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High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Written statement* submitted by Chinese Association for International Understanding, 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 2022]

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



Remarkable Achievements in Ensuring Employment and Labor Rights for Ethnic Minorities in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China

Chinese Association for International Understanding(CAFIU) and China Ethnic Minorities' Association for External Exchanges(CEMAFEE) have long been attaching great importance to the protection of ethnic minorities' rights to employment and development in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China. In recent years, the United States of America and other Western countries have repeatedly imposed sanctions on related businesses and individuals in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China under the false pretext of "forced labor". For example, the United States of America has put into effect the so-called "Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act", which has seriously violated the employment and development rights of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China, including those of the Uyghur ethnic group. Recently, our two associations have specifically investigated the employment and labor rights of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China. We are now submitting our report to the United Nations Human Rights Council for reference in the hope of sharing relevant facts with relevant institutions concerned about Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China affairs.

I. The legitimate labor rights and interests of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China are protected

According to the investigation, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (UAR), China has been strictly implementing the Constitution of China, the Labor Law of China, the Labor Contract Law of China, and other provisions on protecting the workers' legitimate rights and interests. In addition, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China has formulated and implemented regional regulations including the Opinions on the Implementation of the Labor Law of China in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (UAR), China and the Measures for Implementing Regulations on Labor and Social Security Supervision in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (UAR), China. The establishment, management, supervision, and arbitration of labor relations among ethnic minorities in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China are all carried out in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

During the investigation, the team found that all forms of ethnic discrimination are prohibited by law in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China, and local ethnic minorities' work-related rights and interests are well protected. Based on the principles of equality, voluntariness, and consensus, ethnic minority workers in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China sign labor contracts with enterprises in accordance with the law. Besides, during their working, their rights of remuneration, rest and leave, labor safety and health protection, access to insurance and social welfare and so on are all protected in accordance with the law, and their rights and interests in religious beliefs, ethnic culture, and languages and scripts are respected and safeguarded. The investigation team went to Beijing and learned that Abdullah Turhong, an ethnic minority from Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China, has been running a restaurant in Beijing for eight years, and that he closes his business every Ramadan. He said: "Fasting has been my habit for many years, and no one has ever forbidden me from fasting."

II. The job preferences of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China are respected

As the saying goes, it is better to teach a man to fish than to give him a fish. The same is true for poverty alleviation: only by helping the recipients acquire certain skills can they truly get rid of poverty. The investigation team learned that in recent years, more and more urban and rural surplus laborers in the four prefectures of southern Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China (namely Hotan Prefecture, Aksu Prefecture, Kashgar Prefecture and

Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture) have shifted their attention to cities in northern Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China and comparatively more developed cities in inland China with higher wages, more comfortable living conditions, and better working environment. For example, Pashagul Keram from Wuqia County, Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture, has worked in Dongguan, Guangdong Province for many years. She has not only made herself better-off but also motivated nearly 600 fellow villagers to go out to work.

The investigation team also learned that ethnic minority people's voluntariness has always been the premise for Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China to organize them to go out to work. The government solicits in advance their employment preferences concerning their desired region, industry, type of work and post, and training needs. After voluntarily signing up, people will receive voluntary training on the required occupational skills for specific posts. For example, Aymigul, a farmer from Makit County in Kashgar Prefecture, volunteered to go out to work and helped her family get rid of poverty. "I hope I can start my own business in my hometown one day," she said.

Relevant government documents have clear elaboration and emphasis on relevant work processes. For example, the Plan on Promoting Training for Poverty Alleviation through Employment for Extremely Poor Areas in the Four Prefectures of Southern Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China (2018-2020) requires "to take every administrative village as a unit to find out the willingness and preferences of laborers from poor families on going out for employment" and "to provide entrepreneurship training for those with desire and conditions to start their own business". These statements reflect the government's respect for the job preferences of ethnic minorities. For those who are unwilling to be employed due to their health or other reasons, their will is fully respected, and they are not forced to sign up for training. Besides, public welfare jobs in local areas are set up and measures such as providing financial support are implemented to help them shake off poverty.

III. The income of ethnic minority workers in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China has grown steadily

Ethnic minorities working either within or outside of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China all have stable incomes. According to incomplete statistics, the annual per capita income of workers from Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China who are working in other provinces is about RMB40,000, roughly equal to the per capita disposable income of permanent urban residents in the places where they work. The local people who left their home to work elsewhere in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China (surplus impoverished rural labor seek employment outside their hometown to engage in labor or business activities to earn wage income or business income) have an annual per capita income of RMB30,000, much higher than earnings from farming. For example, Amina Rahman and her husband from a registered poor household in Ghoruchol Town, Awat County, Aksu Prefecture in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China, applied for jobs after seeing the information released by the township's labor and social security office in March 2018, and were then both hired by a company in Jiujiang City, Jiangxi Province. They now have a monthly income of about RMB9,000, paying off their loans and saving over RMB90,000 yuan.

According to the data released at the press conference on the economic performance of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China in the first half of 2022, the per capita disposable income of residents in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China was 10,748 yuan, a year-on-year increase of 6.3%, and the growth rate was 1.6 percentage points higher than that of the country, ranking sixth in the country. These figures show that thanks to the policies like poverty alleviation and rural revitalization, minority workers in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China have truly benefited from the rapid economic growth in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China and various employment security policies have worked effectively.

IV. Any incidents of forced labor are prevented and punished.

For a long time, China has taken a series of practical actions to firmly oppose all forced labor practices, especially in terms of legislation. China's Criminal Law, Labor Law, Labor Contract Law, Public Security Administrative Punishment Law and other relevant laws all stipulate that it is strictly forbidden to force a person to work by means of violence, threat, or illegal limitation of personal freedom, or to affront, physically punish, beat, illegally search or detain an employee. China actively fulfills its obligations under various international conventions and effectively protects workers' rights. China has ratified 28 international labor conventions to firmly oppose all forms of forced labor, including the Forced Labor Convention, 1930, and the Abolition of Forced Labor Convention, 1957, both of which are ratified in April 2022.

Strictly observing relevant laws and regulations, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China provides information on the law through education campaigns, strengthens the legal awareness of employers and employees, conducts routine inspections to ensure that labor laws are enforced, and takes resolute action to prevent or punish any incidents of forced labor.

Through investigation, we believe that the employment and labor rights of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China are fully protected. Xinjiang's Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China policies and practices concerning employment and job security conform to China's Constitution and relevant laws, as well as international labor and human rights standards, and meet the great aspiration of all ethnic groups to live a better life. They have served to improve people's well-being, and win their support. Therefore, we hope that the United Nations Human Rights Council will learn more about the employment and labor rights of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China, and we are also willing to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with other relevant institutions and organizations in protecting the rights of ethnic minorities.

China Ethnic Minorities' Association for External Exchanges (CEMAFEE), NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.