



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
31 August 2021

English only

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## Human Rights Council

### Forty-eighth session

13 September–1 October 2021

Agenda item 3

**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]

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



## **Cultural Protection in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), China**

It is a universally acknowledged value and a policy doctrine which a responsible government insists that outstanding traditional culture should be fully protected and modern cultural industries should be proactively developed in order to satisfy the needs of the people to live a better cultural life in contemporary world. That is quite typical in Tibet Autonomous Region, China.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the peaceful liberation of Tibet (TAR, China). During the past 70 years, the central government of China and Tibet (TAR, China) local authorities have invested a lot in protecting outstanding traditional culture of Tibet (TAR, China), made tremendous achievements, and contributed Chinese wisdom and Chinese plan to the cause of cultural protection and development for all mankind. Based on the enormous field works in Tibet (TAR, China), we believe that culture in Tibet (TAR, China) has been protected fully and comprehensively, safeguarding the cultural rights of various ethnic groups in TAR, China, and summing up experiences deserving more recognition from international community.

The study and use of the Tibetan language is protected by law. Since the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region, China, the resolutions and regulations adopted by its people's congress, and the official documents and announcements by governments at various levels and government departments have all been issued in Chinese and Tibetan. The two languages are used in large meetings and major activities organized by local governments, enterprises and public institutions. In judicial proceedings, the Tibetan language is used to hear cases and make legal documents in accordance with the needs of Tibetan litigants, so as to guarantee the right of Tibetan citizens to use the language for litigation.

Tibetan classics are protected and utilized. In 1984, the state allocated funds for the establishment of the Archives of the Tibet Autonomous Region, China, which houses and preserves a large number of precious Tibetan archives. The archives in its collection now number more than 3 million items. The state supports the collection, collation, translation and publication of important Tibetan classics. It has organized the collation and publication of the Tibetan-language Chinese Tripitaka, the rescue and collation of the epic Life of King Gesar, and the publication of many valuable Tibetan classics, including the Collected Works of Ancient Tibetan Scholars, Library of Chinese Classics: Tibet Volume, and the "Library of Snowfield Classics" series.

The state respects and protects the rights of all ethnic groups in Tibet (TAR, China) to live and conduct social activities in accordance with traditional customs and habits. While maintaining their traditional ways and styles of dress, diet and housing, people of all ethnic groups have also absorbed many new and modern cultural customs. The Tibetan New Year, the Shoton Festival in Lhasa, and the Horse Racing Festival in Nagqu are among a large number of cultural and traditional festivals that have been conserved and upgraded. In recent years, various cultural and tourism festivals, such as the Commemoration Day for the Liberation of One Million Serfs in Tibet (TAR, China), the Mount Qomolangma Culture and Art Festival in Xigaze, the Yarlung Cultural Festival in Shannan, and the Peach Blossom Festival in Nyingchi, have enriched the lives of Tibetan people and showcased their vitality in the new era.

Over the past few decades, Tibet (TAR, China) has organized large-scale and systematic surveys, and the collection, collation and research of cultural heritage. A total of 4,277 cultural relics sites of all kinds have been examined and registered. Tibet (TAR, China) has 1,985 cultural relics sites under the protection of governments at different levels, of which 70 are under state protection. Since restorative work was done on the Jokhang Temple in 1972, the state has continued to invest huge funds in the maintenance and protection of the Potala Palace, Norbulingka, Jokhang Temple and other cultural relics and historic sites. At the end of 2018, the state launched a 10-year project to protect and utilize cultural relics of the Potala Palace – mainly ancient books and documents – at an investment of RMB300 million. From 2006 to 2020, the state allocated more than RMB3.4 billion for the maintenance of 155 cultural relic sites under protection, including the renovation and

expansion of the Tibet Museum. Thirty-five villages have been added to the list of Traditional Chinese Villages, and central government funding of RMB69 million has been used to protect elements of agricultural civilization and cultural heritage and to improve the living environment of farmers and herdsmen.

Since 2006, the state has invested a total of RMB209 million in Tibet (TAR, China) in the following areas – protecting intangible cultural heritage (ICH) items on the national representative list, taking steps to record and conserve the knowledge and skills of the bearers of the ICH items on the national list, training ICH practitioners, and assisting them to set up sites for the protection and utilization of intangible cultural heritage and pass on their skills. Tibet (TAR, China) now has three items (Gesar, Tibetan opera and Lum medicinal bathing of Sowa Rigpa) included on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. There are 89 items on the national ICH list with 96 state-level representative bearers, 460 items on the regional list with 522 regional-level representative bearers.

The public cultural service system keeps improving. As of 2020, there is a five-tiered public cultural service system in place, which consists of the autonomous region, city/prefecture, county/district, town/township, and village/community levels. Libraries, people's art halls, museums, comprehensive culture centers, and reserved halls have become important sites where people can participate in cultural activities. Tibet (TAR, China) now has 10 professional performing art troupes, 76 art troupes at county/district level, 153 part-time Tibetan opera troupes, 395 performing teams at township level and 5,492 at administrative village level, with more than 100,000 performers, including amateurs and professionals. Designed to meet people's cultural aspirations, free or subsidized performances have become increasingly colorful, and more than 24,000 such shows have been staged.

Modern education in Tibet (TAR, China) has been developing in fast pace. In old Tibet, there was not a single proper school. The illiteracy rate exceeded 95 percent, to say nothing of complete ignorance of modern science and technology. From 1951 to 2020, the central government invested RMB224 billion in Tibet (TAR, China)'s education. Now, the region has established a modern educational system which includes preschool, primary and middle schools, vocational and technical schools, institutions of higher learning, and continuing and special education institutions. Students enjoy 15 years of publicly-funded compulsory education. All primary schools are offering math course, all middle schools have completed teaching plans for math, physics, chemistry, and biology courses, and all vocational and technical schools are offering the courses prescribed in the national catalog of courses for these schools. A campaign to popularize senior high school education was completed on schedule. Since 2015, organized educational professionals from across the country have made a tremendous contribution to Tibet (TAR, China)'s education system. At present, Tibet (TAR, China) has 3,195 schools of various types and at various levels, hosting more than 790,000 students. These include seven institutions of higher learning, 12 secondary vocational schools, 143 middle schools, and 827 primary schools. In addition, more than 92,000 students attend schools outside the region. The gross enrollment rate for the three-year preschool education has reached 87 percent. The net enrollment rate in primary school is more than 99.9 percent, and the gross enrollment rate in junior high, senior high, and higher education are 107, 90.2 and 56.1 percent respectively. Basic balanced development of compulsory education has been realized in all counties. The completion rate for compulsory education has reached 95 percent, and new entrants to the region's workforce now have an average of 13.1 years of education.

The process of cultural protection and development in Tibet (TAR, China) during the past 70 years might tell us several experiences. Firstly, government attention and investment matters. The Chinese government strongly supports traditional cultural protection and modern cultural industry development, and mobilizes social forces to advance cultural protection. Secondly, the real cultural needs of the people should be fully respected. The central government of China and Tibet (TAR, China) local authorities, based on the people-oriented idea for development, have established a comprehensive system of cultural protection and development, so as to meet the demands of people of different ethnic groups in Tibet (TAR, China) to live better cultural lives. Thirdly, subjectivity of the people in cultural protection and development should be enhanced. People in Tibet (TAR, China) is not only service objects, but also acting subjects in culture causes. The Chinese government has mobilized

people of various levels and sectors to participate in local cultural protection and development, enhanced the initiative and creativity of the people and achieved sustainability of cultural protection in Tibet (TAR, China) through the combination of state, social and market forces.

Based on observation of the Tibet (TAR, China) case, it is obvious that cultural protection and development is not an isolated field, but one requires coordination among different section of the state and society, of which a responsible government that really cares about its people is indispensable.

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