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**The People's Republic of China's implementation of its  
commitments in the field of combatting poverty and supporting  
socially disadvantaged population**

**Report of the Foundation for Independent Journalism  
"Society of Friends of "Humanité"**

**4th cycle of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Moscow 2023**

## **Preamble**

The Society of Friends of Humanité is an independent organization aimed at supporting independent social journalism in Russia, Europe, and around the world. Since its establishment in 2016, the Society of Friends of Humanité has been an active participant in international human rights forums, where it defends the right to freedom of speech and expression.

## **Report**

The final documents of the 3rd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review contain recommendations for the People's Republic of China to further its efforts to combat poverty and social insecurity.

In particular, the Report of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group of 26 December 2018 contains the following recommendations:

*28.246 Continue to improve laws and regulations relating to the rights and interests of workers and trade unions (Angola); 28.247 Continue to guarantee the right to work and build harmonious labour relations (Mozambique); 28.248 Reasonably adjust the established wage rate and issue guidelines on salary setting (United Arab Emirates); 28.249 Continue to implement the "Healthy China" plan and strengthen other measures to promote the right to health (Viet Nam); 28.250 Continue to strengthen health system in rural areas, including community-based care services for old aged people (Singapore); 28.259 Make progress in the development of the education system (Oman); 28.271 Encourage China to continue to further strengthen measures aimed at education and vocational training for the most disadvantaged groups (Comoros); 28.300 Promote children's healthy development in poor areas and prevent the inheritance of poverty (Kuwait); 28.315 Continue to expand basic social security coverage for persons with disabilities (Congo); 28.316 Ensure that persons with disabilities have equal rights to participate in the management of national social affairs, as well as other legitimate rights and interests (Jordan).*

We are satisfied to mention the great achievements of the People's Republic of China as regards poverty reduction and protection of vulnerable social groups. We can highlight the following achievements:

### **1. Improvement of people's personal well-being**

Personal income has steadily increased with average disposable income per capita rising from 171 CNY in 1978 to 32189 CNY in 2020. Quality of life has improved with the Engel coefficient of urban residents falling from 57,5% in 1978 to 29,2% in 2020 and that of rural residents from 67,7% to 32,7%. Consumption based on subsistence income is gradually giving way to a model aimed at increasing fulfilment and comfort. Consumption of services such as catering, health care, education, tourism, culture and entertainment continues to grow and now makes up about half of China's consumption expenditure per capita.

### **2. Improvement of employment structure and labour protection**

The labour market remains stable and employment quality is improving. China's employed population has grown from 180 million in 1949 to 750 million in 2020. The employment structure has improved to the extent that 47,7% of the labour force is now employed in the tertiary sector and 61,6% work in urban areas. The working-age population has an average of 10,8 years of schooling, and the number of qualified workers has reached about 200 million.

China's policy has moved from one day off to two days off per week and from the "golden week of holidays" to paid annual leave. Workers' holiday rights are better protected to help them balance work and life. The idea that work is the most honourable occupation has been welcomed and is practised by the vast majority of people who believe that hard work is necessary for success in life. The predominant trend is to promote, respect and value work.

### **3. Achievements in the educational field**

We mention the development of education. China has turned into a country with high-quality education and human resources. The country has

established the world's largest education system, covering preschool, primary, secondary and higher education, ranking in the "above average" category of modern education worldwide. The preschool enrolment rate and accessible preschool education have exceeded 84%, the completion rate of nine-year compulsory education has exceeded 95%, and upper secondary education is universally available throughout the country. The education gap between different regions, urban and rural areas, and different schools has narrowed. Basic education in China has progressed from providing access to schools and teachers to ensuring the quality of both, and a good, and equitable education for all children is becoming a reality.

Chinese universities and colleges have trained nearly 100 million professionals. Enrolment in higher education is growing rapidly, and the education level is now in the above-average category worldwide. We also note the development of education for people with disabilities who are now guaranteed equal rights to education.

Much attention is being paid to the digitalisation of education. A system of lifelong learning, complemented by the Internet and digital technologies and offering a wide range of personal choices, is being established, and as self-improvement becomes a daily activity, a learning society for all is being formed.

In 2020, China had 537100 schools of all levels and various types, with 289 million students and 17.9 million full-time teachers. The overall preschool enrolment rate reached 85.2% and the completion rate of nine years of compulsory education hit 95.2%. The net enrolment rate in primary education was just under 100%, the gross enrolment rate in lower secondary education was 102.5%, and compulsory education achieved balanced development in 96.8% of districts nationwide. The overall enrolment rate in upper secondary schools reached 91.2% and in higher education 54.4%. All primary and secondary schools in China had access to the Internet, and 98.4% already had multimedia classrooms.

#### **4. Social welfare**

China seeks to extend social security coverage to all people. It has established the world's largest social security system, including social insurance, social assistance, social security and support for eligible groups that are the components of a comprehensive, multi-level and sustainable system that guarantees the basic life necessities. By the end of June 2021, the number of people covered by basic old-age insurance stood at 1 billion; unemployment insurance at 222 million; work injury insurance at 274 million; and basic health insurance at over 1.3 billion. The law stipulates that maternity insurance covers all employers and employees.

China has implemented a national strategy to combat population ageing and is developing a network of elderly care services that coordinates home, community and institutional care and combines medical care with the maintenance of good health. Most urban communities provide home care services available within 15 minutes, which typically include meal preparation and delivery, medical services and cleaning. Many rural areas have built elderly care facilities such as nursing homes and daycare centres. Affordable elderly care and mutual aid services have been further developed in both urban and rural areas. Older people can now access professional elderly care in their homes or villages and have access to assistance, leisure activities and places to settle.

China has ensured that 85 million people with disabilities enjoy the benefits of middle income as it has stepped up efforts to protect their rights and interests.

#### **5. Medical development**

China guarantees medical care for all. The health insurance policy has now been changed from local reimbursement only to inter-regional settlement. Medical services have been expanded; in addition to hospitals, the medical policy now includes services provided by a growing number of contracted family doctors.

China has continuously improved its three-level healthcare network covering urban and rural areas, with disease prevention remaining a priority. This has provided better access to health services for a fifth of the world's population. In 2020, the number of health facilities in China exceeded 1 million, with 9,1 million beds and 10,7 million health workers. A basic public health system has been established, providing disease prevention and control, health education, maternal and child health care, mental health care and other professional services.

Equal access to basic public health services is supported by the government's per capita subsidy, which has increased from 15 yuan in 2009 to 74 yuan in 2020. 19 services, including prevention and treatment of endemic diseases, have been added to the 12 categories of basic public health services provided free of charge to the population.

Life expectancy in China has increased from 67,8 years in 1981 to 77,3 years in 2019; infant mortality rate has decreased from 37,6 per 1,000 in the late 1970s to 5,4 per 1,000 in 2020; and maternal mortality has decreased from 43,2 per 100,000 in 2002 to 16,9 per 100,000 in 2020.

Within its efforts to provide affordable and effective health services, China has reduced the price of medicines and regularly adds routine and life-saving drugs to the health insurance list. The drive to ensure equal access to basic public health services, in both urban and rural areas, continues unabated. A better health care system and a solid rural health insurance system have guaranteed health care for rural residents and helped prevent people from falling into or returning to poverty due to bad health.

### **Recommendations**

The progress made by the PRC in social protection and poverty alleviation shows the accuracy of the chosen socio-economic course.

At the same time, we can list a number of problems that require further efforts to address.

1. Continue to take measures aimed at mitigating regional disparity in average and minimum wages. This puts residents of some regions of China in a privileged position.

2. Further improve social insurance, including an increase in the minimum pension.

3. To broaden the medical protection system, increasing the list of medical services that citizens receive free of charge.

In this regard, we welcome the China Human Rights Action Plan (2021-2025) adopted by the State Council of the People's Republic of China and look forward to its successful implementation.