Twenty Years of the United Nations Human Rights Council: Historical Process and Achievements of China's Participation

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Abstract: *Promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms is the basic purpose and principle of the Charter of the United Nations. The Chinese government has consistently supported the efforts made by the United Nations in this regard and actively participated in the United Nations human rights activities, especially the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council. This paper adopts a combination of literature review and empirical analysis, systematically examines relevant documents of the United Nations Human Rights Council, and objectively shows the basic situation of China's participation in various mechanisms of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The study finds that China comprehensively participates in the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Especially since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), China has continuously put forward human rights resolutions at the Human Rights Council, showing an increasingly institutionalized pattern. These United Nations historical documents indicate that under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy and important expositions on human rights, China is promoting global human rights governance towards a fairer and more reasonable direction with a more confident and active attitude.*

Keywords: Universal Periodic Review ♦ Special Procedures ♦ Advisory Committee ♦ global human rights governance

I. Introduction

Following the restoration of its lawful seat in the United Nations (UN) in 1971, China gradually began to participate in discussions on human rights issues at the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Beginning in 1979, China attended the sessions of the then United Nations Commission on Human Rights as an observer for three consecutive years. In 1981, China was elected by ECOSOC as a member of the Commission on Human Rights and was subsequently re-elected continuously until 2006. During this period, China participated constructively in discussions and consultations on human rights issues within the Commission. For example, China actively took part in successive meetings of the governmental expert group established by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to draft the *Declaration on the Right to Development*, making

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important contributions to the Declaration's formal adoption in 1986.[1]

On March 15, 2006, the 60th session of the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 60/251, establishing the United Nations Human Rights Council to replace the Commission on Human Rights under the ECOSOC. The Human Rights Council is the principal intergovernmental body within the United Nations responsible for human rights, with a mandate to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights around the world. The Council is composed of 47 Member States, which are directly elected by a majority of the 193 UN Member States of the UN General Assembly. According to the Institution-building of the United Nations Human Rights Council (Resolution 5/1), adopted in 2007, the Council comprises a number of mechanisms and subsidiary bodies: first, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a State-led cooperative mechanism that periodically reviews the human rights situation in all UN Member States; second, the Special Procedures, under which independent experts serving in their personal capacity examine and report on thematic human rights issues and the human rights situation in specific countries; third, the Advisory Committee, which serves as the Human Rights Council's "think tank" by providing expertise and advice on thematic human rights issues; and finally, the Complaint Procedure, which is designed to address consistent patterns of gross and reliably attested violations of all human rights and fundamental freedoms occurring anywhere in the world.

Looking back, China's participation in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council has unfolded alongside the country's reform and opening-up process, from its launch to its continuous deepening. In particular, since the 18th CPC National Congress, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, has made the advancement of human rights a key component of governance, and has delivered a series of important speeches and put forward a number of important statements on respecting and protecting human rights. These speeches and statements provide profound insights into the defining features of and valuable experiences gained from China's path of human rights development, providing fundamental guidance for advancing China's human rights cause in the new era and contributing China's wisdom on the improvement of global human rights governance.

Guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy and his important discourses on human rights, China has participated extensively and substantively in the work of the Human Rights Council, introducing China's human rights philosophy, policies, and achievements to representatives of States members and non-governmental organizations participating in its sessions. It has spoken up for the legitimate concerns of developing countries and firmly safeguarded its national interests and

[1] State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *The Right to Development: China's Philosophy, Practice and Contribution*, December 1, 2016.

international image. Through the Human Rights Council as a multilateral platform for human rights diplomacy, China has actively participated in global human rights governance, advocating the practice of true multilateralism, upholding a people-centered approach to human rights, combining the principle of the universality of human rights with the specific realities of individual countries, advancing all categories of human rights in a balanced manner, opposing the politicization of human rights and the application of double standards, and promoting human rights dialogue and cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual respect, with a view to promoting the sound development of the international human rights cause.

This paper reviews relevant United Nations documents concerning China's participation in the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review, Special Procedures, and Advisory Committee, with a view to presenting an overview of China's participation in these UN human rights mechanisms. It also provides an objective account of the historical development and achievements of China's participation in the Human Rights Council, and offers insights for China's future engagement with UN human rights mechanisms.

II. China's Active Participation in Elections to the United Nations Human Rights Council

On March 15, 2006, the 60th session of the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 60/251, establishing the United Nations Human Rights Council to replace the Commission on Human Rights. With regard to election procedures, the Human Rights Council moved beyond the previous practice under the Commission on Human Rights, whereby regional nomination preceded voting, and introduced a more competitive election process among Member States.[2] As of the time of writing, China has been elected to the Human Rights Council on six occasions,[3] demonstrating its strong commitment to active participation in international human rights affairs while also reflecting the recognition by other countries of China's achievements and contributions in the development of human rights.

A. Election rules of the United Nations Human Rights Council

According to UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251, the Human Rights Council is composed of 47 Member States, which are elected directly and individually by secret ballot by a majority of the members of the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall take into account the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments. Seats on the Human Rights Council are allocated on the basis of equitable geographical

[2] Research Group of China University of Political Science and Law, "UN Human Rights Mechanisms and China's Constructive Participation," *Human Rights* 6 (2020): 57-58.

[3] As of the time of writing, China has served as a member of the Human Rights Council during the terms 2006-2009, 2009-2012, 2014-2016, 2017-2019, 2021-2023, and 2024-2026.

distribution as follows: Group of African States (13), Group of Asia-Pacific States (13), Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (8), Group of Western European and other States (7), and Group of Eastern European States (6).[4] As of January 2024, 124 of the 193 UN Member States had served as members of the Human Rights Council.[5] Members serve three-year terms and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms, but may be elected again after a one-year interval.

According to UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251, membership in the Human Rights Council is open to all UN Member States. Since members of the Human Rights Council are expected to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, a principle established at the Council's inception, candidate States are required to submit Voluntary Pledges and Commitments when presenting their candidacies.[6] When electing Council members, Member States should take into account candidates' contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments in this regard, including the international human rights instruments to which they are parties, their cooperation with human rights treaty bodies, the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), their UPR participation, as well as the domestic situation with regard to the respect for, protection of, and fulfilment of human rights.

Since the establishment of the Human Rights Council, States have actively sought election to its membership. A sovereign State's election to the Human Rights Council not only reflects its achievements in advancing human rights and strengthening human rights governance at home, but also serves as an indicator of its international standing and global influence. The growing number of States that have served as members of the Human Rights Council reflects both the broader dissemination and deeper entrenchment of the United Nations' concepts of human rights governance and protection, and also demonstrates the overall progress of the global human rights cause.

B. China's six elections to the United Nations Human Rights Council

On March 15, 2006, the United Nations Human Rights Council was established pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251. On May 9 of the same year, the 60th session of the UN General Assembly elected the inaugural members of the Council, and China was elected with 146 votes for a three-year term.[7] China was subsequently elected to the Council for the 2009-2012 term with 167

[4] UN General Assembly, *Human Rights Council*, A/RES/60/25, March 15, 2006, para. 7.
[5] Human Rights Council, accessed December 25, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/zh/hr-bodies/hrc/hrc-elections.
[6] "Suggested Elements for Voluntary Pledges and Commitments by Candidates for Election to the Human Rights Council," accessed October 24, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/Pledges.pdf.
[7] UN General Assembly, *General Assembly Official Records, Sixtieth Session: 80th Plenary Meeting*, A/60/PV.80, May 9, 2006.

votes,[8] for the 2014-2016 term with 176 votes,[9] for the 2017-2019 term with 180 votes,[10] and for the 2021-2023 term with 139 votes.[11] In October 2023, the 78th session of the UN General Assembly elected members of the Human Rights Council for the 2024-2026 term, and China was elected for the sixth time with 154 votes.[12] China's participation in Human Rights Council elections demonstrates its consistent commitment to seeking membership of the Council and engaging actively in its work. Moreover, China's six successful elections have made it one of the countries most frequently elected to the Human Rights Council, indicating that China's human rights commitments and practices are in line with the expectations of the vast majority of countries concerning the advancement of human rights, as evidenced by the voting support it has received from a large majority of UN Member States. Taking the 2023 Human Rights Council election as an example, China systematically presented its human rights achievements and the commitments it had fulfilled across four areas: civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, the rights and interests of specific groups, and international human rights exchange and cooperation. It also made new commitments, including fully safeguarding economic, social, and cultural rights; effectively safeguarding civil and political rights; strengthening equal protection and special support for specific groups; and actively participating in global human rights governance.[13]

Table 1. China's terms of membership and voting results in elections to the United Nations Human Rights Council

Year	Term of Membership	Votes Received
2006	2006-2009	146
2009	2009-2012	167
2013	2014-2016	176
2016	2017-2019	180
2020	2021-2023	139
2023	2024-2026	154

China's Council membership record indicates that the vast majority of UN Member States highly

[8] UN General Assembly, *General Assembly Official Records, Sixty-third Session: 83rd Plenary Meeting*, A/63/PV.83, May 12, 2009.
[9] UN General Assembly, *General Assembly Official Records, Sixty-eighth Session: 51st Plenary Meeting*, A/68/PV.51, November 12, 2013.
[10] UN General Assembly, *General Assembly Official Records, Seventy-first Session: 36th Plenary Meeting*, A/71/PV.36, October 28, 2016.
[11] UN General Assembly, *General Assembly Official Records, Seventy-fifth Session: 16th Plenary Meeting*, A/75/PV.16, October 13, 2020.
[12] UN General Assembly, *General Assembly Official Records, Seventy-eighth Session: 17th Plenary Meeting*, A/78/PV.17, October 10, 2023.
[13] Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations, "Annex to the Letter Dated 21 September 2023 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General: Aide-Memoire," A/78/389, accessed October 24, 2025, https://docs.un.org/zh/A/78/389.

recognize China's achievements and commitments in advancing human rights both domestically and internationally. Over the course of four consecutive terms between 2006 and 2019, China's vote total increased from 146 to 180, demonstrating a steady upward trend. This can be attributed in part to China's effective protection of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as its active promotion of reforms within UN human rights bodies, helping to make international human rights mechanisms more equitable, objective, and transparent; China has also consistently advocated addressing human rights issues through constructive dialogue and cooperation, and has maintained productive cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.[14] In particular, since the 18th CPC National Congress, China has played an increasingly prominent role in advancing and shaping UN human rights agendas.[15] China's vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind and the "Four Global Initiatives" have received growing support and recognition from the international community. For example, on March 23, 2017, at its 34th session, the Human Rights Council adopted the resolutions on "The Question of the Realization in All Countries of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights"[16] and "The Right to Food,"[17] which expressed the determination to "build a community of shared future for human beings." This marked the first incorporation of the concept of a community with a shared future for humanity into a Human Rights Council resolution, signifying its emergence as an important component of the international human rights discourse.[18]

After 2020, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in international relations, the number of votes China received, while remaining at a relatively high level, declined significantly from 180 to 139. But in the most recent election, China's vote total rebounded. This suggests that although elections to the Human Rights Council are influenced by international political factors, a country's domestic human rights record and its participation in international human rights affairs remain important considerations for Member States when casting their votes. China has developed a human rights path suited to its national conditions, ensuring that its people enjoy broad, substantive, concrete, and effective human rights.[19] China has actively participated in global human rights governance, making Chinese contributions and providing Chinese approaches to the advancement of

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[14] Lu Guangjin, "The United Nations at 80 and the Progress of Global Human Rights Civilization," *Chinese Review of International Law* 6 (2025): 31.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Human Rights Council, *The Question of the Realization in All Countries of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, A/HRC/RES/34/4 (March 23, 2017).
[17] Human Rights Council, *The Right to Food*, A/HRC/RES/34/12, March 23, 2017.
[18] Hu Wangyun, "A Study on the International Communication of the Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind in the United Nations System: A Case Study of Resolution-Making Bodies," *Journal of International and Regional Studies*, 1-2 (2022): 18-19.
[19] Xi Jinping, "Steadfastly Following the Chinese Path to Promote Further Progress in Human Rights," *Qiushi* 12 (2022): 7.

human rights worldwide.[20] For this reason, China has consistently received the support of the vast majority of UN Member States in the Council membership voting.

III. China Attaches Great Importance to and Actively Cooperates with the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism

On March 15, 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 60/251, establishing the UPR mechanism. As a cooperative mechanism, the core substantive component of the UPR is the interactive dialogue, which aims to enhance national capacities and improve the human rights situation on the ground on the basis of voluntariness and consultation.[21] China has actively cooperated with the Human Rights Council's UPR Working Group in the review of its human rights situation, accepted international scrutiny, and engaged proactively in international human rights dialogue. To date, China has completed four review cycles and has successfully received the endorsement of the Human Rights Council.

A. Overview of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism

The review takes place during meetings of the UPR Working Group,[22] through an interactive dialogue between the Member State under review and other United Nations Member States. During the dialogue, any UN Member State may raise questions, make comments, and/or provide recommendations to the Member State under review. A troika composed of three Human Rights Council members from different regional groups serves as rapporteur and assists in the review of each Member State under review. The troika classifies the issues and questions raised to ensure that the interactive dialogue proceeds in an orderly manner. Before the Human Rights Council adopts the final outcome report, the Member State under review is required to indicate in writing its position on each recommendation — whether accepted or noted — and, where applicable, provide reasons for recommendations it does not accept. All such responses are incorporated into the review report.

During the first review cycle, each country was reviewed for three hours. Starting from the second cycle, the review time was extended to three and a half hours. The review is primarily based on three sources: information provided by the Member State under review, mainly in the form of a "national report"; information contained in reports by independent human rights experts and groups (including Special Procedures, human rights treaty bodies, and other UN entities); and information provided by other stakeholders, such as non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions.[23]

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[20] Ibid., 6.

[21] Ma Shuteng, "An Analysis of the Factors Influencing Recommendations Made by States in the Universal Periodic Review," *Chinese Journal of Human Rights* 3 (2022): 60.

[22] The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review is composed of the 47 members of the Human Rights Council and is responsible for conducting the Universal Periodic Review.

[23] OHCHR, *Maximizing the Use of the Universal Periodic Review at Country Level: Practical Guidance*,

Thirty minutes of each Working Group session are allocated to the adoption of the outcome reports of the Member States under review, which are to be adopted within 48 hours following the review of each Member State. The outcome report summarizes the discussions during the review, including questions, comments, and recommendations made by states, as well as the responses of the Member State under review. After its adoption, the Member State under review may make editorial revisions to its statements within two weeks, after which the report must be adopted by the plenary of the Human Rights Council. During the plenary session, the State member under review may respond to issues not fully addressed during the Working Group session and provide further replies to recommendations. Member States bear responsibility for implementing the recommendations contained in the outcome report. The UPR mechanism ensures that all Member States are held accountable for progress in the implementation of those recommendations. When a Member State undergoes a subsequent review, it must report on the measures taken to implement the recommendations from the previous cycle four years earlier. The international community, in consultation with the concerned Member State, may assist in implementing recommendations related to capacity-building and technical assistance. Where necessary, the Council may also address situations of non-cooperation.[24]

Beginning with the second review cycle, the focus of the review shifted to "the implementation of recommendations accepted by the Member State under review and developments in the human rights situation,"[25] particularly "the achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints in the implementation of accepted recommendations, as well as developments in the human rights situation; the key national priorities, initiatives and commitments undertaken or envisaged to overcome those challenges and constraints and to improve the human rights situation on the ground; and the expectations of the Member State under review in terms of capacity-building, together with requests for technical assistance and support, where appropriate."[26]

B. China's active participation in four cycles of the Universal Periodic Review

As of the writing of this paper, China has participated in four cycles of the UPR. In February 2009, China participated in the first cycle of the UPR. In June of the same year, the Human Rights Council adopted the outcome report of China's review.[27] In October 2013, China participated in the second cycle of the UPR. In March 2014, the Human Rights Council adopted the report on China's

accessed October 24, 2025,
https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/UPR_Practical_Guidance_CH.pdf.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Human Rights Council, *Follow-up to the Human Rights Council Resolution 16/21 with Regard to the Universal Periodic Review*, A/HRC/DEC/17/119, June 17, 2011.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Human Rights Council, *Outcome of the Universal Periodic Review: China*, A/HRC/DEC/11/110, June 11, 2009.

review.[28] In November 2018, China participated in the third cycle of the UPR. In March 2019, the Human Rights Council adopted the report on China's review.[29] In January 2024, China participated in the fourth cycle of the UPR of the Human Rights Council. In July of the same year, the Human Rights Council adopted the report on China's review.[30] An examination of the four cycles of the UPR indicates that China attaches great importance to the mechanism. The size of the Chinese delegations has generally increased, and their members have been drawn from high-level official ranks. At the same time, China has maintained a relatively high rate of acceptance of recommendations made during the UPR and has provided detailed explanations for recommendations it did not accept.

1. High-level Chinese delegations participating in the review

In February 2009, China participated in its first cycle of the UPR. The Chinese delegation was headed by Ambassador Li Baodong, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland, and consisted of 42 representatives from various Party and government departments.[31] In October 2013, China participated in the second cycle of the UPR. The delegation was headed by Mr. Wu Hailong and consisted of 43 representatives from multiple central government departments, as well as the governments of the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions.[32] In November 2018, China participated in the third cycle of the UPR. The delegation was headed by Le Yucheng, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, and consisted of 65 representatives from multiple central government departments, as well as the governments of the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions.[33] In January 2024, China participated in the fourth cycle of the UPR conducted under the Human Rights Council. The delegation was headed by Ambassador Chen Xu, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland, and consisted of 58 representatives from multiple central and local government departments, as well as the governments of the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions.[34] The Chinese delegation presented a comprehensive account of China's historic achievements in the field of human rights, responded to

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[28] Human Rights Council, *Outcome of the Universal Periodic Review: China*, A/HRC/DEC/25/111, March 20, 2014.
[29] Human Rights Council, *Outcome of the Universal Periodic Review: China*, A/HRC/DEC/40/113, March 15, 2019.
[30] Human Rights Council, *Outcome of the Universal Periodic Review: China*, A/HRC/DEC/56/103, July 4, 2024.
[31] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China*, A/HRC/11/25, May 29, 2009, 32-34.
[32] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China (including Hong Kong, China and Macao, China)*, A/HRC/25/5, December 4, 2013, 29-31.
[33] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China*, A/HRC/40/6, December 26, 2018, 22-24.
[34] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China*, A/HRC/56/6, March 11, 2024, 25-27.

questions and recommendations raised by participating States after each round of interventions, and engaged in constructive dialogue with State representatives in an open and candid manner.

Overall, the Chinese delegations participating in the UPR have exhibited the following characteristics: (1) the delegations are large in scale and their overall membership has generally increased over time; (2) the delegations are broadly representative, with members drawn from a wide range of departments. For example, in the fourth cycle of the UPR, the delegation included representatives from dozens of central and local bodies, such as the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee, the State Council Information Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Supreme People's Court, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Justice, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, and the National Working Committee on Children and Women under the State Council, as well as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Macao Special Administrative Region, and the Xinjiang Uygur and Xizang autonomous regions;[35] (3) each delegation is drawn primarily from senior central government institutions and China's Permanent Mission to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland; (4) the members hold senior positions. Taking the fourth cycle of the UPR as an example, the head of delegation was China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland, and members included directors-general or deputy directors-general of various State Council ministries, as well as senior officials such as the Director of the Research Office of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. This demonstrates that the Chinese government attaches great importance to the UPR mechanism of the Human Rights Council and affirms its constructive role in promoting cooperation and dialogue among States. At the same time, the participation of representatives from local governments such as Xinjiang and Xizang, as well as departments of the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions, has facilitated the smooth discussion of relevant issues and reflects China's willingness to engage in professional communication and dialogue with other Member States.

2. China takes review recommendations seriously

China's participation in the UPR has attracted widespread attention, and the number of recommendations it has received has shown a steady increase. In the first cycle of the review, 60 delegations made statements and a total of 139 recommendations were put forward;[36] in the second

[35] Ibid.

[36] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China*, A/HRC/11/25,

cycle, 137 delegations made statements and 252 recommendations were made;[37] in the third cycle, 150 delegations engaged in interactive dialogue and made 346 recommendations;[38] in the fourth cycle, 161 delegations participated in the interactive dialogue and made 428 recommendations.[39]

China attaches great importance to the recommendations received during the interactive dialogue of the UPR, carefully examines them, and responds to them in a constructive manner. During the first cycle, Member States made 139 recommendations, of which China accepted 58, noted four, and placed six under consideration. The accepted recommendations accounted for 41.7% of the total.[40] In the second cycle, Member States made 252 recommendations, of which China accepted 204, representing 81% of the total.[41] In the third cycle, Member States made 346 recommendations, of which China accepted 284, accounting for 82% of the total.[42] In the fourth cycle, Member States made 428 recommendations, of which China accepted 290, partially accepted eight, noted 32, and rejected 98; accepted and partially accepted recommendations together accounted for 71.5% of the total.[43] These figures indicate that, since the second cycle, China has accepted a majority of recommendations made by Member States and has consistently maintained a high rate of acceptance. Notably, in its voluntary commitments and responses to the recommendations arising from the fourth cycle, China classified the recommendations as accepted, partially accepted, noted, or rejected, demonstrating the seriousness with which it approaches the review process and its commitment to making appropriate undertakings in light of its implementation capacity and level of human rights development.

The vast majority of Member States have positively evaluated China's human rights development, offered constructive recommendations, and expressed full recognition and appreciation for China's remarkable achievements in the field of human rights and its sustained efforts to advance the global human rights cause. Taking the fourth cycle of the UPR as an example, such evaluations

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May 29, 2009, 6 and 27-31.

[37] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China (including Hong Kong, China and Macao, China)*, A/HRC/25/5, December 4, 2013, 5 and 14-28.

[38] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China*, A/HRC/40/6, December 26, 2018, 3 and 5-21.

[39] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China*, A/HRC/56/6, March 11, 2024, 3-24.

[40] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China*, A/HRC/11/25, May 29, 2009, 27-31.

[41] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/25/5/Add.1, February 27, 2014, 2.

[42] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/40/6/Add.1, February 15, 2019, 2.

[43] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/56/6/Add.1, May 31, 2024, 2.

mainly included: (1) appreciation for the Chinese government's completion of all objectives and tasks set out in the *National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2016-2020)*, as well as its commitments and progress in promoting, protecting, and respecting human rights; (2) appreciation for China's significant progress in poverty alleviation and its achievement ahead of schedule of the poverty reduction targets under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as its major contributions to global poverty reduction and development; (3) appreciation for China's enactment of a series of laws and amendments to existing legislation since the third cycle of the UPR, thereby strengthening the protection of human rights; (4) appreciation for China's efforts to strengthen the rights of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, as well as its efforts to promote development, expand and improve universal education and healthcare systems, and provide adequate housing; (5) appreciation for China's efforts to narrow the urban-rural development gap, ensure equal employment opportunities for urban and rural workers, and fulfill its international obligations to combat forced labor; (6) appreciation for China's constructive participation in the UPR, its acceptance of nearly all recommendations from the previous review cycle, and its active cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms; (7) appreciation for the Chinese government's path of human rights development suited to China's national conditions and chosen in light of its political system and development path, as well as the Chinese path to modernization aimed at ensuring the equal enjoyment of human rights and achieving common prosperity; (8) appreciation for China's progress in promoting the ratification of a number of international human rights instruments, including the *Forced Labor Convention*, 1930 (No. 29), the *Abolition of Forced Labor Convention*, 1957 (No. 105), and the *Marrakesh Treaty*; (9) appreciation for China's respect for and protection of the rights of persons belonging to ethnic minorities and religious minorities.[44]

China established an inter-agency mechanism to carefully review the recommendations made during the UPR and accepted the majority of them. China's reasons for not accepting certain recommendations mainly include the existence of inaccurate information, matters that should be decided independently by itself, situations in which relevant measures had already been taken, or causes in which no such measures were considered necessary. These were mainly reflected in the following areas: (1) Ratification of international human rights instruments, including the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR), the *International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance*, and the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*. China's response was: "China is steadily advancing judicial and administrative reforms and is actively preparing for

[44] OHCHR, "UPR Extranet: Statements Delivered," accessed January 2, 2026, https://uprmeetings.ohchr.org/Sessions/45/China/Pages/default.aspx.

the ratification of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*; however, it is not yet in a position to provide a specific timetable";[45] "China is making preparations for ratification, and the timing will depend on when the necessary conditions are in place";[46] "the timing of ratification will depend on when conditions in various respects become mature."[47] (2) Strengthening cooperation with the Special Procedures. China's response was: "Inviting Special Procedures mandate holders to visit or issuing a standing invitation should be decided independently by each government in light of its national conditions";[48] "Special Procedures should carry out their work in full consultation with States and with due respect for State sovereignty";[49] "Relevant visits should respect China's sovereignty and comply with Chinese laws and regulations."[50] (3) Issues relating to Xinjiang and Xizang, including the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination concerning Xinjiang. China's response was: "China welcomes and, in accordance with the law, facilitates visits to Xinjiang by diplomats, domestic and foreign journalists, tourists and others who comply with Chinese laws, while firmly opposing interference in China's sovereignty and internal affairs under any pretext";[51] "The report is entirely illegal and invalid, and the Human Rights Council's rejection of the relevant draft decision reflected the formal position of Member States."[52] (4) The death penalty. China's response was that "retaining the death penalty while strictly limiting and applying it with great caution constitutes China's fundamental policy on capital punishment."[53] (5) Safeguarding freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of association. China's response was: "China protects citizens' freedom of expression on the Internet

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[45] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/25/5/Add.1, February 27, 2014, 2.

[46] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/40/6/Add.1, February 15, 2019, 2.

[47] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/56/6/Add.1, May 31, 2024, 3.

[48] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/25/5/Add.1, February 27, 2014, 5.

[49] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/40/6/Add.1, February 15, 2019, 3.

[50] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/56/6/Add.1, May 31, 2024, 4.

[51] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/40/6/Add.1, February 15, 2019, 3.

[52] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/56/6/Add.1, May 31, 2024, 3.

[53] Ibid.

in accordance with the law, while regulating cyberspace in accordance with the law"; "China protects citizens' freedoms of expression, association, and assembly in accordance with the law, while addressing unlawful acts in accordance with the law."[54] (6) Ending arbitrary detention and abolishing residential surveillance. China's response was: "China is a country governed by the rule of law; judicial and law enforcement authorities handle cases strictly in accordance with laws and regulations, and arbitrary detention is strictly prohibited."[55] (7) Protection of persons fleeing from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the avoidance of their repatriation. China's response was: "In refugee management, the Chinese government has consistently followed international practices such as the principle of non-refoulement. North Korean nationals who enter China illegally are not refugees, and the principles governing their treatment differ from those applicable to refugees. China has consistently handled such cases in accordance with international law, domestic law, and humanitarian principles."[56]

IV. Human Rights Council Resolutions Sponsored by China Have Received Broad Recognition

This section reviews the Human Rights Council resolutions sponsored by China since the 18th CPC National Congress. Through a search and classification of information available on the website of the United Nations Human Rights Council, using as the criterion cases in which China acted as the principal sponsor of a draft resolution and introduced it on behalf of the other sponsoring Member States, a total of sixteen Human Rights Council resolutions sponsored by China were identified, covering the period from 2016 to 2025 without interruption. The draft resolutions primarily addressed such issues as the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights, the promotion and protection of economic, social, and cultural rights, promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights, the protection of the rights of specific groups, and the negative impact of the legacies of colonialism on the enjoyment of human rights. In absolute terms, the number of resolutions sponsored by China is relatively limited. However, from the perspective of historical development, it can be clearly observed that since the 18th CPC National Congress, under the guidance of General Secretary Xi Jinping, China has participated in the work of the Human Rights Council in an increasingly active, sustained and substantive manner.

Voting on Human Rights Council resolutions is conducted in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure of the United Nations General Assembly*. Voting rights are limited to Member States of

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[54] Ibid., 4.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China; Addendum: Views on Conclusions and/or Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments and Replies Presented by the State under Review*, A/HRC/25/5/Add.1, February 27, 2014, 13-14.

the Human Rights Council. Human Rights Council resolutions may be adopted in two ways: by recorded vote or without a vote. For example, of the sixteen Human Rights Council resolutions sponsored by China, nine were adopted by recorded vote and seven were adopted without a vote. If Human Rights Council members are unable to reach consensus on a draft resolution, the resolution must be put to a vote. Human Rights Council resolutions do not constitute "important questions"[57] and are therefore decided by a simple majority, namely, "by a majority of the members present and voting."[58] Members present and voting are those casting an affirmative or negative vote; Member States abstaining from the vote are regarded as not voting.[59] Conversely, where Human Rights Council members reach an agreement on the content of a resolution, no vote is required and the resolution is adopted by consensus. At the same time, some Member States may indicate that they do not join the consensus on certain aspects of a resolution, which does not affect the adoption of the resolution by consensus. In this regard, the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly noted: "Where the adoption of decisions and resolutions by consensus may contribute to the effective and lasting resolution of differences and thereby strengthen the authority of the United Nations, such practice is desirable."[60]

A. The contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights

The right to development is a core issue in China's human rights diplomacy. China has repeatedly introduced draft resolutions on this subject, emphasizing the fundamental role of development in the enjoyment of human rights and encouraging greater international attention to the realization of the right to development. A total of five Human Rights Council resolutions sponsored by China address the theme of "the Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights" (see Table 2).

Table 2. Resolutions sponsored by China concerning the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights and their voting results

Year	Resolution Title	Resolution No.	Voting Result (For: Against: Abstentions)

[57] UN Charter, art. 18(2); *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly*, Rule 83. Important questions shall include: recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the election of non-permanent members of the Security Council, the election of members of the Economic and Social Council, the election of members of the Trusteeship Council in accordance with Article 86(1)(c) of the Charter, the admission of new Members to the United Nations, the suspension of rights and privileges of membership, the expulsion of Members, questions relating to the operation of the trusteeship system, and budgetary questions.

[58] UN Charter, art. 18(3); *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly*, Rule 85.

[59] *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly*, Rule 86.

[60] *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly*, Annex IV, "Conclusions of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly," 77.

2017	*The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights*	A/HRC/RES/35/21	30:13:3
2019	*The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights*	A/HRC/RES/41/19	33:13:0
2021	*The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights*	A/HRC/RES/47/11	31:14:2
2023	*The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights*	A/HRC/RES/53/28	30:12:5
2025	*The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights*	A/HRC/RES/59/19	Adopted without a vote

On June 22, 2017, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted the resolution "The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights," sponsored by China, by a recorded vote of 30 in favor, 13 against, and three abstentions.[61] The resolution explicitly affirms that building a community with a shared future for humanity is a common aspiration of the international community, recognizes the significant contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights, and calls on all Member States to pursue people-centered development, to draw the driving force for development from the people, to rely on the people to advance development, and to ensure that development benefits the people. The resolution calls on all Member States to strengthen international cooperation, make every effort to advance sustainable development, particularly through the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a view to promoting the full enjoyment of human rights. The resolution also welcomes further efforts by Member States to advance development initiatives, strengthen partnerships, and achieve mutually beneficial cooperation and common development.

On July 12, 2019, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted the resolution "The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights," sponsored by China, by a

[61] Human Rights Council, *The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights*, A/HRC/RES/35/21, June 22, 2017.

recorded vote of 33 in favor, 13 against, and no abstentions.[62] The resolution reaffirms that development makes a significant contribution to the enjoyment of all human rights, and emphasizes that meeting people's aspirations for a better life is a priority task for all countries. It calls on all Member States to pursue people-centered development, to draw the driving force for development from the people, to rely on the people to advance development, and to ensure that development benefits the people. The resolution further calls on Member States to promote sustainable development and strengthen international cooperation on development and poverty eradication.

On July 12, 2021, at its 47th session, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted the resolution "The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights," sponsored by China, by a recorded vote of 31 in favor, 14 against, and two abstentions.[63] The resolution reaffirms the important contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights, emphasizing that the goal of development is to enhance the well-being of all people, and that Member States should meet people's aspirations for a better life. The resolution welcomes the significant efforts and achievements made by Member States in promoting sustainable development, eradicating poverty and related areas, and calls on all Member States to pursue people-centered development, ensuring that development is for the people, relies on the people, and benefits the people; and to promote sustainable development, with a view to better ensuring the enjoyment of human rights, and promoting equal access to development opportunities.

On July 14, 2023, at its 53rd session, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted the resolution "The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights," sponsored by China, by a recorded vote of 30 in favor, 12 against, and five abstentions.[64] The resolution reaffirms the important contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights, and calls on all parties to address new challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through innovative approaches during the post-pandemic recovery process. It emphasizes strengthening global partnerships for sustainable development, enhancing international cooperation, and promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms through high-quality development.

On July 8, 2025, at its 59th session, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted the resolution "The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights," sponsored by China.[65] This marked the first time since China first introduced the resolution in 2017 that it was

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[62] Human Rights Council, *The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights*, A/HRC/RES/41/19, July 12, 2019.

[63] Human Rights Council, *The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights*, A/HRC/RES/47/11, July 12, 2021.

[64] Human Rights Council, *The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights*, A/HRC/RES/53/28, July 14, 2023.

[65] Human Rights Council, *The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights*,

adopted without a vote and by consensus, reflecting the broad recognition within the international community of the concept that development promotes human rights. The resolution encourages all States to promote inclusive and sustainable development, strive to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and eradicate poverty in all its forms and manifestations, with a view to building more sustainable, peaceful, just, equitable, inclusive, and resilient societies.

At the same time, pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution 35/21, the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee submitted a study on "The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights."[66] China's concept of "common development" — development that is fair, open, comprehensive, and innovation-driven, aimed at promoting inclusive development and creating the necessary conditions for all peoples to share the right to development — has gained broad recognition.[67] In the report, the Advisory Committee specifically refers to a comprehensive southern perspective on human rights, which interprets the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* through the lens of regional human rights instruments and practices in the Global South. It argues that "societies in the Global South generally regard the rights to subsistence and development as paramount, as these rights are closely linked to human dignity, which is the source of all human rights." China's *White Paper on Human Rights*, issued in 1991, likewise emphasized the importance of the right to subsistence. This illustrates the differences between the development perspectives of Global South countries, represented by China, and those commonly found in Western countries. From the perspective commonly adopted in Western countries, subsistence and development are often viewed not as specific human rights in themselves, but as means of consolidating democratic governance and the rule of law. Poverty eradication helps reduce inequality and vulnerability to extreme poverty and crises, promotes the full realization of fundamental human rights, and ultimately strengthens democratic governance and the rule of law.[68] This demonstrates the high importance attached by countries of the Global South to the rights to subsistence and development, highlighting a clear contrast with traditional Western conceptions of human rights.

The Chinese government maintains that "development is the enduring theme of human society and the key to solving all problems."[69] The resolution "The Contribution of Development to the

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A/HRC/RES/59/19, July 8, 2025.

66 Human Rights Council, *The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights: Study of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee*, A/HRC/41/50, May 7, 2019.

67 Ibid., para. 20.

68 Ibid., para. 22.

69 Chen Xu, "Statement by Ambassador Chen Xu at the 47th Session of the Human Rights Council Introducing the Draft Resolution on 'The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights,'" Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and Other International Organizations in Switzerland, accessed October 24, 2025, https://geneva.china-mission.gov.cn/dbtyw/rqsw/202107/t20210719-9129692.htm.

Enjoyment of All Human Rights," first introduced by China in 2017 and subsequently adopted, was the first resolution on development ever adopted by the Human Rights Council. Guided by the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, China introduced the resolution "The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights" and, for the first time, introduced the concept that development promotes human rights into international human rights discourse. The resolution reflects the concerns and aspirations of developing countries and has received broad support, particularly from developing countries. This resolution represents China's approach to participation in global human rights governance, helps strengthen the voice and agenda-setting influence of developing countries in international human rights affairs, and promotes and guides the development of international human rights toward a more positive direction.

B. Promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights

China attaches great importance to the protection of economic, social and cultural rights and is committed to reducing global inequalities and promoting a more equitable and inclusive international human rights governance system. A total of four resolutions sponsored by China in the Human Rights Council concern the theme of "Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" (see Table 3).

On July 1, 2016, Human Rights Council Resolution 32/16, entitled "Promoting the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health Through Enhancing Capacity-Building in Public Health," was adopted without a vote.[70] The resolution reaffirms that health is a fundamental human right and expresses deep concern over the heavy burden that communicable and non-communicable diseases place on the health systems of all countries, particularly those of developing countries. To this end, the resolution urges Member States to assume primary responsibility for strengthening national public health capacity through investment in health systems, personnel training, and the establishment of immunization and disease-prevention mechanisms, while encouraging the use of international rules to enhance access to medicines. The resolution also emphasizes the need to support developing countries through enhanced international cooperation, technology transfer, and development assistance, with a view to jointly advancing the health-related goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Table 3. Resolutions sponsored by China concerning the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights and their voting results

Year	Resolution Title	Resolution No.	Voting Result (For: Against: Abstentions)

[70] Human Rights Council, *Promoting the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health through Enhancing Capacity-Building in Public Health*, A/HRC/RES/32/16, July 1, 2016.

2016	*Promoting the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health through Enhancing Capacity-Building in Public Health*	A/HRC/RES/32/16	Adopted without a vote
2022	*Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the Context of Addressing Inequalities in the Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic*	A/HRC/RES/49/19	31:14:2
2023	*Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the Context of Addressing Inequalities*	A/HRC/RES/54/22	Adopted without a vote
2025	*Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the Context of Addressing Inequalities*	A/HRC/RES/60/14	Adopted without a vote

On April 1, 2022, Human Rights Council Resolution 49/19, entitled "Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the Context of Addressing Inequalities in the Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic," was adopted by a vote of 31 in favor, 14 against, and two abstentions.[71] The resolution focuses on promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights in the post-pandemic recovery process, while addressing inequalities both within and among countries that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. It expresses deep concern over the severe negative impact of the pandemic on the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and highlights the structural vulnerabilities resulting from long-standing underinvestment in public services and systemic discrimination. The resolution further emphasizes that Member States have a responsibility to prioritize investment in key areas such as public health, education, and social protection in order to safeguard economic, social and cultural rights, and calls for strengthened international solidarity and cooperation to ensure equitable access to vaccines, medicines, and essential resources for developing countries and vulnerable groups.

On October 12, 2023, Human Rights Council Resolution 54/22, "Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the Context of Addressing Inequalities," was adopted

[71] Human Rights Council, *Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the Context of Addressing Inequalities in the Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic*, A/HRC/RES/49/19, April 1, 2022.

by consensus without a vote.[72] The resolution emphasizes the need to ensure the full, equal, and effective enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights without discrimination in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the goal of reducing inequalities, and to ensure that no one is left behind. It recognizes the serious negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the enjoyment of these rights and the structural consequences arising from the long-term underfunding or fragmentation of public services and policies. It calls on States to make the maximum use of available resources, progressively realize these rights through measures including legislation and international cooperation, and create conditions conducive to the enjoyment and realization of economic, social and cultural rights. The resolution encourages States to increase investment in health, education, social protection, housing and other related sectors, eliminate discrimination and poverty, expand international cooperation to support developing countries, least developed countries, and marginalized and vulnerable groups, and encourages international financial institutions to give priority to social spending. At the same time, the resolution requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish, at the UN Headquarters, a knowledge hub on technical assistance and capacity-building that would consolidate best practices and expertise related to the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights in the context of addressing inequalities, and make them available to Member States and other stakeholders in a user-friendly manner.

On October 6, 2025, at its 60th session, the Human Rights Council adopted by consensus without a vote the resolution "Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the Context of Addressing Inequalities," submitted by China on behalf of nearly 70 countries, including Bolivia, Egypt, Pakistan, and South Africa.[73] The adoption of the resolution the genuine needs of the people, responds strongly to the calls from developing countries for increased investment in economic, social and cultural rights, and demonstrates China's important role in bridging differences and building consensus. The resolution emphasizes that the full, equal, and effective enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights is essential for addressing inequalities within and among countries and to achieving the SDGs. It notes the challenges posed by growing inequalities in the context of global crises to Member States' efforts to fulfill their human rights obligations and commitments in the field of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly with regard to marginalized and vulnerable groups. It calls on Member States to eliminate discrimination and poverty through measures such as legislation, social protection, universal access to public services,

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[72] Human Rights Council, *Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the Context of Addressing Inequalities*, A/HRC/RES/54/22, October 12, 2023.
[73] Human Rights Council, *Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the Context of Addressing Inequalities*, A/HRC/RES/60/14, October 6, 2025.

and human rights education, and to strengthen international cooperation and assistance in support of developing countries and least developed countries.

Resolution 60/14 welcomes the establishment of the knowledge hub on economic, social and cultural rights pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution 54/22 and requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to strengthen its related work, resource allocation, and research and analytical capacity so as to effectively assist Member States in realizing economic, social and cultural rights and addressing inequalities. On October 2, 2025, the online platform of the knowledge hub on economic, social and cultural rights was officially launched. It serves as an important mechanism of the United Nations for strengthening capacity-building in the field of economic, social and cultural rights by integrating effective practices and expertise and providing practical support to countries in need.[74]

China's series of resolutions on promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights constitute an important effort to address the long-standing marginalization of these rights and to rectify historical imbalances within the United Nations human rights system. Economic, social and cultural rights have long been marginalized within the Human Rights Council the Special Procedures related to these rights have received significantly less attention and fewer resources than those concerning civil and political rights. Moreover, during the first three cycles of the UPR, recommendations relating to economic, social and cultural rights accounted for only 21% of all recommendations, roughly half the proportion of those relating to civil and political rights.[75] Ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by all is essential to achieving the SDGs and addressing global challenges. The resolutions address inequalities both among countries and within countries. They advocate enhanced international exchange and cooperation, particularly in support of developing countries and least developed countries, while also calling for the elimination of discrimination and the root causes of inequality. They emphasize adequate investment in public health systems, education, social protection, decent work, housing, food, water, and sanitation, so as to ensure that all people, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups, can fully enjoy economic, social and cultural rights.

C. Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights

China has actively promoted international cooperation in the field of human rights within the

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[74] "UN Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Knowledge Hub Officially Launched," humanrights.cn, accessed October 24, 2025, https://www.humanrights.cn/2025/10/09/04816adab2c9429aaf6b3fde10721688.html.

[75] Chen Xu, "Statement by Ambassador Chen Xu at the Panel Discussion on 'Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the Context of Addressing Inequalities' at the 57th Session of the Human Rights Council," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and Other International Organizations in Switzerland, accessed October 24, 2025, https://geneva.china-mission.gov.cn/chn/dbtyw/rqsw/202409/t20240912_11489279.htm.

Human Rights Council, making important contributions to building a new model of international human rights dialogue and strengthening international solidarity. A total of three Human Rights Council resolutions sponsored by China address the theme of "Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights" (see Table 4).

Table 4. Resolutions sponsored by China concerning the promotion of mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights and their voting results

Year	Resolution Title	Resolution No.	Voting Result (For: Against: Abstentions)
2018	*Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights*	A/HRC/RES/37/23	28:1:17
2020	*Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights*	A/HRC/RES/43/21	23:16:8
2021	*Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights*	A/HRC/RES/46/13	26:15:6

On March 23, 2018, Human Rights Council Resolution 37/23, "Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights," was adopted by a vote of 28 in favor, one against, and 17 abstentions.[76] The resolution reaffirms that the work of the Human Rights Council should be guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, and constructive international dialogue and cooperation. It emphasizes that mutually beneficial cooperation is essential to the promotion and protection of human rights in an increasingly interconnected world and advocates expanding consensus and strengthening constructive cooperation, including capacity-building and technical cooperation, through sincere dialogue and cooperation based on universality, indivisibility, non-selectivity, non-politicization, equality, and mutual respect. The resolution calls on all Member States to uphold multilateralism in order to jointly promote mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights and encourages other stakeholders to make active contributions. It underscores the importance of the UPR as a mechanism founded on cooperation and constructive dialogue and calls on UN human rights mechanisms and procedures to continue promoting mutually beneficial cooperation.

On June 22, 2020, Human Rights Council Resolution 43/21, "Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights," was adopted by a vote of 23 in favor, 16 against, and

[76] Human Rights Council, *Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights*, A/HRC/RES/37/23, March 23, 2018.

eight abstentions.[77] The resolution calls on all Member States to pursue multilateralism and engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights based on the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, non-politicization, equality, and mutual respect, with a view to enhancing mutual understanding, expanding consensus, and strengthening cooperation. It reaffirms the important role of technical assistance and capacity-building in promoting and protecting human rights and encourages strengthened North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation. The resolution also emphasizes the importance of building international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice, and mutually beneficial cooperation, as well as building a community with a shared future for mankind in which all people enjoy human rights. This reflects China's commitment to promoting global human rights governance in a fairer, more just, reasonable, and inclusive direction, advancing the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, and working together to create a better world.

On March 23, 2021, at its 46th session, the Human Rights Council adopted Human Rights Council Resolution 46/13, "Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights," sponsored by China, by a vote of 26 in favor, 15 against, and six abstentions.[78] The resolution calls on all Member States to uphold multilateralism, engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights, strengthen technical assistance and capacity-building, promote mutually beneficial cooperation, and jointly build a community with a shared future for humanity. The resolution further advocates actively strengthening international cooperation, effectively responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensuring that developing countries have access to affordable vaccines. It emphasizes that strengthening consultation and cooperation, upholding and practicing multilateralism, effectively addressing global challenges, and promoting mutually beneficial cooperation within the international system help prevent the politicization of human rights and the use of human rights as a pretext for interference in the internal affairs of other countries, while fostering genuine dialogue and cooperation among all parties in the field of human rights.

China adheres to the principle of mutually beneficial cooperation in global human rights governance and actively promotes the development of a fair, just, inclusive, and constructive international human rights dialogue framework. It advocates the principles of universality, impartiality, and non-politicization, respects the development paths and cultural diversity of all countries, opposes the politicization of human rights and the application of double standards, and

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[77] Human Rights Council, *Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights*, A/HRC/RES/43/21, June 22, 2020.
[78] Human Rights Council, *Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights*, A/HRC/RES/46/13, March 23, 2021.

seeks to promote mutual understanding, expand consensus, and strengthen constructive cooperation. China emphasizes the central role of multilateralism and international cooperation and supports the effective use of Human Rights Council mechanisms such as the UPR and Special Procedures to assist developing countries in strengthening their capacity to protect and promote human rights. The series of resolutions on "Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights" reflects China's firm commitment to building a community with a shared future for mankind and advancing the global human rights cause in a more equitable and sustainable direction. These resolutions have contributed China's wisdom on cooperation, pragmatism, and development to international human rights governance.

D. Protection of the human rights of specific groups

China has consistently attached great importance to protecting the human rights of specific groups, including women, children, and persons with disabilities, and has promoted the integration of the principles of gender equality and accessibility into national institutional frameworks. A total of three Human Rights Council resolutions sponsored by China address the theme of "Protection of the Human Rights of Specific Groups" (see Table 5).

Table 5. Resolutions sponsored by China concerning the protection of the human rights of specific groups and their voting results

Year	Resolution Title	Resolution No.	Voting Result (For: Against: Abstentions)
2019	*Marking the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*	A/HRC/RES/42/14	Adopted without a vote
2024	*Marking the 30th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*	A/HRC/RES/57/4	Adopted without a vote
2024	*Promoting Accessibility for the Full Enjoyment of All Human Rights by All*	A/HRC/RES/57/16	Adopted without a vote

Human Rights Council Resolutions 42/14,[79] adopted in 2019, and 57/4,[80] adopted in 2024, both commemorate the Fourth World Conference on Women and its outcome documents, the *Beijing Declaration* and *Platform for Action* (BPfA). They emphasize that all Member States have an obligation to promote and protect the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by women and

[79] Human Rights Council, *Marking the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, A/HRC/RES/42/14, September 26, 2019.
[80] Human Rights Council, *Marking the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, A/HRC/RES/57/4, October 9, 2024.

girls, reflecting the international community's sustained efforts to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women, while also demonstrating China's active contribution to the promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls. Both resolutions acknowledge the progress achieved by the Conference and the BPfA in advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls, while also recognizing that challenges and obstacles remain in the implementation of the BPfA.

As BPfA's birthplace, China has demonstrated a long-standing commitment and made substantive contributions to promoting gender equality and safeguarding the rights of women and girls within the international human rights agenda, thereby laying a solid foundation for the advancement of women's cause worldwide.

On October 10, 2024, Human Rights Council Resolution 57/16, "Promoting Accessibility for the Full Enjoyment of All Human Rights by All," was adopted without a vote.[81] It was the first United Nations resolution adopted on this subject. The resolution aims to reaffirm and promote the importance of accessibility in ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of human rights by all, especially persons with disabilities, older persons, and other vulnerable groups. The resolution cites a number of core international human rights instruments, including Article 9 of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, emphasizing that States Parties have an obligation to adopt appropriate accessibility measures to ensure equal access to the physical environment and other accessible facilities and services, while fully taking into account universal design and reasonable accommodation. It also calls for the provision of safe, inclusive, accessible, and green public spaces and transportation systems and for expanded access to information and communication technologies. Furthermore, it advocates the removal of physical, digital, social, economic, legal, and policy barriers through legal, policy, educational, technological, care, and support measures. The resolution encourages countries to incorporate accessibility into national legislation, development plans, policies, urban and rural planning, and public services, raise public awareness, and create accessible environments. It also calls on Member States, the UN system, the private sector, and civil society organizations to strengthen international cooperation, promote capacity-building and technical knowledge exchange in the context of emerging digital technologies, and integrate the principle of accessibility for all into their policies and operational practices.

On September 1, 2023, the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Developing Barrier-Free Environments* came into effect, marking China's first comprehensive legislation in the field of accessibility. The Human Rights Council's adoption of the accessibility resolution sponsored by China demonstrates the country's strong commitment to protecting the human rights of specific

[81] Human Rights Council, *Promoting Accessibility for the Full Enjoyment of All Human Rights by All*, A/HRC/RES/57/16, October 10, 2024.

groups. It is also of great significance for strengthening China's leadership in advancing accessibility-related concepts, promoting international standards on accessibility, and enhancing the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, older persons, and other vulnerable groups. The resolution reflects China's contributions and commitment to implementing Human Rights Council resolutions and advancing inclusive development.

E. The negative impact of the legacies of colonialism on the enjoyment of human rights

At the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the adoption of the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*, UN General Assembly President Annalena Baerbock noted that "few legacies were as bitter, or as pervasive, as colonialism," and that achieving the Declaration's promise to eliminate all forms of colonialism "remains our enduring responsibility."[82] Against the backdrop of international efforts to address the legacy of colonialism, China proposed the resolution "Negative Impact of the Legacies of Colonialism on the Enjoyment of Human Rights" (see Table 6).

Table 6. Resolutions sponsored by China concerning the negative impact of the legacies of colonialism on the enjoyment of human rights and their voting results

Year	Resolution Title	Resolution No.	Voting Result (For: Against: Abstentions)
2021	*Negative Impact of the Legacies of Colonialism on the Enjoyment of Human Rights*	A/HRC/RES/48/7	27:0:20

On October 8, 2021, the Human Rights Council adopted China-sponsored Resolution 48/7, "Negative Impact of the Legacies of Colonialism on the Enjoyment of Human Rights," by a vote of 27 in favor, 0 against, and 20 abstentions.[83] The resolution highlights that various legacies of colonialism — including economic exploitation, inequalities within and among countries, systemic racism, violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, contemporary forms of slavery, and the destruction of cultural heritage — have a negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights. It emphasizes the importance of eliminating all forms of colonialism and addressing the adverse effects of colonial legacies on human rights. The resolution notes that various legacies of colonialism continue to affect global peace and development and have a serious adverse impact on the enjoyment of human rights worldwide. The resolution notes that the human rights of Indigenous Peoples have

[82] UN News, "UN Marks Sixty-Fifth Anniversary of the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples* and Vows to Eliminate the Legacies of Colonialism," accessed January 3, 2026, https://news.un.org/zh/story/2025/12/1141336.

[83] Human Rights Council, *Negative Impact of the Legacies of Colonialism on the Enjoyment of Human Rights*, A/HRC/RES/48/7, October 8, 2021.

been violated in colonial contexts and calls on Member States to take all necessary measures to protect Indigenous Peoples, particularly Indigenous women and children, safeguard their rights and security, restore truth and justice, and hold perpetrators of human rights violations accountable.

It is noteworthy that although the resolution was not adopted by consensus, no State voted against it; the major former colonial powers chose to abstain rather than vote against the resolution. Since the adoption of the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*, the goal of eliminating colonialism and its legacies has gained broad international recognition. China's advocacy for eliminating all forms of colonialism and addressing the legacies of colonialism has gained broad support, providing a platform for peoples who continue to be affected by colonial legacies to discuss these issues and helping to advance the international community's ongoing efforts toward decolonization.

V. China's Strong Support for the Work of Special Procedures

Special Procedures constitute an important component of the UN human rights mechanisms. They were originally established by the Commission on Human Rights and subsequently assumed by the Human Rights Council.[84] Special Procedures originated in 1967, when the Commission on Human Rights established an ad hoc expert working group on South Africa to address the issue of apartheid and racial discrimination. Following the military coup in Chile in 1973, the Commission on Human Rights established an ad hoc working group in 1975 to investigate the human rights situation in the country. In 1979, the working group was replaced by a Special Rapporteur and two experts mandated to investigate cases of missing persons in Chile. Building on this experience, the Commission on Human Rights established the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances in 1980 to address cases of enforced disappearance worldwide, making it the first thematic mandate under the Special Procedures.[85]

Special Procedures mandates are carried out by independent experts who serve in their personal capacity, thereby ensuring the impartial and objective discharge of their functions. They report and advise on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective. Their main working methods include country visits and individual communications. China actively supports and participates in the work of the Human Rights Council's Special Procedures. On the one hand, two Chinese independent experts have served under Special Procedures mandates and played important roles. On the other hand, the Chinese government has to date hosted ten thematic human rights country visits and

[84] Research Group of China University of Political Science and Law, "UN Human Rights Mechanisms and China's Constructive Participation," *Human Rights* 6 (2020): 60.

[85] OHCHR, "Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council," accessed December 25, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/zh/special-procedures-human-rights-council/special-procedures-human-rights-council; Xu Xianming, ed., *International Human Rights Law* (Beijing: Law Press China, 2004), 116.

engaged in constructive dialogue with independent experts in cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights.

A. Chinese independent experts actively participate in the work of Special Procedures

The Human Rights Council's Special Procedures consist of independent human rights experts with specific mandates who report on and provide recommendations concerning human rights issues from either thematic or country-specific perspectives. They serve without remuneration, are appointed for a three-year term, and may be reappointed for one additional three-year term. Mandate holders of the Special Procedures and members of the Human Rights Council's Expert Mechanism are appointed through a competitive and transparent process that consists of several stages. First, candidates submit online written applications in response to a call for applications issued by the Secretariat. In the next stage, the Consultative Group reviews the applications received and shortlists candidates for interview. The Consultative Group consists of five senior representatives, each nominated by one of the five regional groups and serving in a personal capacity. After interviewing the shortlisted candidates, the Consultative Group submits a public report to the President of the Human Rights Council, including a list of recommended candidates for each vacancy. Following extensive consultations and based on the recommendations of the Consultative Group, the President of the Human Rights Council identifies a suitable candidate for each vacancy. The President submits to the Council the list of candidates identified for all vacancies. Once the candidates proposed by the President are approved by the Council, the appointment process is completed.[86]

In the nomination, selection, and appointment of mandate holders, the general criteria include expertise, experience in the relevant mandate area, independence, impartiality, personal integrity, and objectivity. Due consideration should also be given to gender balance, equitable geographic representation, and appropriate representation of different legal systems.[87] Eligible candidates should be highly qualified individuals with recognized competence in the field of human rights, as well as relevant expertise and extensive professional experience.

According to Human Rights Council Decision 6/102,[88] mandate holders must also satisfy rigorous technical and objective requirements: (1) Qualifications: relevant educational qualifications or equivalent professional experience in the field of human rights; good communication skills in one of the official languages of the United Nations; (2) Relevant expertise: knowledge of international human rights instruments, norms, and principles; as well as knowledge of institutional mandates

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[86] Human Rights Council, *Statement by the President of the Human Rights Council: Methods of Work of the Consultative Group of the Human Rights Council*, A/HRC/PRST/OS/14/2, December 16, 2020.
[87] Human Rights Council, *Institution-Building of the United Nations Human Rights Council*, A/HRC/RES/5/1, June 18, 2007.
[88] Human Rights Council, *Follow-up to Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1*, A/HRC/DEC/6/102, September 27, 2007.

related to the United Nations or other international or regional organizations' work in the area of human rights; proven work experience in the field of human rights; (3) Established competence: nationally, regionally, or internationally recognized competence related to human rights; (4) Flexibility/readiness and availability of time to perform effectively the functions of the mandate and to respond to its requirements, including attending Human Rights Council sessions.

Since the establishment of the Human Rights Council's Special Procedures mandates, a total of two Chinese nationals have been appointed as Independent Experts or Special Rapporteurs as of the end of 2025. Ms. Li Yuefen took up her function as the UN Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights on May 1, 2020. Her primary responsibilities include examining the debt burdens of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, the social impact of measures arising from external debt, and the effects of illicit financial flows on the enjoyment of human rights.[89]

Ms. Lu Haina assumed her functions as member of the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls on November 1, 2023. The Human Rights Council's Working Group on discrimination against women and girls aims to intensify efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls worldwide. The Working Group consists of five experts, with one expert from each of the United Nations' five regional groups (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe and other States).[90] Ms. Lu Haina is the second Chinese expert to be appointed since the establishment of the Special Procedures in 1967.

B. China maintains good communication and cooperation with independent experts serving under the Special Procedures

The Special Procedures are an important component of the United Nations mechanisms, under which independent human rights experts report and advise on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective. In the context of the 2011 review of their work and functioning, the Human Rights Council reaffirmed the obligation of all States Parties to cooperate with the Special Procedures, which operate with integrity and independence and are guided by the principles of cooperation, transparency, and accountability, thereby enhancing the Council's capacity to address human rights situations. The Special Procedures: (1) Undertake country visits: country visits are an important means by which mandate holders obtain first-hand information on the human rights situation through direct engagement with the country concerned. At the invitation of States Parties, mandate holders undertake country visits to assess the human rights situation at the national level. Some States Parties have extended "standing invitations" to the Special Procedures, indicating their

[89] OHCHR, "Independent Expert on Foreign Debt and Human Rights," accessed October 24, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-foreign-debt.
[90] OHCHR, "Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls," accessed October 24, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-women-and-girls.

readiness to receive visits from any thematic mandate holder. During their mandates, experts assess, in accordance with their respective mandates, the overall human rights situation in the country, including its institutional, legal, judicial, and administrative frameworks, as well as the human rights situation in practice. The host country is obliged to provide the mandate holder and accompanying personnel with the necessary guarantees and facilitation facilities before, during, and after the visit.[91] Visits usually last one to two weeks. Upon completion of the visit, the mandate holder engages in a dialogue with the Member State concerned on the findings and recommendations and submits a report to the Human Rights Council;[92] (2) Send communications: Most Special Procedures receive information concerning alleged human rights violations and send communications to the Member State concerned requesting clarification and appropriate action. Mandate holders may also address letters to States Parties seeking information on legal, policy, or structural developments, providing observations, or following up on recommendations;[93] (3) Conduct thematic studies and convene expert consultations to develop human rights standards and guidelines and to advance the development of international human rights norms;[94] (4) Raise public awareness of specific human rights situations and phenomena involving substantiated threats to or violations of human rights through public statements and engagement with various stakeholders.[95] The Special Procedures report annually to the Human Rights Council, and most mandate holders also report annually to the UN General Assembly.

The Special Procedures can be divided into two categories: country mandates, which are responsible for investigating and monitoring the human rights situation in a particular country or territory and thematic mandates, which focus on specific human rights issues. At present, the Human Rights Council has established 46 thematic and 14 country mandates.[96]

1. Country mandates

China adopts a prudent approach toward the establishment of country mandates and seeks to promote improvements in the human rights situation of the countries concerned, rather than engaging

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[91] Twenty-Third Annual Meeting of Special Rapporteurs, Representatives, Independent Experts and Chairpersons of Working Groups of the Human Rights Council, *Revised Terms of Reference for Country Visits by Special Procedures Mandate Holders of the United Nations Human Rights Council* (based on Appendix V, E/CN. 4/1998/45), June 2016.

[92] OHCHR, accessed October 24, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/zh/special-procedures-human-rights-council/country-and-other-visits.

[93] OHCHR, accessed October 24, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/zh/special-procedures-human-rights-council/what-are-communications.

[94] OHCHR, accessed October 24, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/zh/special-procedures-human-rights-council/special-procedures-human-rights-council.

[95] Ibid.

[96] OHCHR, accessed October 24, 2025, https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewAllCountryMandates.aspx?Type=TM&lang=en; OHCHR, accessed October 24, 2025, https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewAllCountryMandates.aspx?lang=en.

in unwarranted criticism or judgment. China maintains that UN human rights mechanisms, particularly country-specific mechanisms, should respect the national conditions of different countries, reject prejudice, accusation, and confrontation, and strengthen dialogue, communication, and cooperation, so as to promote the common development and advancement of human rights on the basis of equality and mutual respect.[97] For example, during the Human Rights Council's 48th session, when the human rights situation in Afghanistan was under consideration, China proposed a number of amendments calling for the unfreezing of the assets of Afghanistan's central bank in order to avert a potential economic crisis and threats to the human rights of the Afghan people;[98] for reporting on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, including violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed by all parties to the conflict, including foreign forces;[99] and for urging those countries responsible for Afghanistan's current difficulties to assume their due responsibilities in the country's reconstruction.[100]

2. Thematic mandates

China has consistently cooperated actively with Special Procedures mandate holders, responded to relevant communications in a timely manner, and received country visits. China's direct cooperation with the Special Procedures mainly takes the form of correspondence with thematic mandate holders on human rights issues, hosting country visits, and implementing relevant human rights recommendations.[101] As of the end of 2024, China had hosted a total of ten country visits under thematic mandates, covering issues such as arbitrary detention, the right to education, the right to food, the rights of older persons, discrimination against women, the effects of foreign debt on human rights, extreme poverty and human rights, and the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights.[102] From May 6 to May 17, 2024, Alena Douhan, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, visited China. During her visit, the Special Rapporteur traveled to Beijing, parts of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and Shenzhen, where she met with representatives of local governments and held discussions with officials from relevant government departments, experts and scholars, as well as representatives of enterprises and civil society organizations. In her report, the Special Rapporteur

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[97] Research Group of China University of Political Science and Law, "UN Human Rights Mechanisms and China's Constructive Participation," *Human Rights* 6 (2020): 60-61.
[98] Human Rights Council, *China: Amendment to Draft Resolution A/HRC/48/L.24/Rev.1*, A/HRC/48/L.44.
[99] Human Rights Council, *China: Amendment to Draft Resolution A/HRC/48/L.24/Rev.1*, A/HRC/48/L.46.
[100] Human Rights Council, *China: Amendment to Draft Resolution A/HRC/48/L.24/Rev.1*, A/HRC/48/L.47.
[101] Sun Meng, "China's Participation in UN Human Rights Mechanisms and the Enhancement of Its International Human Rights Discourse Power: A Case Study of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council," *Foreign Affairs Review* 3 (2019): 44.
[102] OHCHR, accessed October 24, 2025, https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?visitType=all&country=CHN&Lang=en.

commended the Chinese government, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for coordinating and facilitating the visit in a transparent and constructive manner and for actively providing supplementary information and data during and after the visit, which assisted her in gathering first-hand information and understanding the impact of unilateral sanctions and over-compliance on the enjoyment of human rights both within and beyond China.[103]

VI. Chinese Experts Actively Participate in the Work of the Advisory Committee

The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee traces its origins to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, established by the Commission on Human Rights in 1947, which was renamed the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in 1999. Following the establishment of the Human Rights Council in 2006, the functions of the Sub-Commission were assumed by the Advisory Committee. Mr. Chen Shiqiu was the first Chinese expert to serve on the Advisory Committee. By the end of 2025, a total of five Chinese experts had served as members of the Committee, participating throughout its development and contributing their expertise to its work.

A. Overview of the Advisory Committee

Pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1, the Human Rights Council established the Advisory Committee to replace the former Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The Advisory Committee serves as the Human Rights Council's "think tank" and carries out its work under the Council's guidance. At the request of the Human Rights Council, it provides expert advice on the promotion and protection of all human rights, primarily through research studies and advisory opinions based on its findings. The Committee may also propose further research or studies within the scope of work defined by the Human Rights Council, subject to the Council's consideration and approval.

The Advisory Committee is composed of 18 independent experts from diverse professional backgrounds, representing the major regions of the world. Its membership comprises five experts from African States, five from Asian States, two from Eastern European States, three from Latin American and Caribbean States, and three from Western European and other States. Candidates for the Advisory Committee are nominated United Nations Member States following consultations with national human rights institutions and civil society organizations. Members are elected by the Human Rights Council through a secret ballot from a list of candidates submitted in accordance with the agreed requirements. Members serve three-year terms and may be re-elected once.[104] Similar to the

[103] Human Rights Council, *Visit to China: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights*, Alena Douhan, A/HRC/57/55/Add.1, August 9, 2024, 2.
[104] Human Rights Council, *Institution-Building of the United Nations Human Rights Council*, A/HRC/RES/5/1, June 18, 2007.

requirements applicable to candidates for the Human Rights Council's Special Procedures, Human Rights Council Decision 6/102 sets out the requirements for the submission of candidates to the Advisory Committee: (a) Recognized competence and experience in the field of human rights; (b) High moral standing; (c) Independence and impartiality; (d) Other considerations: the principle of non-accumulation of human rights functions at the same time is to be respected.[105]

B. Chinese experts have served repeatedly as members of the Advisory Committee

As of the end of 2025, a total of five Chinese experts had served as members of the Advisory Committee.[106] Mr. Chen Shiqiu served from March 2008 to March 2009 and from March 2009 to September 2012; Mr. Zhang Yishan served from September 2013 to September 2016; Mr. Liu Xinsheng served from September 2016 to September 2019 and from September 2019 to September 2022; Mr. Zhang Yue served from September 2022 to September 2025; Mr. Ren Yisheng has served since September 2025 to the present.

Since the establishment of the Advisory Committee, Chinese experts have continuously served as its members, reflecting the strong support of the Chinese government for the work of the Committee. In electing members of the Advisory Committee, the Human Rights Council should give due consideration to the equitable representation of different civilizations and legal traditions. As the world's largest developing country with a distinctive civilization and legal tradition, China's participation through its experts helps the Human Rights Council advance the promotion and protection of human rights from a broader and more comprehensive perspective, thereby contributing China's wisdom and efforts to international human rights affairs.

VII. Conclusion

As the international community marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Human Rights Council, it is regrettable to note that the Council is facing serious challenges. Some Western countries have long applied "double standards" to human rights issues, leading to the increasing politicization and weaponization of the Council's agenda. Human Rights Council resolutions are often employed to advance the political objectives of these countries, serving as instruments for political alignment, sanctions, and pressure against States Parties holding different positions. More notably, in November 2025, the United States became the first country since the launch of the UPR mechanism in 2008 to neither submit a national report nor participate in its review. Such actions by the United States have seriously undermined the core principles of "universal

[105] Human Rights Council, *Follow-up to Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1*, A/HRC/DEC/6/102, September 27, 2007.

[106] UN Human Rights Council, "Elections of Members of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee," accessed January 2, 2026, https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/advisory-committee/elections.

participation" and "equal review" that underpin the UPR mechanism of the Human Rights Council. These practices by the United States and some other Western countries have significantly eroded the credibility of the Human Rights Council and undermined the authority of the multilateral system centered on the United Nations.

Against this backdrop, China's engagement within the United Nations Human Rights Council has followed a clear trajectory from participant in the system, to key supporter, and ultimately to active builder and leader. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy and General Secretary Xi Jinping's important expositions on human rights, China has participated in the work of the Human Rights Council with a more proactive and open approach. In every cycle of the UPR, China has dispatched high-level delegations to participate in the review process, reflecting its commitment to the principles of dialogue and cooperation. The number of Chinese experts serving within the Special Procedures has increased significantly, while Chinese experts have continuously participated in the work of the Advisory Committee, contributing Chinese perspectives and expertise to the work of the Human Rights Council. The number of Human Rights Council resolutions sponsored by China has grown steadily and has received broad support within the Council. By proposing resolutions covering a wide range of topics — including the contribution of development to the enjoyment of human rights, economic, social and cultural rights, mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights, and the protection of the rights of specific groups — China has not only responded to the common concerns of developing countries but has also substantively shaped and enriched the agenda of the Human Rights Council. Through its engagement with the Human Rights Council, China has promoted concepts with Chinese characteristics — including the people-centered development philosophy, the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind, and the principle of promoting human rights through development — as important elements of international human rights discourse. These concepts have brought new perspectives and momentum to global human rights governance and have helped promote the transition of the international human rights system from a Western-dominated model toward a more inclusive and equitable model of human rights governance based on the equal participation of all countries.

Looking ahead, China will continue to serve as an important force in global human rights governance. As General Secretary Xi Jinping noted in his congratulatory message to the Forum on Global Human Rights Governance in 2023, "China is ready to work with the rest of the world to act on the principles enshrined in the *Vienna Declaration* and *Program of Action*, push for greater fairness, justice, reason, and inclusiveness in global human rights governance, and promote the

development of a human community with a shared future, and jointly build a better world."[107] China will remain committed to a human rights development path with Chinese characteristics, strive to bridge international differences and build consensus on development, and continue to play an increasingly important and indispensable role in the evolving landscape of global human rights governance.

(Translated by *CHEN Feng*)

[107] Xi Jinping, "Xi Jinping Sends a Congratulatory Letter to the Forum on Global Human Rights Governance," *People's Daily*, June 15, 2023, 1.