

Practices and Recommendations on Strengthening Transnational Exchanges and Cooperation on the Protection of Minority Rights

Distinguished Special Rapporteur, dear organizers of the Forum:

I'm Ms. Qiu Peng from the Department of International Exchanges of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission (NEAC) of the People's Republic of China. I am glad to share with you China's practices and experience on strengthening transnational exchanges and cooperation on the protection of minority rights. For a long time, NEAC has attached great importance to strengthening exchanges and cooperation in the protection and development of minority rights with counterpart government agencies of other countries as well as the concerned UN entities. During this process, we have accumulated some useful experience in establishing transnational and trans-regional networks, mainly including the following:

First, the section in charge of international exchanges should be set up in competent agencies. There are more than 2,000 ethnic groups in over 200 countries and regions in the world. In many countries, the central government has an agency responsible for ethnic-related affairs, and has accumulated experience in the protection of ethnic minority rights with its characteristics. To enhance international exchanges in this

regard helps to deepen mutual understanding, share governance experience and strengthen pragmatic cooperation in the cause of safeguarding minorities' rights at home and abroad. The establishment of section responsible for international exchanges with professional staff and special budget in competent government agencies sets the basis for transnational and trans-regional exchanges and cooperation as well as for the building of networks. Apart from the Department of International Exchanges, there are sections or personnel responsible for international exchanges in all the educational and cultural organizations directly affiliated to NEAC, which have long been committed to the cause in various concerned fields and have achieved fruitful results.

Second, international exchange mechanism and relations should be established between concerned agencies. In order to strengthen the exchange of experience in the protection of minority rights in relevant countries and improve the effectiveness and sustainability of international exchanges and cooperation, competent government agencies of relevant countries should be encouraged to establish institutionalized exchange relations through ways such as signing agreements, so as to clarify the contents and forms of exchanges, which can include high-level group visits, exchanges and cooperation on

ethnic minority affairs governance, economic and social development in ethnic minority areas, traditional culture preservation and minority education, personnel training as well as academic discussions, etc. In the agreement, clauses to support relevant NGOs and academic institutions to strengthen international exchanges and cooperation can also be included in order to promote friendly interaction at all levels. Such institutionalized exchanges and cooperation can be bilateral or regional. The Special Rapporteur and relevant UN entities may provide higher platforms for and leverage their positive roles in this regard. For example, opportunities for mutual acquaintance and understanding can be provided for relevant agencies in minority forums and regional forums.

Third, promotion and protection of minority rights should be carried out with the support of pragmatic cooperative projects. On the basis of equality and mutual respect, and according to national realities and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, competent government agencies of relevant countries should strengthen practical cooperation and make joint efforts to promote the implementation of relevant contents in international instruments such as *the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* and *the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or*

Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The Chinese government has taken effective policies and measures in eliminating poverty among ethnic minorities, preserving and inheriting ethnic minority cultures, and promoting ethnic unity and progress. In recent years, NEAC has launched seminars concerning the above subjects for foreign officials and experts in the ethnic field from neighboring and developing countries to share and exchange ideas and practices, which have received positive results and favorable feedback. We hope that the Special Rapporteur and relevant UN entities may play a more active role in promoting practical cooperation so as to enrich and support the development of international networks in the regard.

Thank you!

Sincerely yours,

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