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**Toward the Realization of the Chinese Dream  
Through the United Effort of All the Ethnic Groups**

Introductory Statement by H.E. Ambassador Yu Jianhua  
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At the 96th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

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Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Mr. Rapporteur, Ms. Co-rapporteurs, members of the Committee,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I wish to warmly greet you, the members of the Committee, and pay our sincere tribute to you. The Committee has done a huge amount of work to realize the purposes and principles of the Convention. The Chinese government appreciates your contribution and commits as always to supporting the work of the Committee.

It gives me and my colleagues in the Chinese delegation great pleasure to make a presentation today on the combined 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> periodic reports of China on its implementation of the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of*

*Racial Discrimination.* The Chinese delegation is composed of 48 officials and experts from 32 departments of the Central Government and the governments of Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions (SAR). We are also joined by eight colleagues who are ethnic Tibetan, Uygur, Yao, Korean, Hui and Bai. My delegation will have the dialogue with the members in an open, cooperative and responsible manner with a view to assisting the Committee in making a comprehensive and objective evaluation of China's implementation of the Convention. We welcome constructive comments and recommendations from the members.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee,

The Committee is reviewing China's implementation of the Convention since 2009, a period that has witnessed great progress on all fronts and the advent of a new development era in China. Against this background, I wish to offer you an update on China's work on ethnic affairs in recent years and on protection of the rights of ethnic groups, an update which is in addition to the information already provided in the periodic reports. Next Monday, my colleagues will offer you more information including some specific data when they answer your questions.

**I. A strong sense of community for the Chinese nation has become the guidance for China's ethnic work in the new era.**

China is a unitary multinational State. Han and 55 other ethnic groups make up one Chinese nation. Over the years, the notion of a community of the Chinese nation where "the Han Chinese cannot live without ethnic minorities which cannot live without the Han Chinese and no one ethnic minority group can live without other ethnic minority groups" has gained increasing support and endorsement. At the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping called in explicit terms for 'the forging of a strong sense of community of Chinese nation', which has been the guidance for China's ethnic work in the new era. In March 2018, the amendments to the *Constitution* expanded the wording '... upholds and develops a relationship of equality, solidarity and mutual assistance among all of China's ethnic groups' to read 'upholds and develops a relationship of equality, solidarity, mutual assistance and harmony among all of China's ethnic groups'. The re-wording reflects more fully and accurately the defining feature of

our contemporary ethnic policy. What hold the key to implementing this policy are ethnic equality and solidarity, inter-ethnic mutual assistance and harmony so that all ethnic groups work together as one big family for common prosperity and development and for realization of the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation.

## **II. The legal system for ethnic affairs is continuously improving.**

Human rights cannot be protected without legal safeguards. As stated in the combined periodic reports, China has steadfastly and continually developed its system of regional ethnic autonomy. An ethnic legal framework has taken shape underpinned by the *Constitution's* provisions on ethnic work and supplemented by the *Law on Regional National Autonomy*. Since 2012, the Chinese government has been vigorously pursuing law-based governance across the board. New advances have been made to see that legal thinking and rule of law prevail in ensuring development of ethnic groups and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of people of all ethnic groups. To this end, over 20 laws and administrative regulations, including the *Tourism Law*, the *Public Cultural Service Guarantee Law*, the *Law on Traditional Chinese Medicine*, the *Regulation on Religious Affairs and Measures for the Administration of the Ethnicity Registration of Chinese Citizens*, provide for prohibition of ethnic discrimination or hatred, promotion of ethnic equality, enhancement of inter-ethnic unity and guarantee for all rights including freedom of religion or belief. Autonomous ethnic regions have enacted or amended over 20 regulations on the exercise of autonomy and over 200 separate regulations covering, inter alia, political, economic, social, cultural and educational fields as well as ecological preservation. Thanks to these efforts, the legal framework on ethnic affairs is further improved.

Officials from ethnic minorities play an important role in running state affairs. For example, five months ago, China's legislative body, the National People's Congress, held its 13<sup>th</sup> session. 438 deputies from ethnic minorities participated in the session, or 14.7% of the total number of deputies, higher than the proportion of ethnic minorities in the overall population. Today we are joined by one of the 438 deputies from ethnic minorities, who is Mr. Kaiser, from the Uygur ethnic group.

## **III. Vigorous efforts have been made to promote comprehensive development in ethnic areas.**

During the last consideration, the Committee referred to the issue of underdevelopment in ethnic areas. Since then, the Chinese government has dedicated great efforts to bridging the gap between ethnic areas and other developed areas in the country. To this end, a raft of policies and plans were rolled out, including the *13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan for Economic and Social Development 2016-2020*, which includes sections on the “promotion of healthy development of ethnic areas”, and “the development and opening up of border regions”, the *13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan on the Promotion of Development in Ethnic Areas and Small-Population Ethnic Groups*, and the *13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan on Revitalizing Border Areas and Enriching Residents’ Lives*. These plans cover economic, social, livelihood, health, educational, cultural and environmental progresses, resulting in rising levels of human rights enjoyed by ethnic minorities.

In ethnic areas, the economy has made significant progress, and people’s living standards has continued to rise. In 2017, eight multi-ethnic provinces and regions mainly populated by ethnic minorities (i.e. five autonomous regions including Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Tibet, Ningxia and Xinjiang; three multi-ethnic provinces including Guizhou, Yunnan and Qinghai) reached the total output value of 8,873 billion yuan (or USD 1,344.4 billion), 7.6% more than 2016, and 0.7% higher than the national average. The per capita disposable income of urban and rural residents reached 31,553 yuan (or USD 4,781) and 10,442 yuan (or USD 1,582), an increase of 8.4% and 9.2% respectively. The population in poverty went down from 31.21 million in 2012 to 10.32 million, and poverty rate dropped from 34.1% to 6.8%.

In a short period of five years, in these eight provinces and autonomous regions with poor economic and geographic conditions, over 20 million people were lifted out of poverty, isn’t that impressive? If you allow, I wish to share with you a story about targeted poverty alleviation, a newly-adopted basic policy in China, which was initially rolled out to support ethnic minorities. In the remote mountainous areas of Hunan province, there is a village of Miao ethnic group called *Shibadong*. It was a poor village with little arable land, technology or funding. In November 2013, General Secretary Xi Jinping, during a field visit to the village, proposed for the first time the policy of targeted poverty alleviation. To be specific, it means to proceed from local conditions, and give case-specific guidance in fighting poverty. Following this policy, the local government worked to fight poverty in light of the

natural conditions and the specific circumstances of the individual to be assisted. As a result, a number of pillar industries, including fruit plantation, handicraft and cultural tourism, have taken shape, significantly boosting people's income. In February 2017, Shibadong village was lifted out of poverty, one of the first in Hunan province. Shibadong's success story has been made into a well-received movie (titled *Hold Your Hands* in English). We have brought you this movie on DVD with English subtitle and hope you will like it.

Supported by economic growth, health, education, cultural and ecological preservation programs have also made headway. In addition to China's periodic reports, I'd like to talk about how we preserve the culture of ethnic minorities and their ecosystem and environment. The government is committed to protecting and promoting the cultures of ethnic minorities, which is an integral part of Chinese culture. Let me share with you how we preserve their villages, a tangible ethnic heritage. For example, in Hubei province, there is a *Pengjia* village. The village consists of some 250 Tujia ethnic people in 48 households. Traditional architecture built in late Qing Dynasty (over 100 years ago), including Diaojiaolou, a type of housing built on stilts and copper columns, is kept intact there. A few years ago, the same village was in a dilapidated state, worn down by ages of disrepair and lack of preservation. Under the State Ethnic Affairs Commission program for protecting and developing ethnic minority villages with unique characteristics, the village underwent protective repair with a view to "restoring the old as it was". As a result, *Pengjia* village was reborn and is attracting numerous tourists with its new look.

As ecological barriers and zones of headwaters, ethnic areas are key to building a beautiful China. Instead of a "treatment after pollution" approach, we pursue green development in ethnic areas and uphold the idea that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets". A case in point would be a white paper published by the State Council Information Office last month, titled *Ecological Progress on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau*. Located in south-western China, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is hailed as "the roof of the world", "the Third Pole" and "the water tower of Asia". It is an important ecological safety barrier for China and the rest of Asia. The white paper elaborates on a portfolio of measures taken by the Chinese government, including enhancing legislation, enforcement and monitoring, increasing financial investment, expanding R&D and application, establishing a system of natural reserves and eco-compensation and developing green economy,

as well as achievements in preserving and improving the ecological system on the Plateau.

I wish to emphasize that China has adopted the aforementioned policies and measures bearing in mind its obligations under the Convention and its national conditions as well as useful recommendations from the concluding observations of the Committee in the last consideration.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members,

Due to their geographic restraints and weak economic bases, some ethnic areas are still lagging behind developed regions in terms of economic and social progress. China is at a crucial stage of poverty alleviation. It needs to further address livelihood issues like health and education and better protect the ecosystem. It needs to further improve the legal framework for ethnic autonomy. It needs to further implement the policies and laws aiming at protecting and promoting equality and solidarity among ethnic groups. In pursuing national development, the Chinese government will continue to act in accordance with the Convention by adopting more effective measures to speed up all-round development of ethnic areas and areas inhabited by ethnic minorities and continue to raise the level at which ethnic minorities enjoy all human rights. As such, the implementation of the Convention is a major contributing factor to the realization of the Chinese Dream through the united effort of all the ethnic groups in China. In this regard, we stand ready to enhance cooperation with the Committee.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members,

The Convention applies equally to the Hong Kong SAR and the Macao SAR. In accordance with the principle of “One Country, Two Systems”, the governments of the two SARs are responsible for preparing their respective information on the implementation. Now I’d like to invite Mr. Andy Chan Shui-fu from the Hong Kong SAR and Mr. Liu Dexue from the Macao SAR to present their introduction.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members.