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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 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.

[19 August 2024]

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



Artificial Intelligence Contributes to Safeguarding the Right to Development in China

Artificial intelligence (AI) is an important driving force for the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation and has a profound impact on global economic and social development and the progress of human civilization. China values the development, application and governance of AI as a new quality productive force. The high-quality and healthy development of China's AI technology plays an irreplaceable and important role in improving the digital literacy, reducing the digital divide, enhancing digital well-being, protecting the free and well-rounded development for every individual, and promoting global human rights governance.

1. Insisting on the Idea of 'People-oriented'

China has made improving the common welfare of all people as its goal. On the premise of protecting human dignity and social security, it integrates the people-centred philosophy of development and the basic principle of promoting and protecting human rights into the entire cycle of AI systems to ensure that the development and utilization of AI technology run in a correct way which is conducive to the progress of human civilization. China is committed to building a humanistic AI governance system. Based on the principle of AI for good, China actively creates an open, inclusive, trustworthy and non-discriminatory digital social environment and continuously promotes the digital transformation of economic and social development, so that the application of AI could benefit the daily lives of all people in a visible way. China is also dedicated to promoting AI to empower sustainable development. On the basis of ensuring safety, reliability and controllability, China strives to promote the innovation of AI to address global challenges such as climate change and the regional digital divide.

2. Protecting Right to Equal Participation in Development

The application of AI promotes the construction of digital infrastructure, allowing more people to enjoy the right to access the Internet. China widely uses AI in the construction of digital facilities such as 5G, cloud computing and big data, greatly improving the computing speed, reducing the operating and maintenance costs, and making digital products more inclusive and accessible. By the end of 2023, the number of Chinese netizens reached 1.092 billion and the Internet penetration rate reached 77.5%.

The application of AI improves the digital literacy of Chinese people and reduces the digital divide between regions and groups. With the help of AI technology, China continues to promote the expansion of 5G network coverage to rural, border and remote areas. By the end of 2023, the difference in Internet penetration rate between urban and rural areas in China is 16.8%, which has narrowed by 4.4% compared to the data of 2022. By the end of 2024, the number of rural broadband access users in China is expected to exceed 200 million, and the Internet penetration rate in rural areas will increase by 2%. At the same time, China is working to make digital public services more accessible and friendly to older people. Statistical data at the end of 2023 shows that the proportion of Internet users aged 50 and above in China increased from 30.8% at the end of 2022 to 32.5%, proving the development of the Internet further benefited the elderly groups.

The application of AI facilitates the building of a digital barrier-free environment and effectively protects the rights and interests of digitally disadvantaged groups. In 2023, China implemented the Barrier-free Environment Creation Law, and the universal application of AI fits exactly with the legislative goal of 'barrier-free information exchange'. Intelligent products on the market are constantly optimizing functions such as senior mode, voice-to-text transcription, and screen reading assistance to help reduce the obstacles for the disabled and the aged. Through the auxiliary application of AI, disadvantaged groups could share the achievements of the development more conveniently.

3. Promoting Global Human Rights Governance

China is at the forefront of the world in developing and governancing AI. The experience of China provides a valuable model of how AI could help better realize the right to development. On 18th October 2023, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a speech at the opening ceremony of The Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, proposed the Global AI Governance Initiative, which emphasizes that the development of AI should adhere to the people-oriented approach, developing-AI-for-good principle, and the goal of increasing the wellbeing of humanity. This initiative also encourages international cooperation and practical actions to help countries, especially developing countries, bridge the gap in AI technology and its governance capacity. This is an China's important action to practice the concept of a human community with a shared future and promote global human rights governance. On 1st July 2024, the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus the resolution 'enhancing international cooperation on capacity-building of artificial intelligence' proposed by China and co-sponsored by over 140 countries. The majority of UN member states highly appreciated China's positive role in promoting global AI cooperation and governance. These ideas and plans are of great practical significance for promoting human rights in the digital age and helping to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
