

**Moderate Prosperity in All
Respects:
Another Milestone Achieved in
China's Human Rights**

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Foreword

Human rights are an achievement of humanity and a symbol of progress. Respect for and protection of human rights is a basic principle of modern civilization, and the unwavering goal of the Chinese Communists. The Communist Party of China (CPC) seeks happiness for the people. Its 100-year history records its efforts in fighting for, respecting, protecting, and developing human rights. Owing to its efforts, human rights in China have greatly improved, adding diversity to human civilization.

Building China into a moderately prosperous society in all respects is a major strategy designed by the Party and the government to improve the wellbeing of the people, better protect human rights, and achieve modernization of the country. On July 1, 2021, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and president of China, solemnly declared in Beijing on behalf of the Party and the people that we had realized the first centenary goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. This means we have brought about a historic resolution to the problem of extreme poverty in China, and we are now marching with confidence towards the goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects. It is an exciting moment for human rights in China, a moment that will go down in history, and a moment from which we will forge ahead into the future.

The realization of all-round moderate prosperity shows that the CPC has stayed true to its original aspiration and founding mission. Under the CPC leadership, the Chinese people worked hard in the final stage towards this goal, and finally completed the historic transformation from poverty to secure access to food and clothing, to a decent life, and finally to moderate prosperity.

Moderate prosperity in China is evident in all respects: a buoyant economy, political democracy, a flourishing culture, social equity, and healthy ecosystems; balanced development between urban and rural areas to the benefit of all the people; and high respect for and comprehensive protection of human rights. China's realization of moderate prosperity serves as a solid foundation for human rights, and takes a deeper and broader perspective on this cause. It represents comprehensive progress in ensuring universal human rights in China, and a new contribution to the world's human rights cause.

I. Achieving Moderate Prosperity and Advancing Human Rights

Xiaokang, an ancient term in China, refers to a status of moderate prosperity whereby people are neither rich nor poor but free from want and toil. It has been the people's wish since ancient times to live a life of peace, stability and happiness. In the early period of reform and opening up, based on its own national conditions, China articulated the goal of building a moderately prosperous society, which demonstrated its concern for improving the people's wellbeing, and its commitment to protecting and promoting human rights. The realization of all-round moderate prosperity ushers in a new era for the protection of human rights in all respects.

1. The Journey to Moderate Prosperity

Building a moderately prosperous society has been a grand strategy since the 1980s, designed to realize national prosperity and rejuvenation, and ensure the people's wellbeing in China under the leadership of the CPC. Based on its analysis and judgment of China's realities at that time, the CPC decided to focus on economic development to drive social progress on all fronts. Since then, the CPC and the Chinese government have made it a key goal to build a moderately prosperous society by stages.

In December 1979, Deng Xiaoping presented the vision of building a *xiaokang* society. The reference to *xiaokang* grounded the goal of China's modernization firmly in traditional Chinese culture. The report to the 12th CPC National Congress in 1982 defined the goal to quadruple the annual gross output value of industry and agriculture and secure the people's basic needs in two decades from 1981 to the end of the 20th century. The report to the 14th CPC National Congress in 1992 stated that the country had ensured the basic needs of 1.1 billion Chinese people and was moving on towards *xiaokang*.

The report to the 16th CPC National Congress in 2002 declared that on the whole the people had made a historic leap from having only adequate food and clothing to leading a life of moderate prosperity, and set forth the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects: In the first two decades of the 21st century, China would build a society of moderate prosperity of a higher standard in an all-round way to the benefit of over one billion people; China would further develop the economy, improve democracy, advance science and education, promote cultural prosperity, foster social harmony, and upgrade the quality of life for the people.

The report to the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012 laid out the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020. According to this report, China's economy would maintain sustained and sound development, people's democracy would be expanded, and human rights would be fully respected and protected. The country's cultural soft power would be improved significantly. Living standards would be raised. Major progress would be made in building a resource-conserving and environmentally friendly society.

The report to the 19th CPC National Congress in 2017 pointed out that to succeed in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, China must strive against all difficulties to promote coordinated progress in the economic, political, cultural, social and eco-environmental fields in light of the current principal challenge facing the country, so that the moderately prosperous society it builds earns the people's approval and stands the test of time.

On July 1, 2021, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and president of China, declared on behalf of the Party and the people that China had realized the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

This is a critical step towards the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation, fulfilling the historic commitment of the CPC and the Chinese government to the people.

2. Steps Taken to Protect Human Rights

The route to all-round moderate prosperity coincides with comprehensive progress in human rights in China, which involves all the steps necessary to liberate, protect and develop the individual.

Prioritizing the right to subsistence. The right to subsistence comes first among all human rights. A moderately prosperous society takes it as the primary goal to secure adequate food and clothing and protect the right to subsistence, and takes further steps to meet the growing material and cultural needs of the people. Visible progress in securing basic needs and remarkable improvements in living standards are the natural results of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

Realizing the coordinated development of all human rights. A moderately prosperous society emphasizes economic, political, cultural, social, and eco-environmental progress to benefit the people. It upholds the basic principle of interdependence and indivisibility of human rights. To advance all human rights and fundamental freedoms in all respects, it protects economic, social, and cultural rights, political and democratic rights, personal rights, personality rights, and property rights.

Advancing the rights of all people. All-round moderate prosperity means all the people enjoy human rights. In the process of creating this society, China

has built a system guaranteeing social equity with equal opportunities, equal rules and equal rights, in which all can participate in, contribute to, and enjoy development.

The CPC and the Chinese government uphold the universality of human rights and ensure that no one is left behind on the way towards prosperity. Holding fast to the principle of common prosperity, they allowed some people to create wealth as a first step to bringing prosperity for all. They have ensured just distribution in order that the fruits of development benefit all people equally. They adhere to the principles of equality before the law and non-discrimination, making sure all citizens are entitled to equal rights and respect without discrimination of any kind, such as ethnicity, race, gender, occupation, birth, religion, education, property, or length of residence. Committed to protecting the basic rights of vulnerable groups, particularly poor people in impoverished areas, they have eliminated extreme poverty by applying strong determination, clear thinking, effective measures, and all resources available.

3. Reinforced Groundwork for Human Rights

Human rights are the foundation of good governance. China has always been committed to respecting, protecting and advancing human rights, and increasing the people's sense of fulfillment, happiness and security. The route to moderate prosperity has reinforced the groundwork for human rights.

Providing a solid material foundation for protecting and developing human rights. In the process of building a moderately prosperous society, China has maintained its commitment to the new development philosophy. The economy has achieved long-term rapid growth and the basic needs of over one billion people have been met. The urban-rural divide has been resolved and the income distribution profile has been reformed to improve living standards. Targeted poverty reduction and eradication has achieved success, strengthening protection of all vulnerable groups. A social security system covering all the people is in place, with better medical services and a higher overall level of health. Public cultural services have improved. Free compulsory education has been realized in both urban and rural areas. An efficient and ubiquitous information network has been set up. With accelerated efforts to build an eco-civilization, a basic national policy of environmental protection has been implemented, measures to prevent and control pollution have intensified, and the eco-environment has notably improved.

In a moderately prosperous society, economic, political, social, cultural and environmental rights are more equitable and more easily accessible to all people to ensure equal rights to participation and development in all fields.

Providing a solid political and democratic foundation for protecting and developing human rights. In achieving moderate prosperity, China has ensured that the Party's leadership, the people's position as masters of the country and law-based governance form an indivisible whole. The institutions and mechanisms by which the Party exercises leadership have improved. The system of people's congresses, the system of CPC-led multiparty cooperation and political consultation, the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and the system of community-level self-governance have developed steadily.

The institutions, standards and procedures of law-based socialist democracy have improved, with more diverse forms of democracy and wider democratic channels. A social governance model based on collaboration and common interests has taken shape and the principle of the people as masters of the country is put into practice in China's political and social fields. Civil, political and democratic rights are better protected.

Strengthening legal protection for human rights. The Constitution stipulates that the state shall respect and protect human rights, which is an important principle in state governance. Advancing the rule of law has been made a national strategy. Systems and mechanisms to ensure the enforcement of the Constitution are improving. Further progress has been made to ensure sound lawmaking, strict law enforcement, impartial administration of justice, and the observance of law by all. Our efforts to build a country, government, and society based on the rule of law are mutually reinforcing. The system of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics has been steadily improved, and public awareness of the rule of law has risen markedly.

Good progress has been made in reforming the system of government administration, the national supervision system, and the judicial system. Effective measures have been taken to develop other systems to strengthen checks and oversight over the exercise of power. The role of the rule of law in protecting human rights has been enhanced.

Fostering a culture to respect and protect human rights throughout society. In building a moderately prosperous society, China has promoted the creative evolution of fine traditional culture, and rooted the core socialist values among the people. Public cultural services have been improved, with cultural programs and industries flourishing. Endeavors to achieve moderate prosperity have fostered a Chinese spirit, Chinese values, and Chinese strength, and cultivated stronger cultural confidence. China's cultural soft power and the international influence of Chinese culture have increased significantly. The process of achieving moderate prosperity helps everyone improve the understanding of their own value, personal dignity and principal status, fostering a culture that respects and protects human rights.

II. Ending Extreme Poverty and Securing the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living

Poverty is the biggest obstacle to human rights. The CPC and the Chinese government have directed extra attention to rural poverty, furthering development-driven poverty alleviation, and achieving a series of important breakthroughs. The 18th CPC National Congress in 2012 made ending extreme poverty China's benchmark task in achieving moderate prosperity in all respects. By eliminating extreme poverty China has won the biggest and toughest battle against poverty in human history, to the benefit of the largest number of people.

By the end of 2020, by China's current poverty threshold of RMB2,300 per person per year (based on the 2010 price index), all of the 99 million rural poor, as well as the 832 counties and 128,000 villages classified as poor, had emerged from poverty, and regional poverty was eliminated.

Since the launch of reform and opening up in 1978, 770 million rural poor living below China's poverty line have been raised from poverty; against the World Bank's international poverty line, the number of people lifted out of poverty in China accounts for more than 70 percent of the world total during the same period. China realized its poverty reduction goal from the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 10 years ahead of schedule, representing a significant contribution to global poverty reduction and human progress.

1. Securing the Right to Food for the Poor

China bases its food security on solid agricultural foundations. It has built a modern agrotechnology system, improved comprehensive agricultural productivity, maintained the steady growth of agricultural output, and resolved the problems of insufficient food and undernutrition. China's total grain output increased from 113 million tons in 1949 to 669 million tons in 2020. China's per capita share of grain now exceeds 474 kg, which is comfortably above the international food security threshold of 400 kg.

China has ensured that all the poor have access to food by increasing their incomes through targeted poverty alleviation. The per capita disposable income of rural residents in poor areas increased from RMB6,079 in 2013 to RMB12,588 in 2020, an average annual increase of 11.6 percent. The amount of grain they consumed increased steadily. Now, the problem of food shortages has been resolved. Key impoverished groups have much better nutrition, and the right to be free from hunger is guaranteed.

China ensures a proper food supply for poor children through nutrition programs. The Chinese government has implemented the Nutrition Improvement Program for Children in Poor Areas, providing children aged six months to two years in contiguous poverty-stricken areas with free food supplements – one pack per child per day. By 2020, this program had benefited 11.2 million children. There is also a Nutrition Improvement Program for Rural Students in Compulsory Education, providing them with nutrition allowances. This program covers 132,000 schools and benefits over 38 million students every year.

2. Ensuring Safe Drinking Water for the Poor

Since 2005, the Chinese government has made an enormous investment in its Safe Drinking Water Program for Rural Areas. By the end of 2015, the program had benefited 520 million rural residents, including 47 million teachers and students. During the 13th Five-year Plan period (2016-2020), it launched an upgraded program, which improved access to safe drinking water for 382 million rural people, including 28.9 million rural poor. Tap water coverage in poor areas increased from 70 percent in 2015 to 83 percent in 2020. Through replacement of water sources, water purification, and population resettlement, China has resolved the problem of excess fluoride in drinking water for 9.52 million rural people.

3. Providing Compulsory Education in Poor Areas

To guarantee compulsory education and prevent poverty from passing down from one generation to the next, China launched the Plan for Poverty Alleviation Through Education During the 13th Five-year Plan period and the Implementation Plan for Poverty Alleviation Through Education in Severely Impoverished Areas (2018-2020).

A great effort has been invested in improving school conditions and education quality for compulsory education in poor areas. Now, all primary and secondary schools in China have access to the internet, and 95.3 percent have multimedia classrooms.

The Program for Special Teaching Posts in Rural Compulsory Education has been implemented to attract more university graduates to teach in poor rural areas. Living subsidies are offered to rural teachers in contiguous poverty-stricken areas, which benefit nearly 1.3 million teachers from more than 80,000 schools. A total of 190,000 teachers have been dispatched to remote and poor areas and to border areas with large ethnic minority populations.

The system of financial aid to students has been improved to provide targeted assistance. Students from registered poor households all receive living

subsidies during their compulsory education. Every year, about 150 million students are given exemption from school fees and textbook fees; about 25 million students in economic difficulty are provided with living subsidies; and about 14 million students from migrant worker families have had their compulsory education subsidies transferred to their urban schools. All students from poor rural households have access to compulsory education, and dropouts are all identified and helped back to school in a timely manner. In 2020, the compulsory education completion rate in poor counties reached 94.8 percent.

4. Providing Essential Medical Services for the Poor

China launched the Health Care Program for Poverty Alleviation, taking comprehensive measures to guarantee access to essential medical services for the rural poor, and to prevent them from falling back into poverty due to ill health.

Continuous efforts have been made to improve the three-tiered medical services system at village, township and county levels. Every village has a clinic, and every town or township has a health center served by licensed doctors, except for villages, towns and townships that already satisfy the requirements for basic medical services. Each of the counties formerly classified as poor has at least one public hospital, and 98 percent of them have at least one Grade II hospital. The aim is to ensure the poor can have common ailments and chronic diseases treated at nearby medical institutions in a timely manner.

All poor populations have access to basic medical insurance, serious illness insurance, and medical assistance. Basic medical insurance coverage of the poor remains almost 100 percent. Measures have been taken to ensure medical treatment to those with serious illnesses, contracted health care to those with chronic illnesses, and guaranteed medical services for those with critical illnesses. Now, 30 illnesses are covered by special funds for serious illnesses of the rural poor, including congenital heart defects in children, leukemia in children, stomach cancer, esophageal cancer, colon cancer, and serious mental illnesses. The funds have supported treatment for more than 20 million poor patients, relieving their families of the financial burden incurred by medical expenses.

5. Ensuring Safe Housing for the Poor

To guarantee safe housing for the rural poor, China has launched programs such as the renovation of dilapidated rural homes and construction of rural public rental housing. Tens of millions of people have had their dilapidated mud-and-straw dwellings replaced by safe homes which are more comfortable and offer better protection against earthquakes. The right to

housing and basic housing safety of the rural poor were fundamentally guaranteed.

Between 2008 and 2020, the central government allocated a total of RMB284 billion for the renovation of 27.6 million dilapidated homes, targeting registered poor households, households entitled to subsistence allowances, severely impoverished rural residents cared for at their homes with government support, and impoverished families of individuals with disabilities. These funds have helped to guarantee access to safe housing for 80 million rural poor.

III. Boosting Human Rights with Development and Securing Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

In building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, China is committed to boosting human rights with development and securing economic, social, cultural, educational and environmental rights. As a result, its people now lead more prosperous, secure, harmonious and happier lives.

1. Putting Life First in Fighting Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic is the most serious global health emergency in a century. Facing this crisis, China has put the people's interests first – nothing is more precious than people's lives. It has adopted thorough, rigorous and effective prevention and control measures, regardless of huge economic and social costs. It has turned the tide in the battle against the virus and safeguarded people's lives and health.

In the early days of the epidemic, China mobilized the whole nation and carried out a campaign to save lives on an unprecedented scale. It pooled the best doctors, the most advanced equipment, and critical supplies from across the country to aid Hubei Province, especially its capital city of Wuhan.

From January 24 to March 8, 2020, it rallied 346 national medical teams, consisting of 42,600 medical workers and more than 900 public health professionals to the immediate aid of Hubei; it mobilized 40,000 construction workers and a huge array of machinery and equipment to build the 1,000-bed Huoshenshan Hospital in 10 days, the 1,600-bed Leishenshan Hospital in 12 days, and 16 temporary treatment centers providing more than 14,000 beds in just over 10 days. Across Hubei, more than 3,000 patients over the age of 80, including seven centenarians, were cured, with many of them brought back to life from the

verge of death. This fully demonstrated that the state respects and protects each and every life.

China did everything possible to treat all patients. The government promptly adopted policies to subsidize medical expenses for Covid-19 to ensure that patients could receive timely treatment and that medical institutions could proceed smoothly with admission and treatment. They proved to be very effective in raising the cure rate and lowering the fatality rate.

China has combined ongoing targeted control and local emergency response, and consolidated the gains in its fight against Covid-19. It is making every effort to vaccinate its people and moving faster to form nationwide immunity.

2. Ensuring Equitable and Accessible Health Services

Prosperity for all is impossible without health for all. China gives top priority to improving its people's health. It is carrying out the Healthy China initiative and has worked out action plans to ensure that basic public health services are inclusive and efficient, and to make health and medical services more equitable, accessible, convenient and affordable.

A basic public health services system is in place. The number of medical and health institutions in China, including hospitals, grassroots medical institutions and specialized public health institutions, increased from 170,000 in 1978 to over 1 million in 2020. A public health services system consisting of various specialized institutions has taken shape, providing disease prevention and control, health education, maternal and child health care, mental health care, emergency response, blood collection and supply, health inspection, and other services.

The range of public health services is expanding. Free basic public health services increased from nine categories in 2010 to 12 categories in 2020, spanning the entire life cycle. The state promotes many preventive services, such as screening for stroke and cardiovascular disease risk, comprehensive oral disease prevention and intervention, and early screening and treatment of cancer. China's capacity to prevent and control chronic illnesses has improved remarkably. Major infectious diseases have been effectively contained. By raising the vaccination rates under the national immunization program, China eradicated polio in 2000 and neonatal tetanus in 2012. It eliminated malaria in 2020 and was awarded a malaria-free certification from the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2021. The spread of HIV remains at a low level, and the cure rate of tuberculosis is maintained at over 90 percent.

China's medical services system has been improving. The country is committed to building an integrated medical services system of high quality and efficiency and improving the availability and accessibility of medical

resources. As a result, public satisfaction with medical services is rising notably.

In 2020, the number of beds in medical institutions across the country reached 9.1 million, including 7.1 million beds in hospitals and 1.4 million in township-level health centers. There were 10.7 million health professionals, including 4.1 million licensed doctors and assistant doctors and 4.7 million registered nurses. That year recorded 7.8 billion medical visits. The rate of prenatal care was 96.8 percent, and the rate of hospital deliveries reached 99.9 percent.

China provides a reasonable distribution of medical resources. It is building a tiered treatment system featuring primary treatment at the community level, flexible inter-hospital patient transfer, differentiated treatment for acute and chronic illnesses, and coordination across different levels. It has put an end to the practice of hospitals subsidizing their medical services with drug sales and established a system of essential medicines. All government-funded medical institutions across the country are supplied with essential medicines, which are guaranteed to meet priority health care needs and sold with zero markup.

Public health indicators are steadily improving. The core health indicators of the Chinese have generally surpassed the average level of middle- and high-income countries. The average life expectancy in China rose from 67.8 years in 1981 to 77.3 years in 2019. Infant mortality declined from 37.6 per 1,000 in the early days of reform and opening up to 5.4 per 1,000 in 2020; and maternal mortality dropped from 43.2 per 100,000 in 2002 to 16.9 per 100,000 in 2020. In recognition of its achievements, China has been hailed by the WHO as a role model for developing countries and a fast-track country in improving maternal and child health.

The Law on the Promotion of Basic Medical and Health Care has been adopted and implemented, providing a legal guarantee for comprehensive health care for the full life cycle and for the Healthy China initiative. With steady social and economic improvement, the state devotes itself to helping citizens develop healthy lifestyles. A social atmosphere has taken shape where both urban and rural residents do regular exercise in their spare time and pay attention to a healthy diet.

3. Upgrading the Quality of Life

Incomes continue to rise. For four decades, China's economy has been growing steadily. From 1978 to 2020, the country's per capita GDP increased from RMB385 to RMB72,000. In 2020, the average per capita disposable income was RMB32,189. Consumption patterns are improving. In 2020, the Engel coefficient was 30.2 percent, down 33.7 percentage points from 1978.

Housing conditions have improved markedly. In 2019, the per capita floor space of urban residents was 39.8 sq m, up from 4.2 sq m in 1978, and that of rural residents was 48.9 sq m, up from 8.1 sq m in 1978. Urban park green space per capita increased from 1.5 sq m in 1981 to 14.36 sq m in 2019. Construction projects have been launched to provide affordable housing to urban residents, helping nearly 200 million poor people improve their housing conditions.

China's transport infrastructure network has been improving steadily, resulting in more convenient and safer public transport. By the end of 2020, the country's rail length had grown to 146,000 km, and high-speed rail had reached 38,000 km; road length had increased to 5.2 million km, including 161,000 km of expressways; urban rail transit had reached 7,355 km.

The availability of IT applications has improved greatly. The Chinese government makes great efforts to develop new types of infrastructure to ensure that the people benefit more from the use of information technology. In 2020, every 100 people had 113.9 mobile phones; internet usage was 70.4 percent nationwide and 55.9 percent in rural areas. By June 2021, 847,000 5G base stations had been built and put into operation across the country. New business forms represented by online shopping are thriving. In 2020, there were 782 million online shoppers, accounting for 79.1 percent of all internet users, and nationwide online retail sales reached RMB11.8 trillion, up 10.9 percent from 2019.

4. Maximizing Employment

China advocates an employment-first strategy and a proactive employment policy. It encourages widespread entrepreneurship and innovation, and gives top priority to ensuring stability in employment and people's wellbeing. It is committed to realizing fuller employment, with decent jobs for all and harmonious labor relations. It has established a five-tiered employment services network covering the province, city, county, sub-district/township, and community/village levels.

As of 2020, there were 45,800 employment services agencies in China, helping 290 million people find temporary or long-term work; China's employed population reached 750 million, of whom 463 million were in urban areas. In 2019, the growth in new jobs in urban areas was 13.5 million, and the figure had remained above 13 million for seven consecutive years. In 2020, despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 11.9 million new jobs in urban areas.

Private enterprises provide more than 80 percent of urban jobs. New industries and new business forms and models continue to emerge, creating a large number of part-time or flexible jobs. Workers' incomes are increasing

rapidly. The average annual salary of employees in urban non-private units rose from RMB615 in 1978 to RMB90,501 in 2019.

5. Enhancing Public Cultural Services

Over the past four decades, China's public cultural services have continued to improve. Art, literature, culture and sports are thriving.

In 2020, China had 3,212 public libraries, 5,788 museums, 3,321 cultural centers, 32,825 township-level cultural stations, and 575,384 village-level cultural service centers. In publishing, 27.7 billion copies of newspapers, 2 billion copies of magazines, and 10.1 billion copies of books were issued, a per capita average of 7.2 books.

In 2020, the coverage of radio programs was 99.4 percent, and the coverage of TV programs 99.6 percent. The country produced 202 TV series, TV animations with a total length of 116,688 minutes, 531 feature films, and 119 popular science films, documentaries, animated cartoons and special films. Public-interest cultural initiatives to ensure radio and television coverage for all households, bring cinema to rural communities, and set up rural libraries were implemented to provide consistent and equal access to basic public cultural services and to protect the people's basic cultural rights and interests.

In 2020, a total of 1,274 terabytes of public cultural resources were created through projects under the public digital cultural services program. Among them, the digital library project covered 39 provincial-level and 376 city-level libraries, with services radiating into 2,760 county-level libraries.

The state is promoting a national fitness program. Sports venues of various types have been built or renovated, including public stadiums, fitness centers, sports parks, running trails, soccer fields, and multifunctional fitness facilities. In 2020, there were 3.7 million sports venues in China, with a total floor area of 3.1 billion sq m (2.2 sq m per capita); 37.2 percent of the population took part in regular exercise; the rural fitness program covered almost all villages.

6. Guaranteeing the Right to Education

China runs education for the public good and regards equal access to education as a basic national education policy. It has made significant progress in protecting the right to education. The gross enrollment rate in three-year preschool education rose to 85.2 percent in 2020 from 56.6 percent in 2010. In 2020, the completion rate of compulsory education was 95.2 percent, and the availability of compulsory education reached the average level of high-income countries. More than 95 percent of children with disabilities received compulsory education.

The state has established a policy system for subsidizing students with financial difficulties, which offers full coverage from preschool to postgraduate education. As a result, the goal of ensuring that no student drops out of school due to financial difficulties has now been largely achieved. The state gives more support to education in rural areas and central and western regions. Thanks to this, 96.8 percent of the counties nationwide have realized balanced compulsory education, and more children in rural areas and central and western regions enjoy better access to quality education.

The gross enrollment rate in senior secondary education increased from 42.8 percent in 2000 to 91.2 percent in 2020, higher than the average of upper-middle-income countries. The gross enrollment rate in higher education rose from 12.5 percent in 2000 to 54.4 percent in 2020. China has built the world's largest higher education system, with over 40 million students on campus.

7. Expanding Social Security to Cover All Citizens

Social security is a basic institutional guarantee for safeguarding and improving people's lives, ensuring social equity and enhancing their sense of wellbeing.

In 2020, 340 million people were covered by basic medical insurance for urban workers, and 1.02 billion by basic medical insurance for rural and non-working urban residents – a total of 1.36 billion. As of June 2021, basic old-age insurance for urban workers covered 467 million people, basic old-age insurance for rural and non-working urban residents covered 547 million, and unemployment insurance covered 222 million. Work-related injury insurance covered 274 million, 90.8 million of whom were migrant workers. Childbirth insurance covered more than 235 million people. In addition, the state has established a serious illness insurance covering both urban and rural residents, which is a supplement to the basic medical insurance systems, reimbursing the victims of serious illnesses for their high medical expenses.

China has established a comprehensive and inclusive social assistance system whose main provisions are subsistence allowances, assistance and support for severely impoverished people, disaster relief, medical assistance, education assistance, housing assistance, employment assistance, and temporary assistance, supplemented by public participation. At the end of 2020, 8 million people lived on urban subsistence allowances, 36.2 million on rural subsistence allowances, 310,000 on assistance and support for urban residents in extreme difficulty, and 4.5 million on assistance and support for rural residents in extreme difficulty. In 2020, 13.4 million received temporary assistance; 186 million received medical assistance worth of RMB54.7 billion.

To guarantee a basic living to people in difficulties caused by Covid-19, the government provided temporary subsidies totaling RMB21.8 billion to residents in need when the Consumer Price Index fluctuates beyond a certain range, benefitting 400 million people. Due to impact from Covid-19, subsistence allowances were extended to an additional 2.4 million people facing difficulties, and 2.5 million received temporary assistance.

8. Improving the Eco-environment

A sound eco-environment is the most inclusive benefit to people's wellbeing. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the central leadership has incorporated eco-environmental progress as part of the Five-sphere Integrated Plan for national development and has promoted an environment-friendly development model, advocating that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets. It has enforced strict eco-environmental red lines and made solid efforts to prevent and control pollution, working to build a beautiful China and protect environmental rights.

The air has become cleaner through efforts to keep the sky blue. In 2020, China's CO₂ emissions per RMB10,000 of GDP fell by 48.4 percent from 2005, achieving the goal of a 40-to-45-percent fall during this period ahead of schedule. The proportion of natural gas, hydropower, nuclear power, wind power and other types of clean energy in total energy consumption rose from 19.1 percent in 2016 to 24.3 percent in 2020. Among the 337 cities at and above prefecture level nationwide, 202 met the air quality standards in 2020.

Water quality is improving through efforts to keep waters clear. In 2020, 83.4 percent of the 1,940 surface water sections monitored by the state showed excellent and good quality (meeting Class I to Class III surface water quality standards), up 8.5 percentage points from 2019; 0.6 percent of sections suffered from poor water quality below Class V, down 2.8 percentage points from 2019. In 2020, 77.4 percent of offshore waters reached Class I and Class II sea water quality standards, up 0.8 percentage point from 2019; 9.4 percent of offshore waters were worse than Class IV, down 2.3 percentage points from 2019.

Effective measures have been taken to bring under control the risks associated with worsening soil qualities. The state has formulated the Law on Prevention and Control of Soil Pollution, and implemented its action plan for addressing soil pollution. National soil pollution surveys have been carried out, with the focus on land for agriculture and key industries and enterprises. From 2014 to 2019, more than 3,500 heavy-metal enterprises were shut down in accordance with laws and regulations, and more than 850 heavy-metal discharge reduction projects were carried out. The soil quality of agricultural land is subject to classification and restoration, and the soil environment of

agricultural land remains stable. China has banned the import of foreign waste, and imports have largely fallen to zero.

The living environment is improving. In 2020, sanitary toilets were used by more than 68 percent of rural households. The system for the collection, transport, treatment and disposal of domestic waste covered more than 90 percent of villages. Domestic sewage treatment covered 25.5 percent of rural areas. In 46 major cities, 83 million households in 94.6 percent of communities were involved in domestic waste sorting programs. More than 90 percent of black and fetid water bodies in built-up areas of cities at and above prefecture level had been eliminated.

China enforces stringent eco-environmental conservation. As of 2020, nearly 10,000 nature reserves had been established across the country, covering 18 percent of China's land mass, and bringing some 90 percent of land ecosystems and 85 percent of key wild animal populations under effective protection. China's forest coverage rose from 12.7 percent in the early 1970s to 23 percent in 2020. While the global forest stock decreased by 178 million ha between 1990 and 2020, China's forest area has seen an average annual increase of 2.5 million ha in the past decade, ranking top in the world. Between 2012 and June 2021, China completed desertification control work involving over 19 million ha of land, and 1.8 million ha have been closed off to prevent deterioration. China has become the first country to achieve a zero increase in desertification, making a great contribution to the UN 2030 Sustainable Development goal of zero increase in land degradation across the globe.

9. Achieving a Higher HDI Score

According to the Human Development Report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), China was among the low-ranked countries in terms of the human development index (HDI) score in 1990; it moved into the ranks of countries with medium HDI scores in 1996; it ascended into the ranks of countries with high HDI scores in 2011. From 1990 to 2019, China's HDI score increased from 0.499 to 0.761. China is the only country to have risen from a low-ranked country to a high-ranked country since 1990, when the UNDP first started to calculate countries' HDI ratings.

IV. Protecting Civil and Political Rights with Law and Governance

In building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, the CPC and the Chinese government have pursued a people-centered development philosophy, and adopted vigorous and practical measures to develop whole-process people's democracy, uphold social equity and justice, and ensure by law that people enjoy more extensive rights and freedoms.

1. Expanding People's Democratic Rights

China ensures the principal status of the people, and improves the system of people's congresses, the system of CPC-led multiparty cooperation and political consultation, and the system of community-level self-governance. It has worked to diversify the forms of democracy and establish more democratic channels. People's democratic rights are effectively protected.

Implementing orderly democratic election processes. Both rural and urban areas are represented by people's congress deputies in proportion to their population, and all regions, ethnic groups, and sectors of society have a certain proportion of deputies.

To guarantee people's rights to vote and to stand for election, deputies to the people's congresses at the county level and below are directly elected, and measures are taken to ensure the elections are clean and the results are satisfactory to the people. In the elections to the people's congresses at county and township levels beginning in 2016, more than 1 billion constituents cast votes for nearly 2.5 million deputies. There are now more than 2.6 million deputies to the people's congresses at all five levels – the province, city, county, township, and village levels.

Steadily advancing socialist consultative democracy. Democratic consultation is applied extensively as a mechanism at multiple levels. The fields and procedures of consultation are well regulated. Extensive consultation is conducted on matters concerning overall economic and social development and related to the vital interests of the people.

The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) serves as a major channel and specialized body for socialist consultative democracy. It has worked hard to play its role well and apply the results of consultation to good effect. Between January 2012 and June 2021, the CPPCC National Committee had received 58,768 proposals, 48,496 of which were placed on file. Most of the suggestions in the proposals were adopted and implemented.

Improving community-level self-governance. China has amended the Organic Law of the Urban Residents Committees and the Organic Law of the Villagers Committees to improve and regulate the election and removal procedures for committee members. More than 10 rounds of villagers committee elections have been held in villages across the nation. More than 98 percent of these have been conducted by direct election, with more than 95

percent of villagers taking part. The state has worked to expand the channels for the migrant population to participate in community-level governance in their residential areas.

In the fight against poverty, China has paid special attention to improving the mechanism for self-governance by villagers. All matters related to the implementation of poverty alleviation policies, allocation and use of public funds, and projects for improving people's wellbeing are subject to extensive public discussion and consultation to build consensus and obtain popular support.

The system for the democratic management of enterprises and public institutions in the form of workers congresses has improved. Across the country, 29 provinces and equivalent administrative units have issued 36 local regulations concerning the democratic management of enterprises, to guarantee workers' right to participate in management and oversight, and to protect their lawful rights and interests.

Protecting the rights to know, to participate, to express views, and to supervise the exercise of power. China has put in place an audit result announcement system and revised the Regulations on Government Information Disclosure to improve government transparency and protect citizens' right to know.

Internet-based government services have improved. E-government has been promoted to ensure access to all government services through a single portal, shortening the process by over 40 percent for more than half of the items requiring administrative licensing. Moreover, online and one-stop services are provided for over 82 percent of the items requiring provincial administrative licensing, and 50 commonly used government services and 200 public services are provided on an inter-provincial basis to ensure easier access. According to the *E-Government Survey 2020* published by the United Nations, China ranks 9th on both the Online Service Index and the E-Participation Index, showing a very high level of e-government development.

Democratic lawmaking is ensured through improved systems for legislative deliberations and solicitation of public opinion on draft laws, so that every law reflects the will of the people. By the end of 2020, the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) had solicited public opinion on 87 draft laws.

China has improved the mechanism of law-based decision-making. This makes public participation, expert discussion, risk assessment, legality review, and group discussion statutory procedures in major administrative decision-making, so as to make decision-making more democratic.

China provides open, smooth, efficient and convenient channels for people to express their opinions and demands. Public complaints can be submitted

online as well as through letters, visits, calls and other channels. This ensures that extensive public opinion is collected, that citizens' legitimate demands are addressed quickly, in situ and by law, and that people can participate in the management of public affairs in an orderly manner and supervise state agencies in exercising their powers.

From 2018 to 2020, the Standing Committee of the 13th NPC heard and reviewed a total of 52 work reports of the State Council, the National Supervisory Commission, the Supreme People's Court, and the Supreme People's Procuratorate. It examined the implementation of 19 laws and decisions. It conducted 18 surveys and 8 consultations on subjects such as the outline of the 14th Five-year Plan, targeted poverty alleviation, pollution prevention and control, and reform of the social security system.

With a well-defined role in democratic supervision, the CPPCC has strengthened its function of democratic supervision, with clearer priorities and in more forms. It has improved the mechanisms for organizing democratic supervision, protecting related rights and interests, providing informed feedback, and facilitating communication and coordination, so that supervision is embodied in consultation and consultative supervision plays a better role.

Reform of the national supervision system has been advanced to strengthen all-round law-based supervision of public servants in the exercise of public power. The systems of people's assessors and supervisors have been improved to ensure citizens' right to judicial participation and supervision.

2. Protecting Personal Rights

China respects human dignity and value, and protects citizens' personal rights and liberty in accordance with the law.

Respecting and protecting personal liberty. Unlawful deprivation or restriction of a citizen's personal freedom is prohibited. In 2013, the Standing Committee of the 12th NPC adopted a decision to repeal laws and regulations on reeducation through labor. In 2019, the Standing Committee of the 13th NPC adopted a decision to repeal laws and regulations on detention education. In 2020, the State Council abolished the Measures for the Detention Education of Persons Engaging in Prostitution and Whoring. The abolition of reeducation through labor and detention education embodies the constitutional principle of respecting and protecting human rights, and demonstrates China's commitment to protecting citizens' personal liberty by law.

Facilitating the movement of people. China has continued to reform the household registration system. It conducts unified household registration of urban and rural areas to enable rural people who have stable jobs and have lived in urban areas for the appropriate time to register as permanent urban residents. In this way, China ensures that people enjoy equal rights. In 2020,

the urbanization rate of registered population reached 45.4 percent, an increase of 10.1 percentage points from 2012. Since 2010, more than 15 million unregistered people have completed household registration.

Securing personal information and privacy by law. China has enacted the Civil Code and strengthened protection of personality rights. The government has intensified efforts in protecting data and personal information in accordance with the law and taking firm action on infringements concerning personal information. Since 2016, it has taken special actions to handle cases involving suspected violations of personal information, effectively curbing such violations. In 2019, a campaign was launched nationwide to address collection and use of personal information by applications in violation of laws and regulations, focusing on the absence of a privacy policy, bundled and forced consent, and collection and use of personal information without consent. This campaign has increased transparency in the privacy policy of applications.

The Cyberspace Administration of China and three other departments jointly issued in March 2021 the Provisions on the Scope of Required Personal Information for Common Types of Mobile Applications, clearly defining the personal information required for 39 common types of mobile apps. Between May and July 2021, the authorities conducted an assessment of personal information protection provided by 1,035 frequently downloaded apps of 12 common types. In an ensuing public notice, 351 apps were criticized for seriously violating laws and regulations, and 52 apps were taken down for failing to correct their violations within the required time frame. As a result, infringements of privacy in the collection and use of personal information have declined.

China strikes hard at telecom and cyber fraud, and severely punishes crimes involving infringements of personal information, to strengthen protection of personal privacy. In 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020, people's courts at all levels concluded 1,393, 2,315, 2,627, and 2,558 such cases at first instance, and 273, 292, 331, and 395 cases at first instance related to privacy disputes.

Cases of unauthorized access to users' address book data by mobile phone apps and abuse of personal credit information by online credit platforms are subject to legal procedures. The notice and takedown rule is accurately applied. Any online platform being used to spread defamation is ordered to delete relevant information as requested by the victim. In 2019 and 2020, people's courts at all levels concluded 4,059 and 4,058 cases at first instance on online infringement liability. The prosecuting bodies have made the protection of personal information a focus of their efforts to expand the coverage of public interest litigation.

Protecting the lawful rights and interests of detainees and prisoners.

China has regulated and reduced the application of compulsory custodial measures. When detainees enter a house of detention, they are informed of their rights and obligations, and their complaints are handled in accordance with due procedure. Relevant laws and regulations have been improved to guarantee the dignity and lawful rights of detainees, including the right to meet lawyers, appeal, and receive medical treatment. Prison affairs are open to the public. Procuratorial and law enforcement supervision has been improved to protect prisoners' lawful rights and interests. Some prisoners are allowed leave of absence from prison to visit their families.

The Community Correction Law was enacted, which embodies respect for and protection of human rights in law-based management, and integrates supervision and management with education and assistance. To protect the legitimate rights of those subject to community corrections, China provides subsistence allowances, temporary assistance, social security, and employment and education assistance. By the end of 2020, a total of 5.37 million people throughout the country had received community service orders. Of these, 4.73 million had completed their service, and 640,000 were still subject to their service orders. The recidivism rate in the case of those assigned to community service remains low at 0.2 percent.

China has improved the assistance and management system for people released after completing their prison sentence, ensures their access to social assistance, and provides employment assistance to them to enable a smooth return to normal life.

3. Protecting Individual Property Rights

Improving property rights protection with fairness as the core principle. China has cleared up unfair laws and regulations, strengthened protection of the property rights of economic organizations under all forms of ownership and of natural persons, and encouraged, supported and guided the development of the non-public sector. It has ensured that economic entities under all forms of ownership have equal access to factors of production in accordance with the law, can participate in market competition on a level playing field, and enjoy equal legal protection.

The Constitution stipulates that citizens' lawful private property is inviolable, and the state protects citizens' property and inheritance rights. The Civil Code stipulates equal protection of all property rights, strengthens protection of personal information, data and virtual property, and improves rules for the protection of rights and remedy for rights violations. As a result, an effective mechanism for rights protection has taken shape in China, and the legal framework for property rights protection continues to improve.

Providing legal guarantee for optimizing the business environment.

China adheres to a series of principles and policies to encourage, support and guide the development of the non-public sector. It combats crimes infringing the lawful rights and interests of private enterprises and their operators, and protects the independent management of private enterprises and the personal and property safety of their owners in accordance with the law.

China adheres to the principle of restraint in the Criminal Law, regulates law enforcement and judicial activities involving private enterprises, prohibits criminal law intervention in economic disputes, and accurately applies compulsory measures in accordance with the law to minimize any impact on the normal work and business activities of enterprises. The Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate have publicized a series of guiding cases and typical cases concerning judicial protection of private enterprises, providing guidance for judicial bodies at all levels in handling cases.

Strengthening protection of intellectual property rights (IPRs). China is strengthening the protection and application of IPRs and improving the incentive mechanism for technological innovation. For a better market competition environment and innovation-driven development, China has improved infringement compensation that reflects the value of IPRs, demonstrating its determination to encourage and protect innovation.

China has set up intellectual property courts in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, which have tried major cases, established judgment rules and made consistent standards, and strengthened punishment for IPR infringement. The system is designed to address the problem that the cost of infringement is low and the cost of protection is high. The Supreme People's Procuratorate has set up an Intellectual Property Prosecution Office for guiding prosecution of criminal, civil, and administrative cases concerning IPR infringement and establishing a mechanism for comprehensive judicial protection of intellectual property rights.

China is also stepping up international dialogue, exchanges and cooperation on IPR law enforcement and justice, and working for fairer and sounder international IPR rules.

4. Reinforcing Judicial Guarantee for Human Rights

China has furthered judicial reform, fully implemented the judicial accountability system, improved protection of lawyers' practicing rights, and strengthened supervision over judicial activities, so as to safeguard the rights and interests of the people and ensure that fairness and justice apply in every judicial case.

Steadily advancing judicial reform. In 2014, the 18th CPC Central Committee adopted at its Fourth Plenary Session the CPC Central Committee's Resolution on Certain Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Advancing the Law-Based Governance of China, to fully reform the judicial system, ensure justice, and improve judicial credibility. China has implemented all-round judicial accountability reform, and improved judicial administration and the exercise of judicial power by delegating power in an orderly manner, rationally allocating power, and standardizing and strictly regulating the use of power.

China has improved the allocation of judicial functions and powers, and furthered reform to establish a criminal litigation system centered on court trials. It has strengthened legal supervision by prosecuting bodies, and underlined the role of litigation procedures in regulating the exercise of power. It has better defined the procedures, powers and accountabilities of the judiciary and law enforcement, and improved their coordination. China has also enhanced the institutions and mechanisms by which public security, prosecuting, judicial, and judicial administrative bodies perform their respective functions and work closely together while mutually checking on each other in the exercise of investigative, prosecuting, judicial and law enforcement powers.

Improving protection for judicial personnel to perform their duties. China has improved the system under which any leading officials found to have interfered in judicial activities or the handling of specific cases, or any judicial personnel found to have attempted to influence the result of a case, will be put on record and held accountable. This aims to ensure that the judiciary is free from interference by administrative bodies, social organizations or individuals.

China has standardized methods for the evaluation, accountability and sanctioning of judicial personnel, making it clear that judges and prosecutors who perform their duties in accordance with the law are not subject to legal action, and protecting those responsible for misjudgments that result in severe consequences as long as they have not intentionally violated laws and regulations or are not guilty of gross negligence. No judge or prosecutor may be transferred, removed, dismissed, or demoted without legal procedures and other than for legal reasons.

China has improved the relief mechanism for victimized judicial personnel and the mechanism for clarifying false reports against judicial personnel, and acts resolutely against infringements of the legitimate rights and interests of judicial personnel, so as to foster a social atmosphere that respects judicial adjudication and upholds judicial authority. It has also improved compensation and preferential treatment measures to provide judges and prosecutors with

personal and property guarantees that are commensurate with their occupational risks.

Preventing and redressing miscarriages of justice. China has established and improved mechanisms for the identification, correction and prevention of misjudged cases, and for imposing accountability on those responsible. It adheres to the unity of procedural justice and substantive justice, and safeguards judicial justice. It strictly follows the principles of legality, presumption of innocence, evidence-based verdict, and exclusion of illegally obtained evidence. It prohibits forced confessions, corporal punishments, or abuse. It also implements a state compensation system to strengthen judicial guarantee of human rights.

In 2019 and 2020, people's courts at all levels retried 1,774 and 1,818 criminal cases respectively in accordance with trial supervision procedures and overthrew the original judgments, acquitting 637 and 656 defendants in public prosecution cases and 751 and 384 defendants in private prosecution cases, and concluded 18,164 and 18,433 state compensation cases to protect the legitimate rights and interests of compensation claimants. Between January 2020 and June 2021, prosecuting bodies at all levels lodged protests in 1,325 criminal cases through trial supervision procedures, while the courts changed 685 verdicts and remanded 134 cases for retrial in the same period. The prosecuting bodies raised 616 proposals for criminal retrial, and the courts changed 214 verdicts and remanded 6 cases for retrial over the same period. A number of major wrongful convictions were corrected in accordance with the law.

Strengthening protection of lawyers' practicing rights. China has issued the Provisions on Protecting Lawyers' Practicing Rights in Accordance with the Law, which provide comprehensive provisions protecting lawyers' litigation rights, such as the rights to meet their clients, examine case files, investigate, and obtain evidence, as well as to ask questions, conduct cross-examination, debate, and defend during court trials. It has also improved the relief and accountability mechanisms for protecting lawyers' rights.

The Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of State Security, the Ministry of Justice, and the All-China Lawyers Association have set up a fast-track joint response mechanism for safeguarding lawyers' practicing rights, to ensure that lawyers can get timely and effective relief when their rights are infringed. The All-China Lawyers Association, and lawyers associations at provincial and city levels have all set up centers for safeguarding lawyers' practicing rights. The Supreme People's Procuratorate has carried out special programs to supervise and correct cases where law enforcement and judicial bodies hinder lawyers from exercising their litigation rights, so as to ensure the smooth progress of

litigation activities. At the end of 2020, there were more than 34,000 law firms and 522,000 lawyers in China.

Increasing transparency in the administration of justice. China promotes openness in judicial, procuratorial, policing and prison affairs, and releases timely information on the legal basis, procedures, processes, results and effective legal documents of the judiciary and law enforcement in accordance with the law. With advances towards a smart judicial system, and increased IT application in judicature and law enforcement, people now have quicker and easier access to litigation services.

By the end of 2020, 98 percent of the courts across the country had widely applied information technology to their litigation systems, providing a full range of litigation services. 98 percent of the courts had opened service websites to provide online application for case filing, case inquiry, file access, and electronic document delivery.

From October 1, 2014, when the case information service system went online for China's prosecuting bodies, to June 30, 2021, the website delivered procedural information on 15 million cases, published information on 1.1 million major cases and 6.6 million legal documents, and accepted 558,872 online applications for defense and litigation services. In 2019, the website was merged into 12309.gov.cn to upgrade online services, and China's prosecuting bodies began to advance faster in regular and standardized release of case information supported by IT.

Improving the legal aid system. China has implemented the Measures for the Work of Legal Aid Duty Lawyers, and set up legal aid stations at courts and detention centers. It has strengthened legal aid in criminal cases, implemented provisions on the scope of legal aid stipulated in the Criminal Procedure Law and related regulations, and carried out pilot programs to achieve full legal defense coverage in criminal cases.

China has expanded the coverage of legal aid in civil and administrative proceedings, and brought matters closely related to people's lives into the scope of legal aid. China has worked to alleviate poverty through legal empowerment, and expanded the scope and coverage of legal aid to benefit more people in need. To improve the quality of legal aid services, China has also issued and implemented norms for legal aid services in criminal, civil and administrative cases, and established standards for evaluating the efficacy of legal aid cases.

In 2020, 1.4 million legal aid cases were handled nationwide, helping 2.2 million people and providing legal advice to 14.7 million people; duty lawyers provided legal aid in 740,000 cases, including 680,000 cases where the rule of clemency applied to suspects and defendants who confessed to their crimes. By the end of 2020, more than 70,000 legal aid stations had been set up at courts,

arbitral institutions, public complaints agencies, and township-level judicial offices to provide citizens with easy access to legal aid to address their concerns and solve disputes as early as possible.

5. Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief

The Constitution provides that the citizens enjoy freedom of religious belief. The Chinese government upholds the principle that all religious groups should operate independently and carry out religious activities within the law. It administers religious affairs involving state and public interests, but does not interfere in the internal affairs of religions. China has advanced the rule of law in the administration of religious affairs.

In 2017, China amended the Regulations on Religious Affairs to better protect citizen's freedom of religious belief. It has implemented the Rules on the Administration of Religious Activities of Foreigners in the People's Republic of China to protect foreigners' freedom of religious belief in accordance with the law.

China resolutely fights religious extremism and cults acting under the guise of religion. It now has 144,000 registered sites for religious activities, 92 religious academies, nearly 200 million citizens who believe in Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholic and Protestant Christianity, and other religions, and more than 380,000 clerical personnel.

China has improved social security for clerical personnel, with medical insurance covering 96.5 percent and old-age insurance covering 89.6 percent. With the citizens' freedom of religious belief fully protected, China enjoys religious and social harmony.

V. Promoting Social Equity and Protecting the Rights of Special Groups

A moderately prosperous society is to be enjoyed by each and every one of us. China takes solid measures to protect and promote the rights and interests of rural people, and attaches great importance to protecting the rights of women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and ethnic minority groups, ensuring their equal status and providing them with equal opportunities to participate in economic, political, cultural and social life and enjoy the fruits of development.

1. Upgrading Protection of the Rights of Rural People

Boosting rural property right through land reform. Rural people's basic needs are ensured by the household contract responsibility system with remuneration linked to output, introduced after the launch of reform and opening up in 1978, and their burden is eased with the abolition of agricultural taxes and fees.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, measures have been taken to ensure that rural land contracting practices will remain stable and unchanged on a long-term basis. The system for separating the ownership, contractual, and management rights for contracted rural land has improved. Farmers have the right to possess, use and benefit from the contracted land, and can transfer or mortgage their management right. The government ensures rural households' usufruct of their landholdings. It aims to help rural people increase income from property and endowing them with more property rights.

As of 2020, all 31 provinces and equivalent administrative units had begun to certify the rights to contracted land, confirming the contractual right to 100 million ha of land, upgrading 200 million land contracts, and issuing 200 million land contractual management certificates.

Improving the lives of migrant workers. The per capita monthly income of migrant workers increased from RMB2,290 in 2012 to RMB4,072 in 2020. Migrant workers in cities now enjoy much better housing, with a per capita living area of 21.5 sq m. 85.4 percent of them have showers, 94.8 percent have access to the internet, 67 percent have refrigerators, 68.1 percent have washing machines, and 30.8 percent have automobiles for private or business use.

Caring for family members of migrant workers left behind in rural areas. Policies have been introduced to boost employment for poverty alleviation and more people are returning to their hometowns to work or start businesses. There is also help to enable the children of migrant workers to go to school in cities where their parents work. This has resulted in a drop in the number of left-behind children, from 9 million in 2016 to 6.4 million in 2020.

The government has issued the Opinions on Further Improving the System of Care and Services for Rural Left-Behind Children and Children in Need, and the Guidelines for Labor-Intensive Enterprises to Further Strengthen Care and Services for Rural Left-Behind Children and Children in Need, to improve policy design in this regard. The government has also issued the Opinions on Strengthening Care and Services for Rural Left-Behind Women, to provide services to rural women in need, and the Opinions on Strengthening Care and Services for Rural Left-Behind Elderly, to ensure basic needs for poor elderly people through service networks covering all provinces.

Enhancing the rural living environment. To improve the living environment in rural areas, proper facilities have been created for treating household waste and domestic sewage, and solid efforts have been made to

enhance toilet sanitation through the “toilet revolution”. As of 2020, more than 95 percent of villages had taken action for a cleaner environment. In 2019 and 2020, the government allocated RMB14.4 billion from central finance to subsidize the “toilet revolution” in villages, and RMB6 billion from the central budget to support programs for improving the rural living environment in the counties of central and western provinces. Monetary incentives were given to the 39 best-performing counties.

2. Increasing Protection of the Rights of Women, Children and the Elderly

Optimizing laws and policies. Since they were promulgated in the 1990s, the Law on the Protection of Minors, the Law on the Protection of Women’s Rights and Interests, and the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly have undergone multiple revisions to better serve their purpose.

A series of laws and regulations, including the Law on Maternal and Infant Health Care, the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, the Law on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, the Special Provisions on Labor Protection for Female Employees, the Provisions on Prohibiting the Use of Child Labor, the Regulations on School Bus Safety Management, and the Special Provisions on the Protection of Juvenile Workers, have been enacted to lay down a legal basis for protecting the rights of women, children and the elderly. The government has issued the Opinions on Establishing and Improving the Mechanism for Evaluating Gender Equality Implications in Laws, Regulations and Policies, to codify and institutionalize the basic national policy of gender equality and promote the all-round development of women.

The Civil Code promulgated in 2020 includes articles regarding the right of habitation, the common debts of spouses, and measures to prevent and stop sexual harassment, further strengthening protection for the three groups. The Chinese government has developed three outlines and plans for the development of women, three for children, and five for the elderly.

Empowering women to participate in economic and social affairs. The illiteracy rate of women aged 15 years and above dropped from 20.5 percent in 1979 to 7.3 percent in 2017, and the proportion of female students in junior colleges and universities rose from 24.1 percent in 1978 to 51.7 percent in 2019. More than 40 percent of the employed are women.

The Law on Land Contract in Rural Areas amended in 2018 stipulates that women enjoy equal rights with men in undertaking land contracts. There were 742 female deputies to the 13th NPC in 2018, accounting for 24.9 percent of the total and 3.7 percentage points higher than the percentage of female deputies to the Sixth NPC in 1983. There were 440 female members in the 13th CPPCC National Committee, representing 20.4 percent of the total and 7.6

percentage points higher than that in the Sixth CPPCC National Committee in 1983.

Improving health care for women and children. In 2020, the rate of prenatal care was 97.4 percent, and the rate of hospital deliveries was 99.9 percent. The government has carried out a program of free cervical and breast cancer checkups for women in rural areas, and brought cervical and breast cancer into the scope of national subsidies for serious illnesses.

The government has launched the Nutrition Improvement Program for Children in Poor Areas, benefitting 11.2 million children by 2020. Between 1991 and 2020, the mortality rate of children under five decreased from 61 per thousand to 7.5 per thousand.

Providing special care and protection for children. In 2020, there were 29,000 community service centers and 249,000 service stations for children, 360,000 parenting schools, and 320,000 children's activity centers in urban and rural communities. There were 56,000 child welfare supervisors in towns and townships, and 675,000 child welfare directors in villages, forming a strong grassroots force for children's care and protection.

Greater care and protection have been given to orphans, children with disabilities, rural left-behind children whose parents work in cities, and children in need. The state has strengthened guarantee for the basic needs of orphans. In 2019, the basic living subsidies from special government funds for orphans increased by 50 percent to RMB300, RMB450 and RMB600 per person/month for eastern, central and western regions. At the end of 2020, there were 60,000 orphans in child welfare institutions, with an average monthly living allowance of RMB1,611 per person; there were 134,000 orphans not in care facilities, with an average monthly living allowance of RMB1,184 per person.

The government issued the Opinions on Further Strengthening Protection of Uncared-for Children, to bring all de facto orphans into the coverage of state support. By 2020, 254,000 uncared-for children were covered by state support, and given an average monthly living allowance of RMB1,184 per person.

The state maintains zero tolerance for crimes against minors. Between 2017 and 2020, prosecuting bodies at all levels approved the arrest of 160,200 people committing crimes against minors, and prosecuted 218,500 people. In judicial procedures, the rights of victimized minors are fully protected by promoting one-stop inquiry and assistance mechanisms integrating evidence collection, psychological counseling, and judicial assistance. By 2020, there were 1,029 one-stop inquiry and assistance sites across the country. More help is provided in different forms to minor victims. In 2019, more than RMB62 million of aid was granted to 4,306 minor victims and their families.

Guaranteeing the lives and rights of the elderly. The Chinese government is developing an old-age service network that coordinates home, community and facility care, and combines medical care with health preservation. It has strengthened care and services for left-behind elderly people in rural areas, and adapted home and public environments to make life easier for the elderly. Individual income tax deduction applies to expenses for taking care of elderly family members. The government aims to ensure care, support, recreation, and security for the elderly.

In 2020, the government brought 18.3 million poor elderly people into the scope of subsistence allowances, and covered 3.9 million elderly people living in extreme poverty with government support. Subsidies are ensured at the provincial level nationwide for poor elderly people who cannot perform essential self-care. As of 2020, 30.6 million elderly people enjoyed old-age allowances, 810,000 enjoyed nursing subsidies, and 235,000 enjoyed service subsidies. There were 38,000 care institutions and 280,000 community care facilities for the elderly across the country, with a total of 8.2 million beds.

The State Council has issued policies supporting the provision of both traditional and digital public services to ensure ease of access for elderly people.

3. Furthering Protection of the Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Guaranteeing the right of ethnic minority groups to participate in the administration of state affairs. The provisions in the Constitution and laws regarding the representation of ethnic minority groups in the leadership of organs exercising regional autonomy and the election of ethnic minority deputies to the people's congresses are strictly implemented.

The Electoral Law stipulates that ethnic groups with a small population shall have at least one deputy to the NPC. All 55 ethnic minority groups have deputies to the NPC and members in the CPPCC National Committee. The 13th NPC has 438 ethnic minority deputies, accounting for 14.7 percent of the total.

Raising the living standards of ethnic minority groups and areas. Special programs have been launched, and policies and measures have been implemented to boost the economy of ethnic minority areas, such as the development of the western region, the action plan to bring prosperity to border areas and their residents, paired assistance between developed areas and less developed ethnic autonomous areas, special support for ethnic groups with small populations, and preservation and development of ethnic minority villages and towns.

Between 2018 and 2020, the five autonomous regions of Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Tibet, Ningxia and Xinjiang, and the three provinces of Guizhou,

Yunnan and Qinghai with large ethnic minority populations recorded faster economic growth than the national average. The per capita disposable income of their residents increased from RMB150 in 1978 to RMB24,534 in 2020.

Developing education in ethnic minority areas. China has adopted a series of measures to promote educational equality and ensure ethnic minorities' right to education. These measures include opening more schools in ethnic minority areas, offering preparatory courses or special classes at secondary schools and universities to ethnic minority students, running boarding schools in farming and pastoral areas, and developing higher education in ethnic minority areas.

All ethnic minority areas have enforced nine-year compulsory education from primary school to junior high school. In the Tibet Autonomous Region and in Hotan, Kashgar, and Aksu prefectures and Kizilsu Kirgiz Autonomous Prefecture in southern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, students enjoy 15 years of free education from preschool to senior high school.

Boosting cultural undertakings of ethnic minority groups. While promoting standard spoken and written Chinese, the state protects the right of ethnic minority groups to use and develop their own spoken and written languages to consolidate ethnic unity and social harmony. As of 2020, there were 729 radio and television stations in ethnic autonomous areas. The broadcasting stations across the country run 279 television channels and 188 radio programs in ethnic minority languages.

The Site of Xanadu, the Tusi Sites, the Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, the Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace of Lhasa, and Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor are all included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Of the 42 items from China included in the UNESCO Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage, 15 are from ethnic minority areas.

China has established 11 national (pilot) cultural reserves in ethnic minority areas. A total of 25 provinces and equivalent administrative units have institutions that catalogue and study ancient classics and records of ethnic minorities. By 2020, about 1 million privately-held ethnic minority ancient classics and records (excluding books collected in museums and temples), including many rare editions and single extant copies, had been rescued and catalogued. China has launched the compilation of *Collection of Ancient Classics and Records of Chinese Ethnic Minorities*, which will include about 300,000 books upon completion.

Safeguarding peace and stability in ethnic minority areas. In this unified multiethnic country, the sense of identity of the Chinese nation is heightened to unite all the people in pressing forward for common prosperity and a bright future. With strong support from all ethnic groups, the government

takes lawful actions to combat terrorists, separatists and religious extremists, to safeguard ethnic unity and social stability. People's rights to a peaceful existence, to life and health, and to property are effectively protected, and their sense of gain, happiness and security continues to grow.

4. Strengthening Guarantee of the Rights of People with Disabilities

Improving social security. China has established a subsidy system to provide for the living expenses of disabled people in need and to pay the nursing costs of people with severe disabilities. By 2020, the system had benefitted 12.1 million poor disabled people and 14.7 million with severe disabilities in need of nursing. A total of 27 million people with disabilities were covered in old-age insurance schemes in both urban and rural areas, with 11.4 million receiving pensions. 10.8 million people with disabilities received urban or rural subsistence allowances, including 6.4 million with severe disabilities. The government paid basic old-age insurance premiums for 96.7 percent of the 6.8 million people with severe disabilities. The government also fully or partly paid the premiums for 3 million people with mild or moderate disabilities.

Making rehabilitation universally available. The government has included rehabilitation services for the disabled in plans for basic public services, and carried out targeted rehabilitation programs to help those in need. It has established a rehabilitation assistance mechanism for disabled children, developed community rehabilitation services for people with mental illnesses, and boosted the industry of rehabilitation assistive devices. Basic rehabilitation services and products are provided to disabled children and people with certified disabilities.

In 2020, 10.8 million disabled children and people with certified disabilities received basic rehabilitation services, and 2.4 million people with disabilities benefited from adaption services for assistive devices. About 676,000 disabled children have benefited from a rehabilitation assistance mechanism that was initiated in 2018.

Efforts to prevent disability have paid off. In 2017, the State Council approved the establishment of August 25 as the Disability Prevention Day, to promote public awareness of disability prevention. The National Disability Prevention Action Plan (2016-2020) laid out effective measures for controlling the occurrence of birth defects and disabilities caused by development disorders, preventing disabilities caused by illnesses, reducing injuries that cause disabilities, and improving rehabilitation services. Substantial progress has been made in these four areas, and the main targets have been reached.

Creating better access to education. People with disabilities have an equal right to education that is guaranteed through special education and

inclusive education. In 2020, there were 2,244 special education schools with 66,200 full-time teachers and 880,800 students, an increase of 512,700 students or 139 percent from 2013. Continued efforts have also been made to provide the necessary support for students with disabilities to go to regular schools, and the number of students with disabilities attending regular schools has seen a steady increase, from 191,000 in 2013 to 435,800 in 2020, an increase of 128 percent. Over the past decade, about 50 percent of students with disabilities have been able to study at regular schools. Free 12-year education from primary school to senior high school has been ensured for disabled students from poor families.

Guaranteeing the right to work. China promotes the employment of people with disabilities by improving relevant laws and regulations, expanding employment channels, and improving services. In 2020, there were 2,811 employment service agencies and 478 vocational training centers for people with disabilities, and the number of employed people with certified disabilities reached 8.6 million.

Efforts have been made to help people with disabilities emerge from poverty. Between 2015 and 2020, China built 4,581 poverty alleviation centers for people with disabilities, helping 409,000 disabled people find jobs and increase income. The per capita net income of registered poor household with disabled members grew from RMB2,776 in 2015 to RMB8,726 in 2019.

Building an accessible environment. The Regulations on the Building of an Accessible Environment have come into effect. As of 2020, 1,753 cities and counties had initiated efforts to improve accessibility and remove barriers, and 469 cities, counties, towns, and villages had been recognized by the state as barrier-free. Among comprehensive service facilities in villages or communities across the country, 81 percent of entrances and exits, 56.6 percent of service counters and 38.7 percent of restrooms had been upgraded for accessibility. Between 2016 and 2020, home adaptation was carried out for 650,000 poor families with severely disabled members. As of 2019, there were 2,341 comprehensive service facilities, 1,006 rehabilitation facilities, and 887 care facilities for people with disabilities; at the provincial level, 25 radio programs and 32 sign language television programs serviced people with disabilities; and there were 1,174 reading rooms with Braille and audio books.

A variety of measures have been taken to promote information accessibility, increasing the supply of accessible terminal products, and applying accessible products and technologies for better services. By expanding the channels for people with disabilities to engage in an information society, and facilitating the application of information technology to build an accessible environment, China is trying hard to eliminate the digital divide and create a more inclusive society.

Moderate prosperity covers every aspect. The Chinese government gives top priority to ensuring people's wellbeing, and spares no effort in addressing concerns of the people. Significant progress has been made in ensuring access to childcare, education, employment, housing, medical services, elderly care, and social assistance. Moderate prosperity in all respects benefits all Chinese people and enables them to enjoy greater human rights than ever before.

Conclusion

Under the CPC's leadership, the Chinese people have achieved moderate prosperity in all respects, a historic undertaking completed through consistent hard work.

In this process, China has respected and protected human rights within the institutional framework of Chinese socialism under CPC leadership:

- applying the principle of universality of human rights in China's context;
- taking a people-centered approach to human rights;
- protecting the rights to subsistence and development as the primary task;
- promoting human rights through development;
- with a happy life as the ultimate goal;
- providing legal guarantee for the protection of human rights;
- promoting comprehensive progress in human rights;
- building a global community of shared future.

China's population is about one fifth of the world's total. China's success in realizing moderate prosperity is a milestone in the history of global human rights. China's approach and experience have provided a distinctive path forward for human progress.

There is no end to improving human rights. Moderate prosperity is a new starting point on China's quest for human rights. To fully build China into a modern socialist country, the CPC will practice the new development philosophy, build a new development dynamic, and pursue high-quality development, to ensure the Chinese people live a happier life and enjoy more extensive human rights. As a commitment to the world, China will make a greater contribution to global human rights.