

Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in Relation to the Performance of the Chinese Government in Eliminating Sex Role Stereotyping and Prejudice

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1. We are pleased to note that since 2014, when China's combined seventh and eighth periodic report on its implementation of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) was reviewed, the Chinese government has taken a series of measures to eliminate gender stereotyping (in accordance with Article 5 of the CEDAW) by means of introducing laws and regulations, conducting gender equality training workshops, and strengthening evaluation and monitoring of the media, and etc., which have effectively reduced sex role stereotyping and prejudice.

2. We are pleased to see that the government has revised or introduced a number of laws and regulations to eliminate gender discrimination. *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests*, newly revised in 2022, clearly stipulates that the government shall incorporate the basic state policy of equality between men and women into the national education system, provides publicity and education, enhance public awareness, and cultivate social customs to promote gender equality. *Advertising Law of the People's Republic of China*, revised in 2021, prohibits any sexually discriminatory content in advertisement. *The China National Programme for Women's Development (2021-2030)* calls for promoting gender equality in universities, primary and secondary schools, raising awareness of gender equality among the public and government organs, and strengthening evaluation and assessment of the media.

3. We are pleased to see that training and education in promoting gender equality continue to grow. In 2014, several government agencies including the State Council Information Office, the Ministry of Culture, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film

and Television of China, coordinated by the Office of National Working Committee on Children and Women (NWCCW) under State Council, jointly held the first “Gender Awareness Training Program for Press Workers”. From 2016 to 2018, the All-China Women’s Federation held 45 training workshops themed on Internet and new media across the country. In many provinces, training programs for local officials have integrated gender mainstreaming in lectures and courses. The Ministry of Education (the MOE) has introduced knowledge of women’s rights and gender equality into textbooks and courses like Chinese literature and history. In addition, the MOE requires that images implying sexual discrimination in the contents, photos and illustrations of textbooks should be prohibited. The NWCCW office has explored ways of integrating the concept of gender equality into the education and teaching in primary and secondary schools. By the end of 2019, training programs on gender equality had been conducted in more than 10,000 primary and secondary schools across the country.

4. We are pleased to see that government organs, media, people’s organizations and professional societies have strictly monitored mass media in regard to gender equality. Firstly, guidelines have been developed. In a guideline for journalists to use appropriate words in news reports, developed by the Xinhua News Agency in 2015, 2016 and 2019, words containing prejudice and discriminations against women had been scrutinized and prohibited. Likewise, Shenzhen issued a guideline for gender sensitive assessment in advertising in 2021. Secondly, monitoring mechanism of mass media has been initiated by local government agencies. Government in Guizhou province, for instance, issued a notice attempting to establish a comprehensive mechanism for monitoring gender equality in media in 2016. Thirdly, good examples have been employed for extending publicity and raising gender awareness in society. Since 2012, the annual selection of the “Top 10 News Events of Gender Equality”, initiated by *China Women’s News*, has become popular and effective in conveying concepts of gender equality and demonstrating ways of women rights protection.

5. We are pleased to note that women have made great contribution in social and economic development. The Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government pay great attention to endow national awards to distinguished women, which has significantly changed gender-based stereotypes and prejudice against women in

the society. The honorary titles women have received ranging from the Medal of the Republic, Role Model of the Times, July 1 Medal, Reform Pioneers, to the awards of poverty alleviation, scientific and technological innovation and anti-Covid-19 battle. Besides, the All-China Women's Federation has continuously nurtured and awarded women from various fields as role models with the title of "March 8th Red-banner Holder", "Women Pacesetters for Achievements", etc. to encourage more women to dedicate to economic, political, cultural, social and ecological drive.

6. We are glad to see that the concept of gender equality has gained greater popularity and the younger generation has a stronger awareness of equality. According to the *2020 Survey of Chinese Women's Social Status*, jointly conducted by the All-China Women's Federation and the National Bureau of Statistics, 95.4% of respondents agreed that having a gainful job is important for a woman, which indicates a changing attitude toward traditional convention that men are bread-winners in public, whereas women are care-givers and housekeepers at home. Furthermore, those who thought that men, like women, also need balance their work in public and care giving to family accounted for 93.3%. Younger women tend to be more supportive toward sharing care-work among family members instead of constraint women within housework. 94.6% of the respondents under 35 years old disagreed with the statement that it is only the mother's responsibility to take care of children.

7. We've noted that gender discrimination still exists in the mass media. Positive images of women are not sufficiently presented, and reports of women's development and gender equality are far from enough. The status of women in the mass media needs to be improved. The number of female students in media studies and female employees in mass media are increasing, however, fewer women make it to the top levels of decision-making in this sector.

8. We've noted that while new technological progresses have brought about much transformation to make our lives better-off, the rapid development of global information technology has the potential to intensify gender bias. The coming era of AI has seen, in some ways, an algorithmic bias in favor of men while women are depicted with stereotypes.

9. We hope that the government should take actions to strengthen gender monitoring and assessment of the media. We suggest that requirements and standards for scrutinizing the media should be

effectively clarified in laws and regulations to avoid and rectify incidence of gender discrimination, and mechanisms be established for supervision, complaint and punishment. Meanwhile, the professional societies should formulate gender-sensitive guidelines and set up rules for self-discipline, encourage more media coverage of women and gender issues, and enhance the career development for women employees in this sector.

10. We hope the government organs take effective measures to reduce gender discrimination in AI algorithms and big data management. Relevant departments need to promote legislation so that data collection and algorithmic development could avoid potential gender discrimination. Furthermore, the proportion of female programmers and decision-makers should be increased. Training in gender equality should be designed and conducted for algorithm engineers.