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Item 119 (c) of the preliminary list*

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 2 June 2020 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to draw your attention to the decision of the Government of the People's Republic of China to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2021–2023, at the elections to be held in New York during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, in 2020.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [60/251](#), I have the honour to transmit the enclosed aide-memoire, which contains China's voluntary pledge for the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex).

It is kindly requested that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 119 (c) of the preliminary list.

(Signed) **Zhang Jun**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations

* [A/75/50](#).



Annex to the letter dated 2 June 2020 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

[Original: Chinese]

Aide-memoire on pledges and commitments

The Government of the People's Republic of China has decided to submit its candidature for the Human Rights Council for 2021–2023. The election will be held in New York during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, in 2020.

The promotion and protection of human rights is high on the Chinese Government's agenda. The principle of respecting and protecting human rights is articulated in the context of the Constitution of the Communist Party of China, the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the national economic and social development plan. China persists in integrating the principle of universality of human rights with its national conditions, and espousing a people-centred view of human rights. The Chinese Government constantly promotes economic and social development, social fairness and justice, and strengthens the rule of law for human rights. In addition, it endeavours to improve the rights of all its people in a coordinated manner and works for their rounded development. China opens a new path of human rights protection based on its national conditions. It has fulfilled pledges and commitments made during its last campaign for membership of the Council, including mainly:

Economic, social and cultural rights have been further strengthened. The living standards of people have been greatly improved. In 2019, China's gross domestic product (GDP) totalled nearly 100 trillion yuan, and the per capita disposable income of rural and urban residents was 30,733 yuan. Every year from 2012 to 2019, an average of more than 10 million people in China were lifted out of poverty. In China, a nationwide medical and health service system covering both urban and rural areas was basically established. The average life expectancy of the Chinese people reached 77 years in 2018. The health level of the residents is generally higher than that of middle- and high-income countries. China has built up the largest-scale social security system covering the largest population of the world. As of the end of 2019, the number of people participating in basic pension, unemployment and work-related injury insurance plans reached 968 million, 205 million and 255 million, respectively, and there were about 1.305 billion social security card holders in China. More than 1.3 billion people, which is almost China's entire population, are covered by the medical insurance system, including basic medical insurance for workers and for rural and non-working urban residents. China has built up the largest-scale education system in the world and made efforts to let people enjoy more equitable and higher quality education. The retention rate of nine-year compulsory education reached 94.8 per cent in 2019. Thirteen million new jobs were created in Chinese cities each year over the past seven years. The surveyed urban unemployment rate was lower than the world average. The Chinese Government constantly improves and perfects the housing security system. By the end of 2019, public rental housing had provided affordable housing to more than 38 million low-income people. About 22 million poor people had received public rental subsidies. With the purchase of affordable housing, more than 50 million middle-low earning urban residents solved the housing problem. More than 100 million people have moved away from the shanty town and into new residential quarters. The government-subsidized housing project has improved the housing condition of nearly 200 million residents with special needs. The Government has taken action in the area of household registration (Hukou), basically bringing the entire population into the Hukou system. In 2018,

ecological civilization was written into the Constitution. The Government formulated and implemented the action plans for the prevention and control of air, water and soil pollution. As the urban and rural public cultural service system has been gradually established in China, cultural industries have developed rapidly and public digital culture service ability has been greatly improved.

Protection of civil and political rights has been promoted. The Chinese people enjoy extensive rights and freedoms prescribed by law, and the legal protection of human rights is effectively enhanced. Orderly development is seen in community-level democracy. A dynamic community-level self-governance system has been constantly improved. The Chinese Government, in accordance with the law, has protected people's rights to vote, to know, to participate, to express and to supervise, and ensures the freedom of religious belief. Administrative power has been delimited in accordance with the law. China has established a principle for administrative law enforcement that administrative bodies should not do things not mandated by law, introduced a list of well-defined government powers and a list of responsibilities, and prohibited any power not provided for by law, or any illegal use of power. China has ensured independent and impartial exercise of the judicial and procuratorial power and improved the judicial accountability system. The powers and responsibilities of judges and prosecutors have been made clear, and they have had accountability for the cases they adjudicate. The mechanism that guarantees performance of duty of judicial personnel in accordance with the law has been improved, clearly stipulating that judges and procurators be free from interference by administrative organs, social groups and individuals when handling cases in accordance with the law. Judicial transparency has been promoted. By the end of April 2020, China Judicial Process Information Online had publicized 1.486 billion information entries. Chinacourt.org had broadcasted 6.85 million live trials online. China Judgments Online had released 91.24 million copies of written judgments and garnered 43.6 billion visits. The reform of the trial-centred litigation has been actively promoted. Some legal principles have been faithfully carried out, such as the principle of legality, the principle of evidentiary adjudication and the exclusion of unlawful evidence. It legally protects the litigants' and other participants' right to know, right to defence and the other legitimate rights and interests. By the end of 2019, there were altogether more than 473,000 lawyers in China. China has provided quality and more convenient public legal services. A sound legal aid system has been established. By the end of September 2018, there were more than 3,200 legal aid centres and more than 70,000 service stations in the country. The Government has further improved the duty lawyer system and protected the suspects' and defendants' right to obtain legal aid. The Government has progressed in implementing a pilot project nationwide to ensure that all criminal cases have defence lawyers. The Chinese Government has noticeably increased people's consciousness of the need to promote the rule of law and the constitutional stipulation of "respecting and protecting human rights" through wide publicity and education. It has enhanced public awareness of the legal protection of human rights. Efforts have been made in consolidating social mechanisms for the legal protection of human rights. China has included education on the rule of law into the national education system and has established eight national human rights education and training bases.

The legitimate rights and interests of ethnic minorities, women, children, older persons and the disabled have been better protected. The rights of ethnic minority groups in administering State affairs is effectively guaranteed. All 55 minority groups have deputies and members in the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. The ethnic autonomous regions have enjoyed the right of autonomy extensively, as prescribed by law. Ethnic minority areas have experienced rapid growth in terms of the economy and education. The total GDP of the eight autonomous regions and provinces with a large ethnic

minority population reached 10.04521 trillion yuan in 2019. Their growth rate has been higher than the national average for many years. The ethnic minority areas have achieved the nine-year compulsory education for all for primary and middle school funded by the Government. They have seen the rapid development of preschool education, and the goal of making senior high school education universal has been basically met. China guarantees the freedom of all ethnic groups to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, as well as their right to learn and use the common spoken and written languages of the country. Efforts have been made in the investigation, preservation and display of endangered languages of Chinese ethnic minorities, and the “Chinese Language Resources Protection Project” has been established and implemented to promote the protection and continued use and development of languages of various ethnic groups. As of March 2019, there were 714 broadcasting organizations, such as radio and television stations, in ethnic autonomous areas. The Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Women’s Rights and Interests and the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Minors have laid the legal foundation for protecting the rights of women and children. The Supreme People’s Court, the Supreme People’s Procuratorate and the All China Women’s Federation have established a cooperation mechanism to jointly promote the protection of women’s and children’s rights and interests, increase the punishment of violations of women’s and children’s rights, and effectively protect the legal rights of women and children. For three cycles in a row, the Chinese Government has formulated and implemented a national programme for women’s development and a national programme for child development, actively advocating and effectively realizing equality between men and women, and guaranteeing women’s rights to participate in public affairs management and economic and social development. Efforts have been made to implement the principle of giving priority to children, to strengthen the protection of rights of the child and to promote the overall healthy growth of children. Efforts have been made to strengthen the care and protection of rural “left-behind” children and the protection of children in difficulties, by establishing a coordination mechanism and forming synergies. The sense of gain and happiness of rural left-behind children and children in difficulty continue to increase. More efforts have been made to increase the protection of female employees’ rights and interests in employment, labour protection and maternity protection, among others. The level of women’s and children’s health services has continued to improve. In 2019, the maternal mortality rate fell to 17.8/100,000, the infant mortality rate fell to 5.6 per 1,000 live births and the mortality rate for children under 5 fell to 7.8 per 1,000 live births. China has formulated and amended the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of the Elderly, formulated and implemented the national medium- and long-term plan for actively responding to population ageing and clarified China’s institutional arrangements and task deployment to deal with population ageing by the middle of this century. China issued the guiding opinions on establishing and improving the health service system for older persons and several opinions on deepening the promotion of the integration of medical and nursing services to speed up the establishment and improvement of the health service system for older persons and further promoting the integration of medical and nursing services. As of the end of 2019, there were more than 4,700 integrated medical and nursing institutions across the country and more than 56,000 pairs of medical and health institutions and senior care institutions that had concluded agreements establishing a cooperative relationship. The old-age service system has gradually expanded from focusing on the centralized care of institutions to the coordination of home, community and institutions and the combination of medical care and health care. The national allowance system for senior citizens with economic difficulties has achieved full coverage at the provincial level and all provinces across the country have introduced policies for the social preferential treatment of older persons. A subsidy system for the livelihood of persons with disabilities and a nursing subsidy for severely disabled

persons have been established in an all-round way, benefiting 10.69 million disabled persons with economic difficulties and 13.54 million severely disabled persons, respectively. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons has been formulated and amended to safeguard the legal rights and interests of disabled persons. A specialized employment service agency for the disabled has been established and the number of newly employed urban and rural disabled people has remained at over 300,000 per year. Efforts have been made in incorporating rehabilitation services for disabled persons into the basic public service plan, and comprehensively establishing and implementing a rehabilitation assistance system for disabled children, and the situation of rehabilitation services for disabled persons has improved significantly. As of 2018, there were 9,036 rehabilitation institutions for the disabled throughout the country. Vigorous support has been given to creating an accessible environment and providing assistive device services, and the Regulations on the Building of an Accessible Environment have been implemented to promote the national common sign language and Braille and serve the needs of special groups.

Fruitful results have been achieved in international human rights exchanges and cooperation. Since the establishment of the Human Rights Council in 2006, China has been elected as a member of the Council four times. China has actively participated in United Nations human rights affairs, earnestly fulfils its international human rights obligations, carried out extensive international human rights cooperation and promoted the adoption of resolutions such as the "Contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights" and "Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights" to actively provide Chinese wisdom and solutions for global human rights governance and advocated, through real actions, for the development of global human rights governance towards a more just, reasonable and inclusive direction. China participated in the third cycle of the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, accepted multiple reviews on its compliance with international human rights treaties, conducted constructive dialogues with the special procedures of the Council, and seriously and promptly responded to communications from the special procedures. Since 2016, China has received the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights and the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. On the basis of equality and mutual respect, China has held human rights dialogues and exchanges with more than 20 countries and regional organizations. It has hosted multiple times such events as the international seminar to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development, the seminar to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Beijing Forum on Human Rights and the South-South Human Rights Forum, which has served to enhance mutual understanding with other countries on human rights issues.

Protecting and promoting human rights in the fight against COVID-19. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Chinese Government has been giving top-most priority to people's lives and health. It has adopted the most comprehensive, rigorous and thorough prevention and control measures nationwide, and has made every effort to treat COVID-19 patients. Priority has been given to the protection of people's right to life and health. Within a very short period of time, medical teams were dispatched from across the country to the anti-COVID-19 front line in Hubei, and emergency medical facilities such as the Huoshenshan Hospital, the Leishenshan Hospital and 16 makeshift hospitals were established. Utmost efforts were made to provide equipment, beds, medicines and other materials, to adhere to the prevention and control requirements of early detection, early reporting, early isolation and early treatment and to the principle of the concentration of patients in designated hospitals, the pooling of experts and resources as well as the focused treatment of patients, so as to go all out to treat each patient. China has become one of the first countries in

the world to bring COVID-19 under control. As of May 15, the cure rate reached more than 94 per cent. Government finance bears the cost of patients' diagnosis and treatment, and medical institutions adopt the principle of "treatment first and charge later" to ensure that patients' tests and treatment are not hindered due to cost problems. Thirty-one provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government have issued first-level responses and proposed detailed measures to ensure the safety of people's lives and their physical health in accordance with local conditions. Local governments have successively issued a series of measures to support the rights of people's livelihood, such as resuming work and production, material security, transportation, energy security, tax reduction support and labour security. China ensures the highest protection of people's right to development. As the COVID-19 situation is by and large brought under control, China has sought to ensure the overall restoration of socioeconomic order by implementing a series of stage-specific policies, including the reductions and exemptions for basic endowment insurance, unemployment insurance, work-related injury insurance and basic medical insurance for workers, value-added tax relief and the provision of subsidies for the stabilization of employment, to reduce the costs of enterprises. The average rate of work resumption among industrial enterprises above a designated size in the country reached 99 per cent, and 94 per cent of staff in those enterprises. The comprehensive Purchasing Managers Index output index in April was 53.4 per cent, an increase of 0.4 percentage points from March, and was above the entrepreneurs' confidence threshold for two consecutive months. The resumption of work and production in China has served to reduce tremendously the huge global pressure in terms of demands for medical supplies. During the collective COVID-19 prevention and control period, the Chinese Government has put the right to know of the public as a priority and released COVID-19 information daily in a highly transparent manner, while strictly protecting personal privacy and information safety according to law. Upholding the principle of equal protection, China has treated patients equally, with same standards to all and preferential treatment to the vulnerable. It has also increased support to the impoverished, the unemployed and those living on minimum living subsidies. As of the end of March this year, nearly 1 million people were newly covered by minimum living subsidies due to COVID-19, and a temporary price subsidy of 3.71 billion yuan was granted to people living on minimum subsidies and extreme difficulty. China attaches high importance to the protection of life and health of Chinese citizens overseas, and has been distributing health kits and sending charter flights and temporary flights to bring those of them caught in a difficult situation back home in a gradual way. All foreigners in China are treated equally and their legitimate rights and interests are well protected in accordance with the law.

At the same time, with the vision of a community of shared future for mankind, China has acted with openness, transparency and responsibility, updating COVID-19 information in a most timely fashion and sharing experience on prevention, control and treatment with the World Health Organization and the international community without reservation. We have strengthened cooperation on key COVID-19-related scientific research projects and tried our best to support and assist others. As of May 15, China had held 153 videoconferences for health experts of more than 160 countries, in which all parties made in-depth exchanges on how to effectively respond to and defeat the virus. Fourteen medical expert teams have been sent to 22 countries to actively carry out foreign aid and cooperation within its capacity. The Chinese Government and civil organizations have provided much-needed medical supplies to more than 150 countries and international organizations.

In spite of the tremendous progress that China has made in economic and social development as well as in human rights, China remains a developing country with the salient problem of unbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable development and multiple challenges in protecting and promoting human rights. The Chinese

Government is advancing its thirteenth Five-Year Plan of economic and social development and the National Human Rights Action Plan (2016–2020) in a down-to-earth manner, and is setting its goals and tasks on the promotion and protection of human rights in the years ahead by working on the fourteenth Five-Year Plan and a new national human rights action plan. That will further push China’s human rights cause to a new level. The Chinese Government is ready to solemnly make the following pledges and commitments:

Comprehensive protection of economic, social and cultural rights. We will continue to implement the new development philosophy, build a modern economic system and implement rural revitalization strategies and regional coordinated development strategies. We will earnestly implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, further guarantee and improve people’s standard of living and ensure that all people share more fully the benefits of the nation’s reform and development in an equal way. We will further improve people’s standard of living and quality of life, upgrade the public service system and ensure that more people have equal access to such services. We will spare no effort in poverty alleviation towards lifting out of poverty all those who still live below the current poverty line. We will give priority to the development of education and improve the quality of employment and people’s income levels. With the promulgation of the Basic Medical and Health Care Promotion Law, it is clearly stated in Chinese law for the first time that “the State and society respect and protect citizens’ right to health”. We will implement the Healthy China strategy, strengthen the building of the social security system and establish and improve a basic medical and health system covering urban and rural residents in the entire nation. We will continue to accelerate the reform of the ecological civilization system and build a beautiful China.

Protection of citizens’ civil and political rights in accordance with the law. China will advance law-based governance, strengthen the legal protection of human rights and ensure the enjoyment of extensive rights and freedoms by people. We will improve the system to ensure that people are the masters of the country, expand orderly civil participation in political affairs, improve the check and supervision system for the operation of power, and protect and promote the full enjoyment of citizens’ rights to be informed, to participate, to be heard and to supervise. We will enforce law in a strict, standard, fair and civil manner, and protect citizens’ personal rights and dignity. We will promote judicial justice and guarantee litigants’ right to a fair trial. We will enhance the rule of law in addressing religious affairs and implement relevant stipulations in the Constitution concerning freedom of religious belief.

Full protection of the rights of special groups. China will prioritize the development of ethnic minorities and ethnic minority areas, respecting and protecting the rights of ethnic minorities. China will implement the basic State policy of gender equality to eliminate gender discrimination, improve the environment for women’s development and protect the legitimate rights and interests of women. Upholding the principle of “putting children first”, the Government and the whole society shall strengthen their responsibility for the protection of children’s rights and interests. China will respond actively to the ageing of the population, promote the social value to respect, provide for and help older persons and undertake mutual care projects for them. In that way, the legal rights and interests of older persons will be effectively protected. The Chinese Government will improve the system of the protection of the rights and interests of the disabled, raise the level of social security and basic public services for the disabled, and facilitate their participation in social life on an equal footing.

Active participation in international human rights undertakings. China will earnestly fulfil its obligations under the international human rights treaties to which

it has acceded, fully participate in the work of the United Nations human rights mechanisms and encourage the Human Rights Council and other mechanisms to attach equal importance to economic, social and cultural rights as to civil and political rights, and to function in an impartial, objective and non-selective manner. China will implement the commitments made during the third universal periodic review and, on the basis of equality and mutual respect, continue to hold human rights dialogues and consultations with relevant countries and regional organizations and conduct human rights technical cooperation with relevant countries.

Protection of people's livelihood and promotion of development while battling the virus. With the people-centred approach, China will continue to put the core interests of safeguarding people's life and health as the priority and people as the main force in COVID-19 prevention and control, and coordinate the prevention and control of the virus with socioeconomic development arrangements. While maintaining regular anti-COVID-19 efforts, China will step up efforts to ensure stability in employment, the financial sector, foreign trade, foreign investment, domestic investment and expectations, in order to maintain security in terms of jobs, basic living needs, operations of market entities, food and energy security, stable industrial and supply chains, and the normal functioning of primary-level governments. The Chinese Government will continue to follow the overarching principle of pursuing progress while ensuring stability, apply the new development philosophy, pursue supply-side structural reform as its main task and draw momentum from reform and opening up to promote high-quality development. Upholding multilateralism, China will engage in international anti-COVID-19 cooperation featuring collective and coordinated prevention and control, promote global public health governance, strengthen coordination and cooperation among all sides, consolidate global consensus on fighting the virus in solidarity and step up international macroeconomic policy coordination to cope with the downward pressure of the world economy.

There is always room for improving human rights. There is no universally applicable model, and human rights can advance only in the context of national conditions and people's needs. China will continue to make overall economic, political, cultural, social and environmental progress, known as the Five-point Strategy, and it will make coordinated moves to complete the task of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, further reforms, advance the rule of law and strengthen Party discipline, known as the Four-pronged Strategy. In this way, China will eliminate absolute poverty and complete the task of building a moderately prosperous society in 2020, basically realize socialist modernization by 2035 and build a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful by 2050. With the realization of these objectives, the protection of human rights in China will reach a new high. China will, as usual, work with the international community and strive for the healthy development of the international human rights cause.