

ethnic minority areas.

The state also adopts many preferential measures to help ethnic minorities develop their capabilities in science and technology. For example, the central government lays emphasis on the development and training of ethnic minority scientists and technologists, requiring higher-education institutions to make special arrangements to enroll ethnic minority students or establish ethnic minority student classes; help ethnic minorities and ethnic minority areas to bring in skilled personnel and advanced technologies and facilities to help transform their traditional industries and products.

In the field of health care in ethnic minority areas, the state gives priority to improving the skills of medical workers, working on disease prevention and treatment and children and women's medical care, and supporting the medical practices of ethnic minorities.

Support and assistance are given to perpetuate the culture of ethnic minorities. The state establishes ethnic art troupes, trains artists from among the ethnic minorities, and encourages literary and artistic creation among the ethnic minorities.

Training Ethnic Minority Officials

Deeming the situation of ethnic minority officials to be an important indicator of each ethnic minority's development level, the central government attaches great importance to their training, and has adopted a series of effective measures according to the actual conditions prevailing at different points in time:

1. The state offers training and learning opportunities in schools of different types and at different levels in line with the ethnic minority's needs and social development level, so as to improve the overall quality of ethnic minority officials.
2. The ethnic minority officials are selected to work on secondment in central government organs or comparatively developed regions to cultivate their practical capabilities. A great number of ethnic minority officials are trained through this approach, thereby accelerating economic and social development in ethnic minority areas.
3. Based on the principle of equal emphasis on integrity and ability, the state gives ethnic minority officials preference in recruitment and

promotion in the CPC committees, governments, people's congresses and CPPCC committees at all levels, so that they can occupy a proper proportion of the staff numbers in these influential organs.

Using and Developing Ethnic Minorities' Spoken and Written Languages

China's Constitution stipulates, "All ethnic groups have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages," and "In performing their functions, the organs of self-government of the ethnic autonomous areas, in accordance with the regulations on the exercise of autonomy in those areas, employ the spoken and written language or languages in common use in the locality." The Law of Regional Ethnic Autonomy provides further detail to these provisions. It is stipulated in Article 10 that "The organs of self-government of autonomous areas shall guarantee the freedom of the ethnic groups in these areas to use and develop their own spoken and written languages"; Article 21, "While performing its functions, the organ of self-government of an autonomous area shall, in accordance with the regulations on the exercise of autonomy of the area, use one or several languages commonly used in the locality; where several common languages are used for the performance of such functions, the language of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy may be used as the main language"; Article 37, "Schools where most of the students come from ethnic minorities should, whenever possible, use textbooks in their languages and use these languages in classes," "People's governments at various levels should support the editing, translating and publishing of textbooks and publications in ethnic minority languages in finance"; and Article 47, "...guaranteeing that citizens of the various ethnic groups enjoy the right to use the spoken and written languages of their own ethnic groups in court proceedings."

Respecting Customs and Traditions of Ethnic Minorities

China's ethnic minorities have their own customs and practices

in clothing and ornamentation, food and drink, architecture and ceremonies, weddings and funerals. The Chinese government accords full respect to such customs and practices, guaranteeing to ethnic minorities the right to preserve and reform their own customs and practices in all aspects of social life. The state prohibits any insult to the ethnic minorities' customs and traditions in the mass media.

Respecting and Protecting the Freedom of Religious Belief of Ethnic Minorities

China has many religions, including Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, and Catholicism and other forms of Christianity. Most people from China's ethnic minorities have some form of religious belief. In some ethnic minorities, the vast majority share a single religious belief: almost all Tibetans, for example, believe in Tibetan Buddhism. China's Constitution stipulates: "Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy the freedom of religious belief." In China, freedom of religious belief means that every citizen has the freedom to believe in, or not believe in, any religion; the freedom to believe in this or that religion; the freedom to believe in this or that sect within a religion; the freedom to convert from not believing in to believing in, or from believing in to not believing in, any religion. At present, there are 30,000 mosques around China, and over 1700 locations for Tibetan-Buddhist activities in Tibet.

The practice of ethnic policy since the founding of the People's Republic has proven its success, finding a pathway to solve China's ethnic issues in line with prevailing conditions in China, in a manner that will ultimately bring about a common level of development and prosperity among all ethnic groups. The Chinese government believes that following the state's rapid progress in reform, opening up and modernization, all China's ethnic groups will share faster and better growth, and there will be further consolidation and development of equal, unified, mutually-assistant and harmonious relationships.

CHINA'S ETHNIC POLICIES





The People's Republic of China is a unified multi-ethnic country. It has 56 ethnic groups in total, of which the Han ethnic group represents the largest population. The populations of the other 55 ethnic groups are relatively small, and so the latter are customarily referred to as "ethnic minorities." In order to accelerate and balance the political, economic and cultural development of ethnic minorities, the Chinese government has formulated, and continues to develop, a series of ethnic policies.

Upholding Ethnic Equality and Unity

Equality among ethnic groups means that regardless of their population size, level of economic and social development, and differences in religious beliefs, customs and traditions, every ethnic group is an equal member in the family of the Chinese nation. Citizens of all ethnic groups enjoy the same rights and share the same responsibilities in all aspects of society. Unity of ethnic groups means equality, friendship, mutual respect and assistance among ethnic groups. Ethnic equality is the precondition and foundation of ethnic unity. Without equality, unity among ethnic groups is impossible. Ethnic unity is the consequence of equality, and the guarantor of genuine equality among ethnic groups.

As the recognized solution to ethnic issues, ethnic equality and unity is defined in China's Constitution and relevant laws and regulations. The Constitution stipulates, "All ethnic groups in the People's Republic of China are equal. The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the ethnic minorities and upholds and develops the equality, unity and mutual assistance among all of China's ethnic groups. Discrimination

against and oppression of any ethnic group are prohibited."

China has signed up to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and other international conventions, and conscientiously performs the duties prescribed in the conventions, making unremitting efforts together with the international community to achieve ethnic equality around the world and to oppose racial apartheid, ethnic suppression and discrimination.

Practicing Regional Ethnic Autonomy

Regional ethnic autonomy is a basic policy adopted by China to handle problems among its ethnic groups, and a significant political institution. Regional ethnic autonomy, people's congresses, multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), alongside community-level self-governance, form China's fundamental political system. Under the unified leadership of the state, the self-governance organs of ethnic minorities are established in areas where various ethnic minorities live in compact communities in order to enable regional ethnic autonomy, so that ethnic minorities become their own masters, managing their internal affairs in their respective autonomous areas.

Regional ethnic autonomy conforms to China's national interest and the fundamental interests of all ethnic groups, guarantees the equal political status and rights of ethnic minorities, and satisfies the demand from ethnic minorities to participate in China's political life. According to their distribution, in compact communities or in wider areas, ethnic minorities can have autonomy at different administrative levels. This approach safeguards ethnic minorities' autonomous rights while maintaining national unity. It will provide the most advantageous outcomes for all sides, beneficial to integrating the state's general and specific policies with the ethnic autonomous areas' prevailing conditions, and combining the growth of the country with the development of its ethnic minorities.

China's regional ethnic autonomy has two obvious features: (1) It is a self-governing system under the unified leadership of the state. Every ethnic autonomous area is an inseparable part of the country; as the country's local power structures the organs of self-governance in autonomous ethnic areas must follow the leadership of the central government. When formulating policies and plans for national economic and cultural development, government departments at higher levels must take into account the specific conditions and needs of regional autonomous areas, and bring to bear all manner of appropriate assistance and support. (2) It is not a simple form of ethnic or regional autonomy, but a combination of regional and ethnic factors, and an integration of economic and political factors. Regional ethnic autonomy should be of benefit to China's unification, stability and ethnic unity, to the progress of self-governing ethnic groups, and to China's national construction.

At present, China has in total 155 ethnic autonomous areas, including five autonomous regions, 30 autonomous prefectures and 120 autonomous counties (banners).

Accelerating Economic Development of Ethnic Minority Areas

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the government has done its utmost to promote the common development and prosperity of all the country's ethnic groups. According to the prevailing conditions within individual ethnic minority areas, the government has drawn up and adopted a series of policies and measures to support the economic growth of ethnic minority areas, and encouraged and organized developed areas to assist ethnic minority areas. Thirteen articles in the Law of Regional Ethnic Autonomy stipulate the legal obligations of the higher-level state organs in helping the minority areas accelerate their development.

In 2005, the central government clarified that development is the key to overcoming difficulties and solving problems in the minority areas, and stressed that as the nation's comprehensive potency increased, the central government would offer ongoing support to ethnic minorities and minority areas for social and economic development, improve the

policy-related transfer payment system compatible with regional ethnic autonomy, help minority areas run the infrastructure projects that will play a key role in improving local social and economic development, and give preference to the kind of small and medium-sized public welfare projects that are particularly relevant to the everyday life of local people.

In the same year the State Council issued the Regulations on the Execution of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy. These were the first administrative rules in this domain. In addition, the state has established three specific plans, namely, supporting the development of relatively small ethnic groups, helping the borderlands and their peoples to prosper, and working on various ethnic minority initiatives.

Since 2007, the State Council has issued a series of preferential policies and measures to promote the social and economic development of Xinjiang, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia and Guizhou, as well as Tibetan-inhabited areas in Qinghai and borderlands in Yunnan. These have served to increase investment, enhance infrastructure construction, develop industries with particular local advantages, drive social initiatives forward, and accelerate the social and economic development of the minority areas, hence improving their comprehensive economic strength. As China's reform and opening up continues to expand its reach, the central government has increased investment in ethnic minority areas and accelerated the pace of their opening to the outside world, bringing new vitality to the economic growth in these areas.

Developing All Social Initiatives of Ethnic Minorities

The Chinese government actively supports the ethnic minorities in making progress in education based on their own characteristics and prevailing conditions. The central government empowers the self-governance organs of ethnic minority areas to independently develop their own education, puts emphasis on ethnic language teaching and bilingual teaching, enhances the quality of the ethnic minority's teaching staff, provides them with more educational funds, and encourages other provinces or cities to offer assistance in education to their partners in

