

Report submitted by China Foundation for Human Rights Development
to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
for Universal Periodic Review

1. The China Foundation for Human Rights Development pays great attention to the fourth round of human rights review on China that the UN Human Rights Council will conduct in 2024. Since the introduction of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has signed more than 200 cooperation documents with 151 countries and 32 international organizations¹. In this report, we mainly assess the impact of China's promotion of the BRI on the development of human rights in partner countries as well as on global human rights governance, and give our advice.

2. We agree that many of the problems, conflicts and crises that beset the world today stem from inadequate and unbalanced development. The UN Declaration on the Right to Development confirms the right to development as an inalienable human right. The Chinese government has taken concrete actions to implement the recommendation 28.45² carried in the Working Group's 2019 report, making the well-being of the people the fundamental purpose of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. The Chinese government advocates promoting development through cooperation and advancing human rights through development. The Chinese government has also put forward multiple initiatives, including one for improving the global human rights governance system and another for developing a community with a shared future for mankind.

3. According to a World Bank research report, the joint pursuit of the BRI could contribute to lifting 7.6 million people from extreme poverty and 32 million from moderate poverty in relevant countries, boost their trade by 2.8 to 9.7 percent, and increase global income by 0.7 to 2.9 percent³. So far, the initiative has generated nearly a trillion U.S. dollars of investment, established over 3,000 cooperation projects, created about 420,000 jobs in countries along its routes, and helped lift approximately 40 million people out of poverty⁴.

4. We have noticed that under the BRI framework, the Chinese government has been active in implementing recommendation 28.47⁵ carried in the Working Group's 2019 report. It has launched a project to provide access to satellite TV for 10,000 African villages. As of December 2022, the project had completed construction in 21 African countries, covering 9,512 villages and directly benefiting over 190,000 households⁶. This has opened a window for millions of African people to access external information.

5. On March 5, 2017, China launched a rural water supply project in Senegal, covering 12 out of 14 regions in the country. Each water supply system consists of wells, water towers, water transport and distribution pipelines, and water distribution

¹ <https://www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/xwzx/roll/77298.htm>.

² Continue to promote the Belt and Road Initiative to help other developing countries in their development endeavors (Pakistan), Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, A/HRC/40/6,28.45.

³ The Communist Party of China and Human Rights Protection -- A 100-Year Quest (white paper), State Council Information Office, June 2021.

⁴ Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang answered questions of journalists from home and abroad on China's foreign policy and foreign relations at a press conference on the sidelines of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress, March 7, 2023.

⁵ Further enhance international cooperation in the field of human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, including through technical cooperation and capacity-building and South-South cooperation (Thailand), Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, A/HRC/40/6,28.47.

⁶ "China-aided satellite TV connects African villages to outside world," Xinhua News Agency, March 29, 2023.

facilities. The project's maximum daily water supply capacity reaches 80,000 cubic meters. The project has also created jobs for more than 3,000 local people⁷.

6. We've come to know that the Chinese government has issued multiple normative documents on regulating corporate operation and social responsibilities. In October 2014, the Ministry of Commerce released management provisions for outbound investment, which clearly state in Article 4 that overseas investments made by Chinese enterprises must not "violate international treaties or agreements concluded or participated in by the People's Republic of China."

7. In the process of jointly building the BRI, the Chinese government has taken effective measures to implement recommendation 28.57⁸ included in the Working Group's 2019 report. Relevant departments, provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, and industry associations have also issued guideline documents. Companies are asked to comply with environmental protection laws and regulations in host countries, obtain environmental permits from local governments for investment cooperation in accordance with the law, fulfill their legal obligations related to environmental impact assessment, emission standards, and environmental emergency management. Companies are encouraged to align themselves with international practices by learning environmental principles, criteria, and conventions adopted by international organizations and multilateral financial institutions.

8. China Foundation for Human Rights Development has provided multiple human rights training programs for Chinese enterprises since 2020, with trainees from nearly 200 enterprises participating in the BRI. We have noticed that the Chinese government encourages Chinese companies participating in the BRI to promote the understanding of human rights and carry out relevant education and training programs in various forms so as to foster a corporate culture that respects and safeguards human rights.

9. We believe that in advancing the BRI, Chinese companies have met partner countries' development needs, respected overseas partners' willingness to cooperate, responded promptly to the people's core demands, and paid attention to ecological and environmental protection in host countries. High-quality BRI cooperation has not only promoted the economic growth of partner countries, but also helped them fight poverty, boost employment, improve people's livelihoods and develop education, among others.

10. We have noticed that, amid joint efforts to advance the BRI, the Chinese government has faithfully implemented international human rights treaties it has ratified, and actively carried out exchanges and cooperation in international human rights with partner countries. In addition, the Chinese government advocates the approach of "development-oriented aid," which helps recipient countries achieve independent development through aid and cooperation. This is conducive to directly or indirectly creating better conditions for human rights protection in recipient countries.

11. The Chinese government has cooperated with international organizations that have signed BRI cooperation documents, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme, through various relevant frameworks, which has greatly improved people's livelihoods and welfare in areas such as education, culture, medical care and health in relevant countries and regions.

⁷ "Guardian of 'the well of happiness' in Senegal," Xinhua News Agency, March 25, 2023.

⁸ Review its national and regional security legislation to bring it into conformity with international human rights law and standards and ensure that provisions are clearly and strictly defined (Austria), Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, A/HRC/40/6,28.57.

12. We believe that China's efforts in advancing high-quality BRI cooperation is conducive to promoting the human rights cause in partner countries, as well as improving global human rights governance.

13. High-quality BRI cooperation now faces many risks and challenges. The world has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation. The issues of high inflation, high leverage and high debt in the global economy, as well as the food, energy, refugee and industrial chain crises triggered or aggravated by them, have created shocks on various economies. Some countries attempted to decouple with others and sever industrial and supply chains in the economic field, and there is a growing trend of politicizing human rights and turning human rights into one's tool or weapon. Global development has encountered headwinds and countercurrents.

14. We suggest that, in the process of jointly building the BRI, the Chinese government and relevant countries should strengthen cooperation in poverty reduction and carry out extensive knowledge and experience sharing activities in this field. They should provide more medical assistance to less developed regions along the Belt and Road, help train local medical workers and improve medical services there. They should actively encourage and support more non-governmental organizations in participating in the BRI.