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

Letter dated 1 August 2016 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of China has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2017-2019 at the elections to be held in New York in 2016 during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

I enclose herewith a copy of the aide-memoire of commitments on the candidature of China for membership of the Human Rights Council, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 115 (d) of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) **Liu Jieyi**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

* Reissued for technical reasons on 14 September 2016.

** [A/71/150](#).



Annex to the letter dated 1 August 2016 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of China for membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2017-2019

Aide-memoire of commitments

[Original: Chinese and English]

1. The Government of China has decided to present its candidature for membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2017-2019. The elections will be held in New York in 2016 during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.
2. China attaches great importance to promoting and protecting human rights. Respect for and protection of human rights have been enshrined in the Constitution of the Communist Party of China, the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and China's national economic and social development plans. Combining universal principles of human rights with its own national conditions, China has been working vigorously to promote economic and social development, advance social equality and justice, strengthen legal guarantees for human rights and the rule of law and facilitate the comprehensive and coordinated development of economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. China has embarked on a path of human rights development suited to its own national conditions.
3. The Chinese Government has fulfilled the commitments made during its campaign for membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2014-2016, including the following main commitments.

Economic, social and cultural rights have been comprehensively strengthened

4. China has become the world's second largest economy and has steadily improved the living standards of its people. The number of rural poor was reduced by 66.63 million between 2012 and 2015. More jobs were created, and the number of employed people in urban and rural areas reached 770 million in 2015. Nine years of education are now compulsory for all, and school conditions in poor areas have been improved.
5. China has gradually put in place the world's largest medical insurance and social security systems, with 858 million people covered by the national pension insurance system and over 1.33 billion people covered by basic employee medical insurance, basic medical insurance for urban residents and new rural cooperative medical insurance. China pays particular attention to its 277 million migrant workers, 85 million persons with disabilities, 61 million left-behind children in rural areas, 66 million low-income urban and rural residents and 5.91 million people living in extreme poverty. Since 2013, more than 20 million residential units have been built as government-subsidized housing and as part of the rebuilding of run-down urban areas.

Civil and political rights have been effectively guaranteed

6. The Chinese people enjoy more extensive democratic rights and freedoms in accordance with the law, and the legal guarantees for human rights and the rule of law have been enhanced. China has worked actively to make government affairs more transparent and to guarantee people's rights to be informed, to participate in public affairs, to express their views and to supervise government work. Efforts have been made to streamline administration, delegate power to lower levels and to introduce a list of governmental review and approval powers. Freedom of religious belief is fully guaranteed.

7. Steady progress has been achieved in strengthening legal guarantees for human rights and the rule of law, and a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics that includes 250 valid laws has been established. The practice of re-education through labour has been abolished. China's Criminal Law was amended in 2011 and 2015, abolishing the death penalty for 22 criminal charges. China has deepened the reform of the judicial system, improved the lawsuit system and strictly observed the principles of "crime and penalty defined by statute", "no prosecution in doubtful cases" and "eliminating illegal evidence". Procuratorial organs disallowed the arrests of 816,379 people between 2012 and 2015. China has made great efforts to improve the mechanisms to prevent, redress and seek accountability for cases involving unjust, false and wrongful charges, to ensure that all judicial authorities perform their duties in a lawful, independent and just manner and to safeguard the rights of its citizens, including the right of person and the right to impartial trial.

The rights of ethnic minorities, women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities have been further protected

8. The right of ethnic minorities to equal participation in the management of State and society is guaranteed in accordance with the law. All 55 ethnic minority groups in China have their own deputies to the National People's Congress. Ethnic minority areas have achieved fast economic and social development, with the gross domestic product (GDP) of eight regions and provinces inhabited by large minority populations increasing from 5.8505 trillion yuan in 2012 to 7.4736 trillion yuan in 2015. The traditional cultures of ethnic minorities are protected and developed and their rights to learn, use and develop their own languages are truly respected and safeguarded.

9. The Chinese Government protects the equal right of women to be employed in line with the Employment Promotion Law. Criminal punishment for the trafficking of women and children has been reinforced. China's first anti-domestic violence law was adopted. The health conditions of women and children have been improved. The system for bettering the lives of children in difficult circumstances has been improved through the launching initiatives to provide temporary surrogate parents, family pairing and assistance to children in troubled circumstances, with the number of beneficiaries reaching 13.129 million. China has gradually improved the mechanism to protect the rights and interests of the elderly and the old-age insurance system. By the end of 2015, there were 115,000 old-age nursing institutions and facilities nationwide, an increase of 151 per cent compared with 2012. Protection of the rights and interests of people with disabilities, including the rights to education, employment and cultural services, has been constantly

improved. China has established a livelihood subsidy system for the disabled poor and a nursing subsidy system for the severely disabled.

Great achievements have been made in international human rights exchange and cooperation

10. China has been elected as a member of the Human Rights Council on three occasions, becoming one of its longest-serving members. China fully observes its international human rights obligations and supports the United Nations human rights mechanisms in working in a just, objective and non-selective way. China supports the legitimate propositions of developing countries and urges the international community to give equal emphasis to economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. China is explicitly opposed to the politicizing of human rights issues, calls upon all countries to engage in dialogue and cooperation, and opposes the practices of publicly exerting pressure, naming and shaming and provoking confrontation.

11. China smoothly underwent the second round of its universal periodic review by the Human Rights Council, had dialogues with the human rights treaty bodies on China's implementation of those treaties, engaged in constructive dialogues with the special procedures of the Council and replied to their letters in a serious manner. China played host to the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice and to the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights. China has conducted human rights dialogues and exchanges with nearly 20 countries and regional organizations on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

12. Despite tremendous achievements in economic and social development as well as with respect to the human rights cause, China remains a developing country with acute problems of unbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable development that faces multiple challenges in promoting and protecting human rights. The Chinese Government is working on a new national human rights action plan in line with the 13th five-year plan for economic and social development, identifying the objectives and tasks for human rights promotion and protection for the period 2016-2020. This will further advance the human rights cause in China.

13. The Chinese Government is ready to make the following solemn commitments.

Comprehensively promote economic, social and cultural rights

14. By 2020, China will double its GDP and per capita income for urban and rural residents (compared with 2010 levels). China aims to lift out of poverty the 55.75 million rural residents who fall below the national poverty line. China will build a fairer and more sustainable social security system, promote access to fairer and higher quality education and increase the average length of schooling received by the working-age population from 10.23 to 10.80 years. China will adopt a more proactive employment policy and create over 50 million additional jobs in urban areas. China will improve its income distribution system so as to narrow income gaps.

15. China will provide better housing by rebuilding 20 million residential units in run-down urban areas. A basic medical care system covering all urban and rural residents will be established and the average life expectancy will increase by one year by 2020. China will advocate a green production and living approaches, with a view to improving the ecological environment. China will build a modern public cultural service system so as to enrich the cultural lives of its people.

Ensure civil and political rights in accordance with the law

16. China will improve the system of democracy, develop diverse forms of democracy and expand citizen participation in political affairs in an orderly way. China will strengthen the system of consultative democracy, accelerate community building and enhance democracy at grassroots levels. China will endeavour to improve legal guarantees for human rights, accelerate legislation in key areas and promote scientific and democratic legislation. Efforts will be made to deepen reform of the judicial system in order to ensure judicial fairness and credibility. Adjudicatory supervision will be reinforced so that people feel that there is fairness and justice in each judicial case.

17. China will promote the reform of the people's assessor system to strengthen judicial democracy. The rights of Chinese lawyers in their professional capacity will be protected in accordance with the law. China will provide better judicial assistance by improving lawsuit service centres and the legal services system. China will integrate education on human rights and the rule of law into legislation, law enforcement and judicial practices and enhance the awareness of the whole society with respect to human rights and the rule of law.

Fully protect the rights and interests of ethnic minorities, women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities

18. China will adhere to and improve the system of regional autonomy for ethnic minorities, continue to carry out preferential policies with respect to ethnic minorities and protect and develop their fine traditional cultures so that their rights will be truly respected and protected. China adheres to the basic policies of gender equality and putting children first and will strengthen protection of the rights and interests of women and children. China protects the equal rights and opportunities of women to education, employment, marital property and participation in social affairs. China will strengthen legal guarantees of the rights of minors, including their rights to life, development, protection and participation. China will severely punish the crime of trafficking women and children.

19. China will work to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy a higher standard of living along with the rest of the society, strengthen their full access to rehabilitation services and improve disability prevention efforts. China will guarantee the right of people with disabilities to education, facilitate their employment and reduce their level of poverty. China will improve the social security system, in particular for groups in difficulty such as children living in difficult conditions, left-behind children in rural areas, the very old, the incapacitated elderly, the severely disabled and the disabled poor.

Continue its active participation in international exchange and cooperation on human rights

20. China will be deeply involved in the work of the Human Rights Council, the Third Committee of the General Assembly and other multilateral human rights mechanisms and will promote the fulfilment of their responsibilities in a just and objective manner. China will call upon all parties to engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation and to attach equal importance to economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. China will continue to speak up for developing countries and oppose interference in other countries' internal affairs on the pretext of human rights. China will earnestly fulfil its obligations under the international human rights treaties it has acceded to and have constructive dialogues with relevant treaty bodies on China's implementation of its treaty obligations.

21. China will have constructive dialogues with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, reply to letters from the special procedures in a serious and timely manner and arrange visits to China by special procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights and the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, taking into consideration China's capacity to host. China will continue its human rights dialogues and consultations on the basis of equality and mutual respect, with relevant countries and regional organizations, and will carry out technical cooperation on human rights with relevant countries.

22. There is always room for improvement with respect to human rights. The human rights cause is an important and integral part of a country's economic and social development that must and can only be promoted in line with national conditions and the needs of the people of each country. China will follow an overall plan for promoting all-round economic, political, cultural, social and ecological progress and a four-pronged comprehensive strategy, implement a development concept featuring innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development, and make arduous efforts to achieve its two centennial goals and the Chinese dream of great national rejuvenation. This will enable China's human rights cause to attain even greater achievements. As always, China is willing to work together with the international community and make unremitting efforts to promote the sound development of the international human rights cause.
