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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by All-China Environment Federation, 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.

[31 January 2021]

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



Chinese NGOs' Contribution to Environmental Rights Protection

According to the definition given by the United Nations, human rights refer to rights innate to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status, and everyone is equally entitled to these rights. Equal rights and access to safe working and living conditions as both an internal and an external concern have been always considered as one crucial part of human rights. All-China Environment Federation (ACEF), Hulunbuir Environmental Volunteer Association, and Tianjin Ecological Education Promotion Association are three of the domestic non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in China that persistently contribute to the rights protection in the field of environment.

As a nationwide environmental NGO, All-China Environment Federation (ACEF) serves as a bridge between the government, NGOs, private sectors and the public in implementing the sustainable development strategy, achieving national objectives on environment and development, and protecting the rights of the public. ACEF has been working towards environmental justice, biodiversity conservation, combating climate change, sustainable consumption and other relevant work since 2005. Together with solidifying environmental NGOs and facilitating Chinese NGO participating in global environmental process, protecting the public environmental rights is one of the 3 key roles of ACEF.

Since its establishment in 2005, besides projects around its working programs, ACEF has also been providing legal assistance for people to protect their own environmental rights. Environmental public interest litigation have been actively carried out, and some of the cases are selected as best practices into the Communiqué of the Supreme People's Court of China and Top 10 Typical Cases of Annual Environmental Resources Trial. We went deep into the grassroots level to carry out 30 environmental law education activities, and carried out more than 10 trainings on environmental risk prevention and environmental emergency training for hundreds of enterprises in industrial parks, so as to raise the awareness of the public and enterprises on environmental protection and environmental laws and regulations; 4 sessions of National Environmental Resources Moot Court Competition for College Students were held, attracting 16 colleges and universities in China to actively participate, which is good example of integration of environmental law education and environmental judicial practice; a legal expert committee composed of 22 well-known environmental law experts has been established, which includes a volunteer lawyer team with 449 volunteer lawyers and 138 volunteer law firms to protect the environmental rights for the public. Volunteer Lawyer Alliance composed of 23 excellent lawyers has also been formed to promote the development and progress of environmental rights protection.

In recent years, we also witnessed the growing capacity of Chinese grassroots NGOs in both working approach and strategies, and they know more specifically about the environmental concerns and needs of the local people in China. Hulunbuir Environmental Volunteer Association, and Tianjin Ecological Education Promotion Association are two of such local NGOs. They have huge voluntary activities of environment protection and public environmental education held by these two domestic NGOs each year have further promoted public awareness as well as their engagement in environment supervision and decision-making process at a local scale.

Hulunbuir Environmental Volunteer Association, in 2017, initiated “Everbright Green Partnership” to carry out projects and activities with 158 partner associations on biodiversity conservation of grassland, supervision of “public opening of environmental protection facilities, wildlife conservation in province of Inner Mongolia. It has provided 53200 hours volunteer service on environmental protection since its establishment in 2016. Tianjin Ecological Education Promotion Association sees great significance of Public Opening of Environmental Protection Facilities in protecting peoples’ rights of “access to the environmental information” and public environmental awareness raising. Since 2019, it has recruited 5 volunteer guides, and coordinated Environmental Protection Bureaus as well as elementary and middle schools in different districts of Tianjin and organized 1400 citizens to visit 11 enterprises and institutions, particularly their environmental protection facilities open to the public.

People's health and well-being are closely linked to environmental safety and health, which emphasizes the significance of environmental protection in terms of achieving equitable and sustainable human flourishing. It is common responsibility of the whole society to figure out who benefit and who burden from the environmental issues, analyze the drivers behind the environmental issues, and come up with effective solutions. To ensure the environmental rights, we appeal that efforts from multi-stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, individuals, private sectors, etc., are made to facilitate policy process, daily behavior changes and green innovation for environmental protection.

Hulunbuir Environmental Volunteer Association, Tianjin Ecological Education Promotion Association, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.