

National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2012-2015)

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Information Office of the State Council, or China's cabinet, published the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2012-2015) on Monday. Following is the full text.

The formulation of the National Human Rights Action Plan is an important measure taken by the Chinese government to ensure the implementation of the constitutional principle of respecting and safeguarding human rights. It is of great significance to promoting scientific development and social harmony, and to achieving the great objective of building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way.

Since the promulgation and enforcement of the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2009-2010) in 2009, Chinese citizens' awareness of human rights has been enhanced significantly; the protection of the citizen's economic, social and cultural rights and interests has been comprehensively strengthened; their civil and political rights have been more effectively safeguarded; the rights of ethnic minorities, women, children, senior citizens and the disabled have been further protected; international exchanges and cooperation in the field of human rights have been increasingly deepened; and human rights protection in all aspects has been constantly advanced

along the orbit of institutionalization and rule by law. The cause of human rights in China has entered a new stage of development. In addition, the formulation, implementation and completion on schedule of the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2009-2010) have been widely acclaimed by the Chinese public and highly regarded by the international community.

In recent years, the Chinese government has appropriately addressed the heavy toll brought about by the international financial crisis and the severe challenges posed by major natural disasters, vigorously solved the problems in development, perseveringly advanced the cause of human rights by putting people first, and had its human rights conditions increasingly improved. The Chinese government has unswervingly combined safeguarding human rights with promoting scientific development and social harmony, kept improving its institutional arrangements for ensuring and improving its people's livelihood, vigorously boosted employment, speeded up the development of various social undertakings, promoted equal access to basic public

services, gradually improved a social security system that covers both urban and rural areas, initially established a basic medical care and health service system benefiting both urban and rural residents, strived to develop cultural and educational undertakings, and effectively guaranteed the rights of all members of society to equal participation and development. The Chinese government has consistently combined protecting human rights with promoting democracy and the rule of law, actively and steadily pushed forward political reform, expanded citizens' orderly participation in political affairs, and carried out democratic election, decision-making, administration and supervision in accordance with the law to guarantee the people's rights to be informed, to participate, to be heard and to oversee. The Chinese government has integrated the principle of respecting and safeguarding human rights into its legislation, administration and law enforcement and strengthened supervision and restriction over the exercise of power. Consequently, a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics has been established to provide legal support for all fields

diseases, as well as for seriously disabled people.

—The state will raise the education level of the disabled. The state will make sure that school-age disabled children generally receive compulsory education. It will promote compulsory education for disabled children in such a way that they attend the same classes as other healthy children where convenient, providing education for disabled people that suits their needs and capacities. The state will develop pre-school rehabilitation education for disabled children and vocational education for the disabled, promoting senior high-school education and higher education for the disabled, and reducing illiteracy among the young and middle-aged disabled population.

—The state will stabilize and expand employment for the disabled. The state will provide employment services and vocational training for disabled people who seek employment, and make sure that an additional 800,000 disabled people will be employed by 2015.

—The state will strengthen development-oriented poverty reduction programs for the disabled population in rural areas. The state will help eight million needy disabled people in rural areas to improve their living conditions, increase their incomes and enhance their abilities for development. The state will provide skills training for 800,000 disabled people in rural areas, and continue to implement the "sunshine housing project" to improve the housing conditions of impoverished disabled people in rural areas.

—The state will require public cultural facilities to give access to the disabled free of charge or at preferential rates. The state encourages the construction of digital reading rooms for the blind in public libraries in areas that are capable of doing so, opens public sports facilities to the disabled gratis or at preferential rates, and carries out mass cultural and sports

activities that conform to the physical and psychological characteristics of the disabled.

—The state will quicken the construction and renovation of barrier-free facilities. It will create barrier-free cities, counties and districts nationwide, strengthen the construction of barrier-free facilities of public transport including the railway, as well as the construction of information accessibility. The state will carry out renovation of barrier-free facilities for families of the disabled and subsidize those who have financial difficulties in the renovation.

—The state will expand the scale of publications in braille. It will strengthen the construction of publishing bases of braille books, and realize the annual production goal of 700,000 copies of such books and periodicals in 1,600 titles. It will also develop music scores for the blind, as well as reference books, periodicals, digital audio books and encyclopedias for them.

—The state will improve a coordinating work mechanism of legal assistance to the disabled. It will improve legal assistance to the disabled to protect their rights and interests by law.

IV. Human Rights Education

China will carry out extensive human rights education and training in various forms, and promote human rights awareness and publicize human rights knowledge throughout the Chinese society.

—China will include human rights education in the training programs of civil servants to strengthen human rights education and training for civil servants. The state supports human rights research institutes in their efforts to develop teaching materials for training in human rights and participate in the training work.

—China will strengthen human rights education in primary and middle schools. The state will make sure that human rights knowledge

is integrated into relevant courses and included in the legal education curriculum. It will also carry out human rights promotional activities that suit juveniles, promote school management by law and democratic administration, and create an education environment that honors human rights.

—China will encourage institutions of higher learning to offer public courses and specialized courses on human rights, support the development of related disciplines and majors, and encourage studies on human rights theories.

—China will encourage and promote the publicity of human rights knowledge in enterprises and public institutions, and develop corporate cultures that honor and protect human rights.

—China will encourage the dissemination of human rights knowledge via the media. It will enhance human rights awareness among the whole populace to create an atmosphere of public opinion that human rights is emphasized by all.

—China will give full play to the role of national human rights education and training bases. By 2015, at least five new such bases will be opened.

V. Fulfillment of Obligations to International Human Rights Conventions, and Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of International Human Rights

China continues to earnestly fulfill its obligations to the international human rights conventions to which it has acceded, and actively conducts exchanges and cooperation in the field of international human rights.

(1) Fulfillment of obligations to international human rights conventions

China cherishes the important role played by international instruments on human rights in promoting and

protecting human rights. It submits timely reports on implementing the conventions to the treaty bodies concerned, holds constructive dialogues with these treaty bodies, takes into full consideration the proposals raised by them, and adopts rational and feasible ones in the light of China's actual conditions.

—China completed the sixth report on implementing the "Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment," and submitted it to the United Nations Committee against Torture for consideration.

—China completed the 14th report on implementing the "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination," and submitted it to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination for consideration.

—China renewed the second report on implementing the "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights," and participated in the deliberation meeting held by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

—China attended the deliberation meeting held by the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning China's third and fourth combined report on implementing the "Convention on the Rights of the Child."

—China attended the deliberation meeting held by the Committee on the Rights of the Child on China's first report on implementing the "Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict."

—China attended the deliberation meeting held by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on China's seventh and eighth combined report on implementing the

"Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women."

—China attended the deliberation meeting held by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on China's first report on implementing the "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities."

—China has continued to carry out administrative and judicial reforms and prepare the ground for approval of the "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."

(2) Exchanges and cooperation in the field of international human rights

China is committed to holding exchanges and cooperation in the field of international human rights and promoting the healthy development of international human rights on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

—China implements the related suggestions of United Nations Human Rights Council's (HRC) first Universal Periodic Review for China, prepares for and actively participates in the second Universal Periodic Review.

—China takes an active part in the work of the HRC, and helps that body to solve human rights problems in a fair, objective and non-alternative way.

—China continues its cooperation with the Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council, answers letters from it, and considers inviting special reporters to visit China while taking into account the principle of balancing various human rights and China's reception abilities.

—China continues its good cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

—China continues to hold dialogues and exchanges on human rights with various countries on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

China also increases consultation and cooperation on human rights with developing countries.

—China continues to participate in human rights activities in the framework of the Asian-Pacific Region and Sub-region, including the Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights.

VI. Implementation and Supervision

The joint meeting mechanism for the National Human Rights Action Plan, headed by the Information Office of the State Council and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is responsible for the implementation, supervision and evaluation of the Action Plan.

—Related departments of the CPC Central Committee and Central Government, and local governments at all levels will attach the utmost importance to the Action Plan, and while taking into consideration the specific responsibilities of each department and regional characteristics, will take effective measures to achieve the aims and complete the tasks of the Action Plan.

—The joint meeting mechanism for the National Human Rights Action Plan will conduct research and examination, and have a final evaluation and publicize the evaluation report.

—In the process of implementing the Action Plan, China will respect and give full play to the public's initiative and creativity. It will innovate the social management mechanism and promote the constructive role of NGOs in human rights protection.

—China will make the Action Plan an important part of human rights education and training, and effectively raise people's consciousness in implementing the Action Plan.

—China will encourage the mass media to play a positive role in the publicizing, implementation and supervision of the Action Plan. ■