

The 107<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Committee  
18 March 2013

Opening Statement by Ms. Florinda Chan  
Head of the Delegation of the Macao Special Administrative Region of the  
People's Republic of China  
Secretary for Administration and Justice of the Government of the Macao  
Special Administrative Region, People's Republic of China

Mr Chairman, distinguished Members,

1. On behalf of the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, I am honoured to address to your Committee on the occasion of the first report of the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China regarding the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
  
2. I wish first of all to thank Ambassador Liu Zhenmin, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and Other International Organizations in Switzerland, for making the necessary arrangements for our attendance and for his kind introductory remarks.

3. Let me introduce the key members of our delegation. They are:

**Ms. Chu Lam Lam - Director of the Law Reform and International Law Bureau, Deputy Head of the Macao SAR delegation;**

**Mr. Raimundo do Rosário - Director of the Macao Economic and Trade Office in Geneva;**

**Mr. Iong Kong Io - Director of the Social Welfare Bureau;**

**Mr. Zhu Lin, Ms. Tchiang Van Kei and Ms Ku Mei Leng - Advisers to the Office of the Secretary for Administration and Justice;**

**Ms. Ilda Cristina Ferreira, Mr. José Luciano de Oliveira - Advisers to the Office of the Secretary for Security;**

**Ms. Teng Nga Kan - Deputy Director of the Labour Affairs Bureau;**

**Mr. Lai Kam Kun - Deputy Commissioner of the Public Security Police Force;**

**Ms. Lam Pui Cheng - Chief of Department of the Government Information Bureau.**

Mr Chairman,

4. Since the People's Republic of China resumed its sovereignty over Macao, on December 20, 1999, Macao has become a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China with a high degree of autonomy, granting its *modus vivendi* (way of life) and *modus operandi* (method of functioning) allied to the self-governing powers of executive, legislative and independent judicial powers, following the principle of "One Country, Two Systems", abiding under the Basic Law of Macao.

5. The "Basic Law", having its constitutional value, was adopted by the National People's Congress of the PRC and entered into force on December 20, 1999. In accordance with its Article 138, international agreements to which China was not yet a party, but which were applicable to Macao, continued to be applied in the Macao SAR.

6. The ability to maintain and develop relations and conclude agreements with foreign states and regions, or international organizations in the appropriate fields, using the name "*Macao, China*" illustrates the Macao SAR *sui generis* legal status.

7. The Macao SAR has an area of approximately 30 km<sup>2</sup>, with 582,000 inhabitants in the year 2012. Due to its history which goes back to centuries ago, the Region reflects its multi-ethnic diversity where different communities live together in a harmonious society and where cultural, religious, and linguistic differences are respected and promoted. In 2005, the Historic Centre of Macao was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, making it the 31<sup>st</sup> designated World Heritage site in China.

Mr Chairman,

8. I would like to take this occasion to outline some of the major initiatives and achievements that the Macao SAR Government has been undertaking in relation to the implementation of the Covenant.

9. The principle of “One Country, Two Systems” has contributed to the enlargement of the scope of human rights in the Macao SAR in accordance with the Basic Law with the adoption of relevant conventions on the field of human rights.

10. The Macao SAR Government is deeply committed with the effective implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

11. For the past 13 years since the return of Macao to the People's Republic of China, our social development has been on a gradual and steady progress with the joint effort of the Macao population. The Government policies stress on increasing significant resources to improve the welfare of the population, such as upgrading the Social Security Fund and Access to Education, including implementing a basic 15 years free education system and financial subsidies to local students, whilst improving medical care and benefits for the seniors, children, students, disable, and unprivileged groups, as well as setting up measures to alienate inflation, creation of a food safety centre and food bank, wealth sharing and public housing schemes.

12. The Macao SAR Government's policy fostering population's greater understanding on the protection of human rights has been carried out through a proactive strategy consisting of human rights training and education, as well as public awareness campaigns in multiple languages (Chinese, Portuguese and English).

13. New legislation was enacted to comply with the obligations set forth in the ICCPR, and other international instruments applicable to the Macao SAR on human rights and other rights have been reinforced, such as in the field of data protection, against drugs and human trafficking, labour relations, persons with disabilities, refugees, access to law and legal aid, protection of women and children. These measures have been adopted to provide adequate assistance to vulnerable persons, as well as to promote dialogue and cooperation with local NGOs in tackling relevant social issues.

14. In respect of the monitoring and supervisory mechanisms on human rights, our judiciary bodies observe and consider whether Macao legal order is in conformity with international conventional law applicable to Macao SAR.

15. Other institutional body within this context is the *Ombudsman* which main function is to protect the rights, freedoms, safeguards and the legitimate interests of the individuals and to ensure the legality in the exercise of public authority, justice, and efficiency in the public administration.

16. In addition, a growing number of institutions to promote, monitor and safeguard human rights has been established, the majority of which is composed of prominent individuals and representatives of the NGOs, such as the Commissions: on the Protection of Victims of Violent Crimes, Refugees, Women's Affairs, Disciplinary Control of the Security Forces, the combating against AIDS, Mental Health, Senior's Citizens Affairs, the Fight Against Drugs, the Deterrent Measures against Human Trafficking and on the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities.

17. The contribution of the NGOs whose aim is to strive for a harmonious livelihood should also be emphasized through their proactive participation. They set up hotlines, study the social problems and measures to counter them, promote public-awareness of the existing legal system, and act as an intermediary between the Government and the population.

18. The Macao SAR Government maintains regular dialogue with the NGOs, and fully encourages the participation of residents in public affairs and political life, through public consultations before major policies decision-making and law drafting.

19. An important aspect in this regard, is the Macao SAR political system development in 2012 with the amendment to the Methodology for the Constitution of the Legislative Assembly, the Methodology for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Basic Law, and their corresponding local electoral laws. Such process was consistent with the Basic Law and the reality of Macao where a gradual and smooth democratisation process for its political system is being undertaken. It should be highlighted that this was a process open to the community which received the full participation of Macao residents and local associations through public consultations.

Mr Chairman,

20. Facing both challenges and opportunities ahead, the Macao SAR Government is aware of its responsibility to promote the knowledge of its people on the human rights international instruments applicable to Macao and respective local law in compliance with the Basic Law and the ICCPR.

21. We shall take the necessary steps to promote civic education, human rights dissemination, legal training and education to the population and to government officials on a continuous basis.



22. It is also worth mentioning that the Government of the Macao SAR strives for a balance between promoting social and economic development, and the challenges associated with such progress. The Government continues to uphold the aim of a “people-oriented” principle in the Administration, strengthening good governance, integrity and participation in public affairs.

Mr Chairman, distinguished Members,

23. We are very grateful for this valuable occasion to reiterate our total commitment for the implementation of the Covenant, enshrined in our constitutional Basic Law. We appreciate this opportunity to exchange views with the Human Rights Committee, and look forward to a constructive and fruitful dialogue. We shall do our best endeavour to respond to your queries.

Mr. Chairman

24. With your permission, I would now like to invite Ms. Chu Lam Lam, Deputy Head of the Macao Delegation, to highlight the MSAR response to some of the key questions in the list of issues identified by the Committee in September 2012.

Thank you.

