

Adoption of review report on China by UNHRC Universal Periodic Review Working Group (with photos)

The Universal Periodic Review Working Group of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) adopted the review report of the fourth round of the Universal Periodic Review on China at the meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, today (January 26, Geneva time).

A spokesman for the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) said, "In the current review, China's delegation has engaged in constructive interactions and dialogues with representatives of various countries in an open and transparent manner. Many countries have spoken highly of China's human rights progress and fully acknowledged China's efforts and historic achievements in advancing and protecting human rights. The HKSAR Government has been steadfastly joining the country in the review. It has actively responded to the views and suggestions about the human rights situation of the HKSAR from meeting participants, and sternly rebutted the unfounded and untrue remarks from a small number of countries.

"With the strong support from the motherland, and as the city where the global advantage and the China advantage converge under 'one country, two systems', Hong Kong will continue to protect and promote human rights through security, development and co-operation, as well as to tell the international community good stories of the HKSAR's human rights situation in a reasoned and robust manner."

The spokesman reiterated, "The HKSAR steadfastly safeguards national sovereignty, security and development interests, and fully and faithfully lives up to this top priority of 'one country, two systems'. The HKSAR Government shall resolutely, fully and faithfully implement the Hong Kong National Security Law and further strengthen the HKSAR's legal system and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding national security to effectively prevent, suppress and punish in accordance with the law acts and activities that endanger national security. At the same time, it shall safeguard in accordance with the law the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people. The overarching goal is to ensure the steadfast and successful implementation of 'one country, two systems'."

Earlier on, the Working Group met on January 23 (Geneva time) to examine China's fourth report, which includes a part concerning the HKSAR, submitted under the UNHRC Universal Periodic Review mechanism. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland, Mr Chen Xu, as the Head of China's delegation, led the delegation to participate in the review. The Chief Secretary for Administration (CS), Mr Chan Kwok-ki, as Deputy Head of China's delegation, took part together with officials of the HKSAR Government

as members of China's delegation.

The spokesman for the HKSAR Government pointed out, "During the review, the CS expounded on the work of the HKSAR in steadfastly promoting and protecting the freedoms and rights of Hong Kong residents. He stressed that Hong Kong people can continue to enjoy the legitimate rights and freedoms, which are guaranteed by our country's Constitution, the Basic Law, as well as the relevant provisions of international covenants that apply to Hong Kong.

"In response to the smears during the review from a small number of countries about Hong Kong's safeguarding of national security, the CS sternly rebutted that no country will watch with folded arms in the face of acts and activities that endanger national security, and that it is the legitimate right and duty of every state to safeguard its national security, and to do so by enacting laws is in line with international practice. He stressed that it is Hong Kong's constitutional responsibility to enact local legislation to safeguard national security; and that the enactment and implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law has brought back stability, security, as well as the rights and freedoms that people in Hong Kong have been deprived of during the period of serious violence in 2019.

"As regards the ongoing legal proceedings in Hong Kong that were mentioned during the review, the CS solemnly pointed out that judges of the HKSAR decide cases independently in accordance with the law, and that no one should comment on or interfere with the proceedings. The suggestion that certain individuals or groups should be immune from legal consequences for their illegal acts is no different from advocating a special pass to break the law, and this totally runs contrary to the spirit of the rule of law. The CS stressed that Hong Kong resolutely safeguards the rule of law. The common law system and independent exercise of judicial power in Hong Kong are protected by the Basic Law. The Judiciary in Hong Kong is well regarded internationally."

The Working Group's review report on China will be presented to the plenary session of the UNHRC in due course. The HKSAR Government will continue to steadfastly join the motherland in the work under the review mechanism.

