

Educational Development in China (2004)

Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

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Upon entering the 21st Century, China has been adhering to the implementation of the strategy of national rejuvenation through science and education and that of reinvigorating China through human resource development. Under the leadership of the Central Government and with the concerted efforts of all society, education in China has made tremendous progress and is becoming an important force that boosts the economic and social development in China, promotes science and technology advancement and improve the overall national strength.

Chapter 1. Survey of the education system at the beginning of the 21st Century

1. A brief introduction to the education system in the beginning of the 21st Century

1.1 Main reform and innovation measures over the education system

1.1.1 Framework of education law

A socialist system of education law with Chinese characteristics with special education law and administrative regulations as subjects and supplemented by education and regional regulations has been established in China at a preliminary level. From 2000 to 2004, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China examined and adopted the National Language Law and the Private School Promoting Act of the People's Republic of China, the State Council promulgated 2 administrative regulations: Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools and Regulation for the Implementation of the Private School Promoting Act; the Ministry of Education has promulgated 11 regulations including Measures for the Handling of Student Injury Accidents. Up to now, there are 87 effective regulations that have been promulgated by the Ministry of Education. Over the next several years, the State will make further amendments to the Compulsory Education Law, the Education Law, the Law of Teacher, the Higher Education Law and the Degree Ordinance, and draft out the Law of School, the Law on Education Examination, the Education Input Law and the Lifelong Learning Law.

The government departments conduct macro management over education mainly through legislation, allocation, planning, assessment, information service, policy guidance, supervision in law enforcement and necessary measures so as to ensure the implementation of the national educational guidelines and the correct directions of school running, standardize the conditions, standards and actions of the running of various types of schools, guarantee the impartiality of education and the equality of the students' right to education, and maintain the lawful rights and interests of the schools, teachers and students.

1.1.2 The organization, structure and management of the education system

Reform on the school running system. China is active in promoting the development of various types of private schools and the diversified trend. A pluralistic school running system participated by all walks of life with stress on governmental school running and a pattern of concerted development of public and private schools are taking shape. The Private School Promoting Act of the People's Republic of China and Regulation for the

Implementation of the Private School Promoting Act has provided more favorable legal and institutional environments for private education.

Reform on the school management system. The reform on the management system of basic education has been further deepened. Both the central and the local governments have increased the financial transfer payment towards the poor areas, and respective local governments have paid attention to strengthen their functions in increasing investment in rural education. School investment channels and service objects have been expanded for higher education, and the schools' unitary subordinating relationships have been weakened and altered. A large number of institutions of higher education have been jointly run by the departments and the localities or adopted various forms of cooperation in school running. A new system for higher education management administrated by governments at the central and provincial levels while relying mainly on the administration of the governments at the provincial level has come into being. With the internal reform of the schools further deepened, the energy of school running and the capability of actively adapting to the social needs have been enhanced.

Reform of the enrollment, financing and graduate employment system.

The enrollment of institutions of higher education continues to expand, and the pressure of senior secondary school graduates entering universities has been alleviated in general. A pattern relying mainly on government allocation while raising funds for education through multi-channels has been gradually improved. The system of students' going to universities after being charged has been properly implemented. At the same time, scholarship, study loan and work-study program have been established and improved, and the system of exemption of tuition and fees has been implemented for the students from economically difficult families. After years of exploration in the reform of graduate employment system, a mechanism which is market oriented, government controlled, school recommended and mutually chosen both by students and by employing units has been established.

Promoting the development of non-standard education and gradually building a lifelong learning system. Multiple opportunities have been provided for the various demands for learning of the social members, and major efforts have been devoted to developing flexible and diversified enterprise staff education, promoting community education and improving social education service systems. Continued education of various forms such as network education, night school, university for workers, correspondence college, broadcasting and television school, self-study examination and training school are developing vigorously.

1.1.3 Course policy, teaching and learning strategy

The new round of reform in basic education course was launched by the Ministry of Education of China in 1999 and started to be implemented in 2001 (see 1.2.3). The purpose of the course reform is to get the basic education in China accustomed to the development of the times so as to promote quality education in an all-round way with stress on the cultivation of the students' creativity and practicality.

The objectives of the new round of reform in basic education course are based on the following aspects: (1) Emphasizing on forming a positive and active learning attitude so as to turn the process of acquiring basic knowledge and skills into a process of learning how to study and forming a correct value and change the tendency of the courses of paying too much attention on knowledge teaching. (2) The categories and hours of the courses should be arranged as a whole, and comprehensive courses should be arranged in order to meet the needs of development of different regions and the students, to embody the balance, comprehensiveness and selectivity of the structures of courses, and to change the present status of course structures that emphasizes too much on subject-orientation with too many subjects but insufficient integration. (3) Strengthening the connections between course contents and the students' lives the development of modern society and science and technology. Close attentions should be paid to the students' learning interests and experiences and the necessary basic knowledge and skills of lifelong learning so as to change the present conditions in which the course contents are excessively "difficult, complicated, partial or outdated" and too much attention has been paid to book knowledge. (4) Bringing the evaluation's functions such as the promotion of student development, teacher enhancement, and improvement of teaching practices into full play so as to change the function of course evaluations that used to stress too much on discrimination and selection. (5) A three-layer management framework of the courses at the state, local and school levels should be established.

New courses call for new teaching methods. The teachers are required to actively interact with the students during the course of teaching for joint development so that the teaching process may become a process of intercourse far from being a process of cognition. Attentions have been paid to the students' individuality and independence, so that their knowledge, skills, emotions and attitudes may be developed through independent discovery of problems, experiments, operations, investigations, collection and disposal of information, expression and intercommunication and other explorative activities. Meanwhile, major efforts have been spent in promoting the universal application of information technology in the teaching process so as to give the advantage of information technology into full play and gradually realize reforms in the presentation methods of contents of teaching, the learning methods of the students, the

teaching methods of the teachers and the interaction between the teachers and the students.

1.1.4 Objectives and main characteristics of the present and the forthcoming reforms

The Chinese State Council approved and transmitted Action Plan for Rejuvenating Education 2003-2007 instituted by the Ministry of Education in March 2004. The Plan is an overall, guiding and operational general plan for the national educational development in China for the next 5 years. The strategic keynotes of education reform and development for the next 5 years according to the Action Plan.

The first priority is to promote the educational reform and development in rural areas. In China, 70% of the population inhabits in rural areas and the students in primary and secondary schools in rural areas have amounted to 160 million. The State has persisted in regarding education in rural areas as the first priority so as to accelerate the educational development, deepen the educational reform and promote the economic and social development in the rural areas, and the concerted development of cities and towns. Vocational education in the rural areas should be employment oriented, and flexible teaching and student status management systems should be put into practice. The nation's key backbone vocational schools and training institutions at prefecture (city) and county levels should expand enrollment in the rural areas. The "labor-transferring training in rural areas" should be carried out to conduct vocational education and training for the peasants working in cities.

Efforts should be made to improve the standard and quality of the universalization of Nine-Year compulsory education in the outlying poverty in the western region. The implementation of the "Program for Strategic Breakthrough in the Universalization of Nine-Year Compulsory Education and Eradication the Illiteracy among Middle-aged and Young Group in the West" has started in 2004, and we are striving toward the realization of the full universalization of Nine-year compulsory education throughout the whole county by 2010. By the end of 2007, the coverage of Nine-year compulsory education in the western region should reach 85%, and the gross enrollment rate of elementary secondary schools should be above 90%, the illiteracy rate among the middle-aged and young people has dropped to below 5%. Major measures that will be taken by the state include: governments at the central and provincial levels will join hands in building, rebuilding or extending a number of boarding elementary secondary schools or primary schools to meet the needs of more students who needs to be accommodated; students from economically difficult families in the western region should be supported in getting education; modern distance education in rural primary and secondary schools should be promoted; emphasis should be given to the building of the teaching team in the rural areas, etc.

A financial system relevant to the public financial system should be established

for education to ensure the sustained and stable increase in educational funds.

Responsibilities of governments at each level towards investment in education should be emphasized. Investment in education in the rural areas should be strengthened with emphasis, and the educational funds newly allocated by the government should be mainly used in the rural areas. Governments at the central, provincial and prefecture (city) levels should build up the ability of counties in financial difficulties to guarantee the educational funds through more transfer payment. An input guarantee system should be established and perfected for rural primary and secondary schools, and a system of aid for schooling should be established and improved to support the students from economically difficult rural families in receiving compulsory education. By 2007, we should strive to make sure that the students from the economically difficult rural families throughout the country are able to be exempted from fees and textbook fees while getting boarding subsidies and that no students are deprived of education opportunities because of economical difficulties of their families.

1.2 Main achievements of education reform in the new century

In recent years, the scales of various types of education at different levels in China have been kept on expanding, the enrollment and promotion rates of the students have been on the increase on annual basis, and education opportunities have risen notably. The above achievements have safeguarded the students' right to education and promoted the impartiality of education.

1.2.1 The right to education

In China, historical achievements have been made in terms of the universalization of nine-year compulsory education and the eradication of illiteracy among the middle-aged and young people, and other causes of basic education have been developing vigorously.

Basic education in China covers a wide range and boasts of large education sizes. In 2003, there are over 640,000 regular secondary, primary and nursery schools in China. The total number of nursery school students was 20,040,000, the number of primary school students was 117,180,000, and the number of students of junior and senior secondary schools was 66,910,000 and 32,410,000 respectively.

Ever since the on schedule realization of the objectives of the universalization of nine-year compulsory education and the eradication of illiteracy among the middle-aged and young people on the whole by the end of 2000, the universalization of compulsory education throughout the country have been kept on the increase. By the end of 2003, the coverage of nine-year compulsory education has reached 91%. The enrollment rate of primary schools in 2003 was 107.2% (with the net enrollment rate being 98.65%), and the gross enrollment rate of junior secondary schools was 92.7%;

the gross enrollment rate of senior secondary schools was 42.1% (the total rate was 43.8%).

— The number of illiterates of the whole country dropped by a large margin, and the literacy rate of adults is among the highest in the 9 developing countries. According to the 5th National Population Census in 2000, the number of illiterates above 15 years of age in China has reduced to 85,000,000, a nearly 100,000,000 drop within 10 years; the illiteracy rate has reduced to 8.72%, and the illiteracy rate among the middle-aged and young people has dropped to below 5%.

— Sustained quick development has been achieved in regular senior secondary school education. The number of students enrolled and that of students at school in 2003 have increased to over 7,521,300 and over 19,648,300 from 2,498,000 and 7,173,000 in 1990.

— Childhood education is an important component of the cause of basic education in China. Adhering to the guidelines of running nursery schools at local governments while relying on and mobilizing all social forces, China has been developing the childhood education cause in various forms and through different channels. Now, the nursery schools are being run by the country, the collectivities and individual citizens together. At present, there are over 110,000 nursery schools across the country, and there are over 20,000,000 nursery school students.

— Much attention has been attached to the education of Disabled children and youngsters by the governments at each level. Currently, there are over 1,500 special education schools, over twice as much as the number in 1990; there are over 370,000 disabled students, which is over 4 times as the number in 1990. At present, a special education pattern in which special education schools are regarded as backbones while the special education classes in regular schools and the disabled children and youngsters learning in regular schools are the main bodies has been formed in China on the whole.

— Private education is developing rapidly. In 2003, there are over 70,000 private schools (educational institutions) of various types at different levels throughout the country, in which there are 14,160,000 students. Among the schools, there are 55,500 private nursery schools with 4,802,300 children; 5,676 private regular primary schools with 2,749,300 pupils; 3,651 private elementary secondary schools with 2,565,700 students; 53 private vocational elementary secondary schools with 22,800 students; 2,679 private regular senior secondary schools with 1,413,700 students; and 1,382 private secondary vocational schools with 793,800 students. The development of private schools has promoted the competitions in education, elevated the efficiencies and vitalities of education, and contributed to the coming into being of a diversified pattern of education development.

1.2.2 Equality in education

In recent years, with strenuous efforts of the Chinese Government, the problem that all the children should have schools to go to have been solved by and large. In addition, the Government's efforts have also resulted in the obvious improvement in the sexual, national and regional differences in education through subsidizing the students from economically difficult families, supporting education in the western regions and education of minority ethnic groups, constantly expanding high quality education resources and quickening the steps of the even development of the basic education.

At present in China, the sexual difference in the primary schools' net enrollment rate of children of school age is already very small. In 2003, the net enrollment rate of the primary schools of boys of school age was 98.69%, and that of girls of school age was 98.61%. The education attainment for females has increased quickly compared with the past. Generally speaking, the enrollment rates of primary and elementary secondary schools for girls are lower than those of boys. However, the difference has been further reduced. According to the relevant data of the second National Census on Status of Women conducted in 2000, in 1990, the average schools years of women were 1.9 years fewer than those of men. In 2000, the figure was reduced to 1.47 years.

In order to ensure the children's right of receiving equal educations, the Education Ministry of China, the Ministry of Finance and other relevant departments and local people's governments at different levels and schools have gradually established a diversified policy system for subsidizing students from economically difficult families with scholarships, student loans, work-study program, hardship allowances and exemption of tuitions as the main body. We are striving to make sure that all the students from economically difficult rural families throughout the country are able to be exempted from fees and textbook fees throughout the compulsory education stage, and are extensively mobilizing the governmental organs, organization, enterprises and institutions and citizens to donate for the education of the students from economically difficult families. Tax preferential policies for units or individuals who have contributed will be further put into practice. In addition, public welfare activities such as the Hope Project and the Spring Buds Program are encouraged.

In order to support the universalization of compulsory education in poor areas, and bridge the gap between the eastern and the western parts of the country, the Chinese Government has implemented the National Compulsory Education Project for the Poor Areas. 5,800,000 person-times of poverty-stricken primary school and elementary secondary school students have been provided with textbooks for free. By 2007, the figure will reach 24,000,000 person-times. With the view to provide more support for the development of the education cause in the western regions and poor areas, the Chinese Government has launched the plans for the schools in the eastern regions to support the schools in the poor areas in the western regions and the schools in large

and medium sized cities to support the schools in poor areas in respective provinces. According to the plans, the eastern regions shall dispatch teachers and management personnel to the west. Statistics show that the schools in the eastern regions have provided over RMB 200,000,000 Yuan of gratuitous aids to the schools in the poor areas in the west, excluding large amounts of computers, books, teaching equipments, etc.

There are 55 minority ethnic groups in China the total population of which is 106,000,000, accounting for 8.41% of the total population of China. The Chinese Government's energetic support for the minority ethnic groups' education causes has resulted in the sharp increase in the population receiving education among the minorities, and the illiteracy rate among the middle-aged and young people in the minority regions has dropped to below 15%. The illiteracy rates of 7 nationalities among the minorities including Korean Nationality, Manchu Nationality, Kazak Nationality, and Mongolian Nationality are lower than the national average rate.

Special funds have been established in the central government to provide necessary support for the special difficulties that are met in running schools in the minority regions. The State also provides policy supports for the minority regions when allocating other special educational funds. In terms of the cultivation of talents in special fields of the minorities, the State has implemented policies of pre-determined enrollment and assignment.

According to the provisions of Article 12 of the Education Law of the People's Republic of China, "In schools and other institutions of education in which students of a minority ethnic group constitute the majority, the spoken and written language used by the specific ethnic group or commonly used by the local ethnic groups may be used for instruction." Currently, 29 languages of 21 minority ethnic groups (other ethnic groups do not have their own languages) are being used in China to compile and publish textbooks for infant, primary and secondary schools, specialized secondary schools, adult, vocational technical education and part of the specialities of institutions of higher education for nationalities, among which the language used by the following 11 ethnic group are being used for instruction that have been officially listed in the course plans of primary and secondary schools: Mongolian Nationality, Tibetan Nationality, Uygur Nationality, Kazak Nationality, Korean Nationality, Zhuang Nationality, Yi Nationality, Kirgiz Nationality, Xibe Nationality, Dai Nationality and Jingpo Nationality. Each year, over 3,500 kinds of textbooks in the languages of minority ethnic groups are published after translating and editing.

The disabled persons' right to education has been further guaranteed in China. Regulations on the Education of Disabled Persons and Interim Orders for Special Education Schools have provided legal guarantees for the disabled persons' right to receive equal educations. A special education system featuring special education schools, special education classes in regular schools and disabled children and

youngsters learning in regular schools has been formed on the whole. The size of the teacher team of special education has been kept on the rise. Up to now, a group of training institutions for teachers of special education has been established throughout the country, while the specialty of special education has been established in some normal schools of higher education. In 2002, the total number of teachers and staffs of special education schools in China was 40,378, and there were 28,494 full-time teachers, a 106% rise over the figure in 1990. Besides, there are large amounts of teachers of special education in regular schools teaching disabled children and youngsters. From 1991 to now, four vocational education and training development plans for disabled persons have been established by the State consecutively. By the end of 2003, there were 3,156 regular vocational education institutions that receive disabled students, 987 vocational education training institutions run by the disabled persons' federations devoted to the training of the disabled persons in vocational skills, 190 secondary vocational educational institutions for disabled persons, and the total number of disabled students was about 11,000.

The Chinese Government has been actively promoting the relatively even development of basic education. Following are the main practices of the Chinese Government: First, compulsory education should be of top priority in appropriation inputs, and balance shall be reached between different regions and schools. Besides, more support should be provided for rural areas, poor areas and economically difficult schools in the appropriation input of compulsory education. The systems in which students may be enrolled in nearby junior secondary schools without having to take admission examinations so as to realize balanced student resources and ensure that the children and youngsters of the right age may enjoy equal educational opportunities and conditions. Second, strengthening secondary education, especially speeding up the development of senior secondary education. Alleviating the pressure of entering schools at higher levels faced by the junior secondary schools in population peak by expanding the resource of high quality senior secondary school through adjustment, combination and rebuilding. Meanwhile, efforts have been spent in getting the children of the floating population enrolled in the schools and realizing the balance of educational opportunities between different groups of students. Third, sufficient improvements have been made to the management system. The development of schools, the management over the teachers' team, the granting of the teachers' salaries and the public funds of the schools should be conducted in a unified way so as to promote the relative balanced development of rural compulsory education. Fourth, more efforts have been paid by the government for the transformation of schools in difficulty and the teachers' post training and continued education have been strengthened so as to elevate the overall qualities of headmasters and teachers' teams, and emphasize on the radiant effects in which increase in the quality of education are brought about by high quality educational resources.

1.2.3 Quality education and course reform

Course reform is a gap for the implementation of quality education. The Ministry of Education of China has promulgated the Program for Course Reform of Basic Education (Trial), Experimental Plan for Course Configuration of Compulsory Education and Course Standards (Experimental Version). At present, experiments of course reform have been conducted in 1,642 counties and districts, or 57% of all the counties and districts in the country. Starting from September 2001, experiments on the new courses of compulsory education have been launched in 42 national level course reform experimental areas in 29 provinces, involving 470,000 primary and secondary school students. The scope of the course reform experiments has been expanding each year. In 2003, the number of counties (districts) involved in the experiments expanded to 1,642, accounting for 57% of the total number of the counties (districts) in the country. Now, new textbooks have been adopted for 35,000,000 secondary and primary school students accounting for 18.6% of the total number of students within the compulsory stage. From this year on, new courses for senior secondary schools have been implemented in four provinces (regions) in China. The number of students who started to take the new courses in initial year accounts for 13% of the total number of students in initial year in Sichuan; by 2005, the number of students in 8 to 10 provinces (regions) who start to take the new course in the initial year will account for 25-30% of the total student number; in 2006, students in the initial year who start to take the new course will account for 50-60% of the total student number in 15 to 18 provinces (regions). It is planned that by 2007, all students in initial years should take up new courses in principle.

1.2.4 System reform and educational input

In order to ensure the sustained and healthy development of compulsory education in the rural areas, in 2001 the Chinese Government convened a working meeting on basic education, on which the Decision on the Reform and Development of Basic Education was made. The Decision pointed out clearly that a management system under the leadership of the State Council, implemented by the local governments, managed at different levels and with stress on counties shall be conducted for compulsory education in the rural areas. Governments at the county level shall be responsible for planning the development planning of local education as a whole, the allocation and use of the funds and the management over schoolmasters and teachers, which basically realized the transformation from the village and town dominated management to the county dominated management of the compulsory education in the rural areas. Over RMB 99 billion Yuan of funds have been appropriated for the compulsory education in the rural areas within the national fiscal budgets, accounting for nearly 80% of the gross input in the funds of compulsory education in the rural areas in the current year. Thus, the government has taken over the responsibilities of compulsory education funds in the rural areas that used to be assumed by the

peasants on the whole.

In recent years, the Central Government has increased its support for the educational development in the western regions through the implementation of the projects such as the Compulsory Education Project in the Poor Areas and the Reconstruction Project of Dangerous Buildings in Rural Primary and Secondary Schools the majority funds of which have been invested in the western regions. According to calculation, in 2002, the financial input of the Central Government accounted for 43.2% of the total amount of funds of rural compulsory education in the mid-western regions, 56% of the expenditure within the fiscal budget, and 72% of the basic salary expenditure of staffs of rural compulsory education in the mid-western regions, and this has played a decisive role in providing guarantee for the granting of salaries to the teachers of the primary and secondary schools in the midwestern regions.

1.2.5 Social involvement and cooperation during the course of educational reform

With the development of the economic, scientific and social development, people are paying more and more attention to the education of their children, and the enthusiasms of getting involved in education of all circles of the society are increasingly surging. Under such circumstances, the Government has been actively trying to create opportunities to steer and absorb social resources in participating in educational development, promote the combination of educational, economic and social development, and strengthen the involvement and management of the society towards education.

The Proportion of Social Investment in Education to the GDP [OMITTED]

1.3 Major problems and challenges faced by the educational system in the early 21st Century

1.3.1 The huge pressure on education created by the population peaks

From 2000-2010, the volumes of school age population in different stages of education in China such as elementary secondary, senior secondary and higher education will fluctuate from peaks to troughs, among which the peaks of the school age population will occur respectively in 2001, 2004 and 2008. Due to the influence of population peaks, excessive class size remains to be a serious phenomenon for secondary schools, and this has posed a huge pressure both for the optimizing of the allocation of educational resources and for the educational restructuring in China.

1.3.2 The imbalance of educational development between different regions and towns and countries

Due to the influence of historical, natural regional and other factors, there is a quite big gap between the overall standard of educational development in the western regions and that of the eastern regions, and the basis for educational development in the west is relatively weaker. Rural education is a weak point demanding prompt strengthening, and the educational gap between town and country is on its way to expansion. Under such circumstances, it is an arduous task to realize the balanced development of education.

1.3.3 The communication between and the combination of various types of education at different levels need to be further strengthened

Further communications need to be conducted between formal school education and non-formal education, and between diploma-aimed education and training for vocational certificates. The overall education system still cannot be fully adjusted according to the requirements of lifelong learning.

Chapter 2. High quality education facing all the youngsters: challenge, trend and keynotes

2. High quality education facing all the youngsters: challenge, trend and priorities

2.1 Equality of education and sex - increasing the girls' opportunities of receiving education

Through the years, the Chinese Government has made tremendous efforts in the elevation of women's status and has made positive achievements. The Chinese Government has signed and is carefully implementing a series of important international conventions and documents including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Beijing Declaration and Program of Action. China has instituted and implemented the Program for the Development of Chinese Women (1995-2000) and the Development of Chinese Women (2000-2010) in succession, including the women's development objectives in the economic and social development planning. While instituting various policies, the Government has emphasized on the view angles of social gender so as to safeguard women's rights and interests. The dissemination and education of the sense of social gender has been strengthened to promote the society's understanding and respect for women. In April 2004, the Chinese Government published a report on the implementation of the working goals of global development for the new millennium. The report reiterated the important meaning of having all the children accept basic education, and pointed out with emphasis that the biggest obstacle of this goal is sex discrimination. The problem of sex discrimination involves extensive fields, and only until it is eradicated will all the children of school age be able to receive equal education. Therefore, the Government has been disseminating gender equality and the Law on Compulsory Education through various means so as to promote the enrollment of girls into schools and reduce instances in which girls discontinue their studying; integrate illiteracy eradication with aid-the poor program, technical training and population, health and legal education, and facilitate to help women in elevating their qualities and abilities to take part in the social development in an all-round way.

The Chinese Government attaches significant importance on girls' education. Being a part of quality education, girls' education emphasizes particularly on taking the girls who failed to enjoy the right to basic education because of social, cultural or other factors as objects. The aim of girls' education is not confined to getting the children back to school. What is more important is to help them get rid of obstacles in various aspects and complete their studies in a satisfactory way.

From 2001 to 2004, relevant departments of the Chinese Government, China Children

and Teenagers Fund and other organizations have done a great deal of work in concerted efforts to safeguard the rights of women and girls in remote and backward areas and have achieved a certain results. For instance, providing trainings on the sense of gender for the managing personnel; compiling relevant training materials; granting small loans so as to help women in becoming rich; providing allowances for girls' education; conducting publicity campaigns among educational workers, leaders of the communities, backbone teachers of the schools on girls' education so as to enhance their understanding on girls' education, conduct basic investigations on girls' education, provide trainings on living skills for female youngsters outside the schools, and provide free textbooks so as to attract more girls to get enrolled for studying, etc.

2.2 Education and social inclusion

For the time being, the Chinese Government is focusing its attention on the enrollment of the children of peasants working in cities. The statistics of the 5th National Population Census showed that agricultural population accounted for 62.34% of the total population of 1.276 billion, reaching 796,000,000 (the National Bureau of Statistics, 2002). In 2002, the number of peasants working in cities reached 94,000,000. Together with their relatives who have moved into the cities, the total number was about 120,000,000. The Chinese Government has taken the following measures in tackling the enrollment problem of the children of large amount of peasants working in cities: First, it has been clarified that the local governments shall be responsible for getting the children of peasants who find jobs in cities to receive compulsory education, and the children of peasants employed in cities may receive compulsory education mainly in full-time primary and secondary schools. Second, the local governments shall establish and improve working systems and mechanisms to ensure that the peasants' children may receive compulsory education. Third, the full-time primary and secondary schools should tap the latent potentialities to the full so as to enroll as many children of peasants working cities as possible. Fourth, a safeguard mechanism for the pooling of funds should be established, and the financial departments of the local governments should grant subsidies for the schools that have accepted relatively more children of the peasants working in cities. Fifth, Support and management of the schools run by social groups that receive children of peasants working in cities should be strengthened so as to include the schools of this category into the management scope of private education.

2.3 Informatization construction shall be promoted for the primary and secondary schools

The Ministry of Education proposed in 2000 to universalize information and technology education among the primary and secondary schools in the country in 5-10 years. The Specific objectives are: required courses of information and technology should be established in over 90% of the primary and secondary schools, and the integration of

information and technology and other courses should be sped up; the Xiao Xiao Tong project should be implemented in an all-round way and the construction of information infrastructures and educational resources should be reinforced so that about 90% of independently organized primary and secondary schools may be connected to the internet. In recent years, multiple modes have been adopted to promote notable developments in the informatization construction of the primary and secondary schools.

In recent years, the informatization construction of education in China that is growing strongly has achieved remarkable results. China Education and Research Network (CERNET) and China Education Board-Satellite (CEBSat) has been established, and a syncretic modern remote education network has acquired a considerable scale. School nets of different scales have been established in nearly 1,000 institutions of higher education, over 5,600 secondary vocational schools, and more than 26,000 primary and secondary schools, and computer classrooms or receivers of remote education satellite signals have been established in over 10,000 primary and secondary schools in the rural areas. Outstanding achievements have been made in the training of informatization talents and teachers. In 2002, the first round of training for the entire personnel of information technologies among teachers of primary and secondary schools has been completed in most of the regions in China. A number of standards and criteria of education informatization have been publicized in succession and have constituted a set of relatively complete standard system for remote education. Meanwhile, testing platforms and certification centers for educational information technologies have been established and therefore have laid solid foundations for the interconnections and intercommunications of various remote education systems and the extensive sharing of various educational resources. Various types of educational resources at different levels, application platforms of educational informatization and the development and promotion of various teaching softwares have been rolling out in an all-round way and have achieved abundant results.

Upon approval of the State Council, the Ministry of Education, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance began to implement the modern remote education pilot demonstration project in 2003, and RMB 364,000,000 Yuan has been invested in three modes in the rural modern remote education pilot places in the 12 provinces in the west and Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps. Teaching disc playing equipments have been equipped in 29,229 rural primary schools and 2,350 rural junior secondary schools, and 5,016 satellite teaching signal receiving sites and 200 computer classrooms have been established. The bid invitation stage of the project has been completed. In 2003, there were 6,630,000 computers in the primary and secondary schools in China, or there was one computer for every 32 students, and there had established 34,749 school nets.

2.4 High quality education and the critical role played by the teachers

Teachers are the keys that determine the standard of education and even the quality of the people of a nation. The teachers' team in China is undergoing a historical transition from quantity insurance to elevation in quality. In recent years, the Government has been actively emphasizing on the cultivation and training of the teachers and various forms of continued education. As a result, the qualities and the structural levels of the teachers' team have been enhanced obviously. At the same time, with the standard salaries of teachers having been raised several times by the State, the teachers' treatment and social status have been greatly improved, and teacher is becoming a more and more attractive profession.

2.4.1 Launching of the Union of National Teacher's Education Network

With the view to build a lifelong learning platform for the teachers and at the same time improve their professional skills, the Ministry of Education launched the Union of National Teacher's Education Network in September 2003. At present, the Ministry of Education is setting about to accomplish the following tasks: to launch diploma-aimed education among the primary and secondary school teachers in large scales, establish and improve the operation rules of the Union of National Teacher's Education Network, and gradually introduce the student cultivating programs that have been examined and approved by the committee of experts; to promote the internal mutual credit recognition and course choosing within the Union of National Teacher's Education Network, and actively promote the construction of the database of shared resources of the Union of National Teacher's Education Network; to launch the construction of teacher training system for the new courses of modern remote education, and implement teacher training for the new courses; continue to conduct thorough investigation into the rural education, and analyze effective approaches and methods of rural teacher training; to make use of the current resources and systematic advantages of the Union of National Teacher's Education Network to quickly promote open education among teachers in rural areas, and explore effective modes for the training of teachers from poor and rural areas, etc.

2.4.2 Non-teacher colleges' participation in teacher education

The active participation of the non-teacher colleges in teacher education has injected new vitalities into the construction of an open and flexible system of teacher education in China. At present, non-teacher colleges proportion in the total number of teacher-training academies has risen to 54%. The non-teacher colleges' are becoming an importance force in teacher education in China, and will play a more and more important role in cause of teacher education in the future.

2.4.3 Trainings of teachers' teams compliant to the new courses are in full swing

Now, there are 9,246,600 teachers in the compulsory education stage in all in China. The onerous and pressing trainings of teachers' teams for the new courses involve a wide range of areas as well as a large number of people. By the end of 2003, the Ministry of Education has directly organized numerous trainings at the state level for teachers, headmasters and persons in charge of educational administrative departments or staff rooms at the provincial or prefecture levels, and there were about 16,000 attendants. This has brought along the extensive and in-depth launch of trainings of teachers' teams for the new courses throughout the country. There are about 2,000,000 teachers that have received different types of trainings for the new courses at different levels organized by educational administrative departments at different levels in various forms. The implementation of the training program for the new courses of senior secondary schools at the state level has been started in the first half of 2004. The main training objects include educational administrative cadres, headmasters of primary and secondary schools, part of backbone primary and secondary school teachers within the senior secondary school's experimental zone, backbone trainees and deans of normal schools, and teachers of subject teaching theories, etc.

2.5 Education for sustainable development

The Chinese Government has attached significant importance to the important role of education in the implementation of the strategy of sustainable development, and has required schools of various types and levels to penetrate the contents of sustainable development education into the contents of respective subjects, and help the younger generation understand correctly the dialectic relationship of the inter-coordination of population, economy, society, environment and resources through the implementation of various courses and practice activities so that the educational objectives of sustainable development may be realized.

Ever since the 1980s, the Ministry of Education of China has gradually added teaching contents relevant to environmental protection in courses such as nature of the primary schools and geography and chemistry in secondary schools. In 1992, contents and requirements of environmental education were clearly defined in the National Program for Courses of Compulsory Education and the teaching programs of various subjects. Since 1998, the Ministry of Education has launched the Project on Education for Environment Population and Sustainable Development (EPD) together with the UNESCO. Through the extensive promotion of education and teaching contents, methods and studying manners in over 1,000 primary and secondary schools in nine cities and provinces such as Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Hunan, the project has succeeded in establishing the concepts of sustainable development among the

teachers, and raised the youngsters' knowledge, moral and practical level of concerns over environment, life, and the sustainable development of the country and the nation.

At present, the local governments have conducted a number of explorations and attempts in terms of education for sustainable development, and arranged varied and interesting activities on the education of sustainable development. The sustainable development education in senior secondary schools has been implemented mainly through subject penetrations, activities and the opening of electives. Contents of sustainable development have been listed in relevant parts of the teaching programs of relevant subjects in senior secondary schools. Apart from the embodiment of education for sustainable development in the courses of the subjects, environmental science knowledge has also been made universal to the students through knowledge lectures, visits and inspections, social investigations, sampling, test determinations and other forms so as to cultivate their creativity, observation and enhance their sense of environment, behaviors and habits. With the new course reform regarding "possessing the sense and behavior that care for and protect the human beings" as an important objective of cultivation embodying the requirements of the times, reforms have been conducted on the present course structures, contents and manners so that education of environmental protection may be further penetrated into the designing of courses of various subjects and teaching practices. In addition, different contents and methods have been determined according to the characteristics of primary and secondary school students of different ages.

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