



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Fifty-seventh session

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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives**

### **Statement submitted by Chinese Society for Sustainable Development, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



## **Statement**

### **Protection of women's rights and promotion of social harmony**

The Government of China is always committed to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the advancement of the status of women and the protection of women's rights in the context of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. The establishment of the National Working Committee on Children and Women in the State Council, the enactment of the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests and the launch of the National Programme of Action for the Development of Women in China are all intended to ensure women's equality and rights in political, social, economic, cultural and family life in China. It has become a basic national policy to promote gender equality.

### **Status of women's right to survival and development in China**

The key to protecting women's rights lies with ensuring their political and economic rights. Only when political equality is guaranteed can women live with dignity and enjoy other rights, such as economic and social rights. Therefore, the Government of China has been making great efforts to create a democratic political environment that encourages the participation of women in politics, helps to build their self-confidence and contributes to their empowerment. Among the delegates to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, women accounted for a historical high of 23 per cent.

The enjoyment of cultural rights and the right to education is essential to women's lifelong development. Women's education in China has seen continued improvement in terms of educational facilities and quality, resulting in an overall upgrading of women's competence and ability. The implementation of the nine-year compulsory education project, which has become a legislative mandate, has been moving ahead at full steam, thus ensuring the right of school-age children to education.

The right to safety and health features prominently in women's life. The prevalence of the traditional patriarchal thinking that values men more than women has been shrinking dramatically. In 2010, Chinese women's life expectancy reached 77.37 years, 5 years longer than that of men. There has also been a significant drop in both the maternal mortality rate and the neonatal mortality rate. Women's health has increasingly become the focus of attention. Currently, over one third of all married women under the age of 65 in China have routine ob-gyn check-ups. Efforts in this field have resulted in an overall improvement in women's health.

As part of a campaign for the promotion of all legitimate rights, the protection of women's rights and interests in relation to marriage and family and against domestic violence has been high on the agenda of Chinese society. Relevant laws and regulations have been put in place at the national and local levels to that end, and an integrated system has been made operational that encompasses prevention, education, punishment, assistance, relief and services. The All-China Women's Federation is committed to the protection of women's rights and the promotion of gender equality as its fundamental responsibilities.

The Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests and related regulations on labour protection have been enacted and implemented in China in a

move to ensure women's right to work by providing them with an enabling social environment. The employment rate of women aged 18 to 64 has reached 71.1 per cent. Most women with a high school or college education have job opportunities. The national authorities have also facilitated, inter alia, microfinance arrangements for women in rural areas and small towns so as to broaden their income-generating potential.

### **Suggestions on effective protection of women's rights and promotion of social harmony**

Additional efforts should be made to promote gender equality as a basic national policy. The goal of gender equality can be effectively realized only by a wide-ranging and in-depth campaign, reaching out through all available channels to people from all walks of life, and by a sustained effort to increase awareness among all citizens of the importance of protecting women's rights and interests, so as to lay a more solid foundation for that purpose.

The laws, regulations and policies on the protection of women's rights should be further fine-tuned and enhanced. A legal system that protects women's rights and promotes women's development has come into being, with the Constitution as its basis and the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests as its centrepiece. As a next step, China should focus more on the need to fine-tune and enhance the legal system for the protection of women's rights and interests, speed up the process of formulating laws against domestic violence and step up the study and deliberations on key issues of concern to women, such as inequality between men and women in the retirement system.

Mechanisms for the protection of women's legitimate rights should be further strengthened. First, authorities and social organizations at all levels should enhance mechanisms for coordination on issues of women's representation and protection of women's rights, in a way that women's rights and concerns are appropriately taken into account. Second, a more effective mechanism for the protection of women's rights and interests should be established to ensure that the National Program of Action for the Development of Women in China 2011-2020 is duly implemented and related law-enforcement and problem-solving capacity upgraded. Moreover, a mechanism for women to claim their rights should be further developed and democratic channels for women's engagement in politics widened, so as to encourage them to actively participate in managing social and economic issues at the national level and offer them more opportunities to claim their rights or seek redress in an orderly manner by legal means. Last but not least, it is important to improve the process for dispute mediation and resolution with regard to gender-related issues, which aims at tackling emerging problems that affect women's rights before they have evolved into fully fledged confrontations, by integrating legal, policy, financial and administrative initiatives with such means as counselling, consultation or persuasion.