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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Written statement* submitted by China Society for Human Rights Studies (CSHRS), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[29 January 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Achievements of China in Human Rights Protection in the Context of COVID-19

The sudden outbreak and global spread of the COVID-19 have brought an urgent and severe threat to people's lives and health worldwide. It also poses a huge and severe challenge to the prevention and control of COVID-19 worldwide. China insisted on integrating the principle of universality of human rights with the national condition and espoused a people-centred view of human rights regarding the rights to subsistence and development as its primary and basic human rights. With persistent courage and determination, China has adopted the most comprehensive, rigorous and thorough prevention and control measures to become a country that effectively controls the epidemic and restores the world's economy, ensuring the Chinese citizen's human rights. Coordinated and practical guarantees have also overcome the precious "window period" for epidemic prevention and control and risk guarantee for other countries in the world, and provided a possible "Chinese sample".

I. Priority and equal protection of the right to subsistence

The primary threat to human rights in a major outbreak is the loss of health or life. In the international human rights law system, the essential components of the right to survival are the right to life and health. The right to life is an essential basis and prerequisite for the realization of all other human rights. The starting point and endpoint of everything China is doing in the prevention and control of COVID-19 are to protect citizens' right to life and health as the first fundamental human right.

Thousands of years of human anti-epidemic history have proved that, in the face of sudden and significant public health incidents, controlling the source of the epidemic and cutting off the channels of infection are the top priorities of epidemic prevention and control. China measured to "closure" of internal non-proliferation and external defence implemented by Wuhan for taking responsibility for the safety and health of Wuhan, Hubei, Chinese citizens, and the people of the world, although this measure is difficult to decide. Provinces (cities, districts) other than Hubei also acted quickly. Following relevant legal procedures, all initiated the first-level response to major public health incidents by the end of January 2020: almost all gathering activities are prohibited, including schools and enterprises. Citizens are required to take temperature tests when entering any place. China requires hospitals to treat patients first, and finances cover the cost of diagnosing and treating patients and guaranteeing the people's essential lives. The above measures have effectively controlled the spread of the COVID-19 in China. It needs to admit that in the face of this previously unknown virus, China has adopted the bravest, most strict, and most active prevention and control measures in history.

To solve the dilemma of equal protection of the right to subsistence and health caused by the scarcity of resources, the Chinese government quickly coordinated the national resources. It changed the situation of resource shortage in a short time. In response to the severe shortage of medical resources in Wuhan at the beginning of the epidemic, the central government organized a national medical team to assist Wuhan. Completed the construction of a hospital with more than 1,000 beds in ten days-"Fire God Mountain-hospital" and "Thunder God Mountain-hospital", and a batch of "Mobile cabin hospitals" have been built.

In response to the insufficient supply of anti-epidemic materials and institutions, China has organized qualified enterprises to adjust and produce anti-epidemic materials such as masks quickly, and rapidly expand testing institutions.

In response to protecting special groups' rights during the COVID-19, China chose to postpone schools' opening and implement closed management of elderly care institutions, psychiatric hospitals, and rehabilitation centres. Provide psychological counselling to disadvantaged groups such as minors, the elderly, and the disabled, and strengthen communication with relatives and friends through telephone and video methods.

As of January 24, 2021, the cumulative number of confirmed cases in China was 99,931, and the death toll was 4810. The cumulative number of confirmed cases in the United States of America is 25,390,042, and the number of deaths is 424,177. As the first country to report the COVID-19, the number of infections and deaths is far lower than that of the United States of America as a representative of developed countries.

II. Coordinate protection of the rights to subsistence, development and other human rights

Human rights are integral. The Declaration on the Right to Development confirms that the "right to development as an inalienable human right". China has coordinated the prevention and control of COVID-19 with economic and social development, and protected rights to subsistence and development, and other human rights such as the rights to health, work and education while economic and social development.

The Chinese government, companies, and individuals work together to ensure that employees return to work safely and timely and strive to resume production. Such as innovative use of big data "health code" and "trip card" to accurately identify travel epidemic risks. Some companies use digital technology to allow employees to work online at home, and Internet technology companies provide free online office systems for social use. After COVID-19 has entered the normalization of prevention and control, the government has successively introduced a series of policies. Such as phased reductions and exemptions of basic pensions, unemployment and work-related injury insurance, reductions and exemptions of value-added tax, and provision of stable job subsidies to help micro and small businesses tide over the difficulties. Financial institutions take the initiative to provide low-interest loans and re-lending and delay the repayment of principal and interest for some companies in difficulty. Stephen Perry, the chairman of 48 Group Club, commented that it is not easy for China to make an orderly decision to resume production and work while preventing and controlling the epidemic. However, it is the correct decision, reflecting the overall situation and long-term vision of the decision-maker.

Schools and teachers across China make full use of modern network technology to carry out online teaching. In response to the weak network signal problem in a small number of remote rural areas, the local telecommunications department dealt with it: built network base stations or installed network signal amplifiers. Also, traffic packages provided for students.

With big data technology support, China has made COVID-19 information highly transparent: First, the National Health Commission's official Chinese and English websites and its social media platform have special sections including updates on disease prevention and control daily. Then use the big data platform's migration map, nearby epidemic situation, patient help, free consultation, fever clinic and other functions to realize online interaction. At the same time, China has established a charity big data supervision platform to achieve full-time, full-chain and full-network supervision of charity fund expenditures, targeted donation materials flow, and charity material quality assurance.

In early 2021, the documentary China's Post-pandemic Era filmed by Japanese documentary director Ryo Takeuchi released in Japan. Japanese netizens praised China's efforts to control the epidemic while stabilizing the economy.

III. Support global COVID-19 control and human rights protection

China actively advocates and implements the concept of "Community with a shared future for mankind" in international relations. This concept is similar to the spirit of human rights protection advocated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Currently, COVID-19 prevention and control have become global security and human rights governance issue. Under the shadow of COVID-19, abandoning prejudice and arrogance, avoiding the ideology of epidemic prevention and control, and deepening international cooperation is the only way for humankind to defeat COVID-19.

China has been using practical actions to help the world fight the COVID-19 attack. China actively shares prevention and control diagnosis, and treatment experience with other countries and establishes a network of COVID-19 knowledge centres to share prevention and control measures for COVID-19 to all countries and continuously updates public diagnosis and treatment plans, prevention and control plans. Besides, China has carried forward the humanitarian spirit and dispatched medical expert teams and vaccines to some countries and regions. At the same time, China takes advantage of its production capacity to export materials overseas. According to data released by the General Administration of Customs, from March to December 2020, China Customs inspected and released primary COVID-19 prevention and control materials worth 438.5 billion yuan, of which 224.2 billion masks exported. This is equivalent to providing an average of nearly 40 masks for everyone except Chinese citizens.

China's approach reflects the best respect for human rights to life and health and proves the feasibility of overall protection of the rights to survival, development and other human rights. Only through suffering and practice can we best interpret the connotation of human rights. In this tragic and challenging war epidemic, the great benevolence and righteousness shown by 1.4 billion Chinese citizens can be seen as an excellent practice for China to respect and protect human rights.
