

Equality, Participation and Sharing: 70 Years of Protecting the Rights and Interests of Persons with Disabilities in the PRC

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Preamble

Persons with disabilities are equal members of the human family. It is a bounden duty of the state and an essential requirement of socialism with Chinese characteristics to respect and protect their human rights and dignity, and to offer them equal opportunities to participate in social life and enjoy the fruits of the country's material and cultural progress on an equal footing.

China now has a population of 85 million persons with disabilities. Over the 70 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, and especially in the process of building socialism with Chinese characteristics, the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government have always put the people first and provided care for the group with special difficulties. China respects the wishes of those with disabilities, protects their rights, attaches importance to their participation in social life, grants them real civil rights, and makes them participants in, contributors to, and beneficiaries of our social and economic development.

Guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, China has included the cause of persons with disabilities in the agenda for building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. It maintains that in promoting the interests of persons with disabilities the government should play the leading role, while soliciting the participation of the whole of society and giving full play to the functions of the market, and that the government should keep improving the wellbeing of those with disabilities and also encourage their self-improvement and self-reliance. By incorporating the programs of persons with disabilities in the national social and economic plan and human rights action plan, China has improved the institutions for protecting their rights and interests. It has also improved their social security and upgraded public services for them, so that they are feeling happier, safer, and more satisfied. China's achievements in championing this cause have won recognition throughout the world.

I. Development of the Cause of Persons with Disabilities

In the 70 years since it was founded, the PRC has taken into full consideration its realities and actual conditions, and developed its own strategy for protecting the rights

and interests of persons with disabilities. It has worked tirelessly to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, protect their dignity, and ensure they participate equally in the nation's politics, economy, and social and cultural life.

Equal status for persons with disabilities. After the founding of the PRC, persons with disabilities got equal status with others politically, with the same lawful rights and obligations as all other citizens. The state promulgated the Provisional Regulations on Pensions and Preferential Treatments for Service Veterans with Disabilities, giving special guarantees to disabled service veterans in terms of rehabilitation, medical treatment, and their life, education, and employment. Welfare and mental institutions were established to take in persons with severe disabilities and without family, orphans with disabilities, elderly persons with disabilities, persons with mental disabilities, and disabled servicemen. With the introduction of special education schools for children with visual and hearing impairments and speech disorders, the government included special education for persons with disabilities in the national educational system. In rural areas, eligible disabled persons without the ability to work began to be guaranteed food, clothing, housing, medical care, burial services or education by collective economic organizations. In cities, persons with disabilities were provided with jobs at welfare factories and other similar units. China explored the socialized management of the affairs of persons with disabilities, establishing the China Blind Persons' Welfare Society in 1953, the China Deaf-mutes Welfare Society in 1956, and the China Association of the Blind and Deaf in 1960. Most provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the central government set up local associations and community-level organizations for persons with disabilities, who began to manage their own affairs. In both urban and rural areas, more persons with disabilities got jobs; they became more involved in cultural and sports activities, and their life began to improve.

Championing the programs of persons with disabilities since reform and opening up. Since reform and opening up was initiated in 1978, the CPC and the Chinese government have introduced a series of major measures to champion the programs of persons with disabilities and improve their lives. These include: founding of the China Foundation for Disabled Persons in 1984, the first national sample survey on disability in 1987, founding of the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) in 1988, and promulgation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities and the first five-year program for China's cause of these people in 1991. Entering the 21st century, as the country moved faster toward a moderately prosperous society, the cause of persons with disabilities also advanced in all respects. In 2008, the "Directives of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Promoting the Cause of Persons with Disabilities" was issued,

and the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities was revised. Promoting the interests of persons with disabilities, from being part of social welfare in the form of relief in the late 1970s and early 1980s, has evolved into an encompassing network covering rehabilitation, education, employment, poverty alleviation, social security, rights protection, culture, sports, accessible environment, and disability prevention. The environment has improved for persons with disabilities to join in social life, and their political, economic, cultural and social rights are respected and guaranteed. There has been a fundamental change in the life and work of persons with disabilities, who have evolved from recipients of relief in the past to a main body involved in relevant activities, and an important force for social and economic progress. In the course of reform and development, many persons with disabilities, for example Zhang Haidi, have become role models who embody the spirit of the Chinese nation and of the times.

New progress in the cause of persons with disabilities. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping as its core has given more care and attention to persons with disabilities. In 2014 and 2019 Xi met with representatives from model units for helping persons with disabilities, and with individual role models of self-reliance and hard work, pointing the direction for China's work for persons with disabilities. In 2014, in his letter to congratulate the China Foundation for Disabled Persons on its 30th anniversary, Xi said that persons with disabilities were a special group in need of extra care and attention. In 2017, in his congratulatory letter to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Midpoint Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, Xi said that China would continue to champion the cause of persons with disabilities, so that they could develop in an all-round way and achieve common prosperity. In 2016, during an inspection trip to Tangshan, Hebei Province, he said that in the course of completing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020, not a single person with disabilities should be left behind. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, work related to persons with disabilities has become an important part of the Five-point Strategy (promoting economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological progress) and the Four-pronged Strategy (to complete a moderately prosperous society in all respects, to further reform, to advance the rule of law, and to strengthen Party discipline). The state has established a special welfare system for tens of millions of persons with disabilities, including living subsidies, nursing subsidies, and subsidies for children's rehabilitation. Persons with disabilities from poor households in rural areas, numbering in the millions, have become a focus in the final fight against poverty, and we should accurately apply policies and give them special assistance.

In the Healthy China initiative, we should pay particular attention to each individual with disabilities and make sure everyone has access to health services. Public services for persons with disabilities have been included in the national system of basic public services, and efforts will continue to provide basic public services to them, improve weaker links, and enhance service quality. As all trades and walks of life strive to eliminate barriers, more and more persons with disabilities are receiving better education, which enable them to find jobs, start businesses, and participate in social life more equally. As the whole nation works to achieve the goals of “equality, participation and sharing” for persons with disabilities, Chinese society is more readily available to care for and help them. The cause of persons with disabilities is picking up speed, and these people are enjoying a greater sense of gain, happiness, and security.

II. Mechanisms for the Protection of Rights and Interests of Persons with Disabilities

China will continue to include the programs of persons with disabilities into the national development strategy, and strengthen the legal protection of their rights and interests, and improve the support system for them and the mechanisms for ensuring their rights and interests.

Integrating the programs of persons with disabilities into the national development strategy. Since 1991, programs of persons with disabilities have been included into the overall plan for national economic and social development. From the 11th to the 13th five-year plans, there have been special sections titled “protecting the rights and interests of persons with disabilities”, “accelerating the programs of persons with disabilities”, and “improving services to and protection of persons with disabilities” in these plans. The State Council has released seven five-year development plans for persons with disabilities, making overall arrangements for the protection of their rights and interests. To further define the tasks and responsibility list for the protection of persons with disabilities, China has issued “Instructions of the State Council on Accelerating the Process Toward Prosperity for Persons with Disabilities”, “Outline for Accelerating the Process Toward Prosperity for Persons with Disabilities in the 13th Five-year Plan Period”, “Plan for Promoting Equal Access to Basic Public Services in the 13th Five-year Plan Period”, “The National Disability Prevention Program (2016-2020)”, and two documents of “Special Education Promotion Plan”, for 2014-2016 and 2017-2020 respectively. Launched in

2009, the three documents of the “National Human Rights Action Plan” for 2009-2010, 2011-2015, and 2016-2020 specified the tasks and goals of this mission.

Law-based protection of rights and interests of persons with disabilities. A legal system is now in place in China with the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China as basis, the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities as its mainstay. It is taken to a further level of detail in the Regulations on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, Regulations on the Education of Persons with Disabilities, Regulations on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities, and Regulations on the Building of an Accessible Environment. By April 2018, more than 80 laws and 50 administrative regulations had been passed concerning the protection of the rights and interests of persons with disabilities.

The Constitution of the People’s Republic of China explicitly specifies that all citizens, including persons with disabilities, have the right to vote and to stand for election in accordance with the law. The Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities provides that persons with disabilities shall enjoy the same economic, political, cultural, social and family rights as other citizens. The Electoral Law of the National People’s Congress and Local People’s Congresses contains special provisions concerning the election rights of persons with disabilities, requiring that assistance be provided to facilitate their participation in elections. In 2018, over 5,000 persons with disabilities, relatives of this group, and personnel working for them were deputies to the people’s congresses and members of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) above the county level.

The state has taken measures to ensure the equal rights of persons with disabilities to participate in public affairs. The Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) has carried out inspections on the implementation of the Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities to improve the protection of their lawful rights and interests. The CPPCC National Committee has held various consultative conferences for the same goal. The Supreme People’s Court, the Supreme People’s Procuratorate, and the CDPF have built a joint working mechanism to this end. The Ministry of Public Security has acted with resolution against illegal criminal acts infringing upon the legal rights and interests of persons with disabilities. The 12385 service hotline for persons with disabilities has been launched nationwide, and an online petition platform is also available to expand the channels for these people to express their concerns.

Prioritizing a public legal service system for persons with disabilities. The Supreme People’s Court and eight other departments have jointly issued the “Directives on Strengthening Legal Aid for Persons with Disabilities”, and set up a

leading group to guide local departments in building legal aid centers. The Supreme People's Court requires that people's courts at all levels open up green channels for persons with disabilities, give them priority, provide them with convenient legal services, and create barrier-free facilities in courts. The Ministry of Justice released the "Directives on Improving Public Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities in the 13th Five-year Plan Period" to expand the scope of these services, including legal aid, and to strengthen criminal legal aid for these people.

By 2018, more than 2,600 legal aid centers and more than 2,600 service windows for persons with disabilities had been set up across the nation. And 1,814 legal aid stations had been built by disabled persons' federations at all levels. From 2014 to 2018, a total of 312,000 persons with disabilities benefited from legal aid services, and 1,242,000 received legal advice from legal aid organizations.

Improving the support system for persons with disabilities. To provide better protection to persons with disabilities, we have formed a support system in which the CPC Party committees take the lead, the government takes responsibilities, the public gives support, and disabled persons' organizations play an important role. In March 2008, the "Directives of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Promoting the Cause of Persons with Disabilities" was released, which stipulates the general requirements for this work. The State Council Working Committee on Disability was set up by leaders from 34 ministries, departments and organizations to coordinate the formulation and implementation of guidelines, policies, regulations and programs made by the State Council in relation to persons with disabilities, and to address major problems in this regard. The member units of this committee are assigned duties to meet this goal.

The people's governments above the county level have set up their own committees to develop programs of persons with disabilities. As the bridge and the bond between the Party, the government, and persons with disabilities, the CDPF and its local branches employ to the full their capacity to represent, manage and serve the interests of this group. The Labor Union, the Communist Youth League, the Women's Federation, and the Association for the Elderly apply their strength to safeguard the lawful rights and interests of workers, youth, women, children and the elderly with disabilities. The Red Cross Society, Charity Society, and China Foundation for Disabled Persons help to raise money and collect donations for those with disabilities. Enterprises and public institutions shoulder their responsibilities to play their part in helping these people.

Full development of disabled persons' federations. The CDPF is a legitimate organization approved by the State Council. It is composed of persons with disabilities, their relatives, and personnel working for them. It represents and safeguards the

legitimate rights and interests of persons with disabilities, and aims to unite, help and serve them. It performs duties assigned by law, undertakes tasks entrusted by the government, and manages and develops programs of persons with disabilities. The highest authority of the CDPF is the National Congress, which is held every five years. By 2018, a total of 42,000 disabled persons' federations had been set up across the nation (with the exception of Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps and Heilongjiang Reclamation Area). The CDPF takes leadership over the China Association of Persons with Visual Disabilities, the China Association of Persons with Hearing Disabilities, the China Association of Persons with Physical Disabilities, the China Association of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Relatives, and the China Association of Persons with Psychiatric Disabilities and Their Relatives. By 2018, a total of 16,000 branches of these associations at provincial, prefectural (municipal) and county levels were in place.

Improving data collection and census mechanisms for persons with disabilities. In order to optimize management and fine-tune services, China has strengthened processes for gathering data on persons with disabilities, and for regulating and improving the statistical indicators for the protection of their rights and interests. It has established systems for monitoring disability at the national and provincial levels, for gathering data and monitoring indicators, and for collecting comprehensive statistical forms from all departments and all regions and having them submitted regularly to higher-level authorities for review. Two national surveys on disability in 1987 and 2006 gave us a clearer picture of this group and of the protection of their human rights. Since 2015, surveys have been carried out on their basic services and demands, and on public services available to them at the community level. Databases have been built, and data shared among relevant departments of the government. In 2018, dynamic information on the services accessible to and demands of 33.08 million persons with disability certificates, and information on service facilities for persons with disabilities in 690,000 villages (communities) was gathered.

A marked increase in financial support to programs of persons with disabilities.

- Disabled persons' federations across the nation spent RMB57.36 billion on programs for helping these people during the 11th Five-year Plan period (2006-2010).
- The figure grew to RMB145.12 billion during the 12th Five-year Plan period (2011-2015), an increase of 153 percent.
- The investment was RMB41.67 billion in 2016, the first year of the 13th Five-year Plan period (2016-2020), an increase of RMB24.15 billion, or 138 percent, compared with the first year (2011) during the 12th Five-year Plan period.

- From 2013 to 2017, the fiscal allocations from all levels of the government for persons with disabilities added up to over RMB180 billion, up by 123 percent over the prior five years.
- In 2018, 4,069 service facilities were in place.

III. Health and Rehabilitation

China attaches great importance to ensuring the right to health for persons with disabilities. It makes comprehensive efforts in preventing disability, and works hard to improve rehabilitation services, in pursuit of the goal that “everyone in need has access to rehabilitation services.”

Policies for ensuring health services for people with disabilities are pragmatic and comprehensive. The “Outline of Healthy China 2030”, the “Plan for Health in the 13th Five-year Plan Period”, and the “Plan for Deepening Medical and Healthcare Reform in the 13th Five-year Plan Period” have raised explicit requirements for ensuring healthcare for persons with disabilities, and improving the ability of community-level institutions to deliver medical and rehabilitation services. The Regulations on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities have been enacted and implemented. A subsidy system for nursing persons with severe disabilities has been established. Persons with disabilities are provided with special medical services, and they are also priority targets in family doctors’ contracting services. Local governments are encouraged to incorporate basic rehabilitation services into personalized contracts with family doctors. Exercise therapy and 28 other medical rehabilitation items are covered by basic medical insurance. Since the 1990s, the Chinese government and various sectors of the society have funded surgeries for cataract patients, and more than 10 million people have recovered eyesight through this campaign.

Special attention has been paid to medical and healthcare services for impoverished people with disabilities in rural areas. The government has issued the “Guiding Opinions on Programs of Poverty Alleviation Through Healthcare”, “Action Plan for Three Groups of People in Programs of Poverty Alleviation Through Healthcare”, “Implementation Plan for Addressing the Difficulties of Poor Households Caused by Disabilities”, and the “Three-year Action Plan for Poverty Alleviation Through Medical Security (2018-2020)”. In rural areas, poor people with disabilities are now covered by basic medical insurance, serious disease insurance, and medical assistance, all of which play an effective role in securing comprehensive

healthcare for them. Medical insurance benefits for registered poor people with disabilities have been improved. More efforts have been made to build county-level rehabilitation service centers for persons with disabilities, with the goal of improving the capabilities of community-level institutions in providing rehabilitation services. A working mechanism has been established to coordinate medical institutions and professional rehabilitation institutions for persons with disabilities.

Positive results have been achieved in preventing disability. The “National Disability Prevention Action Plan (2016-2020)” has been promulgated, by which effective measures are being taken to reduce and control the occurrence of disabilities. Pilot work on comprehensive disability prevention has been carried out around China to improve the integrated mechanism for disability screening, assessment, report and intervention. The national immunization program has been implemented, and pre-marriage and pre-pregnancy health checks, maternal prenatal screening and tests, and screening for newborns and children with disabilities have been strengthened. The Specifications for Disability Screening for Children Aged 0-6 Years (Trial) has been formulated to realize early screening and treatment of children with five types of disability. More efforts have been made in the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, endemic diseases, and chronic diseases, with a focus on key prevention projects such as salt iodization and folic acid supplementation. These have basically eliminated poliomyelitis and iodine deficiency disorders, and other causes for disabilities. Safety measures have been strengthened to reduce accidental injuries that cause disabilities.

The Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) actively pursues breakthroughs in disability prevention technologies. Through two key programs – “reproductive health and prevention and control of major birth defects” and “prevention and control of major non-communicable chronic diseases” – the MOST has planned and conducted prevention and control of birth defects and technical research on the prevention and control of major chronic diseases that will lead to disabilities, effectively reducing the occurrence of disabilities caused by illnesses. In 2017, the State Council officially designated August 25 as the Disability Prevention Day. Promotional activities to raise public awareness of disability prevention have been carried out on Disability Prevention Day, Ear Care Day (March 3), Global Iodine Deficiency Disorders Prevention Day (October 21), National Eye Care Day (June 6), World Birth Defects Day (March 3), and World Mental Health Day (October 10).

As of 2016, the Chinese government had provided free folic acid to 81 million rural perinatal women, free thalassemia screening for 978,000 couples, and free congenital disease screening for 4.69 million newborns.

Rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities have gradually improved.

Starting from scratch, rehabilitation institutions for persons with disabilities have developed a team of professionals, established a work system, business structure and operational mechanism, and improved their service capabilities. By 2018, 914 rehabilitation facilities at provincial, municipal and county levels had been completed, with a total floor area of 3.4 million sq m. There were 9,036 rehabilitation institutions for persons with disabilities, which employed 250,000 people, and 2,750 counties (cities or districts) offered community rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation institutions, which used to provide services only for cataract patients, post-polio patients, and hearing-impaired children, have evolved into to a multi-disciplinary service system with equal emphasis on prevention and rehabilitation that meets the needs of a wide range of people with disabilities.

In 2018, 621 secondary and higher vocational technical schools and regular colleges and universities began to offer degree programs on rehabilitation services, with 29,334 graduates. To train more rehabilitation professionals, preparatory work has officially started for China Rehabilitation University, which is included in the 13th Five-year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the “Outline for Accelerating the Process Toward Prosperity for Persons with Disabilities in the 13th Five-year Plan Period”.

Vigorous efforts are being made to offer community rehabilitation services and enhance the service capacity. By 2018, 1,001 municipal districts and 1,749 counties (cities) were offering community rehabilitation services, employing 478,000 community rehabilitation coordinators. A rehabilitation and assistance system for children with disabilities has been established, providing institutional guarantee for these children to receive basic rehabilitation assistance. A system subsidizing assistive devices for persons with disabilities has been established in nine provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government, reducing the financial burden on families with disabled members. A campaign has been launched to offer targeted rehabilitation services, such as rehabilitation therapy, rehabilitation training, support services, and assistive devices, to disabled children and those with certified disabilities. The MOST encourages the R&D of products that help and benefit persons with disabilities. It has carried out R&D programs on rehabilitation aids and repair materials for artificial tissues and organs, with a focus on two key projects – “active health and technological response to aging” and “R&D of biomedical materials and repair and replacement of tissues and organs”. The rehabilitation system for work-related injuries has been improved, and pensions for injuries and disabilities have been enhanced.

From 2006 to 2016, 21.8 million persons with disabilities made progress in rehabilitation. In 2018, 10.7 million disabled children and persons with certified disabilities received basic rehabilitation services, and the coverage of rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities reached 79.8 percent.

Special attention has been paid to the health of children with disabilities. Following the principle of maximizing the interests of children, the Chinese government pays close attention to the health of children with disabilities. According to the results of the second national sample survey on disability published in 2006, children aged 0-14 years accounted for 4.69 percent of the total population with disabilities, 11.21 percentage points lower than data from the first survey published in 1987. Priority has been given to the rescue therapy and rehabilitation of children with disabilities aged 0-6, with targeted rehabilitation services. In 2018, 157,000 children with disabilities aged 0-6 years were provided with basic rehabilitation services.

To protect the basic rehabilitation rights of children with disabilities in a more comprehensive and sustainable way, the State Council issued the “Directives on Establishing a Rehabilitation and Assistance System for Children with Disabilities” in June 2018, marking the formal establishment of the system. Efforts have been made to promote rehabilitation and assistance services for children with major diseases such as cerebral palsy, amblyopia, and hearing impairments. A basic living allowance system has been established for orphans, including those with disabilities. China has carried out the Blue Sky Plan on Developing Child Welfare Institutions and the Tomorrow Plan on Surgical Rehabilitation for Orphans with Disabilities. In the framework of the latter, by June 2018, 125,000 disabled orphans and abandoned infants with surgical indications had received surgical correction and rehabilitation training.

IV. Special Education and Inclusive Education

China provides equal rights to education for persons with disabilities. The state has promulgated and revised the Regulations on the Education of Persons with Disabilities, included education for them in the “Outline of China’s Plan for Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)”, “China’s Education Modernization 2035”, and “Plan for Promoting Equal Access to Basic Public Services in the 13th Five-year Plan Period”, and enacted two phases of the “Special Education Promotion Plan”. All of this is designed to improve special education, develop inclusive education, and ultimately improve overall education for persons with disabilities.

The system of education for persons with disabilities has become more complete. In China, education for persons with disabilities is primarily managed by educational departments, assisted by civil affairs organs, disabled persons' federations, and social organizations. It covers preschool education, elementary education, secondary education, and higher education. Most children with disabilities attend school with children without disabilities or go to special education schools, and some receive education at home either with visiting teachers or through long-distance education programs. Both forms of education are available for coordinated implementation. A funding system has been put in place to cover children and students with disabilities from kindergarten to college. Since the fall semester in 2016, poor students with disabilities in regular senior high schools have been exempt from fees, so that they receive 12-year free education from elementary school to senior high school.

More children and teenagers with disabilities have received compulsory education. Based on the principle that all school-age children and teenagers with disabilities must go to school and none shall be denied schooling, the state has gone to great lengths to increase the capacity of special education schools and regular schools to accommodate more students with disabilities, as well as designating teachers to go to teach these students at their home. Through these efforts children and teenagers with disabilities enjoy the greatest possible right to compulsory education. The number of students at special education schools has grown significantly over the years, and children and teenagers with visual, hearing, intellectual and other types of impairments now have more chances of schooling than ever before. In 2018, 666,000 students with disabilities studied on campus, an increase of 298,000 persons, or 81 percent over 2013.

Non-compulsory education for persons with disabilities has made steady progress. The state has continued to expand the scale of preschool education for children with disabilities, encouraging regular kindergartens to enroll more of them and special education schools to open preschool courses or kindergartens. Preschool costs for disabled children from poor families have been included in funding programs for children. In 2016, more than 30,000 disabled children attending kindergartens received subsidies. From 2012 to 2018, about RMB310 million from the public welfare lotteries for persons with disabilities were used to support preschool education for 105,000 disabled children from poor families.

Senior high schools have opened special departments or classes for students with disabilities, so that they have more opportunities to receive senior high school education. The state has issued the "Directives on Accelerating the Development of Vocational Education for Persons with Disabilities". In 2018, China had 133

secondary vocational schools or classes with an enrollment of 19,475 students with disabilities.

To develop higher education and provide more channels for students with disabilities, the state has issued the Regulations on the Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the National Exams for Regular Institutions of Higher Education, providing convenient access to exams, along with necessary support for students with disabilities. From 2012 to 2018, a total of 62,200 students with disabilities were enrolled into regular institutions of higher education.

Regarding admissions, to ensure that the rights of examinees with disabilities are fully protected, the Ministry of Education has clear regulations that colleges and universities shall not refuse students with physical disabilities as long as they can care for themselves, can complete their studies in the disciplines they have applied for, and their exam marks have reached the admission requirements.

To provide more opportunities to students with disabilities, the Ministry of Education has ratified 22 higher education institutions to organize exams for them, and distinguished their admission plans from regular admissions. The state encourages institutions of higher education to open disciplines on special education. By June 2018, 61 colleges and universities with regular four-year undergraduate courses were running disciplines on special education, with some 10,000 students. In 2018, higher vocational colleges in China provided 37 programs on special education.

Efforts have been made to develop inclusive education. In 2017, inclusive education was covered by the Regulations on the Education of Persons with Disabilities. Other policy papers, such as “China’s Education Modernization 2035” and the “Phase-2 Special Education Promotion Plan (2017-2020)”, have also called for developing inclusive education. Across China efforts have been made to provide the support necessary for students with disabilities to go to regular schools, such as building more classrooms with resources for special education at regular schools and recruiting full-time and part-time teachers of special education. As a result the number of students with disabilities at regular schools has seen a steady increase, from 191,000 in 2013 to 332,000 in 2018, an increase of 73.8 percent. Over the past decade, more than 50 percent of students with disabilities have been able to study at regular schools.

Public spending on special education has continued to grow. In the period from 2008 to 2015, the state introduced two construction programs for special education schools, investing RMB7.14 billion to build, renovate, or expand 1,182 special education schools in China’s central and western regions, and to support improved facilities in 61 institutions of higher education, secondary vocational schools and special education normal schools. Since 2014, the central government has

increased the subsidies for special education to RMB410 million per year to cover all areas outside of Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai.

Public spending on students with disabilities in compulsory education at regular and special education schools has increased to RMB6,000 per person per year. In some areas teachers of disabled students at regular schools, and those teaching home-schooled students, receive subsidies for special education teachers. In addition to state policies already in place, such as exemption from tuition and fees, free textbooks, and living subsidies for poor students in compulsory education, students with disabilities have also received subsidies from local governments, and the standards of the subsidies are improving. In some provinces and municipalities directly under the central government, students with disabilities enjoy free education from elementary to senior high school.

East China Normal University and four other colleges and universities have been selected to carry out a special education program to train excellent special education teachers, and the State Training Program for Elementary and Secondary School Teachers has sub-programs for training presidents and teachers of special education schools. By 2018 the program had trained 726 presidents and 10,298 teachers.

V. Employment and Entrepreneurship

To create workfare programs for persons with disabilities, China has improved its laws and regulations, expanded channels for employment, and refined the service system to guarantee their right to employment.

The right to employment of persons with disabilities is protected by law. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities stipulates that people's governments at all levels shall formulate preferential policies as well as protective and supportive measures to help persons with disabilities to find employment through multiple channels, at various levels and in a variety of forms. The Employment Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China contains provisions on the disabled persons' right to work. The Regulations on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities specifies the details about employment guidelines, government duties, employers' responsibilities, supportive measures, employment services, and legal liability for these people. The Supreme People's Court publishes typical cases to help protect disabled persons' right to work and their lawful rights and interests in accordance with the law. Local people's congresses and governments also issue normative documents to promote employment, encourage entrepreneurship and guarantee equal job opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Policy support for the employment and self-employment of persons with disabilities. The government departments concerned have released a series of relevant policies and documents:

- Opinions on Reserving a Certain Proportion of Employment Positions for Persons with Disabilities
- Measures for the Administration of the Collection and Use of Employment Security Funds for Persons with Disabilities
- Opinions on Promoting Supported Employment for Persons with Disabilities
- Notice on Preferential Value-Added Tax Policies for Promoting Employment of Persons with Disabilities
- Notice on Policies for Government Purchase of Products from Employers of Persons with Disabilities
- Opinions on Supporting Employment and Entrepreneurship of Persons with Disabilities
- Program on Employment Skill Improvement for Persons with Disabilities (2016-2020)

These efforts have helped persons with disabilities to enjoy the benefits of proactive employment policies. Based on market-oriented employment mechanisms, the state has taken preferential policies and supportive and protective measures for the employment and self-employment of persons with disabilities such as tax reductions, supplying facilities, preferential purchasing by the government, favorable loans and capital support, post allowance and social security subsidies.

The Law of the People's Republic of China on Traditional Chinese Medicine provides that persons with visual disabilities who have obtained the qualification as blind medical massagers according to relevant state regulations can engage in self-employment or serve in medical institutions. The state gives support to the training, employment and self-employment of blind massagers. More than 110,000 therapeutic massagers and 10,000 medical massagers with visual disabilities have been trained.

Extensive training and services for persons with disabilities to seek employment or start businesses. The employment of persons with disabilities is covered by public services at all levels: Persons with disabilities in both rural and urban areas who are able to and wish to work are entitled to free services in finding employment or establishing self-employment; help is offered to those with disabilities in seeking employment and to employers in hiring them. Special employment service agencies for persons with disabilities have been set up at provincial, municipal and county levels to provide services such as policy advice, employment registration, career guidance, job opportunities, and training. Employment aid month activities take place during the New Year and Spring Festival to help them find jobs. By 2018, there

had been 2,811 employment service organizations for persons with disabilities, with 34,000 staff.

Plans have been carried out to improve occupational skills for persons with disabilities, run training courses on jobs and entrepreneurship tailored to their needs, and hold occupational skill competitions to improve their abilities in finding employment or starting their own businesses. In 2018, another 494,000 persons with disabilities took part in training sessions. And 500 occupational training centers have been set up at the state level and 350 at the provincial level.

Various provisions for employment of persons with disabilities. Steady progress has been made in reserving a certain proportion of employment positions, centralized employment, and self-employment for persons with disabilities. In recent years, the government has optimized the development and management of welfare jobs and encouraged “internet plus” employment. It has formulated “Directives on Supported Employment for Persons with Disabilities”, which aims to assist persons with disabilities – including intellectual, mental, and severe physical disabilities – who are working-age individuals eager to be employed but find it hard to enter the competitive job market, to obtain and maintain employment. Provisions are also made for flexible working hours, intensity, pay and labor contract. By 2017, there had been at least one supported employment agency in every municipal district. Preferential measures have been taken to help persons with disabilities in rural areas to engage in farming, breeding, and handicraft industries, all effective sources of employment.

In the past decade, the size and structure of employed persons with disabilities has remained stable, and the number has risen by 300,000 every year. In 2018, another 367,000 persons with certified disabilities were hired, 118,000 in urban areas and 249,000 in rural areas. By 2018, the employment figure of people with certified disabilities had reached 9.48 million.

Increasing the income of persons with disabilities through poverty relief efforts. The Chinese government has formulated the “Development-oriented Poverty Alleviation Program for Persons with Disabilities in Rural Areas (2001-2010)” and the “Outline of Development-oriented Poverty Alleviation for Persons with Disabilities in Rural Areas (2011-2020)”. Since 2011, it has helped nearly 13 million persons with disabilities to engage in production activities through poverty relief efforts, and as a result 6.76 million have got out of poverty. Across the country, 5,490 poverty alleviation centers for persons with disabilities have been set up, employing 881,000 persons with disabilities and helping to increase the income of 1.77 million households with one or more disabled members.

Support has been given to low-income households to engage in farming, breeding and handicraft industries as suited to local conditions. The Rain-Dew Anti-poverty

Campaign is carried out to a deeper level, in which priority is given to training impoverished persons with disabilities and encouraging them to start up business in agriculture by including those capable of farming into the training programs for farmers.

A vocational skill improvement program and a training program for impoverished households have been launched to ensure labors with one or more disabled family members are prioritized in receiving training and they acquire at least one skill to achieve prosperity. And policies and measures have been taken to serve and support their employment and entrepreneurship, covering capital, worksites, facilities, market information and management. Poverty alleviation models with disabilities are included in programs for training entrepreneurship-based poverty relief leaders in poor villages.

The state has formulated the “Plan on Developing Handicraft Industry to Lead Impoverished Women with Disabilities Out of Poverty”. It has strengthened training for these women in practical and employable skills, and developed handicrafts to help them shake off poverty. The heads of National Women’s Poverty Eradication Centers and female leaders in helping villagers achieve prosperity are encouraged to partner with and assist women with disabilities. The government holds skill training sessions in urban areas and provides more employment guidance and services to support women with disabilities in finding jobs and starting businesses.

VI. Basic Life and Social Security

The social security system for persons with disabilities has been steadily improved. They enjoy social assistance, welfare and insurance benefits according to regulations, and lead a higher-quality life with a greater sense of gain.

Persons with disabilities have equal rights to social security. Following the principles of equality and non-discrimination, the Chinese government protects the right to social security for all citizens, including persons with disabilities. The Constitution of the People’s Republic of China stipulates: “Citizens have the right to material assistance from the state and society when they are old, ill or disabled,” and “The state and society ensure the livelihood of disabled members of the armed forces, provide pensions to the families of martyrs and give preferential treatment to the families of military personnel. The state and society help make arrangements for the work, livelihood and education of the blind, deaf-mute and other handicapped citizens.” The Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities states that “the state shall protect the right of persons with disabilities to

various social security.” The Social Insurance Law of the People’s Republic of China, Interim Measures for Social Assistance, Regulations on Work-related Injury Insurance, Regulations on Pensions and Preferential Treatments for Servicemen, and some other laws and regulations have specific provisions on the right of persons with disabilities to social security.

The Chinese government undertakes a more positive obligation to ensure the right of persons with disabilities to social security. It includes eligible unemployed adults with severe disabilities in the system of minimum living allowances for single-person households, subsidizes impoverished persons with disabilities and those with severe disabilities in their social insurance, and gives preferential social treatment to persons with disabilities.

The living security system for persons with disabilities has been improved. Following the principle of “universal benefit plus special treatment”, the Chinese government protects the basic subsistence right of persons with disabilities by improving the social assistance system. At the same time, it makes legal provision for priority assistance to impoverished disabled people, severely disabled people, and households with more than one disabled member, and takes comprehensive measures to meet their basic living needs. By March 2018, over 9 million persons with disabilities had received urban or rural subsistence allowances. The “Directives on Further Improving the Assistance and Support System for People Living in Dire Poverty”, issued by the State Council, has been implemented, which includes nearly 900,000 persons with disabilities in the scope of assistance and support for the destitute.

In the management and renovation of public rental housing and old residential areas in urban areas, priority is given to poor people with disabilities. In 2018, 620,000 persons with disabilities enjoyed public rental housing security. All localities help persons with disabilities to renovate their dilapidated houses through loans with discounted interest. By 2018, the central finance had supported 1.77 million rural poor households with one or more disabled members to renovate their dilapidated houses. Since 2017, the central government has supported four key groups to renovate dilapidated houses, including rural poor households with one or more disabled members, providing an average subsidy of RMB14,000 per household.

Eligible impoverished persons with disabilities are covered by medical assistance, and receive subsidies for basic medical insurance; they also receive subsidies, based on relevant regulations, for unaffordable out-of-pocket medical expenses not covered by the basic medical insurance, serious disease insurance and other supplementary medical insurance. Some provinces and municipalities give preferential policies and

subsidies to low-income families with one or more disabled members for the use of domestic water, electricity, gas and heating, and other basic living expenses.

A welfare system for persons with disabilities has been established. Systems for providing living allowances for poor people with disabilities and nursing subsidies for severely disabled persons have been established. In 2018, more than 21.9 million disabled people benefited from the systems, receiving subsidies of more than RMB23 billion. Vigorous efforts have been made to develop care services, and the number of care facilities for persons with disabilities has increased year by year. By 2018, there were 791 care facilities around China with a total floor area of 2.15 million sq m, and 8,435 care institutions providing residential care services for 223,000 and home services for 888,000 disabled persons. Mechanisms for purchasing such care services, assessment and supervision, and personnel training in this field have been improved; national standards for care services have been formulated; and social forces are encouraged to engage in this work. Through all these efforts, persons with disabilities now have access to multi-level and diverse care services. In accordance with the national plan for accelerating the process toward prosperity for persons with disabilities, the Chinese government has sped up the development of rural care services and a model of rural care with poor and severely disabled people as the major targets.

Parks, tourist attractions, and public cultural and sports facilities are open to persons with disabilities free of charge or at a discount. Fuel subsidies are granted to people with motorized wheelchairs. Pensions and preferential treatment are given to service veterans, police officers, and other special groups with disabilities. Most cities offer conveniences and benefits to persons with disabilities on public transport.

Coverage of social insurance for persons with disabilities has continued to expand. The Chinese government has adopted an insurance regime of universal coverage, under which more support is given to persons with disabilities, insurance subsidies are granted to enterprises employing disabled people with difficulties in finding jobs, and subsidies are granted to impoverished disabled persons and severely disabled persons in both urban and rural areas. By 2018, 25.61 million persons with disabilities had been covered by urban and rural social old-age insurance, and 10.24 million received pensions. 5.76 million of the 5.95 million persons with severe disabilities received insurance subsidies from the government, 96.8 percent had their old-age insurance premiums paid on their behalf, and another 2.98 million persons with mild disabilities had their old-age insurance premiums paid by their employers in full or partially. In recent years, the numbers and proportion of persons with disabilities being covered by various social insurances have continued to grow. In

2018, 79.2 percent of residents with certified disabilities were covered by the old-age insurance.

Pilot work has been done to carry out and improve social insurance systems related to persons with disabilities. In 2010, the State Council revised the Regulations on Work-related Injury Insurance to increase the compensation standards for work-related injuries. In 2018, 239 million people took out work-related injury insurance policies, 569,000 people received evaluation of the degree of their disabilities, and almost 2 million people were granted work-related injury compensations. In some areas, an accident insurance system for persons with disabilities has been established with financial subsidies for those insured, which alleviates the financial pressure on families with one or more disabled members. Pilot work has been done to implement a long-term care insurance system in 15 cities, under which the cost of basic care services for eligible persons with long-term disabilities will be paid in accordance with the regulations, which reduces the burden of care for families with one or more disabled members.

Poverty eradication for persons with disabilities has been advanced. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the government has included poverty eradication for people with disabilities into the national strategy as an important element, and offers support in system design, policy arrangements, and project implementation. In 2018, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the “Directives on Winning the Three-year Poverty Eradication Campaign”, which designates a special section to poverty eradication activities for impoverished people with disabilities to ensure they achieve moderate prosperity with the rest of the country by 2020. Twenty-six departments, including the State Council Leading Group for Poverty Alleviation and Development, National Development and Reform Commission, and CDPF, formulated the “Action Plan on Poverty Eradication for Impoverished Persons with Disabilities (2016-2020)” and supporting programs on lifting these people out of poverty through e-commerce or industrial development. Financial investment has been increased in this regard. From 2011 to 2018, the central finance arranged a total of RMB5.3 billion as subsidized loans for rehabilitation-based poverty alleviation, benefiting 350,000 poor people with disabilities. Since the targeted poverty alleviation strategy was established, the government has registered more than 6 million persons with disabilities as poverty-stricken households in need of help. By 2018, the number of registered poor people with disabilities had decreased to 1.7 million.

VII. Creating an Accessible Environment and Enabling Mobility

China attaches importance to creating an accessible environment and supplying and adapting assistive devices and tools. It has improved relevant laws, regulations and standards, and increased support in this regard.

A system of standards for creating an accessible environment has taken shape. After the “Design Standards of Urban Roads and Buildings for the Convenience of Persons with Disabilities (Trial)” came into effect in 1989, China has formulated the “Codes for Accessibility Design”, the “Construction Acceptance and Maintenance Standards of the Barrier-free Facilities” and other national standards, and issued the “Accessibility Design Guide for Urban Public Transport Facilities” and the “Public Information Graphical Symbols for Use on Sign – Part 9: Symbols for Accessible Facilities”. The administrative departments of civil aviation, rail, industry and information technology, education, and banking have drawn up construction codes for accessibility facilities in passenger terminals of civil airports, passenger railway stations, websites, telecommunications terminal devices, special education schools, and banks. In 2012, the State Council issued the Regulations on the Building of an Accessible Environment. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, legislation on creating an accessible environment has been intensified and the number of relevant laws, regulations, policies and measures has seen an obvious increase. By 2018, 475 rules and regulations on creating and managing an accessible environment had been made by authorities of provinces, prefectures (cities) and counties.

Creating an accessible environment has been expanded from pilot cities to the whole country in an orderly manner. During the 10th Five-year Plan period (2001-2005), 12 cities were selected as demonstration cities for creating an accessible environment. This was expanded to 100 cities during the 11th Five-year Plan period (2006-2010). During the 12th Five-year Plan period (2011-2015), 50 cities and counties were cited as models in building an accessible environment and 143 cities or counties were selected as models in innovative building of an accessible environment. In February 2015, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Ministry of Civil Affairs, CDPF and some other ministries jointly issued the “Guiding Opinions on Improving Accessibility in Towns and Villages” to extend the campaign to rural areas. More efforts have been made to create more such models. By 2018, all municipalities directly under the central government, cities specifically designated in the state plan, and provincial capitals had started building an accessible environment. A thousand seven hundred and two cities and counties had initiated efforts to improve accessibility and remove barriers. Among comprehensive service facilities in villages or communities across the country, 75 percent of entrances, 40 percent of service counters and 30 percent of restrooms have been constructed or upgraded for accessibility. The government has also accelerated the pace of adapting the houses of

families with disabled members, and improved almost 3 million of such houses between 2016 and 2018.

Information accessibility has been improved. China has drawn up national technical standards for information accessibility, and upgraded government and public service websites. The state has issued a series of national and industrial standards for persons with disabilities to use information communications equipment, to obtain online information, and to operate assistive devices, which has further completed China's system of standards in this field. China has also made efforts to enable persons with disabilities to access information on government websites. By 2018, over 500 government departments had built accessible public service platforms, and more than 30,000 websites on government affairs and public service on had removed barriers for persons with disabilities.

The state is obligated to standardize and promote sign language and Braille. The "Outline of the Long and Medium-term Reform and Development Plan of Spoken and Written Languages of China (2012-2020)" and the "National Reform Plan of Spoken and Written Languages During the 13th Five-year Plan Period (2016-2020)" both include sign language and Braille in the overall plan. The "Lexicon of Common Expressions in Chinese National Sign Language" and the "Chinese Common Braille Scheme" were issued and came into effect in 2018. Important meetings such as the NPC plenary sessions have sign language interpretation in live broadcast, and China Media Group and some local television stations provide sign language interpretation for some important programs. In 2018, provincial and prefectural/city television stations ran 295 sign language programs, and radio stations broadcast 230 programs for persons with disabilities; and public libraries at provincial, prefectural/city and county levels had 1,124 Braille and audio rooms.

China offers preferential policies or subsidies to persons with disabilities to enable them to access information. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the CDPF jointly issued the "Guiding Opinions on Supporting the Information Consumption by People with Visual, Hearing or Speech Impairments", which encourages telecommunications service providers to offer preferential plans to these specific groups, and guides large internet companies to provide convenience for these people in such domains as skills training, operations management, and information sharing, to facilitate their participation in internet-related businesses. Internet companies also make efforts to improve their online shopping experience, to share information accessibility technologies, and to give vocational skill training.

Creating an accessible environment has been promoted in key areas. The 2035 plan for a barrier-free public transport system has been launched. The Ministry of Transport adds accessibility requirements in the design standards of transport

facilities such as passenger terminals, expressway service areas, ferry terminals, subway stations, city buses and subway trains. Various localities use more accessible passenger vehicles like low-floor buses and wheelchair accessible taxies, and require reserved seats for the elderly, infirm, sick, and disabled in public transport vehicles. Buses are equipped with telescreens and next-stop announcement systems in most cities, and blind guidance systems in some cities. All public transport facilities are accessible for persons with disabilities in many provinces. The rail administration reserves seats for them on more than 3,400 CRH trains, and permits visually impaired people to board with guide dogs. Financial institutions have upgraded wheelchair ramps and tactile paving, installed number calling and display systems, and set up accessible restrooms and disabled parking spaces. Post offices provide door-to-door services for persons with severe disabilities. Delivery companies send text messages to clients with hearing impairments, and deliver publications in Braille for free. The facilities and services for persons with disabilities to access the legal services have been improved. Accessibility has been upgraded in the reception rooms and judicial tribunals of courts to enable them to enjoy equal legal rights. The courts also promote information accessibility, and allow assistants to those with disabilities to appear in court when necessary.

Services for supplying and adapting assistive appliances are guaranteed by national policies. In 2016, the State Council formulated “Directives on Accelerating the Development of the Industry of Rehabilitation Assistive Appliances”, and the Ministry of Finance, State Taxation Administration and Ministry of Civil Affairs jointly issued the “Notice on the Exemption of Corporate Income Tax from the Enterprises Manufacturing and Assembling the Special Products for Persons with Disabilities” to reduce the cost of such products. Local governments have formulated subsidy measures for assistive appliances and adaption services. In 2018, 3.19 million persons with disabilities benefited from adaption services of such assistive devices as white canes, visual aids and artificial limbs. Programs organized by governments at various levels such as Cheung Kong New Milestone Plan (for artificial limbs) and lottery-subsidized assistive tools have benefited 15 million people since 1996.

The personal mobility of persons with disabilities has been improved. The Ministry of Public Security has relaxed the restrictions preventing persons with disabilities from applying for a driving license, and 279,000 people with physical or hearing disabilities have gained licenses. “Measures for the Administration of Air Transport for Persons with Disabilities” require transport providers, airports and airport ground service agents to provide sufficient free mobility assistive facilities to enable eligible disabled persons to embark and disembark. All trains should reserve a certain quota of tickets for persons with disabilities. Visually impaired people can ride

city buses for free. China has drawn up national standards for guide dogs. The government has also developed online and telephone taxi reservation services for those with disabilities.

VIII. Personal Freedom and Non-Discrimination

China prohibits any forms of disability discrimination. It has drawn up specific measures to protect the right to life and personal freedom of persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy equal rights as other citizens.

Personal rights of persons with disabilities are fully protected by laws. In China, the Criminal Law, General Provisions of the Civil Law, Tort Law, Marriage Law, Law on the Protection of Minors, Labor Contract Law, Mental Health Law, Anti-domestic Violence Law and many other laws define the personal rights of persons with disabilities and stipulate the punishments for maltreating, abandoning, or maliciously injuring them. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities makes full and detailed provisions for their personal rights and defines measures to protect them.

Efforts have been made to adjust mechanisms for protecting the personal freedom of those with disabilities. The state has abolished the system to shelter and send back vagrants and beggars – including those with disabilities – to their homes, but provides assistance to them in line with their own free choice. The practice of isolating lepers from family or community has been abrogated. The central government has established a nationwide program to subsidize local governments for the management and treatment of serious mental illnesses, so as to register, report and rehabilitate such patients through medical treatment and follow-up.

Action has been stepped up against crimes that violate the personal freedom of persons with disabilities. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities forbids any entity or individual to force any person with disability to work by means of violence, threat or illegal restriction of personal freedom. The Amendment VI to the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China adds a crime of “organizing any disabled person or any minor to go begging”, and the Amendment IX to the Criminal Law adds a clause defining the criminal responsibility borne by anyone with a duty to ward or nurse a disabled person who maltreats the person under his or her guardianship or provides improper care. The

Supreme People's Court and the CDPF jointly issued the "Directives on Effectively Protecting the Lawful Rights and Interests of Persons with Disabilities in Trial and Enforcement" and other regulatory documents, requiring stiff punishments in accordance with the law for crimes that violate the rights and interests of these people, so as to effectively ensure their safety and protect their property. The Supreme People's Procuratorate and other departments issued the "Directives on Effectively Protecting the Lawful Rights and Interests of Persons with Disabilities in Procuratorial Work", requiring severe punishments in accordance with the law for crimes like forcing persons with intellectual disabilities to labor or trafficking disabled women and children. The Ministry of Public Security launched a special campaign against crimes that force or lure disabled minors to beg or deaf juveniles to commit crimes. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security also initiated a special effort to control illegal employment.

Laws have been enacted to prohibit any forms of disability discrimination. China's laws and regulations contain detailed provisions to combat discrimination and ensure reasonable accommodation. The Employment Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China adopted in 2007 stipulates that an employer recruiting staff must not discriminate persons with disabilities. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities revised in 2008 defines the principle of anti-discrimination: "Discrimination on the basis of disability shall be prohibited. Insult of and disservice to persons with disabilities shall be prohibited. Disparagement of and infringement upon the dignity of persons with disabilities by means of mass media or any other means shall be prohibited." Since 2010, China has enacted the Mental Health Law, Regulations on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, and Measures for the Administration of Air Transport for Persons with Disabilities, and revised the Regulations on the Education of Persons with Disabilities and Regulations on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities, all of which include detailed clauses to combat discrimination.

IX. Creating a Good Social Environment

China advocates core socialist values and the concepts of "equality, participation and sharing", carries forward China's traditional virtues and humanitarianism, and cultivates awareness of helping people with disabilities as part of the effort to create a social environment in which persons with disabilities are cared for, and the programs to help them are promoted.

The cultural activities of persons with disabilities are thriving. The Public Cultural Service Guarantee Law of the People's Republic of China and the "Plan for Promoting Equal Access to Basic Public Services in the 13th Five-year Plan Period" have included the cultural service programs for those with disabilities into the national cultural service system.

Measures have been taken across the country to ensure accessibility to cultural products and services for persons with disabilities, enabling them to appreciate TV programs, films and dramas. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism and CDPF have held an annual cultural week for persons with disabilities for several years. In 2018, over 1.2 million people with disabilities took part in such activities.

Art troupes of persons with disabilities are growing fast; their number has increased to 283, employing about 300,000 disabled art workers. During the three years since the launch of the Charity Performance Tours and Exhibitions, a total of 170,000 persons with disabilities have taken part in the initiative. The National Disability Art Festival is held every four years. By 2017, it had been held nine times, attracting over 100,000 to participate each year. Designated as UNESCO Artist for Peace, the China Disabled People's Performing Art Troupe has visited 100 countries and regions for performance and exchanges; the *Thousand-hand Bodhisattva* dance enjoys prestige throughout the world.

From 2011 to 2018, the central budget allocated about RMB12 million to launch the project of "Enriching the Community Culture for Persons with Disabilities" in cities, setting up reading sections and supplying cultural products for them. Books for people with disabilities have been added on the shopping list in the "Village Library" project. A cultural campaign has been launched for households with disabled members, particularly the 100,000 impoverished households and those with severely disabled members in the middle and western regions and rural areas. The campaign will enable each of them to read one book, watch one film, tour one park, visit one exhibition, and take part in one cultural activity every year. We have built a multifunctional Braille library and launched a digital reading project for persons with disabilities.

Sports for persons with disabilities are flourishing. Fitness and rehabilitation activities and competitive sports are making rapid progress. In 2011, a fitness program was launched to provide better guidance and service for persons with disabilities. Since 2011, the General Administration of Sport has supported the CDPF in training social sports instructors for people with disabilities. By 2017, a total of 104,000 instructors had been trained. Governments and organizations at all levels have increased investment in the building of sports venues for people with disabilities. In 2017 there were 9,053 cultural and sports venues for people with disabilities across the nation.

Shanghai Special Olympics, Beijing Paralympic Games, and Guangzhou Asia Para Games have been successful. China has succeeded in a bid for the 2022 Winter Paralympic Games. And it has attended nine summer Paralympics in which 1,337 athletes have participated, winning 433 gold, 339 silver and 250 bronze medals. They have broken 261 world records and ranked top in the gold medal tally for the last four Paralympics. China has competed in four Winter Paralympics with a total of 55 athletes, and won the first gold medal in the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Paralympic Games. China has actively taken part in Deaflympics and Special Olympics.

Social organizations of disability support are growing. Since 2012, the central budget has allocated special funds to support social organizations in providing social services, particularly for persons with disabilities. We have encouraged social organizations to streamline administration, delegate powers, innovate supervision, and improve services. We have given support to community-level social organizations in undertaking community public services and tasks entrusted by grassroots governments. And the state has improved preferential tax policies for social disability support organizations. These organizations are growing rapidly. By 2017, over 6,200 such organizations had been registered at local civil affairs departments, including 1,500 civil societies, 4,600 private non-enterprise entities and 100 foundations.

Social norms to support and help persons with disabilities have been established. Government websites have special sections for disability information and services. News media such as newspaper, radio, television and internet have wide coverage of the life of people with disabilities to help promote respect for their dignity and rights, eradicate prejudice and discrimination against them, and establish social norms to encourage the general public to understand, respect and help them. Since 1991 when the National Day for Helping Persons with Disabilities (the third Sunday in every May) was designated, 29 theme activities have been held.

Every year, public welfare activities to help people with intellectual disabilities are organized, and a variety of other activities for children with disabilities are also carried out by charity and volunteer organizations. Sporting activities, art performances, and vocational skills competitions of people with disabilities are held to celebrate their spirit of self-improvement and resilience. Non-profit campaigns in the cultural sector have also been launched to raise the public profile of this group, such as ensuring their access to 100 libraries and museums, and to books donated by 100 publishing houses, and expanding news coverage of their stories by 100 news media.

In primary and secondary schools, able-bodied Young Pioneers are encouraged to pair with their disabled peers to learn from each other. For college students and young people, the Sunshine Action has been launched to recruit youth volunteers to help people with disabilities. The China Association of Volunteers for Persons with

Disabilities has been set up to unite all social forces in providing better services for these people.

The spirit of persons with disabilities and the contribution they make is winning favor with the public. Persons with disabilities devote themselves to national development, and try to maximize the value of their contribution to society. A number of aspirant and enterprising models have emerged and won the titles of “National Model Worker” and “National Model Women Worker”. The state and local governments have rewarded a large number of role models with disabilities and individuals and units of disability support. The state has held six national conferences on commending role models with disabilities and model individuals and units for helping those with disabilities, rewarding 919 “National Self-improvement Models”, and 1,117 “Outstanding Units for Helping Persons with Disabilities” and “Outstanding Individuals for Helping Persons with Disabilities”.

X. International Exchanges and Cooperation

China actively participates in international exchanges and cooperation on disability, promotes better understanding and stronger support in the international community for the cause of persons with disabilities in China, and contributes to the development and progress of these people worldwide.

Fulfilling obligations in international instruments on disability. China fulfills all the responsibilities and obligations of a signatory state prescribed in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In accordance with the provisions of the convention, China submitted its first report in 2010, which was reviewed by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In 2018, it submitted a consolidated report of the second and third implementations of the convention. As a signatory state of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which is a core human right instrument, China respects and safeguards all the rights of persons with disabilities as stipulated by the covenant. In 1987, China approved the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention from the International Labor Organization, and submitted the latest report of its implementation in 2015.

Living up to international responsibilities. China actively provides financial, technical and material support to the UN, and to relevant international disability organizations and developing countries. We have donated assistive devices for persons with disabilities to more than 10 countries including Ethiopia, Burundi and Mongolia, provided humanitarian

relief to tsunami-stricken Southeast Asian countries with a focus on persons with disabilities, subscribed to the Development Fund for the International Paralympic Committee, and given capacity-building training to people with disabilities from Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member economies and Africa. In 2016, chairwoman of the CDPF Zhang Haidi was elected chair of Rehabilitation International (RI). China has subsidized the RI in establishing the Africa Fund and the Global Disability Development Fund.

Actively advancing the international cause of persons with disabilities. China is an active advocate and participant of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We have worked to include the cause of persons with disabilities in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We have helped to establish disability cooperation mechanisms within APEC, Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), China-Asian Expo and other frameworks. China energetically carries out cooperation along the Belt and Road to promote the cause.

With the support of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), we initiated the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities. China and the UN ESCAP jointly hosted the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Midpoint Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, at which the Beijing Declaration and Action Plan was adopted. We hosted the ASEM High-level Meeting on Disability and Global Conference on Assistive Devices and Technology. China actively participates in and hosts international events for persons with disabilities, including seminars, art festivals, and vocational skills competitions. It has participated in the Paralympic Games many times.

Winning international acclaim for our efforts to ensure the rights and interests of persons with disabilities. The international community speaks highly of China's achievements and experience in protecting the rights and interests of persons with disabilities. In 2003, Deng Pufang, then chairman of the CDPF, became the first Chinese and the first disabled Chinese to be awarded the United Nations Human Rights Prize. In 2012, Zhang Haidi, chairwoman of the CDPF, won the Asia-Pacific Disability Rights Champions Award from the UN ESCAP. In 2016, China hosted the 10th Anniversary Meeting of the Adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Ban Ki-moon, then UN secretary-general, attended the meeting and hailed China's efforts in protecting the rights and interests of people with disabilities.

Conclusion

The development of the programs of persons with disabilities are still unbalanced and inadequate in China, and lags behind the level of national economic and social development. There is still a big gap between the lives these people lead and lives to which they aspire, and a long-term effort will be required to fight the discrimination they face. We have a long way to go in ensuring the rights and interests of persons with disabilities, and in integrating the all-round improvement of their lives with that of wider society.

As a group who live with special difficulties, persons with disabilities should be fully respected, cared for, and assisted in every aspect of social interaction. China will continue to improve the mechanisms for ensuring their rights and interests – eliminating discrimination, fully respecting and guaranteeing their human rights, improving their wellbeing, enhancing their ability to better their own situation, and ensuring that they are able to participate in the country's development process and share the ensuing gains as equals.

Under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping as the core, in our quest to secure a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, strive to realize socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era and the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation, we will take disabled people's rights and interests, their all-round development and common prosperity as an important mission and regard them as the focus of our efforts, and open up a new vista for persons with disabilities in the new era.