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**Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration
and Programme of Action**

Written statement* submitted by United Nations Association of China, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

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

[18 August 2022]

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



Practise Democracy Based on National Conditions, Respect the Right to Choose a Democratic Model

The United Nations Association of China (UNA-China) is focusing on the study of the impact of democracy on human rights. Earlier this year, we held meetings and discussed with the national and international experts and scholars on Practise Democracy Based on National Conditions, Respect the Right to Choose a Democratic Model. Participants shared the views that democracy is the common value of all mankind, but the practice of democracy is rich and diverse. They called for the international community to conduct exchanges and dialogues on democracy on the basis of mutual respect and equality, and jointly make greater contributions to the progress of all mankind. We hope that our views will be taken into account when the subject is discussed at the 51th HRC.

I. Limitations of western style democracy

Western style democracy is far from an insurmountable standard. Since the establishment of modern western democratic system, political rights have been linked to certain identities such as wealth and class. Its inherent defects such as inadequate representation, unfair distribution of representation, aggravated division, deliberation without decision, winner-take-all and money politics have been constantly exposed.

Unequal levels of representation. Politics in western democracy is often the game of the rich and the powerful, and those who are well connected. The interests of the minority and the weak are often overlooked. Due to voter apathy or low voter turnout, a government could actually be elected by a minority of the total electorate, which may call into question the legitimacy of the so-called democratically elected government.

Partisan politics aggravate division. Separation of powers between parliament and government makes parties constrain each other, fueling conflicts rather than seeking consensus, dividing the society instead of uniting the people.

Monopolize the definition of democracy and imposing western-style democratic system on other countries. The principles of “one person, one vote” and party competition underlying the western electoral system are propagated as the sole criterion for democracy. A handful of countries exploit democracy as a political tool, and interfere in the internal affairs of others in the name of democracy, undermining the democratization of international relations.

Incite ideological opposition. The opposition between so-called “democracy” and “authoritarianism” is a continuation of the Cold War mentality and bloc politics. It aims to artificially divide the international community into opposing groups, greatly damages the common interests of mankind.

II. Proposed principles in advancing democracy

No democratic system in the world is perfect, and there is no political system model that is applicable to all countries. The establishment of democratic systems and the development of democratic processes in all countries have their historical and national characteristics and have their own unique values. Whether a country is democratic or not should be judged by the people of the country. It should be measured by the practical effect and people's feelings, rather than by a few outsiders.

Democracy is a historical concept that is constantly evolving. Rooted in history, culture and tradition, democracy takes diverse forms and develops along the paths chosen by different peoples based on their exploration and innovation. No matter what difficulties a country may encounter on the road to democracy, it has the right to independently explore and make choices.

Uphold the people-centred principle. Democracy is a way of governing which depends on the will of the people and must be people-centered. Every modern state has the right to live by its own constitution developed within its own culture. The various procedures and

machinery of government are for the citizens of that state to determine. The efficiency and quality of democracy can be measured by the continuous improvement of people's living standards.

Respect principles of non-interference and state sovereignty. The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a state by other states and the principle of state sovereignty are longstanding. Members of the United Nations are treated on an equal legal basis. No country has the right to impose their model of government on others or has a monopoly on defining democracy.

The United Nations should be revitalized and remain at the core of the international order. The UN advocates the spirit of inclusiveness and upholds multiculturalism. It should be supported in playing a central role and always be at the core of the rules-based international order. It should continue to reform and play a strengthened role in advocating respect for differences and promoting equity and justice.

III. China's whole-process people's democracy

China's whole-process people's democracy is a great creation in uniting and leading the people to pursue, develop and realize democracy. It is China's new contribution to democratic theory and democratic politics.

It is a full-chain, all-dimensional and all-encompassing democracy. It integrates process-oriented democracy with results-oriented democracy, procedural democracy with substantive democracy, direct democracy with indirect democracy, and people's democracy with the will of the state.

It suits China's national conditions. The whole-process people's democracy is rooted in China's vast land, nourished by the culture and traditions of the Chinese civilization. It has always been based on the basic national conditions of China, such as a large population and weak economic foundation. It accurately grasps the historical stage China is in and takes into account the major changes facing Chinese society. It has a solid foundation in reality and broad prospects for development, and has won the wholehearted support of the people.

It is truly effective and workable for China. Chinese democracy embodies the will of the people, protects their rights and interests, stimulates their creativity, promotes state governance, and enhances the vitality of the country. It is highly democratic and effective, and is the recipe for the success of the socialist path of political development with Chinese characteristics. Under the guarantee of this system, China has created two miracles, i.e. rapid economic development and long-term social stability, achieved major strategic achievements in the fight against COVID-19, historically solved the problem of absolute poverty, built a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and moved toward common prosperity for all its people. These remarkable achievements have proved eloquently that whole-process people's democracy works well in China.

It provides reference for other developing countries. China's achievements in exploring and developing democracy have brought forth new understandings and recognition of democracy, enriched human political civilization, provided reference for and injected confidence in other countries in their pursuits of development path suitable for their national conditions.