

Human Rights in Xizang in the New Era

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Introduction

It is a common human aspiration for every individual to fully enjoy their human rights. This is also the goal of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups, including those in the Xizang Autonomous Region.

The Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government have always attached great importance to their work related to Xizang, and have constantly refined and expanded their guidelines for governing the region. They have implemented effective measures to develop the economy, improve living standards and people's wellbeing, promote ethnic unity and progress, and protect the basic rights of all the people in the region.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPC Central Committee, with Xi Jinping at its core, has made respecting and protecting human rights an important part of its guidelines for the governance of Xizang in the new era. This commitment is reflected in all aspects and stages of work related to the autonomous region. The CPC has maintained a people-centered approach to human rights and a commitment to ensuring human rights through development, and has vigorously promoted whole-process people's democracy. It has strengthened legal protection of human rights, and coordinated efforts to increase people's civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights, so as to achieve well-rounded development and common prosperity for all people from all ethnic groups. As a result, human rights cause in the region has made all-round and historic progress.

Today Xizang enjoys political stability, ethnic unity, economic development, social harmony, and amity among different religions. Its environment is sound, and its people are content in their work and daily lives. This progress represents a remarkable achievement in protecting human rights on the snowy plateau.

I. Remarkable Progress in Human Rights in Xizang

Advances in human rights in Xizang are part of the development of contemporary China and a natural result of the progression of socialism with Chinese

characteristics. Since the peaceful liberation of Xizang in 1951, the CPC has united the people of all ethnic groups in the region and led them in an unremitting fight to institutionalize, respect, protect and expand human rights. Their rights to subsistence and development and all other basic rights have been guaranteed and are being progressively improved.

– Peaceful liberation laid the foundations for human rights in Xizang.

Before its peaceful liberation in 1951, Xizang was one of the worst regions in the world for human rights violations. Serfs and slaves were afforded no human rights: no protection of life, no personal freedom, no property, and no freedom of thought. Theocratic feudal serfdom, imperialist invasion, and schemes and activities designed to enslave people and foment “Tibet independence” made the people’s right to subsistence insecure and their right to development impossible.

Feudal serfdom under theocracy trampled on human dignity and stifled social vitality. Serfs and slaves, who made up more than 95 percent of the total population, possessed nothing. They were forced to be dependent on serf owners, and would be required to unconditionally obey their orders and satisfy their demands. Serf owners could trade, transfer, bestow and exchange serfs and slaves as they pleased, and would impose excruciating acts on them, including gouging out eyes, cutting out tongues, and cutting off hands or feet. Serfs and slaves were controlled by serf owners in all aspects of their lives, from marriage to movement. They were burdened with heavy taxes and usurious loans, and forced into unpaid labor, and in spite of their year-round toil they would not be provided with sufficient food or clothing.

After the Opium Wars in the mid-19th century, the United Kingdom invaded Xizang on two occasions, posing a significant threat to China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. This violated and damaged the rights of the local people, including their right to subsistence and their social and economic rights. Later, imperialist forces interfered in China’s internal affairs by concocting the idea of “Tibet independence” and propped up local separatist forces who defied the central government. The history of the region demonstrates clearly that “Tibet independence” is a product of imperialist aggression against China.

On May 23, 1951, in Beijing, the plenipotentiaries of the Central People’s Government and the local government of Xizang signed the Agreement of the Central People’s Government and the Local Government of Xizang on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Xizang, also referred to as the 17-Article Agreement. This agreement marked the peaceful liberation of the region, freeing Xizang from imperialist aggression and political and economic control. It effectively safeguarded the national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of China, and created the necessary conditions for Xizang to progress and develop along with the rest of the country, laying firm foundations for the region’s human rights cause in the process.

– Democratic reform enabled the people of all ethnic groups in Xizang to become masters of their own destinies.

After the peaceful liberation, the central government provided Xizang with a huge input of fiscal, material and human resources that helped to propel the region's economic, social and cultural development. However, local upper-class reactionary forces opposed any reform in the region, in an attempt to preserve serfdom and sustain their vested interests and privileges. These forces plotted a series of activities to split Xizang from China, in blatant violation of the 17-Article Agreement, and their actions ultimately led to a full-scale insurrection on March 10, 1959. To safeguard China's national unity and the fundamental interests of the people of Xizang, the Central People's Government, together with the local people, took decisive measures to quell the insurrection and implemented democratic reform in the region, effectively eradicating feudal serfdom.

Reform in Xizang resulted in the annulment of theocracy and the separation of religion and government – a fundamental change in Xizang's social system. The right of feudal serf owners to own the means of production was abolished, and private ownership by farmers and herdsmen was established. Personal bondage of serfs and slaves to officials, nobles and upper-ranking monks was abolished, and they were instead awarded personal freedom and equal legal status. A general election was held across Xizang, in which agencies of state power and governments at various levels in the region were elected. For the first time, former serfs and slaves were no longer regarded as “talking tools”, but instead as the masters of their own destiny and of the new Xizang.

In September 1965, the Xizang Autonomous Region was founded, signifying a historic shift from theocratic feudal serfdom to socialism characterized by people's democracy. The region began to exercise comprehensive regional ethnic autonomy, and a large number of liberated serfs and slaves earned leading posts in agencies of state power at various levels of the region. This democratic reform was an epoch-making event shaping Xizang's social development and human rights cause and a significant advance in human civilization and global human rights.

– Reform and opening up has provided a powerful driving force for human rights development in Xizang.

Reform and opening up has helped not only unleash and develop productive forces across Xizang, but also provide a powerful driving force for human rights in the region. As a result, Xizang has achieved synchronous development with the rest of the country, while at the same time making rapid progress in all aspects of its human rights.

The CPC Central Committee held five national meetings on Xizang in the period between the launch of reform and opening up in 1978 and the 18th CPC National

Congress in 2012. These meetings played a crucial role in defining the guiding principles, major tasks and development plans for Xizang during that period, ultimately leading to the formation of the strategic goals that allowed the region to develop rapidly in stages – picking up speed, advancing in leaps and bounds, and following a sustainable path, and to achieve lasting peace after securing basic stability.

During these meetings, a series of special favorable policies and measures for speeding up the development of Xizang were formulated. This led to the birth of a mechanism for all-round aid for Xizang in which the central government would directly invest in construction projects in the region and provide financial subsidies, while other parts of the country would provide paired-up aid. This mechanism provided a powerful impetus for economic development and social progress in Xizang that improved the lives of local people and ensured the realization of their rights to regional ethnic autonomy.

– The new era has opened a new chapter of all-round human rights development in Xizang.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC Central Committee, with Xi Jinping at its core, has attached great importance to the wellbeing of the people of all ethnic groups in Xizang. They have formulated major policies for Xizang's development and stability in line with the overall goals of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, achieving the Two Centenary Goals, and realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. General Secretary Xi Jinping has set the direction and made overall plans for the work in Xizang. At the sixth and seventh national meetings on Xizang, the CPC Central Committee defined the guiding principles, objectives and tasks under the new circumstances, and outlined the CPC guidelines for governing Xizang in the new era. It was decided at these meetings that the central government would support a large number of key construction projects in Xizang, and a series of special preferential policies were enacted to benefit all ethnic groups in the region. These decisions opened a new chapter of all-round human rights development in Xizang.

Under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at its core, officials and people of all ethnic groups in Xizang have worked hard as one and achieved all-round progress and historic success in advancing human rights across the region. In the new era, significant progress has been made in stabilizing the social environment and achieving rapid economic growth, which has led to a better life for the local people, amity among all ethnic groups and religions, cultural prosperity, sound systems for safeguarding the eco-environmental security, and comprehensive progress in law-based governance. Together with the rest of the country, the people of Xizang have witnessed the tremendous transformation of the Chinese nation, from

standing up and becoming better off to growing in strength, and now embarking on a new journey of building a modern socialist country in all respects.

In promoting human rights in Xizang, the CPC and the Chinese government have integrated the Marxist perspective on human rights with China's actual conditions and the best of traditional culture. In reviewing successful experience in leading all ethnic groups of Xizang in respecting and protecting human rights, the CPC and the Chinese government have accumulated the following basic experience:

Upholding the leadership of the CPC. The fundamental purpose of the CPC is to serve the people wholeheartedly. The Party has always represented the fundamental interests of all Chinese people; it stands with them in the best and the hardest of times and shares a common destiny with them. Respecting and protecting human rights is an ongoing quest of China's Communists, and the strong leadership of the CPC is the fundamental source of the all-round progress and historic achievements in human rights in Xizang. Only by upholding this leadership can the people of Xizang become and remain the masters of their own affairs, can their fundamental interests be safeguarded and advanced, and can there be long-term stability and high-quality development in the region.

Respecting and ensuring the principal status of the people. "For the people" is the distinguishing feature of the Chinese path of human rights protection. Human rights are not exclusive privileges reserved for a single group of people, but rather universal rights for all. By taking a people-centered approach to human rights, the CPC and the Chinese government have boosted local people's enthusiasm, initiative and creativity, and have enabled them to become the dominant participants in, contributors to, and beneficiaries of human rights progress in the region.

Basing our work on Xizang's realities. Based on the real conditions in the region, the CPC and the Chinese government have adopted a development model with Chinese characteristics that respects Xizang's regional features. This approach allows them to fulfill four main tasks in the region – ensuring stability, facilitating development, protecting the eco-environment, and strengthening the borders – while focusing on improving people's lives and strengthening unity in social and economic development. The Party and the Chinese government uphold that the region's development serves to benefit ethnic unity and progress, safeguard national unity and oppose separatism, improve people's lives, and build social consensus. This will give all the people in Xizang a greater sense of gain, fulfillment and security.

Focusing on basic human rights, primarily the rights to subsistence and development. Subsistence is the foundation of all human rights, and living a life of contentment is the ultimate human right. The CPC and the Chinese government adhere to a people-centered development philosophy by which they prioritize protecting the rights of the people of Xizang to subsistence and realizing their rights to development.

Committed to the principle that development is for the people and by the people and the people share the benefits, they focus on addressing the most pressing and immediate issues that concern the local people the most, and on resolving the problem of imbalanced and insufficient development, so as to achieve higher-quality development that is more efficient, equitable, sustainable and secure.

Protecting human rights through maintaining security. Xizang plays an important role in protecting national and eco-environmental security, and is a key region in the country's efforts to safeguard national unity and combat separatist forces. Focusing on safeguarding national unity and strengthening solidarity among all ethnic groups, the CPC and the Chinese government consider that countering separatist activities and preserving national security are essential to the people's wellbeing. This approach has ensured sustained and steady social development for Xizang and stable and secure border areas. A safe and stable environment creates favorable conditions and serves as a solid foundation for the development of human rights in the region.

Protecting human rights in accordance with the law. The rule of law is the most effective guarantee for human rights. By upholding law-based governance, the autonomous region ensures that the authority of the Constitution and the law is maintained. By these means, it has upheld and improved the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and ensured that the people of all ethnic groups in the region exercise the right as masters of the region and enjoy the rights to participate in the administration of state affairs equally and to administer their own regional and ethnic affairs. Predicated on the principle that everyone is equal before the law, the Xizang government has strengthened human rights protection throughout the process of legislation, law enforcement, judicature, and the observance of the law, as part of its effort to provide legal protection for human rights and defend social fairness and justice in the region.

II. Extensive, Genuine and Effective Whole-Process People's Democracy

The CPC and the Chinese government have translated the values and concepts of democracy into sound and effective institutional arrangements and concrete actions by developing whole-process people's democracy and ensuring the people's rights to engage in democratic elections, consultation, decision-making, management and

oversight. As a result, the people's status as masters of the country has grown richer in content and broader in scope, and is having a greater impact. The people of Xizang enjoy full, extensive, genuine, concrete and effective democratic rights in accordance with the law.

– Full implementation of regional ethnic autonomy

The system of regional ethnic autonomy ensures that the people of all ethnic groups in Xizang fully enjoy the right to administer their regional and ethnic affairs. In accordance with the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy of the People's Republic of China, there shall be citizens from the Tibetan ethnic group among those who assume the offices of chairperson or vice chairperson of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of the Xizang Autonomous Region, and the office of governor of the autonomous region shall be assumed by citizens from the Tibetan ethnic group.

Currently, the autonomous region has 26 provincial/ministerial level officials and 512 prefectural/director-general level officials from ethnic minorities. A considerable number of Party and government heads at prefecture and county levels come from ethnic minority groups, and 57.17 percent of the officials in the Party and government leading groups at township level are from ethnic minorities. Eight ethnic townships have been set up in Shannan, Nyingchi, and Qamdo, of which five are for the Monba ethnic group and three for the Lhoba ethnic group, both with small populations. Through these arrangements, the political rights of all ethnic groups in Xizang to equal participation in the management of local affairs are ensured in accordance with the law.

– Strict protection of citizens' rights to vote and to stand for election

In Xizang, as elsewhere in China, citizens aged 18 or above enjoy the right to vote and the right to stand for election in accordance with the law. As prescribed by the Constitution and relevant state laws, the people of all ethnic groups in Xizang directly elect deputies to the people's congresses of county-level and township-level administrative units. Deputies to the higher levels – the people's congresses of cities, the People's Congress of the Xizang Autonomous Region, and the National People's Congress (NPC) – are then elected by deputies at the next lower level. This system ensures that the people can participate in the management of state and local affairs and that democratic elections offer extensive and equal participation in a genuine and progressive nature.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, two elections at the county and township levels have been held in Xizang to elect people's congresses, in which more than 90 percent of eligible voters – 100 percent in some places – in the region participated in these direct elections. At present, a total of 42,153 deputies to people's congresses at four levels in the autonomous region have been elected, 89.2 percent of whom are from the Tibetan or other ethnic minority groups. Compared with the

elections in 2016, in 2021 the number of deputies to people's congresses at the county and township levels increased by nearly 6,500. There are 428 deputies to the 12th People's Congress of the Xizang Autonomous Region, 280 of whom are of Tibetan or other minority ethnicity, accounting for 65.42 percent of the total. Of the 25 deputies of the Xizang delegation to the 14th NPC, 17 or 68 percent are from the Tibetan or other ethnic minority groups, including those with small populations such as the Monba people and the Lhoba people.

The region has implemented a system of community-level self-governance, which includes strict requirements for the organization of villagers' and residents' congresses and election committees, voter registration, recommendation and nomination, decisions on candidates, voting, and other procedures. In 2021, villagers' or neighborhood committee elections and CPC village branch elections were carried out in 5,535 villages and communities.

– Full protection of people's rights to be informed and to participate

Access to information continues to improve across Xizang. Governments at various levels in the region have upgraded their systems for government information disclosure and continue to promote transparency in key fields. Documents of public concern are published via government websites, social media platforms, government gazettes, and other channels. All legally required information for voluntary disclosure is accessible to the public. In 2019, the People's Government of the Xizang Autonomous Region issued the Measures of the Xizang Autonomous Region on Transparency in Village Affairs to strengthen the system for disclosing village affairs. Villagers committees are required to fully disclose village information via transparency bulletin boards and at villagers' representative meetings, as well as via online platforms, broadcasting services, text messages, WeChat, transparency cards, and other channels.

Forms of democratic participation, and the channels through which they are accessed, have become increasingly diverse. The Standing Committee of the People's Congress of the Xizang Autonomous Region has established 10 local outreach centers for legislative matters across the region, which serve as an important means of communicating with the general public and practicing whole-process democracy. The working methods for deputies to people's congresses to reach out to the public have also been improved. Deputies at various levels are encouraged to maintain close contact with voters and to listen to their voices on issues that matter to them, such as rural revitalization, income increase for farmers and herdsmen, development of the private economy, and employment of college graduates. By the end of 2024, Xizang had instituted 790 outreach offices for deputies to people's congresses, and all administrative villages and grassroots urban communities had been equipped with an outreach station or center. These facilities provide effective platforms for the people to

interact regularly with deputies and voice their opinions, and create a standardized process for deputies to perform their duties during intersessional periods. Systems for villagers' representative meetings, urban community residents' congresses, and employees' congresses have been improved, and mechanisms for grassroots elections, deliberations, information disclosure, work reporting, accountability and other affairs have been improved, to make primary-level democracy more extensive and effective.

Consultative democracy is now having its full effect across the region. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) organizations at all levels in Xizang have upheld the integration of Party leadership, the united front, and consultative democracy, introduced new methods, expanded the coverage and established new platforms of consultation to encourage more extensive participation in and administration of state affairs by people from all ethnic groups and all walks of life. This has ensured that a framework of consultation and deliberation is now in place in the autonomous region, which is characterized by the CPPCC plenary sessions that play the leading role, subject-specific deliberative meetings of the Standing Committee and special consultative forums as the focus, and regular proposal handling consultations, sector-specific consultations, and consultative meetings with relevant departments. There are 29 members of the CPPCC National Committee who are residents of Xizang, 93.1 percent of whom are from ethnic minority groups. There are 429 members on the 12th CPPCC Committee of the Xizang Autonomous Region, 59.91 percent of whom are not CPC members. CPPCC organizations have been established in all 74 county-level administrative units in the region, with more than 8,000 CPPCC members, of whom 85 percent are from ethnic minority groups. Between 2013 and 2024, the CPPCC Committee of the Xizang Autonomous Region received a total of 5,095 proposals, 4,920 were accepted and filed and the rest were given a formal response or reply. Between 2018 and 2024, a total of 159 reports, resolutions and calls for action were created.

– Effective protection of people's rights to expression and oversight

Channels for expression and oversight have evolved in Xizang. While continuing to support traditional media such as radio, television, newspapers and magazines, the region has also developed various internet platforms through which people express their opinions. Standards and procedures are in place for evaluation of and comment on government services, and reporting of misconduct. To respond to public concerns in a timely manner, the 12345 government service hotline has been launched. The Regulations on Handling Public Complaints have been issued and implemented in the region. Officials at various levels meet with the people they serve and handle their complaints at the grassroots level, closing the "last mile" gap in government service delivery. Online channels for handling public complaints have been expanded. This includes the formation of new working mechanisms for handling and processing

public complaints online. In March 2022, the Xizang Autonomous Region launched mobile APPs and official WeChat accounts such as Zang Yi Fang to simplify the process of lodging public complaints for mobile users.

Democratic oversight has also been made more comprehensive throughout the region. Xizang has given full play to the oversight by people's congresses, oversight of law enforcement, democratic oversight from the CPPCC, oversight through public complaints, and oversight through public opinion. From 2018 to 2024, the People's Congress of the Xizang Autonomous Region and its Standing Committee have heard and reviewed 199 work reports, conducted 59 inspections on the implementation of laws and regulations, and organized 146 surveys, offering 1,296 opinions and pieces of advice based on their findings. Additionally, they have organized deputies to the NPC from Xizang and deputies to the People's Congress of the Xizang Autonomous Region to participate in law enforcement, research projects, and group inspections, with a total attendance of 975. These efforts have ensured the protection and realization of the legitimate rights and interests of people of all ethnic groups. Between 2018 and 2024, the leaders of the CPPCC Xizang Autonomous Regional Committee led teams to conduct 49 special reviews and inspections. During this process, they identified 353 problems and successfully coordinated solutions. Members of the CPPCC Xizang Autonomous Regional Committee have conducted in-depth surveys on topics of public concern and difficulties in social governance, and have carried out democratic oversight by offering advice, criticism and suggestions. The Integrated Media Center of Lhasa City has opened a Q&A column on local government affairs to allow the public to raise questions and oversee pressing concerns and matters that impact their wellbeing.

III. Better Protection of Economic and Social Rights

Xizang is committed to promoting human rights through development. By fully and faithfully following the new development philosophy in all fields, the region has improved protection of economic and social rights. The rights of people in Xizang to an adequate standard of living, education, work, health, and social security are better guaranteed.

– The right to an adequate standard of living is better protected in Xizang.

Absolute poverty has been eradicated in Xizang for the first time in its history. The region was once a profoundly impoverished area that led the country in the incidence and penetration rates of poverty, and the cost and difficulty of eliminating poverty was therefore the biggest. After the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, Xizang has followed guidelines for targeted poverty alleviation and eradication, and carried out five measures through which people would be lifted out of poverty: boosting new industries, relocating the poverty-stricken population from uninhabitable areas, recompensing the poor for their loss due to eco-environmental conservation, improving education, and securing social assistance to meet basic needs. By the end of 2019, all 628,000 registered impoverished people in the region had risen from poverty. Following this success, the CPC and the Chinese government continued with the rural revitalization strategy to consolidate and expand the achieved outcomes. In 2024, the per capita net income of those lifted out of poverty in Xizang increased by over 12.5 percent.

The right to adequate housing is also safeguarded in Xizang. From 2006 to 2024, the central and local authorities provided over RMB37.26 billion in subsidies to increase the availability of affordable housing. In urban areas, 161,900 public and low-cost rental units, 95,800 transitional housing units for relocated residents, and 1,400 government-subsidized rental housing units were constructed, and 242,600 housing units in rundown urban areas were rebuilt or renovated. About 10,000 people were provided with the annual rental subsidies for urban families eligible for housing support. In rural areas, projects such as relocation for ecological conservation, relocation from uninhabitable areas for poverty eradication, and renovation of dilapidated rural houses were carried out. Before 2016, a project for improving housing conditions for more than 460,000 farming and herding households had been completed. Since then, to ensure safe housing for farmers and herders, 110,800 dilapidated homes in rural areas have been renovated to be more earthquake-proof, and checks and rectifications against hidden hazards have been carried out across 486,600 households. In 2024, the per capita floor space for rural residents stood at 41.32 sq m, 11.74 sq m larger than in 2012. The people of all ethnic groups in Xizang now enjoy adequate and safe housing.

Improved transport infrastructure and services facilitate travel across the region. Between 2012 and 2024, Xizang made a fixed-asset investment of RMB401.93 billion in major highway transportation projects. By 2024, the region had 1,359 km of in-service railways, almost double the length in 2012 (701 km), and it had 183 flight routes connecting the region with 78 domestic and international cities. The total road length grew from 65,200 km in 2012 to 124,900 km by the end of 2024. Roads in rural and mountainous areas have seen overall improvement. By the end of 2024, all towns and townships had access to roads, with 97.99 percent connected by paved roads; all administrative villages had access to roads, with 86.05 percent connected by

paved roads. The rural road length increased from 53,200 km in 2012 to 94,800 km in 2024, with the length of high-grade highways rising from 38 km to 1,196 km in the same period. All counties and equivalent administrative units are linked to bus networks, as are 623 towns and townships and 3,869 administrative villages. Bus passes issued in any of Xizang's seven prefectures and prefectural-level cities are also valid in 329 other cities across the country, and people aged 60 and above all enjoy free bus rides.

Problems of access to electricity have also been largely resolved in Xizang. Since 2011, the region has focused its efforts on building power infrastructure in areas without access to electricity. Priority has been given to waterpower, solar, wind and other clean energy, which make up over 95 percent of all new power installations. In December 2020, the Ngari-Central Xizang Interconnection Project was put into operation. Lying at an average altitude of over 4,500 m, this project has unified the Xizang grid and ensured full electricity coverage for all the 74 county-level administrative units as well as major towns and townships in the region. In 2012, 1.75 million people in Xizang had access to electricity. By 2024, this figure stood at around 3.5 million, with an electricity supply reliability of 99.6 percent. The region's electricity consumption per capita in 2024 was 4,404.8 kWh, marking a 162.89 percent increase compared with 2012.

The public-interest telecommunications service network in Xizang is continuing to improve. Efforts have been made to turn Xizang into a digital and intelligent region. By 2024, all administrative villages had access to fiber optics and 4G connections; the number of ports of 10G PON and beyond had reached 81,000; a total of 2.87 million households had access to 1000M fiber optic networks; and fixed broadband internet services were accessed by over 1.59 million households. In addition, there were over 3.31 million mobile internet users in Xizang, served by 17,881 5G base stations that provide 5G access to every town and township and 70 percent of administrative villages. A total of 60.5 percent of the mobile phone users in the region, or 2.14 million, were 5G users. The price of cellular data had fallen by 98.6 percent from RMB128.1 per GB at the end of 2015 to RMB1.8 per GB at the end of 2024. Both urban and rural residents have access to fast and reliable internet services, which promotes equal sharing of information.

– The right to education is better protected.

Significant advances have been made in protecting the right to education in Xizang. To meet its people's expectations for high-quality education, the region has significantly increased subsidies covering boarding, lodging, and basic study expenses for children from farming and pastoral areas, as well as those from families in urban areas with financial difficulties. Since 2012, these subsidies have been raised 11 times, with the figure currently standing at RMB5,620 per student per year, including

RMB1,000 from the nutrition improvement program. Between 2014 and 2024, the region invested around RMB302.3 billion as government budgetary spending on education. By 2024, there were 3,618 schools at various levels and of different types, 96,600 faculty and staff members, and 970,000 students on campus, accounting for more than 25 percent of the total population of Xizang. In 2024, the region invested RMB254 million into the building, renovation, and expansion of 25 kindergartens, establishing a public service network of preschool education at the prefecture, county, town, and village levels. There are currently 2,474 kindergartens in the region. Specialized teacher training programs continue to be introduced across Xizang to raise the overall quality of teachers, including a special program to train outstanding teachers for underdeveloped central and western regions, a national program to train teachers for kindergartens and elementary and secondary schools, a capability improvement program for vocational school teachers, a special program to train teachers for high-altitude, tough and outlying areas, and a program to support and train rural teachers.

Historic strides have been made in ensuring universal access to education. In 2012, Xizang led the entire country in providing 15 years of publicly-funded education from kindergarten to senior high school. By 2024, the gross enrollment rate of preschool education reached 91.33 percent, the completion rate of nine-year compulsory education was 97.86 percent, the gross enrollment rate in senior high schools reached 91.56 percent, and the gross enrollment rate of higher education was 57.81 percent. The major educational indicators have reached or exceeded the national average. According to the Seventh National Census conducted in 2020, the number of college or university graduates per 100,000 inhabitants in Xizang rose from 5,507 in 2010 to 11,019 in 2020.

Boarding schools play a vital role in providing education to children from remote farming and pastoral areas, where accessing schools can be challenging due to high altitude, harsh natural environments, extremely low population density and long distances. To address this problem, Xizang has followed the same practice as the rest of the country in accordance with the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China, that is, providing accommodation service and covering all the boarding, lodging, and basic study expenses for the pupils in some schools. Students and parents can choose if they wish to board at schools, and students can go home during weekends and holidays. Parents take part in the management and planning of the students' boarding life. These measures aim to protect the equal rights of students from all ethnic groups to high-quality education.

– **The right to employment is effectively safeguarded.**

Employment services have been improved. Xizang has adopted a unified urban-rural public employment service system covering job recommendation, employment

guidance, and job seeker registration. Extensive vocational training is offered across the region, and is open to anyone over the age of 16 in need of a job and training service. When creating training and employment plans, the aspirations and needs of the people are fully respected, and they are free to choose whichever training program, method and institution suits them best. In 2024, 51,000 new jobs were created in urban areas. The surveyed urban unemployment rate has remained below the national average and the number of families with no one in work has been steadily reduced to zero.

Farmers and herders are given support to find other jobs. Various policies and measures have been implemented to encourage enterprises to create more jobs for local farmers and herders. In 2024, the number of farmers and herders in non-farming employment stood at 648,000, up from 450,000 in 2012, and their total income from non-farming employment reached RMB7.16 billion. Prefectural and city governments also collaborate with employment service centers outside of the autonomous region to provide new opportunities for job-seeking farmers and herders, and to support them in their daily life, lodging, travel, and rights and interests protection should they find work outside of Xizang.

Multiple measures have been put in place to increase the number of jobs for college graduates. Xizang has broadened employment channels by providing internship and social insurance subsidies to encourage enterprises to employ graduates from colleges in the region. It supports colleges and enterprises in setting up employment service platforms like business incubation bases to encourage start-ups, and subsidizes graduates who start new businesses with seed money of RMB60,000 for each person and an annual subsidy of up to RMB24,000 for overhead costs. For consecutive years, the employment rate of new college graduates has remained at a relatively high level.

– The right to health is protected in a more balanced way.

Equal access to basic public health services is advancing throughout the region. The Healthy Xizang Initiative advocates a healthy and positive lifestyle, focuses on prevention and control of major diseases, and incorporates key health indicators into the overall plan of economic and social development. The subsidy on basic public health services per capita increased from RMB25 in 2012 to RMB115 in 2024, with 80 percent funded by the central budget, to provide urban and rural residents in the region with free basic health services. According to the Seventh National Census in 2020, the average life expectancy in the region rose from 68.17 years in 2010 to 72.19 years a decade later.

Xizang's medical and health service network has now achieved full coverage. Since 2012, the central and local governments have invested nearly RMB7.6 billion into establishing a five-tiered health service network at the region, prefecture, county,

township and village levels. Urban public hospitals, grassroots medical institutions as well as public health service establishments now have better facilities and equipment and can provide increasingly accessible and convenient services. By 2024, Xizang had 7,231 medical and health institutions (including 5,222 village clinics), with 21,551 hospital beds and 29,379 healthcare professionals, representing an increase of 29.79 percent, 112.66 percent, and 159.42 percent, respectively, compared with 2012. And in 2023, there were 5.9 hospital beds per 1,000 people, up from 3.29 in 2012; 8.05 healthcare professionals per 1,000 people, up from 3.67 in 2012; and 3.34 practicing physicians or physician assistants per 1,000 people, up from 1.53 in 2012.

Medical expert teams from other parts of the country have helped to substantially increase the medical service capacity in Xizang. From 2015, 203 hospitals from 17 paired-up provinces and municipalities directly under the central government selected and dispatched more than 2,000 experts to work in teams in Xizang's health system at various levels, helping to improve diagnosis and treatment capability in the region. Additionally, this program helped to train 5,536 local healthcare professionals. Medical establishments in the region received 15.71 million patient visits in 2023, up from 11.67 million in 2012, and the number of tertiary-care hospitals increased from 3 to 17. All public medical institutions at the township level and above can provide telemedicine services.

Tibetan medicine has been conserved and developed. The region has formulated and implemented a series of policies on promoting Tibetan medicine and encouraging innovation. It has increased input year by year for the application, education, research, and industrial development of this field of medicine. In 2024, there were 51 public Tibetan medicine institutions, up from 28 in 2012. These institutions employed 5,287 professionals, up from 2,232, and housed 3,260 hospital beds, up from 1,364. All community health service centers, 94.4 percent of township health centers, and 50.04 percent of village clinics could provide Tibetan medicine services, up from 50 percent, 71 percent, and 15 percent, respectively, in 2012. The country's first national medical center of ethnic medicine has been approved, a national center for ethnic medicine clinical research, five national-level key clinical specialties, and 17 key medical specialties accredited by the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine have been established, and three Tibetan medicine experts were given the title of Master of Chinese Medicine. Efforts are also ongoing to incorporate Tibetan medicines into the National List of Essential Medicines (Ethnic Medicines).

– **The social security network covers all citizens.**

A multi-layer social security network has taken shape in Xizang. By the end of 2024, the number of policies issued under various social insurance programs totaled about 7.63 million. The figure included 415,000 covered by the old-age pension for enterprise employees, 299,800 covered by the old-age pension for staff of Party and

government offices and public institutions, 1,755,300 by the basic old-age pension for rural and non-working urban residents, 779,200 by work-related injury insurance, 426,100 by unemployment insurance, 3,464,500 by basic medical insurance, and 492,300 by maternity insurance. Government subsidies for basic medical insurance for rural and non-working urban residents have increased year by year, reaching RMB705 per person per year in 2024. The maximum reimbursement rate of inpatient expenses and of outpatient expenses on special diseases has reached 90 percent. Sixty percent of general outpatient expenses in excess of the annual deductible that has been lowered to RMB50 are reimbursable. A special treatment policy has been extended to cover 38 serious diseases, eight more than the national list. The region has established a medical insurance information platform that is interconnected with similar platforms nationwide, providing one-stop services and settlement in basic medical insurance, major disease insurance and medical assistance schemes, and real-time settlement of medical expenses for treatment incurred outside the provincial-level unit where the patient is insured.

Subsistence allowances in urban and rural areas continue to grow, and now cover a broader range of the population. By 2024, a total of 22,203 urban residents received a monthly minimum allowance of RMB947, and a total of 148,435 rural residents received a yearly minimum allowance of RMB5,340.

IV. Further Improvement in the Protection of Cultural Rights

Xizang attaches great importance to protecting, passing down and developing the fine traditional cultures of all ethnic groups, improving public cultural services, generalizing the use of standard spoken and written Chinese language, and guaranteeing the right to study and use the Tibetan language. These measures have raised cultural prosperity and development in the region to new heights and ensured that the cultural rights of all the ethnic groups in Xizang are protected.

– Preserving and protecting fine traditional cultures of all ethnic groups

The protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Xizang has steadily improved. Between 2012 and 2024, RMB473 million from the central government and the government of the Xizang Autonomous Region was earmarked for the protection of ICH items on the national representative list in the region, the

documentation and recording of the knowledge and skills of the bearers of ICH items on the national list, the training of new ICH practitioners, and the construction of new ICH protection and utilization facilities. Xizang now boasts 2,760 items on the representative lists of all types and levels, with 1,668 bearers. *Gesar*, Tibetan Opera, and the Lum medicinal bathing of Sowa Rigpa of Xizang have been inscribed on the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Five state-level and 12 regional-level demonstration bases that protect ICH items by transforming them into cultural products have been approved. Eight counties, townships, and villages with abundant ICH resources, 19 ICH scenic areas and spots, 159 bases for ICH practitioner training, and 153 part-time Tibetan Opera troupes have been named. Xizang has completed a rescue effort to record the knowledge and skills of 66 old-age bearers of the ICH items on the national representative list and of eight bearers of the ICH items on the regional representative list, and set up 224 ICH workshops. ICH items of all types have been effectively preserved, protected and developed.

Cultural relics and historic sites have been placed under proper protection. By December 2024, a total of 4,468 cultural relics sites of all types had been examined and registered. There are 2,373 cultural relics units under the protection of governments at different levels (70 of which are key units under state protection). The Potala Palace, Norbulingka, and Jokhang Temple, together as one item, are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The region boasts 155 sites of revolutionary significance, 43 museums, exhibition halls, and memorial halls, and 155 places on the list of immovable revolutionary cultural heritage. Xizang has completed the survey of resources in 277 grotto temples, and 15 stele and stone inscriptions have been included in the first batch of the list of famous ancient inscriptions by the National Cultural Heritage Administration. Between 2016 and 2024, over RMB2.84 billion was earmarked for 377 projects on the protection and maintenance of cultural relics. Major programs such as the Archeological Finds in China program and the archeological program on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau have been promoted. From 2016 to 2024, 102 archeological excavation projects have been carried out, including 70 proactive ones and 32 rescue operations. The region has held 21 cultural relic exhibitions and 10 museum online exhibitions.

Ancient books and documents have been placed under sound protection in Xizang. At the end of 2018, a 10-year project with a budget of RMB300 million was launched to conserve and explore the use of ancient documents, including the Pattra-leaf Scriptures in the Potala Palace. The results of the first and second phases of this project have been reviewed and accepted. The Ancient Book Protection Center of Xizang has created innovative methods of protecting ancient books and documents. By December 2024, more than 67,000 folios of rare ancient texts had been uploaded

to global cloud-sharing platforms, more than 18,000 rare ancient texts from 1,180 units had been registered and filed, 305 ancient texts had been included in the Catalog of National Rare Books of China, and some 13,990 broken folios of ancient texts had been repaired. In 2013, the state launched a priority cultural project called the Complete Collection of Chinese Classics: Tibetan Volume. This project aims to publish important Tibetan classics for the period from the Tubo Kingdom (618-842) through to the peaceful liberation of Xizang in 1951. Currently, 201 volumes have been published across 12 titles, containing around 128 million characters in total. Additionally, in November 2023, a total of 206 volumes of *Tibetan Medical Canon* were published, recording 3,022 titles of ancient Tibetan medicinal classics.

– **Improving public cultural services**

Xizang has seen improved equal access to public cultural services. Since 2012, the central government has invested a total of RMB4.89 billion in developing public cultural services across the region. By the end of 2024, Xizang was home to 43 museums, exhibition halls, and memorial halls, 82 libraries, 82 people's art halls and cultural centers, 697 all-purpose cultural stations in towns and townships, and over 1,600 cultural squares. Mobile stage trucks and mobile libraries are utilized across 74 counties and equivalent administrative units. A five-tiered network of public cultural service facilities has taken shape throughout the region. Moreover, 14 hometowns of Chinese folk art have been set up, and 89 regional-level hometowns of folk art have been named. In December 2023, the Xizang Performing Arts Center was completed and opened.

There is much better access to public cultural services. Opportunities to participate in cultural services at the grassroots level have increased, with Xizang now home to 76 art troupes at the county level, 153 part-time Tibetan Opera troupes, 395 performing teams at the township level, and 5,492 at the administrative village and urban community level, representing more than 100,000 professional and amateur performers who provide live performances for farmers and herders in their neighborhood. Digitized movie projection is now widely available in rural areas, with 478 digital movie projection facilities across the region holding more than 63,000 movie screenings every year. In 2024, Xizang launched over 1,000 high-quality cultural works, including the dance drama *Rainbow over the Snow Mountains*, and the song and dance performance *Sons and Daughters of Eastern Xizang*. The region also held the Galsang Flower Performance Season and presented 88 performances of drama, concert, song and dance gala, and Tibetan Opera, benefiting over one million online and offline viewers. Grassroots cultural facilities have been widely upgraded. A total of 6,312 centers or stations for promoting cultural and ethical progress in the new era have been set up in villages, townships and counties. Radio and TV broadcasting coverage reach 99.54 percent and 99.67 percent respectively. The network of

grassroots cultural services has also improved, ensuring that all ethnic groups have access to public cultural services.

Informatization of public cultural services has been strengthened. Xizang has developed smart libraries and a digital platform of public cultural services, piloted a program of dividing county-level libraries or cultural centers into headquarters and branches, and established digital exhibition halls for cultural relics from the Tang-Tubo ancient road and the Qamdo section of the ancient tea-horse road. With new technologies and through new media, regular cultural services are now accessible to all the ethnic groups across the region, including online live-streaming of artistic performances, online study, events, and training. The public cultural institutions of all levels in Xizang have annually carried out over 100,000 cultural activities, benefiting nearly 15 million participants. These efforts have been effective in promoting the advanced socialist culture at the grassroots level and delivering cultural services to the people in most remote areas.

– Guaranteeing the right to study and use the Tibetan language

The right to study and use the Tibetan language in public administration is guaranteed. All resolutions and regulations adopted by the People's Congress of the Xizang Autonomous Region and all general-purpose official documents and public notices released by people's governments at all levels in Xizang and their subordinate departments are published in both standard Chinese and Tibetan.

The Tibetan language is widely used in publishing, media, and daily life. By the end of 2024, Xizang had 17 periodicals and 11 newspapers in the Tibetan language and had published 46.85 million copies of 8,794 Tibetan-language books. In addition to traditional media – such as newspapers, magazines, radio programs, films, television programs, and the internet – new media have also been developed in the Tibetan language, including surging official accounts on social media. Their popularity has helped to expand the use of the Tibetan language. Every year, more than 15,000 hours of radio programs, more than 80 movies, and 7,300 hours of TV programs are translated or dubbed from and into minority languages. Both standard Chinese and Tibetan can be found in public facilities, signage and advertisements. The Tibetan language is widely used in fields such as health, postal services, communications, transport, finance, and science and technology.

The right to study and develop the Tibetan language is also guaranteed in education and in the standardization of important terms. Courses on both standard Chinese and Tibetan are taught in primary and secondary schools in Xizang. At the end of 2015, the national standard *Information Technology – Vocabulary in Tibetan* was officially released, becoming China's first national standard vocabulary for information technology in an ethnic-minority language. The National Committee for the Standardization of Tibetan Terminology issued nearly 1,500 newly approved Tibetan

terms in 2018, and 2,200 in 2022. In 2023 an online platform to deal with queries concerning the two languages was launched, hosting a database of 300,000 standard terms.

V. Effective Safeguards for the Freedom of Religious Belief

The Party's policy of freedom of religious belief is rigorously applied in Xizang, and efforts have been made to ensure that religions in China conform to China's realities and remain compatible with socialist society. The legal safeguards for freedom of religious belief are constantly being improved, and religious amity, social harmony and ethnic unity are consistently promoted throughout the region.

– Religious activities are carried out in accordance with the law.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China safeguards Chinese citizens' freedom of religious belief. The revised Regulations on Religious Affairs strengthened the protection of citizens' freedom of religious belief and the legal rights and interests of religious society. Tibetan Buddhism, Islam and Catholicism have coexisted with other religions in Xizang for generations. The region is home to over 1,700 sites for the practice of Tibetan Buddhism and approximately 46,000 Buddhist monks and nuns. There are four mosques and about 12,000 native Muslims, and one Catholic church with over 700 believers.

Xizang allows religious groups to manage their own affairs independently; it protects lawful activities while banning the unlawful, containing extremism, resisting interference, and punishing crime. The region manages religious affairs in accordance with the law. The Measures of the Xizang Autonomous Region on Implementing the Regulations on Religious Affairs and Measures of the Xizang Autonomous Region on the Management of Major Religious Activities have been implemented to safeguard the order of religious society.

All normal religious activities are carried out by religious groups or individuals of their free will, and no organization or individual may interfere with them. Ordinary believers commonly have a scripture room or a Buddhist shrine at home. In Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, traditional religious activities such as learning scriptures, debate, initiation as a monk or nun, *abhisheka* (empowerment ceremony), and self-cultivation are regularly practiced, and examination on scriptures and subsequent promotion in academic degrees are also held in monasteries on a regular basis. Over 1,700 religious and folk activities, including the Shoton Festival, Butter Lamp

Festival, Saga Dawa Festival, and religious walks around lakes and mountains, take place as customary. Lawful religious activities are under effective protection, and every effort is made to satisfy the religious needs of believers.

– The reincarnation of living Buddhas is carried out in an orderly manner based on clear rules.

The central government and governments at all levels in Xizang fully respect the tradition of reincarnation of living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism. They strictly follow the Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism and manage the process in accordance with the law. Under the guidance of Buddhist groups, the succession of living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism is carried out in accordance with religious rituals and historical conventions. In 2016, an online system was launched to facilitate obtaining information about living Buddhas, allowing users to find out more about religious figures in China. By 2024, 93 newly reincarnated living Buddhas had been approved and recognized. The legitimacy and credibility of the reincarnation of living Buddhas is under effective safeguards.

– Sites for religious activities have been significantly renovated and upgraded.

Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, cultural relics, and historical sites are under effective protection in accordance with the law, and the quality of public services at sites for religious activities continues to improve. Branch libraries and ICH centers, ancient book libraries, and cultural relics exhibition halls have been set up in 14 temples and monasteries, including the Talung Monastery and Tsurphu Monastery. Since 2011, dormitories for monks and nuns in monasteries and temples have undergone unified maintenance and renovation, and nursing homes have been built at these sites to provide medical services. Over 98 percent of monasteries and temples now have access to roads, telecommunications, electricity, water, radio and television. Study and living conditions for monks and nuns continue to improve with better infrastructure.

– Social security for religious personnel is further improved.

All monks and nuns in the Xizang Autonomous Region are included in the social security system. Since 2015, the construction of medical clinics in monasteries and temples has accelerated, doctor-monks have continued to receive training, and the social security benefits for monks and nuns have risen year by year, among other social public services. The government allocates over RMB26 million per annum to cover medical insurance, pension schemes, subsistence allowances, accident injury insurance, and health check expenses for all registered monks and nuns.

– Models of religious and modern education are effectively integrated.

The Measures on the Management of Religious Schools were issued to standardize the management of religious schools, improve their quality of teaching,

and cultivate more competent religious personnel. Nine Tibetan Buddhism colleges, including the High-level Tibetan Buddhism College of China and Xizang Tibetan Buddhist Institute, have been constructed in China with an investment of RMB920 million. The traditional system whereby Tibetan Buddhist monks learn sutras in monasteries and temples has been integrated with the three-level academic title system of modern education; 130 monks in Xizang have earned the highest Thorampa title, and over 3,000 monks are learning sutras at Xizang Tibetan Buddhist Institute and its 10 branches. Documents and classics, including the Tibetan-language *Chinese Tripitaka* and the “Library of Snowfield Classics” series, have been compiled and published, an electronic edition of the Tibetan-language *Chinese Tripitaka* has been issued, and ritual procedures, biographies, and treatises on Tibetan Buddhism have been printed as booklets to meet the diverse study demands of monasteries, Buddhist monks and nuns, and believers. Tibetan Buddhist studies are promoted and systematic research into Tibetan Buddhism continues to improve.

VI. Full and Effective Protection of Environmental Rights

Xizang has always prioritized eco-environmental conservation and kept reminding itself that conserving the ecology of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is the greatest contribution to the survival and development of the Chinese nation. The region is committed to maintaining harmony between humanity and nature in modernization. It prioritizes eco-environmental conservation and green development, and strives to continuously improve eco-environmental governance and protect biodiversity on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Xizang has become one of the regions with the healthiest eco-environment in the world, where the protection of the people’s environmental rights has been steadily upgraded.

– **The system for protecting environmental rights is further improved.**

On April 26, 2023, the NPC Standing Committee adopted the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Ecological Conservation on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The Xizang Autonomous Region promulgated the Regulations on Developing National Eco-Civilization Model in the Xizang Autonomous Region, Regulations of the Xizang Autonomous Region for Environmental Protection, and Regulations of the Xizang Autonomous Region for Glacier Protection. Additionally, it released the Decision of the Standing Committee of the People’s Congress of the Xizang

Autonomous Region on the Full Implementation of the Law on Ecological Conservation on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the Guidelines on Further Strengthening Pollution Prevention and Control, and the Decision of the CPC Committee and the People's Government of the Xizang Autonomous Region on Building National Eco-Civilization Demonstration Zones to Boost Efforts for Building a Beautiful Xizang. These actions have provided important legal and institutional support for protecting the environmental rights of all ethnic groups.

– Measures for eco-environmental protection continue to strengthen.

Xizang has established 47 nature reserves of all kinds, covering 412,200 sq km. According to the second survey of terrestrial wild animals, there are 1,072 terrestrial wild vertebrate species and 246 wild animal species under special state protection in Xizang. A total of 7,504 species of vascular plants have been recorded, of which 1,075 are endemic to the region, and 169 species of wild plants are under special state protection. To improve water conservation, river sources, especially those of 33 important rivers, have been placed under systematic protection, eco-environmental protection projects have been launched for the Lhasa River, Nyangchu River and Drigu Tso Lake, and the scope of management and protection for rivers and lakes has been delineated. The Sanjiangyuan National Park section north of the Tanggula Mountains has been established. The water quality of major rivers and lakes in Xizang meets national environmental quality standards for corresponding water areas. According to the third national territorial land survey, forests, grasslands, wetlands, water bodies and other lands with strong eco-environmental functions reached 1.08 million sq km in Xizang.

– Environmental monitoring is normalized.

Xizang has made steady progress in developing the network of eco-environmental monitoring, focusing on surface water and drinking water sources, and air quality. Continuous monitoring has been carried out in key areas including those along the Sichuan-Xizang Railway and the Rongpo River that originates from Mount Qomolangma. Since 2016, the annual proportion of days with excellent or good air quality in Xizang has reached over 99 percent. The air quality in main towns and cities has, on the whole, remained excellent or good, and the air quality in seven prefecture-level administrative units has reached the state Grade-II standards or above. In 2024, Lhasa ranked first among the 168 key cities in China in terms of air quality. The air quality in the Mount Qomolangma area continues to be rated as excellent or good, reaching the state Grade-I standards.

– The urban and rural living environment continues to improve.

Xizang has formulated and released the Guidelines of the Xizang Autonomous Region on Building Beautiful and Livable Demonstration Villages While Improving Rural Living Environment and the Measures of the Xizang Autonomous Region for

Certifying Beautiful and Livable Demonstration Villages While Improving Rural Living Environment. The documents have specified the goal and priority tasks for improving the living environment of farming and pastoral areas, and addressed issues including waste sorting, sewage discharge, and agricultural pollution from non-point sources. By the end of 2024, a total of 430,000 household sanitary toilets in farming and pastoral areas had been upgraded, bringing the accessibility rate to 80.3 percent and enabling more farmers and herders to have access to clean and sanitary toilets.

Thanks to the above efforts, rural infrastructure has improved, and people's awareness on environmental protection has also been raised. In March 2022, the first phase of the project to manage the river ecosystem in the downtown area of Lhasa was completed with an investment of RMB943 million, and the second phase is in process with an investment of RMB2.4 billion. This project has upgraded the living environment of the city by connecting river systems, redirecting wastewater, and improving the landscape. In areas below 4,300 m in altitude, 1,079 villages and over 104,700 households have taken part in a tree planting initiative that has ensured that all households and villages have access to trees. A rural greening action saw 10.31 million trees planted across 2,261 administrative villages, while an afforestation project in the mountains to the north and south of Lhasa has led to 10.58 million *mu* (705,333 ha) of forests being planted and nearly 3.83 million *mu* (255,333 ha) tended. Through these large-scale greening programs, the per capita green area in Xizang has markedly increased and the eco-environment of urban and rural areas has continued to improve.

– The eco-compensation system is in place.

Eco-environmental protection is being combined with efforts to improve people's lives across Xizang. In 2017, the Guidelines of the General Office of the People's Government of the Xizang Autonomous Region on Improving the Eco-Environmental Conservation and Compensation Mechanism were released. Between 2018 and 2024, a total of RMB95.4 billion was allocated as subsidies and rewards for ecological protection across the region. Since 2021, Xizang has invested RMB6.93 billion from the central budget in ecological benefit compensation funds for forests, and has effectively managed and protected 178 million *mu* (11.87 million ha) of state-owned and non-state-owned forests, bringing significant growth in forest resources and direct or indirect benefits to more than 2.1 million farmers and herders. The eco-compensation system has increased the income of farmers and herders, strengthened their awareness of conservation, and improved the eco-environment. The Measures of the Xizang Autonomous Region on the Management of Green Jobs (For Trial Implementation) were formulated to facilitate the pursuit of green jobs and green businesses, and increased incomes through job creation in the eco-environmental sector. From 2016 to 2024, an average of 516,000 jobs for eco-environmental

protection were created annually, providing an annual per capita income of RMB3,500.

VII. Equal Protection of the Rights of Specific Groups

In the new era, human rights are enjoyed equally by all in China. The Chinese government attaches great importance to safeguarding the rights of specific groups in Xizang, including women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. It has continued to improve its mechanisms for protecting rights, so that all the groups share the opportunity to live a fulfilling life and realize their dreams.

– Overall improvement in the protection of women’s rights

The Law on the Protection of Women’s Rights and Interests is implemented in Xizang. By revising the Measures of the Xizang Autonomous Region for the Implementation of the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Women’s Rights and Interests, the local people’s congress of Xizang has steadily strengthened the protection of women’s rights. The local government of the region has promulgated the Plan for Women’s Development in the Xizang Autonomous Region (2021-2025), which lays out the objectives, tasks and priorities of women’s development during the 14th Five-year Plan period (2021-2025).

Women’s political rights are protected. The Measures of the Xizang Autonomous Region for the Implementation of the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Women’s Rights and Interests clearly stipulate that state agencies, social organizations, enterprises, public institutions, and other organizations should ensure the political rights of women to participate in administering state and social affairs. In effect, women represent 36.6 percent of the region’s delegates to the 20th CPC National Congress, 28 percent of its deputies to the 14th NPC, and 22.6 percent of its members of the 14th CPPCC National Committee. Among the delegates to the 10th Party Congress of the region, 32.4 percent are female; 30.6 percent of the deputies to the 12th People’s Congress of the region are female, as are 28.1 percent of the members of the 12th CPPCC Xizang Autonomous Regional Committee. Additionally, all administrative villages or urban communities in Xizang have female members in their Party branches and villagers’ or residents’ committees.

The protection of women's health in Xizang is improving. The region continues to carry out its action plans for maternal and infant safety and for healthy children, and has provided breast cancer and cervical cancer screening for more than 500,000 women. A preferential policy for the cost of hospitalization for childbirth has been implemented, granting pregnant women from farming and pastoral areas full reimbursement of medical expenses, as well as a one-time hospital delivery subsidy of RMB1,000 and a prenatal living allowance of RMB300. Over the past five years, Xizang has provided more than RMB200 million in hospital delivery subsidies to over 267,000 pregnant women from farming and pastoral areas. The hospital delivery rate in the region has risen from 75.8 percent in 2012 to 99.15 percent in 2023, and the maternal mortality rate has dropped to 38.63 per 100,000. In 2023, the number of female beneficiaries of basic old-age pension schemes reached 1.18 million, and basic medical insurance, 1.62 million.

The education level of women has also improved significantly. The gender gap in compulsory education has largely been eliminated, and the proportions of female students in regular higher education, graduate education, and adult higher education are all above 50 percent.

– **Stronger protection of children's rights**

The system for protecting children's rights is improving. The local people's congress of Xizang has revised the Measures of the Xizang Autonomous Region for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors, making provisions for the protection of their legitimate rights and interests. These rights cover six aspects of minors' lives, including protection within the family, at school, by society at large, on the internet, by the government, and through judicial means. It has also promulgated the Measures of the Xizang Autonomous Region for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, leveraging its statutory oversight to facilitate inter-departmental mechanisms and measures for preventing crimes committed by minors and to strengthen control over the sources of juvenile delinquency. Additionally, the local government of Xizang has promulgated the Plan for Children's Development in the Xizang Autonomous Region (2021-2025). There are 32 juvenile courts, 82 three-in-one adjudicatory teams for juvenile criminal, civil, and administrative cases, and 11 one-stop prosecuting, inquiry, and assistance centers for juveniles across the region.

The protection of children's health has seen a marked improvement across Xizang. A project to distribute free nutrition packs to children aged 6-36 months has benefited approximately 160,000 children. In 2013, a pilot program was launched to improve children's nutrition, and by 2016, it covered 74 county-level administrative units. In 2021, the children's nutrition improvement program was integrated into the drive to alleviate poverty through better healthcare and revitalize rural areas. The

Measures of the Xizang Autonomous Region for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Maternal and Infant Health Care have been revised, and policy documents such as the implementation plans for the Action Plan for Maternal and Infant Safety in the Xizang Autonomous Region and the Action Plan for Healthy Children in the Xizang Autonomous Region have been issued, helping to reduce the infant mortality rate in the region to 5.37 per thousand as of 2023.

The children's care and protection system has also improved. Xizang has implemented the three-year plan to improve the care of left-behind children in rural areas and children in need. As a result, the basic rights and interests of these children have been fully guaranteed, the guardianship system for them improved, care towards them more targeted and effective, and their safety better protected. The region carried out the Welfare Lottery Assisting Dreams of Orphans for Education project, which provided grants of RMB76.62 million, to protect orphans' right to education. There are 11 child welfare institutions in the region. The basic living allowances for orphans and de facto orphans have been improved, providing a maximum of RMB1,982 per person per month.

– Remarkable progress in the protection of the rights of the elderly

The Measures on High-Quality Development of Elderly Care Services, the Implementation Plan for At-Home and Community Elderly Care Services, and the Implementation Plan of the Xizang Autonomous Region on Building the Basic Elderly Care System have all been formulated to improve the system of care for the elderly in Xizang. Eighteen standards for elderly care institutions in Xizang have been compiled to cover nursing service, personnel management, emergency management, and food safety, among others.

A wide range of old-age services are available. Xizang provides elderly care through the government purchase of services, public-private partnerships, and other means. There are 65 day-care centers providing life care, spiritual support, and cultural entertainment for the elderly. Additionally, there are 80 nursing homes for severely disadvantaged people that provide support for seniors who agree to be cared for in nursing homes. By the end of 2024, 5,836 senior citizens were benefitting from care in nursing homes, and 7,135 were provided with home care.

Age-friendly renovations continue to be carried out across Xizang. The Implementation Plan for Promoting Age-Friendly Home Renovations for Elderly People with Special Difficulties During the 14th Five-Year Plan Period focuses on providing easy indoor walking, safe bathrooms, convenient kitchen functionality, a better home environment, intelligent safety monitoring, and adaptable assistive appliances for seniors with special difficulties. Based on the plan, Xizang has been renovating residential buildings that meet relevant standards and basic conditions for improvement. By the end of 2024, homes of 2,315 households comprising severely

disadvantaged elderly people had undergone age-friendly renovations. Xizang is also exploring the building of smart elderly care platforms. In 2023, the region's first municipal supervision and guidance center for quality elderly-care services was officially opened. This center utilizes a seniors' information database to provide basic services such as physical sign monitoring and emergency assistance, life care, and housekeeping, making elderly care intelligent and more convenient. Educational and training activities on the use of intelligent technology are being carried out to help elderly individuals eliminate the digital divide and improve their daily lives.

– Better protection of the rights of people with disabilities

Rehabilitation for people with disabilities develops rapidly. Xizang has established an assistance mechanism to provide rehabilitation services for children aged 0-8 with disabilities. Between 2019 and 2024, more than 9,530 children with disabilities aged 0-14 received surgery, rehabilitation, assistive devices and other services. Some 73,000 rehabilitation interventions have been provided to people with disabilities in the region, and assistive devices have been provided on 60,000 occasions. Xizang leads the country with more than 95 percent of its people with disabilities having access to basic rehabilitation services and assistive devices. This contributes to the improvement of the network of rehabilitation services for people with disabilities.

Individuals with disabilities in Xizang are fully covered by social security. All persons with disabilities in the region's urban and rural areas are covered by basic old-age pension and basic medical insurance. The living expenses of persons with disabilities in financial difficulty and the nursing costs of people with severe disabilities are subsidized as they are entitled to. Xizang has spent RMB1.1 billion on this initiative, delivering subsidies for more than 500,000 times to eligible persons in the region. Policy-based guarantees are provided to eligible people with disabilities in financial difficulty, ensuring they receive subsistence allowances, temporary relief, and urban and rural medical assistance as per the policy that all those eligible for subsidies and assistance receive such benefits.

The right to education for persons with disabilities is fully guaranteed. Xizang is continuing to strengthen public-benefit education for individuals with disabilities. Over the past five years, 3,205 students with disabilities have enrolled in regular schools, and home education has been provided for 2,604 disabled students. The enrollment rate of compulsory education has remained above 97 percent throughout this period. By 2024, there were seven special education schools, with a total of 1,035 students, each enjoying an annual allowance of RMB6,000 that covers food, accommodation, basic tuition and other expenses.

Efforts are ongoing to promote employment and entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities. Xizang has formulated special policies to create employment and

self-employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in different fields through various channels, including setting mandated quotas in employment for people with disabilities, facilitating their self-employment, improving the collection, management and use of their employment security funds, providing vocational training, and awarding employers who employ more than their designated quota of such persons. Over the past five years, 7,476 persons with disabilities have received employment and entrepreneurship training. Between 2020 and 2024, persons with disabilities who found employment stood at 354, 424, 521, 720, and 862 respectively, representing an average annual growth rate of over 10 percent. Party and government departments, public institutions, and state-owned enterprises met their quotas by providing jobs for a total of 9,564 individuals with disabilities over the past three years. By 2024, 21,237 registered persons with disabilities were employed in Xizang.

Steady progress is being made in creating an accessible environment. The border counties and districts inhabited by ethnic minority groups in Xizang were the first areas in China to implement the barrier-free renovation project for financially difficult families with members with severe disabilities. This project allocates RMB35,000 per household, and has benefited 954 families to date. A barrier-free tourism strategy has been launched throughout the region, providing quality accessibility services for tourists. In August 2016, the Library of the Xizang Autonomous Region opened its first reading room for the visually impaired.

VIII. Steady Improvement in the Legal Protection of Human Rights

The rule of law provides the most effective protection for human rights. Xizang continues to advance law-based governance and strengthen respect for and protection of human rights throughout the process of legislation, law enforcement, judicature and the observance of the law. The region resolutely defends social fairness and justice and makes consistent efforts to strengthen legal protection of human rights.

– Sound legislation embodies respect for and protection of human rights.

Xizang has issued local regulations to uphold and protect human rights as mandated by national laws. By the end of 2024, the People's Congress of the Xizang Autonomous Region and its Standing Committee had enacted and implemented 171 local regulations, and resolutions and decisions with the same legal standing as

regulations. Among these, 136 are currently in effect, while 35 have been repealed. These measures ensure that citizens are able to enjoy political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights in accordance with the law.

– Law-based administration protects the legitimate rights and interests of citizens.

Xizang continues to strengthen law-based administration to see to it that power is prescribed by law, and that it is exercised, constrained and supervised in accordance with the law, thereby ensuring all government activities are consistent with the rule of law. The region has issued local regulations, rules and other normative documents, including the Regulations of the Xizang Autonomous Region on the Supervision of Administrative Law Enforcement, the Regulations of the Xizang Autonomous Region on Discretion over Administrative Law Enforcement, and the Interim Regulations of the Xizang Autonomous Region on Major Administrative Decision-Making Procedures, to promote strict, procedure-based, impartial and non-abusive law enforcement. Xizang has established an administrative hearing system to keep the exercise of power under effective restraint and supervision. Additionally, the region has worked to promote transparency in government affairs in accordance with the law, while standardizing cyber law enforcement and expanding supervision over law enforcement in cyber security, information security, data security, and personal information protection.

– Law enforcement and administration of justice are strengthened to guarantee human rights.

To make the people feel that justice has been served in every case, judicial departments at all levels in Xizang have endeavored to protect the legitimate rights and interests of litigants in accordance with the law. During judicial proceedings, translators or interpreters can be hired, and their native languages can be used to hear cases and produce legal documents in accordance with the needs of litigant participants, so as to protect the right of citizens of ethnic minority groups to use their native languages in litigation. Xizang has also improved the judicial relief system. From January 2016 to December 2024, people's courts at all levels in the region received 1,416 judicial relief cases and concluded 1,397 of them, with a total of RMB28.69 million of judicial aid granted.

Xizang adheres to the principles of legality and presumption of innocence, and has worked to reform the criminal litigation system centered on the court trial. It fully guarantees the right of defense to criminal suspects and defendants, and protects defense lawyers' right to examine case files, conduct cross-examination, and defend. Detention centers at all levels have standardized the design and construction of lawyers' meeting rooms to improve the efficiency of lawyers' work. In view of the fact that the region has a large territory and a small population, Xizang has set up

meeting places equipped with remote video meeting systems for online meetings, thereby expanding the channels for meetings to ensure that criminal proceedings can be carried out smoothly.

Prisons and detention centers protect the rights of prisoners and detainees to appeal, report and make charges, and submit to the supervision of procuratorial offices, law enforcement supervisors, and non-governmental entities. In addition to fixed-station procuratorial work, the people's procuratorates have established a system to conduct circuit inspections on prisons and detention centers in the region, and have invited deputies to people's congresses, CPPCC members, and representatives of relatives of prisoners to serve as law enforcement supervisors.

– Education, training and outreach activities on human rights are extensive.

An extensive educational campaign has been carried out to raise awareness of the Chinese socialist legal system with the Constitution at the core. In order to promote public understanding of human rights while improving public understanding of laws, Xizang has issued the Regulations of the Xizang Autonomous Region on the Awareness-Raising and Education on the Rule of Law, the Eighth Five-Year Plan for Raising the Awareness of the Rule of Law in the Region (2021-2025), and the Guidelines of the Xizang Autonomous Region on Adopting a Responsibility System for Government Departments to Publicize the Law While Enforcing It.

Public servants have also received training on human rights and the rule of law. Since the launch of the Eighth Five-Year Plan for Raising Public Awareness of the Rule of Law (2021-2025), Xizang has organized leading officials to study and apply the law, with a focus on Party regulations and state laws and regulations. It has organized over 30 exams of various types for over 1.6 million examinees through an online platform for studying laws. The region works to open courses on the rule of law which integrates human rights knowledge and covers all the students in various types of schools in the region.

The region has carried out a campaign to train villagers with legal knowledge to take the lead in promoting the rule of law. By 2024, 22,100 villagers had been trained, 5,863 households in agricultural and pastoral areas had been cited as models for their outstanding performance in legal education and application of the law, and 71 villages and urban communities had been named national models for promoting democracy and the rule of law. The number of legal counselors to villages and urban communities continues to increase across the region, and all villages and urban communities now have full coverage. The region has also worked to strengthen public awareness of the Constitution and the Civil Code. It has become a common practice among all ethnic groups to respect, study, observe and apply the law, and the rule of law permeates the whole of society and takes root among the people.

Conclusion

The concept of human rights is more than a lofty ideal; it is a tangible reality reflected in the lived experiences and feelings of the individual. The ultimate human right is that people can lead a happy life, which is true of the people in Xizang. In today's Xizang, the people of all ethnic groups have contented smiles on their faces, akin to the blossoming galsang flowers on the plateau. This is a true demonstration of their sense of gain, fulfillment and security, as they enjoy extensive human rights.

Over the years, anti-China forces in the United States and other Western countries have colluded with the Dalai Group to spread lies about the "worsening human rights situation" in Xizang. These fabrications are purely for political gain and show a complete disregard for the truth. While they claim to be concerned about human rights, their real goal is to destabilize Xizang and separate it from China. A lie repeated a thousand times is still a lie. The human rights progress in Xizang will not be undermined or wiped out by lies, nor will the advancements being made in the new era by the people of all ethnic groups in the region be halted by deceit. The confidence of the CPC and the Chinese government and the measures they take to ensure all ethnic groups in Xizang fully enjoy human rights will not be shaken or stopped by any forces.

After more than a decade of sustained efforts and successes, now is the time to march forward. The historic accomplishments made in the region represent an unprecedented success of the Chinese path of human rights development in the new era. On the new journey towards national rejuvenation through Chinese modernization, the CPC and the Chinese government will continue to meet the expectation of the people in Xizang for a better life. By promoting higher-quality development of human rights in the region, we will continue writing a new chapter in human rights protection on the snowy plateau.