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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by China Society for Human Rights Studies (CSHRS), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



The United States of America's Incompetent Pandemic Containment Leads to the Violation of the Right to Life

The United States of America claimed to be most abundant in medical resources and healthcare capacity, yet its response to the COVID-19 pandemic was chaotic, causing it to lead the world in the numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases and related deaths. The Trump administration has responded to the virus with a passive attitude that it will “miraculously go away”. However, the virus has not been effectively controlled in the United States so far, but it has become increasingly intense. On August 15, 2021, the number of confirmed cases in the United States in the past two weeks increased by 64%. More than 70,000 Americans were hospitalized per day, with more than 130,000 newly confirmed cases and 662 new deaths per day. The total number of confirmed cases is 36,727,846, and 621,228 Americans lost their lives due to the virus in total. Even these numbers do not give the whole picture of the state, because many cases, including mild or asymptomatic infections, had not been diagnosed. Behind the cold numbers are the bloody lives of Americans, as epidemiologist and former head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) William Foege had put it, is “a slaughter” to the United States. Incompetent pandemic response led to dire consequences, the United States government have brought immeasurable global crises and human disasters. The United States has not only ignored the spirit of humanitarianism, but has also forgotten that as a State Party of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the United States government is obliged to take active measures to protect the right to life of American citizens.

Since 2020, the United States has experienced three waves of the erosion of COVID-19, and now it is the fourth wave of rising. Why has the United States missed the crucial time to prevent and control the pandemic again and again? First of all, the United States puts political interests above people's lives. In the early stage of the pandemic, political struggles in the United States hindered the timely approval of the national comprehensive plan for COVID-19, thus delayed the implementation of anti-pandemic measures and the allocation resources. As a result, six months after the outbreak of the pandemic, the federal government has not yet developed a unified national strategy to protect people's right to life. Disease modelers with the Columbia University estimated that, if the United States had begun locking down cities and limiting social contact on March 1, 2020, two weeks earlier than most people started staying home, about 84 percent of the nation's pandemic-related deaths would have been avoided. It can be seen that the failure of the United States to against COVID-19 is not only a natural disaster, but also a man-made disaster. In addition, the government's incompetence in decision-making have led to the continued deterioration of the pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic, national leaders ignored warnings from WHO and infectious diseases experts, downplayed the seriousness of the pandemic, and released non-scientific information that the virus is just “the common flu”. In a January 29, 2020 memo, White House trade adviser Peter Navarro projected that this pandemic might lead to as many as half a million deaths and trillions of dollars in economic losses. However, the United States government still had been extremely reluctant to issue any decree to make wearing masks mandatory, required slowing down the speed of testing, and even supported using high-risk hydroxychloroquine as a treatment. The FDA had clearly warned that hydroxychloroquine has serious side effects. Moreover, the United States government has not tightened up its customs controls. After the outbreak, more than 20 million American citizens still went abroad. In spite of the opposition of the international community, the United States government had forced deportation of immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to data tallied by the ICE, as of January 14, 2021, a total of 8,848 detainees had been confirmed as COVID-19 cases. According to a report on the website of the Los Angeles Times on November 18, 2020, since March 2020, the United States government had expelled at least 8,800 unaccompanied immigrant children despite serious protection risks during the COVID-19 outbreak. An article published on The New York Times on April 13, 2020 commented that, American leader's “preference for following his gut rather than the data cost time, and perhaps lives.” In terms of vaccine distribution, the United States government lacks a unified vaccine distribution plan and is unable to coordinate a loose medical system. This has led to serious unfair distribution of vaccines, and the right to life of vulnerable groups cannot be fully guaranteed. The KFF shows that the national vaccination rate is 61% for

whites and 12% for blacks, while the death rate for blacks is 3.6 times that of whites. Even more ridiculously, the United States government has vigorously promoted “Origin-tracing terrorism”, ignoring the lives of its own people, and putting a lot of time and resources are utilized to slander and suppress other countries. At the international level, the United States has had a devastating impact on global anti-pandemic cooperation. According to the report, the United States exports of vaccines account for less than 1% of vaccine production. The United States massive accumulation of COVID-19 vaccines and incompetent implementation of vaccine aid commitments have severely deprived developing countries of fair access to vaccines, resulting in an extremely unbalanced global vaccine distribution, and further widening the immunization gap between developed and developing countries.

The American people’s right to life is not guaranteed equally due to incompetent pandemic containment, leading to frequent occurrences of chaos such as disparity between the rich and the poor, social divisions, class consolidation, racial conflicts, regional conflicts, and intergenerational conflicts. Although the United States pursues “the supremacy of freedom”, a large amount of facts and data have proved that such value is useless for controlling COVID-19 pandemic. Humanitarianism must take precedence over ideology, nationalism and racism in pandemic containment. As a result, the United States government should correctly recognize the shortcomings of its governance, learn from the good practices of other countries, promote the human rights value of “the supremacy of life”, put people’s life safety and health first, develop active national action plans to protect the right to life of the people of the United States, work with the international community to build a community with a shared future for humanity.
