

Advance the Global Human Rights Cause and
Build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

Address by H.E. Wang Yi
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At the Opening Ceremony of the First South-South Human Rights Forum

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Distinguished Guests,
Friends,

On behalf of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, I would like to extend our sincere congratulations on the opening of the first South-South Human Rights Forum and our warm welcome to you all.

This high-level international human rights forum is held not long after the successful conclusion of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC). The Congress identified the goal of forging a new form of international relations and building a community with a shared future for mankind. This is China's answer to the question where the human society is heading, and it has also created opportunities for the development of the human rights cause. This forum, under the theme of "Building a Community of Shared Future for Human Beings: New Opportunity for South-South Human Rights Development" is thus both relevant and important. President Xi Jinping's congratulatory message delivered just now by Minister Huang Kunming, together with Minister Huang's important remarks, has provided important guidance for the success of the forum.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Human rights for all is what the Chinese government and people have been striving for. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, under the leadership of the CPC and through unremitting efforts, the Chinese people have scored unprecedented achievements in human history and blazed an oriental pathway toward modernization.

China has managed to meet the basic living needs of its 1.3

billion-plus people, lifted more than 800 million people out of poverty, and created 770 million jobs. We have put in place the world's largest education system, social welfare system and community-level democratic election system, making historic progress in human rights development in China. China's endeavors have also provided new viable solutions to challenges in the protection of human rights worldwide.

China's experience shows that human rights can be protected in more than one way. Countries can find their own models of human rights protection in light of their national conditions and people's needs. The key factor contributing to China's remarkable achievements in its human rights endeavors is its firm commitment to a human rights development path with Chinese characteristics.

— This is a path based on China's reality. Experience is the mother of wisdom. China's human rights development path is rooted in China's 5000-year history and culture, inspired by our exploration and hard work of more than 170 years since modern times and underpinned by the great practice of the past 68 years since the founding of the People's Republic, especially the great practice of reform and opening-up over the past four decades. By integrating the universal principles of human rights with China's specific conditions, promoting mutually reinforcing progress in democracy and people's well-being, and upholding peace and development in a holistic way, we have blazed a path of human rights development with Chinese characteristics.

— This is a people-centered path. As human rights and democracy are all about the people, the ultimate goal of this path is to serve the interests of the Chinese people. By upholding the people's role as masters of the state and developing socialist consultative democracy, we have worked to improve democracy, diversify its forms and expand its channels. By ensuring the principal status of our people, we have worked to enhance their well-being and promote well-rounded human development and common prosperity for everyone. The Chinese people know the best about China's human rights situation and are in the best position to decide on China's path of human rights development.

— This is a path where development is a top priority. We believe that development is what matters. We have pursued innovation-driven, coordinated, green, open and inclusive development to build up China's economic strength. We have made every effort to advance people's well-being in employment, health care, education and social security so

that our people have a greater sense of fulfillment as they contribute to and gain from development. In the earnest implementation of the *United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, we are committed to leaving no one behind in our endeavor of poverty eradication. By sharing with the world China's development experience and opportunities, we are connecting the Chinese dream with the dream of the world, making even more contribution to the human rights cause of the world.

— This is a path guided by the rule of law. As a Chinese adage goes, “Law is the very foundation of governance.” We have worked to improve the socialist system of laws with Chinese characteristics, at the heart of which is the Constitution, and to promote the integrated development of rule of law for the country, the government and society. We have pressed ahead with the judicial system reform, centering around the judicial accountability reform to make fairness and justice prevail. In safeguarding international fairness and justice, China firmly upholds the basic principles of international law with the United Nations Charter at its core. We believe that all countries are equal regardless of their size, and we reject the politicization of human rights or the practice of double standards in the protection of human rights.

— This is a path where opening-up is the driving force for growth. Reform and opening-up is the most distinctive feature of contemporary China. China has championed world multi-polarity, economic globalization and cultural diversity. To improve our own development, we have drawn on both the wisdom of our own civilization and the strengths of other cultures in the spirit of openness and inclusiveness. In this process, China refuses to stay insensitive to the changing times or blindly follow in others' steps. We respect the development path and human rights protection model of other countries that are determined by their own free will. We stand for dialogue, exchanges and mutual learning for common progress on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

The 19th National Congress of the CPC set the goal for China's future development. By 2020, we will have finished the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects and rooted out poverty. By 2035, we will have basically achieved modernization. By 2050, we will have developed China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful. Under the guidance of this blueprint, China will scale new heights in its development and open a new chapter in its human rights cause.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Developing countries have always been a staunch force in promoting human rights. In the struggles against fascism, militarism, colonialism and hegemonism, developing countries initiated and participated in the formulation of a series of milestone international instruments, such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*, the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, the *African Charter on Human and People's Rights*, the *Declaration on the Right to Development*, the Millennium Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, making indelible contribution to the establishment of the right to independence, right to subsistence, economic, social and cultural rights, right to development, and collective rights.

The future development of the human rights cause cannot be advanced without the concerted efforts of developing countries. Facing the deficit in peace, development and human rights in various parts of the world, developing countries should, guided by the general trends and the demand of our times, forge a new form of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation, build a community with a shared future for mankind, and make new efforts for social progress, improved livelihood and fundamental freedoms. Let me share with you some of my thoughts:

— We need to promote human rights through peace. Security is the most important human right. Peace is a blessing for all and war is the common scourge to the world. What are human rights without peace? What is dignity without security?

We need to uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and consolidate the foundation of peace. Historical experience and lessons tell us that no matter how the situation evolves, the basic principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in other countries' internal affairs are still the unshakable foundation of international relations; no matter how the trend of the times develops, multilateralism and the collective security mechanism are still important pillars of international relations that should not be violated.

We need to forge partnerships with dialogue rather than wage confrontation and promote friendship rather than alliance. We need to

tighten the bond of peace. We need to urge various parties to abandon power politics and the law of the jungle and to promote greater democracy and the rule of law in international relations. We should adhere to the principle that all countries, big or small, are equal, and all civilizations should be treated as equals. We should accord each other equality and respect, and resolve disputes and differences through dialogue and consultation.

We need to foster the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and bolster the protection of peace. In the face of such global threats as terrorism, cyber security and climate change, no one should sit idly by or shift his troubles onto his neighbors. Joint commitment and concerted efforts are the only way out.

— We need to promote human rights through development. The right to development is the primary human right for developing countries. There are still over 700 million people living in hunger, more than 128 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, over 65 million displaced, and 24 million children in conflict zones who cannot go to school. All these are serious “human rights deficit” that must be immediately addressed. The gap must be bridged and the challenges must be met.

We need to take poverty elimination as a central task, implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and incorporate it into our development strategies. We need to advance economic, social and environmental progress in a balanced manner and vigorously pursue the goal of “zero poverty” to ensure that development outcomes will benefit all.

We need to seize the historic opportunity presented by the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, boost reform and innovation, speed up efforts to catch up with the trend of industrialization and modernization to realize “corner overtaking”. Developing countries need to leverage their competitive edges and share development experience to facilitate “leapfrog development”. Developed countries need to honor their commitments and take more and concrete measures in ODA, debt reduction and technology transfer to contribute to common development.

We need to uphold an open world economy, build a fair, equitable, inclusive and orderly international economic and financial system, promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and foster

an enabling environment for the growth of developing countries. We should make economic globalization more open, inclusive, equitable, and balanced so that the development dividend will be shared by all countries and all peoples.

— We need to promote human rights through cooperation. The essence of human rights is to promote the well-rounded human development. To attain the goal, equal-footed cooperation is the fundamental way. Human rights, when used as a means of pressure, will only hurt oneself as well as others, whereas serving as a bond of cooperation, human rights could benefit all. It is important to work for dialogue and cooperation between all parties on the basis of equality and mutual respect. No one is in a position to lecture others on human rights, nor has the right to level prejudiced accusations at other countries' human rights practices.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach in human rights practices. No one path of human rights development should be regarded as the only choice, nor should we mechanically follow the paths of other countries. Instead of imposing either eastern or western models, we need to advocate diversity and localization, and work for a rebalancing of human rights models. No one path or system is superior to others as each has its own distinctive features. It is important to draw on the strengths of others and seek harmony without uniformity. All countries should respect others' human rights paths and systems while pursuing their own, and advance human rights development for all.

— We need to promote human rights through equality. Given the unequal rights, unequal opportunities and unfair rules in the global human rights governance system, developing countries, as the immediate victims of such inequality and unfairness, should be strong advocates for change and reform.

We need to work to increase the representation and voice of developing countries in global human rights governance system, and to ensure that the international human rights institutions truly reflect the needs and interests of developing countries in terms of rule-making, membership and staff structure, as developing countries account for four-fifths of the UN member states and 80% of the world's population.

We need to work for accommodation of the concerns of developing countries in international human rights cooperation. There should be greater attention to the right to development as well as economic, social

and cultural rights and increased input in such areas as development, health, sports, women, children, and people with disabilities to promote balanced progress of the two categories of human rights. Efforts should also be made to advance just and equitable human rights governance to enable developing countries to benefit from international human rights cooperation and governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The protection of human rights is an important part of our efforts to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Let us jointly advance the sound development of the global human rights cause and make greater contribution to the prosperity and dignity of mankind.

In conclusion, I wish this forum a full success.