



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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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.

[1 February 2026]

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



## **China Safeguards the Cultural Rights of the People, Making Cultural Life Within Reach**

Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights affirm everyone's right to take part in cultural life, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific progress and its benefits.

In practice, cultural rights concern both individual participation and the safeguarding and transmission of shared heritage. China has continued to strengthen the inclusive provision of public cultural services, to protect and transmit cultural diversity, and to advance digital inclusion—bringing cultural participation closer to the people and promoting the fuller enjoyment of cultural rights.

### **Public Cultural Services**

China has continued to improve a public cultural service network that covers both urban and rural areas, making cultural services convenient and accessible. In the heat of summer, the library in Yicheng District, Zaozhuang City (Shandong Province) remains cool and welcoming. In the children's borrowing area, several children skillfully use a self-service borrowing-and-returning machine. Through a smart platform they search for books and check out the titles they want. The children cheer: "We can find the books ourselves and borrow them ourselves; it's so convenient!"[ "New Technologies Illuminate Public Cultural Spaces," Guangming Daily, 1 September 2024.]

Behind such scenes is the steady improvement of a six-tier public cultural service network spanning the national, provincial, city, county, township, and village/community levels, covering both urban and rural areas, with local comprehensive cultural service centers largely achieving full coverage. Public cultural facilities have continued to expand in scale and reach. New types of public cultural spaces now exceed 33,500. Nearly 200,000 rural reading rooms—often known as "farmers' book houses"—provide digital reading services, helping bring reading resources and cultural services to local communities.

Free and low-threshold access is an important condition for meaningful participation. Public libraries, cultural centers, art museums and comprehensive cultural stations are open to the public free of charge, and more than 90% of museums have also adopted free admission.[ "New Technologies Illuminate Public Cultural Spaces," Guangming Daily, 1 September 2024.]This reduces cost barriers for children, students, older persons and rural residents.

Public cultural services are strengthened not only through venues, but also through long-term culture-for-the-people programs that expand reach and improve equal access. Continuing initiatives include village-to-village and household-to-household broadcasting and rural film screenings, which help make cultural content and services available in communities that may be farther from large cultural venues.[ State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *Moderate Prosperity in All Respects: Another Milestone Achieved in China's Human Rights* (Aug. 2021).] Such programs complement venue-based services and support the standardization and equalization of basic public cultural services. As infrastructure networks improve and service supply is optimized, quality cultural resources increasingly reach grassroots communities, enabling people from different backgrounds to share the benefits of cultural development. In this way, the fairness and accessibility of public cultural services continue to improve.

### **Cultural Diversity and Heritage**

China safeguards the cultural inheritance and development of all ethnic groups in accordance with law, and respects cultural diversity. The Constitution of China provides that all ethnic groups have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their customs and habits, offering a fundamental guarantee for cultural inheritance and development.

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) safeguarding has continued to advance. China has 1,557 national-level representative ICH projects and 3,056 national-level representative inheritors. Moreover, 44 Chinese elements are inscribed on UNESCO’s Lists and Registers of Intangible Cultural Heritage—the largest number worldwide.[ “Statistical Bulletin on the Development of Culture and Tourism (2024),” China Tourism News, 4 June 2025.] These inscriptions cover diverse cultural expressions, including traditional performing arts, crafts, festivals and social practices.

The Kyrgyz epic “Manas” offers an illustrative example of living heritage. Inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List, it is not only an important cultural symbol of the Kyrgyz, but also remains active in festivals and community life. UNESCO notes that it plays a role in public entertainment, the preservation of history, and the transmission of knowledge to younger generations.[ UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, “Manas” (China), <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/manas-00209>(last visited January 27, 2026).]

As outstanding traditional culture continues to be practiced, learned, and shared in contemporary life—and passed down across generations—it enriches people’s cultural and spiritual life and provides a more solid humanistic foundation for mutual understanding and exchanges among different civilizations.

## **Cultural Digitalization and Inclusion**

China advances its cultural digitalization strategy to expand opportunities to participate in cultural life, including for specific groups. First, it broadens inclusive coverage. Since its launch in 2017, the National Public Cultural Cloud has aggregated 572,000 digital resources and recorded 1.647 billion visits as of August 2024. It has deployed “grassroots smart service terminals” in 381 local units across 29 provinces, supporting higher-quality and more efficient digital public cultural services at local levels.[ National Data Administration, “Typical Cases of Digital China No. 10: Building the National Public Cultural Cloud,” 18 October 2024.]

Local initiatives complement the national platform and provide additional service options. For example, the public cultural cloud platform built by the Cultural Center of Suichuan County (Jiangxi Province) offers sections for information, activities, livestreaming, venue booking and digital reading, making cultural services “always available.”[ “New Technologies Illuminate Public Cultural Spaces,” Guangming Daily, 1 September 2024.]

Second, digital development highlights accessibility and user-friendliness for specific groups. In response to the reality that blind and visually impaired persons often face limited channels and a shortage of accessible cultural products, China continues to improve an accessibility-oriented cultural service system and to mobilize social resources to support disability-inclusive cultural projects. The “Light Cinema” public-interest initiative is one representative example. It upholds the idea of “delivering colors through sound, and sensing art through listening.” Through producing and promoting accessible audiovisual works and supporting accessible screenings, it helps visually impaired audiences participate more conveniently in film culture. Over seven years, the initiative has produced more than 600 accessible audiovisual works, and 8 million persons with visual disabilities have benefited.[ China Foundation for Human Rights Development & Xinhua Institute (National High-end Think Tank), Safeguarding the Cultural Rights of Persons with Visual Disabilities in China: Practices and Implications—A Case Study of the ‘Light Cinema’ Public-interest Initiative, December 2024.]

Overall, by combining digital technology with accessible services, the reach of cultural services becomes broader and the threshold for participation becomes lower. More people can obtain cultural products, take part in cultural activities, and share cultural development outcomes on a more equal basis.

## Conclusion

The full realization of cultural rights is an important marker of people’s well-being. China continues to bring cultural rights into people’s daily lives, and its experiences offer a useful reference for the global safeguarding of cultural rights.

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1. “New Technologies Illuminate Public Cultural Spaces,” Guangming Daily, 1 September 2024.
2. “New Technologies Illuminate Public Cultural Spaces,” Guangming Daily, 1 September 2024.
3. State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, Moderate Prosperity in All Respects: Another Milestone Achieved in China’s Human Rights (Aug. 2021).
4. “Statistical Bulletin on the Development of Culture and Tourism (2024),” China Tourism News, 4 June 2025.
5. UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, “Manas” (China), <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/manas-00209>(last visited January 27, 2026).
6. National Data Administration, “Typical Cases of Digital China No. 10: Building the National Public Cultural Cloud,” 18 October 2024.
7. “New Technologies Illuminate Public Cultural Spaces,” Guangming Daily, 1 September 2024.
8. China Foundation for Human Rights Development & Xinhua Institute (National High-end Think Tank), Safeguarding the Cultural Rights of Persons with Visual Disabilities in China: Practices and Implications—A Case Study of the ‘Light Cinema’ Public-interest Initiative, December 2024.