



**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**  
**PERMANENT MISSION AT GENEVA**

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(Translation)

**Work in Cooperation for  
A New Chapter in the  
Cause of International Human Rights**

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At the Inaugural Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

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Mr Chairman,

I would like to start by congratulating you, on behalf of the Chinese Government, on your assumption of the Chair of the inaugural session of the Human Rights Council. I have every confidence that under your able leadership this session will be successful.

Mr Chairman,

The inauguration of the Human Rights Council opens a new chapter in the cause of international human rights. Just a few days ago, on 16 June, the chapter of the Commission on Human Rights, the Council's predecessor, was formally closed. Over a period of 60 years, the Commission accomplished much in drafting international human rights instruments, fighting colonialism and apartheid, and promoting human

rights awareness and culture. On the other hand, it was not able to free itself from the influence of the Cold War mentality. As a result, it suffered eroding credibility and was long plagued by political confrontation, selectivity and double standards. This state of affairs running counter to the trend of history should not be allowed to continue.

Today, peace and development remain two primary challenges facing the world. The people of some countries and regions are still in the grip of war, conflicts and poverty. More than ever before, the international community is conscious of the fact that peace, development and human rights are indivisible and mutually reinforcing, which, together, form the foundation of collective security and human well-being.

The creation of the Human Rights Council is a decision made by the international community in response to the calling of the times, and a major step taken by the United Nations to strengthen its human rights mechanism. The UN General Assembly, in Resolution 60/251, confers higher status, broader mandate and enhanced capacity for action on the Human Rights Council. Can this new body live up to the expectation? The world is watching.

It is incumbent upon all the UN member states, and particularly the newly elected members of the Council, to demonstrate political commitment and exert real efforts to make the Council both dynamic and effective. To this end, the Chinese Government wishes to state the following:

**First, the enjoyment of human rights is possible only in an environment of peace.** The Council should continue to focus its attention on widespread and gross violations of human rights caused by wars and conflicts, and support intensified international efforts to prevent conflicts, rebuild peace and combat terrorism in all forms and manifestations. We support the Council in continuing to closely monitor the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory in the interest of early realisation of the Palestinian people's human rights, including the right to self-determination.

**Second, the enjoyment of human rights goes hand in hand with sustainable development.** Globalisation has not benefited all countries in an equitable manner. The enjoyment of human rights by people in the developing world is seriously curtailed by poverty, disease and environmental degradation. The way that economic, social and cultural rights were dealt with in the Commission on Human Rights characterized by more words than actions must be changed. The Council should urge

the international community and UN agencies to take effective steps to help countries gain the right to development. In particular, it should help the least developed countries to eradicate poverty and accomplish the goal of development envisaged in the 1986 *Declaration on the Right to Development*, namely the active participation of all people in development and fair distribution of the benefits of development.

**Third, the enjoyment of human rights calls for more harmony and tolerance in the society.** Discrimination and prejudice based on race, colour, gender, language and religion still persist in many parts of the world. Recognising this, the Council should pay particular attention to the rights of vulnerable groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and ethnic minorities. It should endeavour to promote education on human rights, develop a culture of human rights and build a society of harmony and dignity for all. We hope that on the basis of full consultation the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* can be adopted as soon as possible.

**Fourth, the enjoyment of human rights requires constructive dialogue and cooperation.** Political confrontation led to the credibility crisis of the Commission on Human Rights. The success of the Council will depend in large measure on whether countries with different social systems and levels of development can establish mutual trust, treat each other as equals and address their differences in a constructive way. Many obstacles should be removed before this can be achieved. The mechanism on country-specific human rights situation must be reformed to make sure that it addresses only widespread and gross violations of human rights. The proposed Universal Periodic Review should ensure that all countries, regardless of their sizes, are treated impartially and in a fair manner. All countries' historical, cultural and religious backgrounds and differences are equally respected.

**Fifth, the enjoyment of human rights requires effective institutional safeguard.** The Commission on Human Rights has left us a whole set of international human rights mechanisms. The Council should keep their positive elements and carry out bold reform to make these mechanisms more relevant today. We support rationalizing the various Special Procedures and formulating a code of conduct to make these procedures more credible, impartial and effective. We also support strengthening the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We hope the Office will improve the geographical representation and professional competence of its staff to provide better advice and more technical assistance to Council members. The Office should also improve

transparency and openness and subject its work to the oversight of member States.

Mr Chairman,

For a long time in its modern history, the Chinese nation suffered greatly from aggression by imperialist powers, fighting among warlords, turbulence and poverty. This makes the Chinese nation keenly aware of the value of peace, development and human rights. The founding of the People's Republic brought about a fundamental change in China's destiny, ushering in a new era when the people have become masters of the country. Then, in 1978, the country embarked on a path of reform, opening and modernisation. In a short space of 28 years, China has completed a journey that took many countries more than one hundred years. It has made two quantum leaps – from languishing under poverty to freedom from want and then to moderate prosperity. As a result, the Chinese now enjoy unprecedented freedom in movement, employment, access to information, belief, the choice of way of life, etc. China has made important contribution to the cause of human rights.

China is the world's largest developing country. It faces numerous problems left over from the past and mounting pressure posed by a vast population, shortage of resources and environmental degradation. This means that progress in human rights and other areas in China will be a long-term endeavour. Basing itself on China's particular conditions and responding to the calling of the times, my Government pursues a scientific outlook on development that is people-centric and promotes comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development. Its goal is to build a harmonious society. In China, development is for the people, it is pursued by the people, and its fruit is shared among the people. China gives high priority to realizing the value, rights and freedoms of the people and raising the quality of their life, their development potential and happiness index. In short, we are committed to the well-rounded development of people. Greater efforts are also being made by the Chinese Government in light of China's reality to promote social justice and protect the disadvantaged groups, improve democracy and the rule of law, and advance political reform in an active and prudent manner. We have solemnly put the provision that "the State respects and protects human rights" into the fundamental law of the country—Constitution. Acting on this constitutional principle, the Chinese Government will continue to promote all human rights, honour its international human rights obligations and conduct human rights dialogue and exchanges with other countries on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

Mr Chairman,

An ancient Chinese poem has these lines, "The new will invariably supersede the old, and change is expected of every generation." We hope that the Human Rights Council will go farther than its predecessor along the right track and make greater contribution to improving the human well-being. This session will chart the course for the Council. China is ready to work together with other Council members in a responsible and constructive manner, with a view to formulating a fair set of rules of procedure and explore feasible working methods through consultation, so that we can get the Council off to a good start.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.