

minorities with different kinds of training and activities. In 2013, the CE has also announced further measures to enhance the support for non-Chinese speaking students¹ in learning the Chinese language, including, amongst others, parents' participation in summer bridging programmes to facilitate students' early adaptation to the local education system, enhancing the professional competencies of teachers, etc. The HKSAR Government will make further endeavours, taking into consideration stakeholders' views.

116. Since the last review, the HKSAR Government has fulfilled and will continue to fulfil its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

117. As in many parts of the world, sexual orientation is a controversial subject in the HKSAR. This notwithstanding, the HKSAR Government's position is clear – no person should be discriminated against on any grounds, including sexual orientation. The HKSAR Government has been undertaking extensive publicity and promotion with a view to fostering in the community a culture of mutual understanding, tolerance and respect. More resources will be injected into this area.

118. During the last review, the HKSAR was recommended to “continue to function according to their realities and preserve different rights of their citizens in accordance with their laws”. The HKSAR Government has made continuous efforts in protection of human rights in the light of actual situation. The HKSAR Government will not underestimate the difficulty and challenges in building up consensus on various controversial issues, such as constitutional development and the protection of rights of sexual minorities, in the coming years. The HKSAR Government will protect and promote the rights of different groups through legal and administrative means, and in close collaboration with different sectors.

VI. Promotion and protection of human rights in the Macao Special Administrative Region (paragraph 114, recommendation 39)

A. Methodology and public consultation

119. During the process of drafting this report, all government departments cooperated closely with related non-governmental organizations in order to provide the latest information for the report. The government of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) uploaded the text of this report to its website and that of the Law Reform and International Law Bureau and issued a related press release in May 2013 for public comment. The report was extensively distributed at different levels, including the Legislative Assembly, government departments, related non-governmental organizations, the media, and the internet.

B. The legislative and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights

120. As a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China, pursuant to the Basic Law of the MSAR of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as the

¹ For the planning of education support measures, students whose spoken language at home is not Chinese are broadly categorised as NCS students.

Basic Law), the MSAR exercises a high degree of autonomy and enjoys executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication. The Basic Law safeguards the rights and freedoms of residents of the MSAR at the constitutional level, with related provisions recorded in Chapters III (Political and Social Rights), V (Economic Rights) and VI (Cultural and Social Affairs Rights).

121. At present, there are altogether 20 international human rights treaties which are applicable in the MSAR, including the following seven core human rights treaties: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), whose application commenced in August 2008. The MSAR has been submitting implementation reports in line with the requirements of the above-mentioned core human rights treaties. Since the handover, the MSAR has already submitted its initial report on the CRPD and two reports on the ICESCR, CEDAW, CERD, CAT and CRC through the Central Government of China. The MSAR had also submitted its initial report with reference to the ICCPR.

122. The MSAR has multiple local laws to further implement the protection of human rights, which mainly include the Legal Framework for Family Policy, the Rights to Assemble and Protest, the General Regime of the Right of Association, the Press Law, the Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Ordinance, the Legal Framework for the Non-tertiary Education System, the Personal Data Protection Act, the Law on the Combat against the Crime of Human Trafficking, the Law for the Employment of Non-resident Workers, the Social Security System, the Economical Housing Law and so forth.

123. The residents of the MSAR can directly invoke legal provisions from different human rights treaties so as to safeguard their personal rights, and can apply for legal assistance should they have insufficient economic means. The new General Legal Aid System adopted in 2012 expands the scope of persons eligible for aid to include non-local employees and students, among others. The Commission Against Corruption and the Office for Personal Data Protection supervise and guarantee the enforcement of human rights in their functional areas, and the committees concerned with different realms of human rights formed by the representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations, including the Commission for the Protection of Victims of Violent Crimes, the Refugees Commission, the Consultative Commission for Women's Affairs, the Commission for Disciplinary Control of the Security Forces and Services of Macao, the Commission on the Fight against AIDS, the Mental Health Commission, the Human Trafficking Deterrent Measures Concern Committee, the Senior Citizens Affairs Committee, the Commission on the Fight Against Drugs, the Commission for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, and the Commission for the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases, can also promote the development of human rights.

124. Human rights education has been incorporated into the school curriculum. The MSAR government has also launched promotional activities and specialized training on human rights for government staff, judiciary personnel and various community groups. In the area of publicity, the government has used a variety of means, including pamphlets, web pages, and special topic discussions and seminars, to extensively publicise United Nations human rights treaties.

C. Progress in promoting and protecting human rights

125. The MSAR attaches great importance to the suggestions made by the United Nations Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. Since the first-cycle review, the MSAR has continued to adopt a variety of measures to promote and safeguard human rights, as well as gradually implementing the commitments made in the previous report; the major developments are as follows.

126. The MSAR government implements a 15-year free education scheme, and began providing textbook grants in the 2009/2010 school year. Students who have financial difficulties can also apply for tuition assistance, subsistence allowances and study materials allowances. The government has also established university grants, including school loans, scholarships, accommodation allowances, travel allowances in order to encourage students to continue their higher education. The MSAR government has always attached great importance to the cultivation of whole-person development of youth, and the Macao Youth Policy (2012–2020) was drawn up for this reason. In order to promote lifelong learning, a continuing education development scheme for subsidizing residents' education was introduced in 2011.

127. The Law on Individual Provident Fund Accounts formulated in 2012 consolidates retirement protections for residents. In addition, qualified seniors aged 65 or above may draw a monthly old-age pension and a yearly senior citizens subsidy, and those who have financial difficulties may also apply for allowances. Moreover, apart from the existing free public healthcare services, the Government started introducing a healthcare plan in 2009 to subsidize residents seeking treatment at private medical institutions.

128. A classification and grading system for assessment, registration and issue of permits for the disabled introduced in 2011 provides free public healthcare services and preferential transportation rates for disabled persons who have been assessed as qualified to receive these allowances. The MSAR government has been financially and technically supporting non-governmental organizations providing assistance to vulnerable groups, as for example, the provision of home care services for the disabled or frail seniors who lack access to family care.

129. In order to assist the families with financial difficulties in resolving their housing problems, the MSAR government has built over 19,000 public housing units and promoted a provisional housing allowance scheme for families awaiting public housing.

130. The "Historic Centre of Macao" was inscribed on the World Cultural Heritage list in 2005. At present, there is a total of 128 monuments, buildings, complexes and sites under conservation, along with 10 intangible cultural heritage items. Since 2011, the "Parade through Macao, Latin City" has been held every year to promote cultural integration among different ethnic groups and the formulation of cross-departmental strategies for the protection of the historic city centre, so as to enhance awareness of cultural heritage protection.

131. The media industry continued to flourish in the MSAR after the handover. Chinese-language daily newspapers, which are continuously published, have increased in number from eight to ten; among them is a new newspaper distributed free of charge. Portuguese-language daily newspapers have increased from two to three, and three English daily newspapers have also been set up in succession. As for the broadcasting industry, a cable television station and four satellite television stations launched services successively after the handover. In addition to the Press Law, which provides a legal basis for guaranteeing journalists' independence in practicing their trade, the MSAR government introduced a government spokesman system in February 2010 and established press and public relations

coordinators in every government department, so as to allow the media to make inquiries at government departments at any time and ensure the free flow of information.

132. The Slavery Convention, the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime are all applicable in the MSAR. In addition to maintaining the usual close cooperation and exchanging intelligence with police affairs departments outside the Region, the MSAR government signed a cooperation agreement on combating trafficking in persons with the Mongolian Government in 2010 and a cooperation agreement on risk assessment and escort services for victims of trafficking in persons with the Hong Kong office of the International Organisation for Migration in 2012. The MSAR has also formulated Law No. 6/2008 on the fight against trafficking in persons, and has established a Human Trafficking Deterrent Measures Concern Committee, publicised information on combating human trafficking, set up a 24-hour enquiry hotline, organised training programmes for police officers, drawn up plans for protecting victims, and cooperated with non-governmental organizations to establish shelters providing such services as medical and economic assistance, legal consultations, and skills training for the victims of trafficking, so as to help them reintegrate into society.

133. The implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in the MSAR began on 12 February 2006. The MSAR government committed to the adoption of multiple implementation measures under the Convention, including legislative and administrative measures. The Law of 2009 on the Prevention and Suppression of Bribery in the Private Sector was formulated to crack down on corrupt behaviour in the private realm. In the area of social development, Law No. 1/2013 on the Legal Regime of Declaration of Assets and Interests amended the Declaration of Assets Act, which had been in force for many years. Additionally, the Organic Law of the Commission Against Corruption of the MSAR, amended in 2012, extends the functional scope of the ombudsman to the special administrative relations existing between private individuals in order to strengthen the protection of residents' legal rights and interests.

134. A succession of statutes have been formulated for the purpose of building a responsible, highly effective and incorruptible administrative team; these include the General Rules for Principal Officials of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the General Regulations for Principal Officials of the MSAR, the Fundamental Provisions of Regulations for Leaders and Chiefs, the Supplementary Provisions of Regulations for Leaders and Chiefs and the Limitations Imposed on Chief Executives and Principal Officials after Termination of Term of Office.

D. Future objectives and challenges

135. To further strengthen the protection of human rights, the MSAR will formulate a domestic violence prevention act, a legal framework for the protection of seniors' rights and benefits and a cultural heritage protection act, as well as amending the Press Law and improving the tertiary education system.

136. The aging of the population presents a trial for the MSAR government. In addition, the MSAR government will increase regional cooperation in the investigation and collection of evidence related to fighting corruption. The development of the MSAR is accompanied by simultaneous opportunities and challenges, and the MSAR government is committed to continuing to adopt the measures necessary to ensure the protection and implementation of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the residents of the Region.