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## Human Rights Council

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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement submitted by Zhongguancun Federation of Social Organizations, 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 May 2026]

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



# **Climate Change and Human Rights: Observations and Reflections from an NGO in China**

## **I. China's achievements in climate and environmental governance**

China has prioritized climate action as a key element of national governance. It has built the world's largest and most complete clean energy industrial chain[1]. By 2025, China's forest coverage rate reached 25.09%, and forest stock volume reached 20.988 billion cubic meters. China has become the country with the fastest and largest increase in forest resources globally.

In air pollution control, 2025 marked the best national ambient air quality since monitoring records began. The average PM2.5 concentration across 339 cities at or above prefecture level stood at 28.0 micrograms per cubic meter, down 4.4% year on year; the proportion of days with good air quality reached 89.3% (excluding sandstorm-affected days); and the proportion of heavily polluted days was 0.9%[3]. In water protection, the proportion of surface water bodies classified as "good quality" (Grade I–III) reached 91.4% in 2025, up 1.0 percentage point from the previous year[3]. Furthermore, China's redline for ecological protection covers over 30% of its land area, with 90% of terrestrial ecosystem types and 74% of key state-protected wildlife populations effectively conserved[4].

China has also deepened South–South cooperation on climate change, signing memoranda of understanding on climate change cooperation with dozens of developing countries to assist them in enhancing climate resilience[5].

## **II. The complex reality of climate change: China's ongoing "warming-wetting" transition**

Notwithstanding these achievements, the adverse impacts of climate change continue to accelerate globally. According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the global mean temperature for 2025 was about 1.43°C above the 1850–1900 average[6]. WMO confirmed that 2015–2025 were the hottest 11 years on record[6].

In China, the climate in 2025 exhibited pronounced "warm-humid" characteristics. The national average annual temperature was 10.9°C, tied with 2024 as the highest on record, with the greatest number of hot days ever recorded. National average precipitation was 668.0 mm, 4.5% above the long-term average, marking a "wet year". Notably, the rainy season in North China saw record-setting levels in both cumulative rainfall and duration, while the autumn rain in West China was also the highest on record. Meanwhile, southern China experienced heavy typhoon activity and concentrated rainfall after a dry early spring[8]. These observations demonstrate that even as China strengthens its mitigation efforts, climate-driven extreme weather events continue to intensify, underscoring the urgent need for both mitigation and adaptation to advance in tandem.

## **III. Reflections for the future**

Climate change is a common challenge for all humanity. In September 2025, China announced its updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) targeting a 7–10% reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions from peak levels by 2035 across the entire economy, marking a significant shift from carbon-intensity control to absolute emission reduction[9].

Based on these observations, we propose the following lines of thinking:

First, strengthen climate adaptation capacity. As climate systems exhibit increasingly non-linear responses—exemplified by the co-existence of "warming-wetting" trends in the north and extreme precipitation in the south—adaptation must be allocated resources and attention on a par with mitigation. Climate risk prevention systems and disaster reduction infrastructure require systematic reinforcement, especially for vulnerable communities.

Second, deepen global climate justice and the operationalization of the loss and damage mechanism. The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events continue to rise, and developing countries remain acutely vulnerable to climate-induced loss and damage. The international community must expedite the effective operationalization of the loss and damage fund to ensure that climate finance reaches those most in need.

Third, promote cross-sectoral and integrated climate governance. Cross-cutting issues at the intersection of climate change and human rights—including climate-induced health risks, livelihood vulnerabilities and displacement—should be mainstreamed into national climate policies and international climate governance frameworks.

Fourth, uphold multilateralism and safeguard global climate governance consensus. Amid challenges of unilateralism and de-multilateralization, the international community must jointly uphold the principles and framework of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement to address the climate crisis through solidarity and cooperation. The legitimate climate rights and interests of developing countries must be effectively protected.

Zhongguancun Federation of Social Organizations will continue to support science-guided, human-rights-centered climate action and stands ready to work with the international community in building a safer, more just and sustainable global climate governance system.

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[1] State Council Information Office of China. (2025). China's Energy Transition in the New Era. (General statement on clean energy industrial chain; no specific page number.)

[3] Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China. (2026, February 27). Press Conference on 2025 Ecological and Environmental Quality. <https://news.chemnet.com/news-2538.html> ; and CGTN. (2026, January 29). China's air and water cleaner as 2025 trends show. <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2026-01-29/China-s-air-and-water-cleaner-as-2025-trends-show--1KjZTqvQdEc/index.html>

[4] Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China. (2025). China's Fifth National Report on Biodiversity Conservation. (Data on redline, ecosystem types, and wildlife protection.)

[5] Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China. (2025). South-South Cooperation on Climate Change: Progress Report. (General reference to memoranda with dozens of developing countries.)

[6] World Meteorological Organization. (2026). State of the Global Climate 2025. <https://wmo.int/publication-series/state-of-global-climate/state-of-global-climate-2025>

[8] China Meteorological Administration. (2026). 2025 China Extreme Weather Events Report. (General description of typhoon and rainfall patterns.)

[9] Climate Cooperation China. (2025, December 8). China's new climate commitments: the NDC 3.0. <https://climatecooperation.cn/climate/chinas-new-climate-commitments-the-ndc-3-0/>