit of human rights, but rather economic competition based on comparative advantage and political pressure grounded in state power.⁸⁰

Several notable trends characterize contemporary international human rights governance: rapid and dynamic evolution; multi-level cooperation under the rule of law; the integration of universality and particularity; and the coexistence of ideality and reality.⁸¹ A deeper examination of these trends can help identify pathways for addressing current challenges. As new categories of human rights continue to emerge — such as “digital human rights”⁸² and “environmental rights”⁸³ — questions have arisen concerning the ambiguity of traditional generational classifications of human rights and the ordering of rights priorities. These issues demand resolution through a clearer understanding of the characteristics of human rights development. Moreover, the solemn commitments undertaken by states through international human rights treaties frequently encounter difficulties in implementation, underscoring the urgent need for critical reflection on the effectiveness of legal institutionalization and human rights protection mechanisms. Ideally, “the rule of law is the most effective safeguard of human rights.”⁸⁴ However, when law itself is ignored or marginalized, human rights risk becoming mere ornaments of power politics. Furthermore, when some states invoke human rights as a pretext to pursue double standards⁸⁵ and unjustifiably interfere in the internal affairs of others, while other states deliberately invoke “cultural differences” to evade their international human rights obligations, it

⁸⁰ Yang Fuqiang, “Cotton, Academia, and Politics: Exploring the Reasons Behind Adrian Zenz’s Attacks on Xinjiang Cotton,” *Journal of Xinjiang University (Philosophy, Humanities and Social Sciences)* 6 (2021): 8-86.

⁸¹ Huang Jinrong, “From the Subjectivity of Human Rights to the Universality of Human Rights — A Preliminary Interpretation of the Theory on the Subjectivity of Human Rights,” *Human Rights* 3 (2024): 187-209.

⁸² Ding Xiaodong, “On the New Rights Characteristics of ‘Digital Human Rights,’” *Science of Law* 6 (2022): 52-66.

⁸³ Zhu Qian, “The Legal Nature of Environmental Rights,” *China Legal Science* 3 (2001): 64-70.

⁸⁴ *Study Outline of Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law (2025 Edition)* (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, Study Press, 2025), 34.

⁸⁵ Xia Yufang, “A Critique of U.S. ‘Double Standards’ on Human Rights,” *Journal of Social Sciences* 4 (2000): 29-33.

becomes necessary to re-examine the dialectical relationship between universality and particularity. Some developed countries raise the banner of “freedom” in the United Nations while disregarding the severe challenges faced by countries in the Global South, such as poverty, public health crises, and food insecurity. Certain non-governmental organizations, for their part, focus narrowly on environmental protection or the advancement of LGBTQ+ community’s rights without adequately considering national cultural contexts and social conditions.⁸⁶ These phenomena compel further reflection on the relationship between ideal aspirations and practical constraints. It is not difficult to observe that when the international environment is relatively relaxed, the scope for cooperation among states expands, and international law enjoys greater space for effectiveness — sometimes even prompting skepticism toward its most fundamental principles in overly favorable conditions.⁸⁷ Conversely, when the international atmosphere becomes tense, realist theories of international relations tend to dominate, significantly constraining the role of international law, with state sovereignty and independence once again assuming primacy.⁸⁸

Recognizing these important trends enables us to look beyond the surface of human rights discourse and to more accurately grasp the deep-seated challenges and developmental possibilities confronting the contemporary international human rights system. The theoretical accumulation of international human rights reflects both a refinement of and response to historical evolution and institutional design, and a necessary preparation for understanding its limitations and future trajectories. By revealing the tensions between universality and particularity, as well as the gap between ideality and reality, we gain a clearer view of an international human rights system that is continuously evolving and advancing.

C. Practical inspirations of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind in terms of concrete requirements

The major dimensions of understanding and the specific strategic orientations articulated by the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind are all of direct guiding significance for human rights practice. From the perspective of concrete planning and institutional design, this concept advances five interrelated dimensions — partnerships, security architecture, economic development, civilizational exchange, and ecological advancement⁸⁹ — each of which entails new requirements in the field of human rights. Among these, partnerships and security architecture belong to traditional issues in international relations. Every state is inevitably concerned with whether it can safeguard peace and avoid danger. Lasting

⁸⁶ Phillip M. Ayoub and Kristina Stoeckl, *The Global Fight against LGBTI Rights: How Transnational Conservative Networks Target Sexual and Gender Minorities* (New York: New York University Press, 2024).

⁸⁷ Chen Yifeng, “Is ‘What Is Not Prohibited by International Law’ Permitted? — A Contemporary Reflection on the ‘Lotus Principle’ in International Law,” *Global Law Review* 3 (2011): 132-141.

⁸⁸ Li Zan, “Principles and Pathways of International Law in Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” *Chinese Review of International Law* 6 (2016): 48-70.

⁸⁹ Xi Jinping, “Jointly Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” in *Selected Readings from the Works of Xi Jinping* (vol. I) (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2023), 565.

peace implies the protection of the right to peace of states and peoples,⁹⁰ the prevention of disasters caused by war and armed conflict to the countries concerned, and the avoidance of shared crises for the international community as a whole.⁹¹ Universal security reflects recognition of the commonality of risks faced by humanity and calls on states to take proactive measures to reduce mutual suspicion, enhance mutual trust, and improve overall global security. Economic development constitutes the foundation for any state to maintain sound governance and social well-being. No country can achieve national strength or the happiness of its people without economic development. The pursuit of shared prosperity means expanding the material foundations through economic and social development so that human rights can be more fully realized, thereby laying a more solid basis for their protection. At the level of the international economic order, this requires abandoning “winner-take-all” system and zero-sum thinking, strengthening the principle of win-win cooperation, and shaping — through multilateral cooperation — a development framework in which all states share growth and jointly pursue well-being. Civilizational exchange is primarily oriented toward openness and inclusiveness,⁹² offering an important response to contemporary theories of a “clash of civilizations.” It must be acknowledged that phenomena such as great-power chauvinism and cultural hegemony still exist in today’s world.⁹³ Prejudice and even discrimination among civilizations have contributed to civilizational conflicts, which in turn affect peace and security, cooperation and prosperity. Therefore, mutual coexistence based on tolerance, and the promotion of mutual benefit and win-win outcomes, constitute the true hope for interaction among human communities.⁹⁴ Openness and inclusiveness require states to adopt open attitudes, promote mutual accommodation, and avoid discrimination, as well as to reject historical patterns of cultural imperialism,⁹⁵ Western-centrism,⁹⁶ and great-power chauvinism.⁹⁷ Ecological advancement is a domain oriented toward the natural environment and resource protection, reflecting

⁹⁰ Zhao Jianwen, “The Origin and Evolution of the Right to Peace,” *Human Rights* 6 (2015): 86-102.

⁹¹ Du Xuewen and Gao Jun, “A Preliminary Exploration of the Right to Peace as a Human Right: From the Perspective of Social Contract Theory,” *Henan Social Sciences* 6 (2010): 94-97; Tang Yingxia, “Right to Peace as Part of Human Rights: Controversy and Connotation,” *Human Rights* 5 (2015): 55-65.

⁹² Some scholars define human rights as “rights that every person should enjoy based on human dignity as international common standards.” See Yan Hailiang, “The Concept of Human Rights in the Constitution and Its Functional Significance,” *Human Rights* 1 (2023): 46-76, which arguably places overly high expectations on common standards of human rights.

⁹³ Regarding related discussions, see He Zhipeng, “The Contribution of the Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind to Human Rights Theory,” *Human Rights* 5 (2017): 1-6.

⁹⁴ Liu Tongfang, “The Original Contribution of Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind to Historical Materialism,” *Social Sciences in China* 7 (2018): 4-21.

⁹⁵ John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism*, Feng Jiansan trans. (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 2018), 38-56.

⁹⁶ John M. Hobson, *Multicultural Origins of the Global Economy: Beyond the Western-Centric Frontier*, Lou Yu et al. trans. (Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2025), 191-270.

⁹⁷ Zhang Jianhua and Li Fengfei, “Nationalism as a Global Trend,” *World Economics and Politics* 1 (1996): 15-18.

humanity's growing concern with environmental issues since the mid-20th century. With scientific and technological advancement, human modes of production and life have exerted increasing pressure on environmental resources. If the environment and resources are not properly preserved, the ecological foundations of human society will deteriorate and become incapable of sustaining human life. Accordingly, contemporary societies must fully consider environmental burdens in production and daily life, and integrate the concept of sustainable development, and ensure both the maintenance of current development levels and the preservation of future generations' development capacity.⁹⁸ This entails actively exploring the opportunities and potential of the present generation without depriving future generations of their own opportunities for development — thus fully respecting environmental rights and the opportunities and right to sustainable development. Taken together, these five dimensions converge into a concept with profound human rights implications. The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind outlines an inspiring vision for the enhancement of human rights protection across states while also indicating feasible paths forward.

First, the human rights effects of lasting peace. The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind places lasting peace at the forefront.⁹⁹ This aspiration is deeply rooted not only in traditional Chinese culture, but also resonates with the wisdom of modern Western philosophy. For a long period of human history, societies have struggled amid warfare, yet the ideal of lasting peace has never faded. Immanuel Kant was among the first to offer a systematic account of perpetual peace, after which thinkers increasingly sought to design a globally coordinated and harmonious international order from the perspective of world citizenship. From the standpoint of individuals, lasting peace means the right to live and work in a peaceful environment. Although this "right to peace" remained a lofty aspiration for a long time, increasing interactions among states and growing communication and cooperation among peoples have rendered peace less remote and unattainable. More importantly, as scientific and technological advances have extended into the military sphere, the development of advanced weaponry has dramatically increased the costs of war, particularly in terms of humanitarian catastrophes. As a result, humanity has become increasingly unwilling to exist in conditions of war. Against this background, the international community convened the Hague Peace Conferences from 1899 to 1907, establishing a series of norms to regulate warfare. This enabled the peace process of the international community to gain more support and recognition. Those who provoke wars, support wars or promote wars, or their actions, are no longer accepted, and in many countries, they are even regarded as criminals and criminal acts. The emergence of war crimes in international law represents a crucial legal mechanism through which individuals, as holders of the right to peace, receive protection.

⁹⁸ S. R. Chowdhury, "Intergenerational Equity: The Foundation of the Right to Sustainable Development," Huang Lie trans., *Foreign Law Review (Today's Global Law Review)* 3 (1998): 8-21.

⁹⁹ Phillip M. Ayoub and Kristina Stoeckl, *The Global Fight against LGBTI Rights*, 565-566.

World peace and human rights exhibit a complex interactive relationship, characterized by both mutual reinforcement and, in certain contexts, tension. From a positive perspective, world peace facilitates the protection of the basic right to subsistence by significantly reducing direct human rights violations caused by war.¹⁰⁰ United Nations peacekeeping operations have directly protected the right to life of large numbers of civilians.¹⁰¹ At the same time, a peaceful global environment provides institutional space for human rights development, enabling the construction and development of the rule of law, democratic institutions, and social welfare systems. Furthermore, peace effectively safeguards the rights of vulnerable groups. In situations of war and armed conflict, minorities, displaced persons, and refugees often become primary targets of violence. In contrast, peaceful conditions allow international human rights mechanisms protecting the rights of women, children, and persons with disabilities to function more effectively. It is necessary to emphasize that peaceful global conditions also strengthen transnational human rights cooperation by facilitating international collaboration and promoting the establishment of global and regional human rights frameworks. It is difficult to imagine an international community immersed in war and armed conflict engaging in negotiations on human rights and related issues. The proliferation of human rights treaties, institutions, and regional arrangements following World War II is inseparable from the relatively peaceful environment that ensued. The Council of Europe's establishment of a supranational judicial system through the *European Convention on Human Rights*, and the operation of its human rights court, exemplify regional cooperation made possible by peace.¹⁰²

Second, universal security constitutes the foundation of human rights. While lasting peace provides a necessary condition for human rights development, it is not sufficient. Genuine human rights progress requires moving beyond the mere cessation of hostilities toward the construction of inclusive institutions, economic justice, and reforms in global governance. The call for universal security within the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind¹⁰³ reflects the shared aspiration of states and peoples to live in a safe environment, while also resisting and condemning actions that undermine security. Security challenges — both traditional and non-traditional — arise not only within states or from external forces, but most frequently from interactions among states themselves. Military actions, economic activities, cyberattacks, or cultural encroachments by one state may pose risks to another. This reality underscores the importance and value of enhancing security through international cooperation and trust-building. International security and human rights interact across multiple dimensions. International security provides the foundational

¹⁰⁰ Chang Jian, "Developmentalist Human Rights Theory and Its Basic Construction," *Academics* 12 (2021): 96-105.

¹⁰¹ Si Xiaoyu and Chen Chong, "Composition of UN Peacekeeping Troop-Contributing Countries and Civilian Protection — A Microdata Analysis Based on African Peacekeeping Missions," *World Economics and Politics* 6 (2023): 54-82.

¹⁰² Zhu Mingzhe and Xu Ying, "The Evolutionary Interpretation and Limitations of the European Court of Human Rights in Climate Litigation," *Chinese Review of International Law* 2 (2025): 51-75.

¹⁰³ Phillip M. Ayoub and Kristina Stoeckl, *The Global Fight against LGBTI Rights*, 566.

framework for human rights protection, while security governance models profoundly shape the pathways through which human rights are realized. First and foremost, international security forms the foundational framework for the protection of human rights. Article 3 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* prioritizes “life, liberty and the security of person,” underscoring the primacy of the rights to subsistence and security. Insecure international and domestic environments deprive people of the conditions necessary for the realization of rights such as education and health. From the perspective of international relations, a state invoking territorial sovereignty or survival security to negotiate with another state, or seek mediation, initiate litigation or arbitration, adopt retaliatory and counter-retaliatory measures, or even enter into war, may formally conform to prevailing international norms. Yet other states may still dispute whether a genuine security threat exists and propose a different view. Moreover, regime security and human rights protection are closely interdependent. In international law, regime security is expressed through state independence and external sovereignty, which constitute prerequisites for human rights protection. The *Charter of the United Nations* emphasizes respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and opposes interference in internal affairs of others, indicating that so-called “humanitarian intervention” that violates state sovereignty is itself anti-human-rights. The politicization of human rights by certain states as geopolitical tools vividly demonstrates the destructive impact of compromised regime security on human rights systems. For instance, the economic blockade imposed by the United States on Venezuela has exacerbated that country’s human rights crisis. In addition, international security mechanisms also provide institutional guarantees for human rights governance. Bodies such as the UN Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court promote shared standards for human rights protection by recognizing and emphasizing core international human rights treaties.¹⁰⁴ UN peacekeeping forces conduct humanitarian assistance in conflict zones — for example, the UN Mission in South Sudan protects civilians, participates in mediation, and provides relief — thereby enhancing human rights protection to some extent. Last but not least, non-traditional security threats pose new challenges to human rights: climate change and rising sea levels threaten the right to subsistence of residents of Pacific island states; algorithmic discrimination and data abuse in digital societies erode privacy and equality rights; and recurring global health crises expose vulnerabilities in global public health security, highlighting the need for security governance beyond national borders.

The wide-ranging human rights implications of security issues require an evolution in international security concepts and a transformation of human rights paradigms — particularly a shift from “collective security” to “common security.” Traditional security concepts centered on military deterrence tend to provoke arms races. By contrast, China’s Global Security Initiative advocates a vision of “common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable” security, integrating development and

¹⁰⁴ Wan Exiang and Mao Junxiang, “New Developments in International Human Rights Law in the Post-Cold War Era and Their Impact on Contemporary International Law,” *Law Review* 3 (2009): 58-63.

environmental rights into the security agenda. For example, the Belt and Road Initiative enhances economic security in developing countries through infrastructure cooperation, indirectly promoting social rights such as education and healthcare.¹⁰⁵ China's agricultural technology cooperation in Africa strengthens food security while advancing local development rights through skills training. China consistently promotes the coordinated governance of security and human rights, proposing 20 areas of cooperation under the Global Security Initiative — including counterterrorism and climate change — thereby directly linking security actions with human rights protection.

Third, shared prosperity provides a systemic support for human rights. The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind places strong emphasis on common prosperity among all countries.¹⁰⁶ An environment of sustained economic growth supports the comprehensive realization of human rights through multiple mechanisms, including strengthening material foundations, optimizing resource allocation, and reinforcing institutional guarantees. The supreme value of human beings and the instrumental nature of human rights imply that, as historical conditions evolve, certain human rights claims may gradually lose importance and urgency, while others emerge as central concerns of the era. Some claims may recede from daily life, while others flourish. Human rights are thus inherently developing and progressive. When societies experience severe disruptions or profound transformations — such as major pandemics, wars, or armed conflicts — patterns of human rights protection inevitably undergo significant change.

Empirical experience shows that poverty eradication establishes a solid material foundation for protecting the right to subsistence. Economic growth directly increases household income, satisfies basic needs, and reduces poverty rates. It also facilitates improvements in infrastructure such as transportation, communication, and energy. Moreover, economic prosperity enhances education levels and employment opportunities, thereby advancing the rights to development and equality. Adequate economic capacity enables increased popularization of education and improvements in educational quality. Similarly, the upgrading of the economic structure provides people with more development opportunities by offering skills training and creating diverse job opportunities. China's urban surveyed unemployment rate, which remains below the global average, benefits significantly from its vocational education system, which cultivates technical talent and supports industrial transformation and income growth. Economic development also injects resources into social security and public services, strengthening the protection of social rights. Economic growth can increase medical investment and ensure people's rights to healthcare and health. Economic prosperity drives the improvement of social security systems, particularly enhancing pension and housing security. The development of the digital economy promotes technological inclusiveness. Innovations like mobile payments and telemedicine break geographical barriers, advancing financial and health rights for residents in remote

¹⁰⁵ Liao Fan, "Interpreting and Constructing a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind under Global Governance," *China Legal Science* 5 (2018): 41-60.

¹⁰⁶ Phillip M. Ayoub and Kristina Stoeckl, *The Global Fight against LGBTI Rights*, 566-568.

areas. Promoting shared prosperity helps establish a positive cycle between business and human rights — safeguarding the right to subsistence in poverty eradication, enhancing the right to development through education, and securing the right to health in social security system reforms, thereby creating a virtuous cycle for human rights protection.

Fourth, inclusiveness and openness are the cultural foundation for human rights protection. The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind incorporates the vision of building an open and inclusive world,¹⁰⁷ reflecting the civilizational diversity within the philosophy of international order. Compared with narrow civilizational positions, inclusiveness and openness are more conducive to the realization of human rights. This stems from their deep congruence with the essential nature of human rights and their capacity to transcend persistent dilemmas in global governance. Firstly, civilizational diversity accords with the social nature of human rights and paves viable pathways for their cross-civilizational development. As products of social relations, human rights are inevitably shaped by specific civilizational contexts. They possess historical, practical, universal, and particular dimensions, and must therefore seek concrete forms of realization within distinct civilizational traditions. Practice in international relations has repeatedly demonstrated that advocating and promoting diversity in human rights approaches can foster a flourishing and pluralistic human rights landscape, enabling the healthy development of the human rights cause. By contrast, if a single concept, system, or practice of human rights is used to govern the human rights practices of all countries worldwide, forcing people from different regions, with diverse cultural traditions, and at varying stages of economic development to conform to the same mold in building human rights, it will not only harm the will and interests of these people but also tarnish the noble meaning of the concept of human rights, undermining the positive value of human rights pursuits, construction, and systems. Uniform standards imposed indiscriminately tend to reduce human rights to formalism, distancing them from human happiness, freedom, and development, while drawing them closer to rigid dogmatism. Such approaches move humanity away from a harmonious order characterized by mutual appreciation and shared progress among civilizations, and instead toward hegemony, power politics, coercion, and intimidation. Few would welcome the silencing effect that the politicization of human rights as a strategic instrument has brought to the human rights cause. Accordingly, the human rights field should more actively advocate and advance the coexistence, mutual learning, and co-evolution of multiple perspectives, interpretations, and pathways.

In recent years, Chinese think tanks and scholars have repeatedly emphasized the importance of discourse in the field of human rights, particularly the need to articulate China's perspectives in language intelligible to foreign audiences, to demonstrate China's progress, and to convey the sincere efforts and achievements of the CPC in leading the people to protect and promote human rights.¹⁰⁸ It must be acknowledged

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 568.

¹⁰⁸ Ren Danhong and Zhang Yonghe, "On the Construction of China's Human Rights Discourse System and the Pursuit of International Discourse Power," *Journal of Southwest University of*
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that, through the active efforts of relevant departments, China has made notable progress in its human rights discourse. The organizational structure, logical framework, and narrative strategies of China's human rights discourse have improved significantly,¹⁰⁹ playing a very noticeable role for many who wish to understand the development of human rights in China but have yet to gain a proper understanding.

Advocating civilizational diversity, cultural pluralism, openness and inclusiveness helps prevent the "cultural violence" inherent in claims of "universal standards." Historical experience shows that civilizational narrowness is often accompanied by "human rights hegemony." For example, Western insistence on multiparty electoral systems as the sole legitimate standard for democracy has contributed to internal conflicts in countries such as Iraq and Libya, resulting in severe violations of citizens' basic rights to survival. By contrast, civilizational diversity respects each country's autonomous choices. China's proposal of "whole-process people's democracy," rooted in its traditional culture, seeks to safeguard political rights while maintaining social stability. Moreover, civilizational narrowness often manifests as the instrumentalization of rights, leading to governance failure. Intolerance reflects arrogance and prejudice in the domain of ideas, fuels the politicization of human rights, and exacerbates domestic and regional conflicts. The Kosovo War, a typical Western military intervention launched under the banner of "human rights above sovereignty," resulted in profound humanitarian disasters;¹¹⁰ similarly, the war in Libya systematically deprived large numbers of women and children of their right to survival.¹¹¹ Such instrumentalization of human rights is, in essence, an extension of civilizational superiority theories.¹¹² Western-centric, single-standard conceptions of human rights ignore the specific needs of developing countries, pushing human rights practice into deadlock. It is necessary to notice that advocating civilizational diversity enhances mechanisms of human rights empowerment. Different civilizations enrich and expand the content of rights, generating pluralistic governance solutions and innovative governance models. China's "Fengqiao Experience," for instance, integrates traditional community norms into local governance, expanding consultative democracy and resolving grassroots disputes.¹¹³ Similarly, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission drew upon traditional tribal mediation mechanisms to better achieve racial reconciliation through alternative justice.¹¹⁴

Political Science and Law 1 (2019): 64-73.

¹⁰⁹ Zhong Houtao, "Shaping Self-Perception to Guide External Perceptions: An Analysis of the International Dissemination of Contemporary Chinese Human Rights Discourse," *Human Rights Studies* 1 (2025): 54-75.

¹¹⁰ Liu Debin, "The Kosovo War: A Historical Tragedy, New Forms of Power, and a Dangerous Turning Point," *Collected Papers of History Studies* 2 (1999): 1-6.

¹¹¹ Tang Yiru, "Libya: No Winners in War," *Social Observation* 4 (2011): 15-17.

¹¹² Wang Jinyan, "External Intervention in Postwar Libya," *Contemporary International Relations* 3 (2020): 57-64.

¹¹³ Dai Yuwei, "The 'Fengqiao Experience' and China's Rule-of-Law Model," *Public Security Science Journal (Journal of Zhejiang Police College)* 3 (2013): 82-88.

¹¹⁴ Vasu Reddy, "Truth and Reconciliation Commission," *South African Human Rights Yearbook* 8 (1997-1998): 267-300.

Fifth, the vision of a clean and beautiful world serves as systemic support for human rights protection. A sound ecological environment and adequate resource endowment constitute the foundation of human rights protection. This relationship is reflected in the independent status of environmental rights as human rights, their supporting role for other rights, and their contribution to sustainable development. The vision of a “clean and beautiful world” articulated within the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind¹¹⁵ emphasizes, first and foremost, the human rights dimension of environmental rights. Clean air, safe drinking water, and healthy soil are fundamental conditions for human survival. Environmental quality directly affects quality of life and constitutes the material precondition for the right to subsistence and a life of dignity. The international community has increasingly recognized the “right to a healthy environment” as integral to human dignity. China has safeguarded people’s subsistence and dignity by continuously improving the natural environment. Guided by the principles that “lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets” and “ice and snow are also invaluable assets,” China has actively promoted environmental protection, restored ecological landscapes such as mountains, waters, forests, and grasslands, and ensured residents’ right to a livable environment. At the same time, environmental rights and interests play a systematic supporting role for other human rights. It is widely known that environmental pollution is a major public health threat, directly implicating the right to health. Ecological resources serve as the material foundation of economic activities, and a healthy environment is essential for the sustainable realization of the right to development. Ecological protection and economic rights can be synergistically enhanced, as environmental degradation will lead to rapid economic collapse, rendering the right to development unattainable. Cultural rights possess rich ecological dimensions, particularly indigenous cultures and traditional ecological knowledge, which depend on specific natural environments. Furthermore, examining from the perspective of environmental justice allows for a more comprehensive realization of fairness in human rights protection. The concept of sustainable development includes the requirement of intergenerational equity, while a proper human rights order also demands regional fairness. For vulnerable groups, their environmental rights are more susceptible to infringement and thus require preferential protection.

VI. Conclusion

Through the aforementioned analysis, we can clearly see that the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind serves as a significant ideological driving force for the innovative development of China’s human rights cause in the new era,¹¹⁶ offering theoretical inspiration.¹¹⁷ Therefore, the holistic and macro-level cognition expressed by the concept itself, along with its specific strategic planning

¹¹⁵ Phillip M. Ayoub and Kristina Stoeckl, *The Global Fight against LGBTI Rights*, 568-569.

¹¹⁶ Yang Chunfu, “Innovative Development of China’s Human Rights Cause in the New Era,” *Law and Social Development* 3 (2021): 55-70.

¹¹⁷ Meng Tao, “On the System Structure of Socialist Human Rights Theory with Chinese Characteristics,” *Human Rights* 1 (2022): 32-45.

and work orientation, holds guiding significance for all aspects and fields of human rights.

An examination of the role of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind within the international human rights system reveals its integrative and guiding function grounded in a broad and elevated perspective. First, it considers issues from the perspective of all humanity. For human rights, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind represents a set of guiding principles for cognition, a framework for distinguishing right from wrong, and a methodology for practical work. This concept emphasizes viewing issues from the standpoint of all humanity, exploring the commonalities that define human destiny. It champions human-centered values over theories like animal-centrism or non-living-entities-centrism, advocating that material production and consumption in the human world should serve human needs. Second, it affirms the shared nature of human destiny and calls for identifying commonalities through empathy and compassion, thereby advancing mutual understanding, tolerance, and consideration among peoples. Third, at the operational level, it highlights the importance of consultation and cooperation among states and international organizations in the face of major threats and risks. While competition for resources and opportunities may dominate at a micro level, at a macro level humanity's failure to learn cooperative governance may result in a shared destiny of catastrophe.

The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind thus offers high-level cognitive enhancement and practical guidance. Looking ahead, human rights ideas, legal norms, institutional structures, and implementation pathways must adapt to the orientations of lasting peace, universal security, shared prosperity, openness and inclusiveness, and a clean and beautiful world. In particular, they must seriously address the realities of digitalization and globalization in contemporary society and adjust and respond in a timely and effective manner. Only by doing so can national human rights systems and the international human rights framework genuinely serve people's needs for a happy life, and establish a sound legal and governance framework for humanity to overcome challenges and build a shared future.

(Translated by *CHEN Feng*)