

**Contesting Human Rights Norms in a Declining
Liberal Order: China at the Human Rights
Council (2017-2022)**

by

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Abstract

There seems to be a scholarly consensus around the idea that, in the last decade, China has been actively promoting its own conception of human rights in an attempt to shape global human rights norms. The extent to which China's views challenge current norms is still unclear, but some suggest they are ultimately aimed at weakening the human rights regime's ability to hold states accountable for their human rights violations. However, this literature is still scarce and insufficient – most works only rely on a few pieces of ad-hoc primary empirical evidence or merely analyse existing secondary literature. We still lack a systematic representation of China's discursive contestation of human rights norms in recent years. This thesis seeks to fill this gap in the literature, asking to what extent China is contesting human rights norms at the Human Rights Council, and more specifically about the main contesting arguments and the main degrees of contestation that China puts forward. My analysis departed from constructivist theories of norm contestation that highlight the different degrees it can take, being able to question the very legitimacy of the norm (validity contestation) or the way it should be implemented (applicatory contestation). Considering this, I conducted a Qualitative Content Analysis of all the available Chinese sponsored and co-sponsored statements and resolutions at the Human Rights Council's sessions between 2017 and 2022, amounting to a total of 279 documents. The most fiercely contested human rights norms were the monitoring of individual countries' human rights situations, opposing the legitimacy of this practice in general, but also the specific wrongdoings in its execution, and the idea of universality, contending instead that states have full authority to implement human rights as they wish. The results also show that China made equivalent use of both types of contestation (validity and applicatory), marking a rupture with earlier Chinese discourse, which largely refrained from questioning the legitimacy of human rights norms. This thesis contributes to the literature by constructing a much-needed systematic, comprehensive and empirically grounded description of China's counter-discourse on human rights norms, which in turn shows that China is posing a very serious challenge to such norms today.

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List of abbreviations

CAT	Convention against Torture
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CSA	Country-specific action
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ESCR	Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
EU	European Union
GONGO	Government-Operated Non-governmental Organisation
HRC	Human Rights Council
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
LIO	Liberal international order
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PRC	People's Republic of China
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis
TACB	Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building
U.S.	United States (of America)
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

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1. Introduction

There is growing evidence suggesting that the liberal international order (LIO) is declining¹. All over the world, the number of democratic regimes is declining, hyper-globalisation has caused multiple crisis and endemic economic instability, rising powers are increasingly resolute in challenging global norms and institutions, and the latter have proven to be remarkably ineffective in addressing global problems, such as civil wars, gross human rights violations and climate change (Tomé 2021).

The widespread assumption that the LIO is facing a crisis has been accompanied by a debate on the nature of the sources of that crisis (Lake, Martin, and Risse 2021). Some stress the internal challenge of authoritarian populists (Broz, Frieden, and Weymouth 2021), the increasing liberal intrusiveness and social purpose of the LIO (Börzel and Zürn 2021), the rise of non-Western countries with different values and preferences (Acharya 2018), or their dissatisfaction with the hierarchies and inequalities the LIO comprises (Stuenkel 2016). The significance of the China's challenge seems to cut across all these accounts. The rise of China as the second greatest power in the international system, with a state-permeated variety of capitalism, an authoritarian political system, and illiberal values is considered to be one of the greatest challenges that the LIO faces, especially given its growing willingness and ability to shape global governance.

One of the main points of contention between China and the LIO has been the issue of human rights, whose protection and promotion constitute one of the order's core principles. China systematically violates human rights at home, and scholars have noted an increasing ambition to shape international human rights norms and institutions. In fact, China's domestic and international behaviour on the issue of human rights is used as evidence for the claim that China is trying to overturn the LIO. Some have gone as far as to claim that such actions risk "turning the human rights architecture on its head" (Brooks 2020, 53), or even that they amount to "an existential threat to the rights of people worldwide" (HRW 2020). However, are China's actions really aimed at undermining the

¹ The conventional story is that the LIO, created in the post-war period among Western states and globalised after the end of the Cold War, comprises the principles, rules and institutions that have governed the interaction between states through the promotion of free trade, democracy, universal human rights, cooperative security, shared sovereignty and collective problem-solving via multilateral institutions (Ikenberry 2001; 2011).

effectiveness of the international human rights regime as a whole? Does China really seek to fundamentally revise or even to subvert international human rights standards?

This thesis seeks to contribute to this debate, which is extremely consequential in a scenario where the LIO is waning and their traditional supporters are not committed to defending it anymore, while, on the contrary, China seems increasingly resolute and capable of challenging and shaping it. If the most pessimistic authors are right, China's 'assault' on global human rights could have real consequences in the already feeble enforcement of human rights on the international stage (HRW 2020; Brooks 2020; Richardson 2020; Piccone 2018). China's increasing material power naturally translates into more influence in shaping international affairs, and its "power and position in the world has never been greater" (Shambaugh 2020, 18). Assessing the nature of China's challenge to human rights standards is therefore of major importance, given this country's capacity to impact global norms and institutions, and hence its ability to subvert the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide.

However, existing scholarship has not satisfactorily addressed such questions. The literature on China and global human rights has focused mostly on China's domestic compliance with international human rights obligations, and, to less extent, on China's actions to obstruct and thwart the procedures of multilateral institutions. China's discursive contestation of human rights norms and standards has received much less attention, and, when it does, it is rarely analysed in a systematic way and supported by comprehensive empirical evidence. The neglect of this dimension hinders the literature's capacity to answer the aforementioned questions, because domestic and procedural compliance alone have little capacity to undermine norms – this task requires influence and, most importantly, a coherent counter-discourse that calls these norms into question (Kinzelbach 2012; Percy and Sandholtz 2022).

This thesis seeks to address this gap, aiming to provide a systematic account of China's views on human rights and the extent to which they challenge prevailing human rights norms. For that purpose, I conduct a qualitative content analysis of all Chinese statements and resolutions at the Human Rights Council – the main global human rights forum – between 2017 and 2022. This has potential to not only generate an accurate representation of China's human rights discourse, but also to disclose the extent to which it contests human rights norms, making an important contribution to the discussions about China's challenge to global human rights and to the LIO in general.

The thesis is structured as follows. The next chapter presents a literature review of China's interaction with the international human rights regime over time and across several dimensions that have caught the scholars' attention. The third chapter critically engages with the existing literature, identifying gaps to contextualise, justify and clarify the research question(s). The fourth chapter lays out the theoretical and analytical framework of the thesis. The fifth chapter discloses my research design, discussing matters of case selection, data collection, methodology, as well as their strengths and limitations. The sixth chapter presents the results of the thesis, while the seventh analyses them, highlighting relevant aspects and putting them into perspective with the previous literature. The eighth and final chapter puts forward a few concluding remarks, summarising the thesis, its findings and how they contribute to the existing literature, but also their limitations, raising also questions for future research.

2. China and global human rights

At a first glance, the fact that China is an active participant in the international human rights regime while systematically violating human rights at home is surprising and paradoxical. In fact, China's engagement with global human rights started more than four decades ago. Today, China is part of the majority of the most significant human rights treaties, embraced human rights protection in its discourse and domestic law, and participates actively in the main human rights fora, especially in the Human Rights Council (HRC), where it has undergone three rounds of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

This chapter presents a literature review of China's interaction with global human rights. It starts with a general historical outline of its evolution over time to then overview the three main issues that scholars have paid more attention to: compliance with international human rights obligations, strategies of engagement and the tactics used by China in institutional fora, and finally China's views of human rights and how they contest international human rights standards.

In the years following the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the newly formed regime was an outsider to the international human rights system². A strong socialist revolutionary identity precluded the recognition of human rights in domestic and foreign policy because China was focused on class struggle, the global proletarian revolution and the overthrow of global capitalism (Inboden and Chen 2012). The massive human rights violations during the Great Leap Forward escaped international attention due to the lack of available information about China's society, the absence of a domestic human rights lobby, and to the underdevelopment of the transnational human rights advocacy network (Cohen 1987; Kinzelbach 2019). China was also not a member of the United Nations (UN), and few countries had acknowledged the new regime and established diplomatic relations.

The PRC joined the UN in 1971, taking the Republic of China's seat at the UN Security Council (UNSC). This was the period of normalisation of relations with the outside world and rapprochement with the Western countries, especially with the United States of America (U.S.). However, China sought to maintain as little involvement with

² The terms 'international human rights system' or 'international human rights regime' are used rather loosely and interchangeably to broadly refer to the international array of treaties, institutions and norms that govern the issue-area of human rights (Nathan 2011; Inboden 2021).

the UN's human rights activities as possible, proceeding also with weak domestic application of its human rights obligations (Kent 1999). Until the end of the decade, China essentially remained an outsider, and Western countries were also not interested in drawing attention to China's human rights record, since that had the potential to undermine the process of rapprochement, considered essential to counter the Soviet Union in the Cold War context (Kinzelbach 2019).

The process of 'reform and opening' in the late 1970s brought about the desire to become a more active participant in the international realm, marking also the beginning of China's interaction with the human rights regime (D. Chen 2009). China acquired observer status of the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) in 1979, becoming a full member in 1982. Throughout the 1980s, it signed multiple international human rights treaties, including the Convention against Torture (CAT) in 1986 (OHCHR 2023a). Chen (2009) notes how China evinced a positive rhetorical attitude regarding the importance of human rights and the cooperation on this matter. However, China's domestic record did not significantly improve, which drove China to adopt a low profile in international human rights bodies, making scarce contributions to discussions and occasionally espousing notions of sovereignty and cultural relativism to protect itself from scrutiny of its human rights practices, which was basically inexistent until 1989 (Kent 1999; Nathan 2011). This was a period of 'emergent' (Inboden 2021) or 'tentative' (Foot 2000) participation in the human rights system.

The violent Tiananmen crackdown on peaceful protestors in 1989 constituted a watershed moment in China's interaction with the human rights regime, bringing, arguably for the first time, China's human rights record to the 'forefront of global attention' (Foot 2000, 256). This event attracted widespread condemnation, leading to the imposition of wide-ranging multilateral sanctions and to severed diplomatic ties with many countries (Nathan 2011). The year 1989 witnessed the passing of the first resolution criticising China's human rights abuses in the UN, most specifically in the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (Inboden and Chen 2012). The regime's immediate response was to decrease involvement in the human rights regime through a "total rejection of the regime's norms, its denial of their applicability to itself, and the mobilization of arguments invoking highly legalistic interpretations of sovereignty" (Kent 1999, 234).

After this initial defensive approach, Beijing became acutely aware of the reputational and material consequences of being a human rights pariah, and realised that

re-engaging with the human rights regime was the best strategy to avoid them (Foot 2000). To prepare for this endeavour, it heavily sponsored and stimulated academic human rights research and discussion at home to develop its own human rights positions, which would hopefully enable the country to defend its human rights practices and views with sufficient sophistication and effectiveness on the international stage (Foot 2000; Kent 1999). The White Paper of 1991 is the first comprehensive display of China's official stance on human rights; subsequent White Papers were published over the years. In this important statement, the PRC accepted the universality of human rights, but opposed the imposition of same standards on all countries, calling for sensitivity to local conditions, argued that sovereignty could not be undermined by human rights promotion and scrutiny, and that the 'right to subsistence' was the most important right and the prerequisite to all others (Kent 1999; Kinzelbach 2019). Kent (1999) notes how China repeatedly espoused these arguments in this period, namely in the Bangkok and Vienna meetings in 1993; these are considered to be the central elements of a very consistent human rights narrative over the years (Kinzelbach 2019).

In a scenario of intense and persistent international scrutiny, China did not only promote this counter-narrative to deflect criticism, but also relentlessly sought to avoid the passing, or even the tabling, of critical resolutions of its human rights record. The PRC managed to prevent all the resolutions from even being voted through the approval of 'no-action motions', except for one in 1995, which was nevertheless defeated in the voting process (Inboden 2021). China vigorously lobbied non-Western countries, building a reservoir of support that consistently helped Beijing to block UNCHR resolutions by appealing to a common developing country identity and to similar concerns with human rights scrutiny, reciprocally defending these countries when they were criticised in this body (Inboden 2021; Nathan 2011). China also marshalled its global economic prowess to threaten and punish countries that supported or wanted to support critical resolutions (Kinzelbach 2019).

From the mid-1990s onwards, China offered to pursue bilateral human rights dialogues with Western countries and the European Union (EU) in exchange for reduced public pressure at the UN and for the abandonment of resolutions (Inboden and Chen 2012). The bilateral aid projects and capacity-building programs that resulted from these dialogues were not effective in improving China's human rights record due to the huge leeway for the Chinese government to shape them (Kinzelbach 2013). However, Western countries managed to extract some tactical concessions from China like the release of

some political prisoners, and the signature of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1997 (ratified in 2001) and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1998 (not yet ratified). In this period, China also received two visits of the Special Procedures, with whom it notably cooperated, promising also to receive the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education in 2003 (Meng and Haina 2020). These small concessions, though, were not accompanied by a significant move towards greater domestic compliance with human rights obligations.

The success of Beijing's efforts became evident in the beginning of the new millennium. Then, China faced reduced public human rights pressure as a consequence of the shift to bilateral venues' 'quiet diplomacy' and of the U.S.' focus on the 'war on terror' since 2001 (Inboden and Chen 2012). The following decade marks a period of a low profile in the human rights system, made possible by the scant condemnation of China's human rights record. Notwithstanding, Beijing heavily invested in the negotiations of the Human Rights Council's (HRC) institutional design, a new human rights forum that replaced the UNCHR in 2006. The PRC's delegation attained considerable successes like the geographical distribution of seats, which ensured continuous representation of like-minded governments, a large membership, the restriction of the human rights advisory body and of the confidential complaint procedure, and the defeat of proposals such as membership criteria tied to human rights performance and binding follow-up action as part of the UPR (Inboden and Chen 2012; Inboden 2021). Conversely, some of China's goals such as the elimination of country-specific resolutions, or the requirement that they had to be sponsored by a third of the members and approved by two thirds, the exclusion of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from the Council's activities, or a strong curtailment of their role, and a greater state control over the Special Procedures were not attained (Inboden and Chen 2012).

However, the net result of these efforts was very positive for China, being now more effectively insulated from serious human rights pressure than ever, which is a remarkable improvement of its situation in the predecessor UNCHR (Nathan 2016). It has not even faced the threat of a resolution, managing also to impair the discussion of its human rights practices; even during the UPR, where every state is individually reviewed, China has filled the room with friendly countries, which offer extensive praise while reducing the time for critical statements (Inboden and Chen 2012; Inboden 2021; HRW 2017).

Until the early 2010s, China is reported to have held a relatively low profile in the HRC, rarely attending sessions, sticking to observing and studying the procedures, refraining from regular lobbying and from issuing big controversial public statements – China only abandoned this passive posture when it was forced to defend itself from direct human rights criticism (Sceats and Breslin 2012). A widely cited report shows that until October 2012, China introduced only 2 own resolutions, co-sponsoring 58; it also reveals a remarkable voting coincidence with Asian and African countries, a trend of supporting winning resolutions to avoid isolation, and the prevalence of anodyne statements, taking also some opportunities to promote its conception of human rights (Sceats and Breslin 2012). Kinzelbach (2019) also notes an increasing confidence in promoting a positive image of itself supported by a strong propaganda apparatus, which portrayed China as a remarkable story of economic development and social stability to try to conquer the global public opinion. Overall, this is a period of immunisation against multilateral condemnation and low profile human rights diplomacy, albeit with attempts to shape human rights procedures and, to a less extent, advance its human rights vision.

For many authors, Xi Jinping's rise to power in 2012 marks a turning point in China's interaction with the human rights regime (T. C. Chen 2019; Y.-J. Chen 2019; Foot 2020; Piccone 2018). This is seen to be part of broader shift in Chinese foreign policy: under Xi, China is said to have abandoned its traditional posture of keeping a low profile, exhibiting increasing confidence and proactiveness internationally in a quest to reclaim its centrality on the world stage and to reshape the global governance system (Shambaugh 2020; Economy 2021). Similarly, since Xi came to power, many claim that China has turned to a more assertive and proactive human rights foreign policy seeking to fundamentally alter international human rights standards. China is seen to have shifted from a defensive attitude of deflecting human rights scrutiny to an offensive posture of trying to promote and mainstream its human rights views (Wan 2022; T. C. Chen 2019; Foot 2020).

Although the exact timing of this change is debated³, there is ample consensus on the nature of this shift in Chinese human rights diplomacy. Whereas China refrained from taking leadership in the HRC before, preferring to let like-minded countries carry the burden, it now exhibits greater confidence and initiative in promoting its views, lobbying

³ The different positions in this debate will be discussed in the next chapter, since this is vital to justify the timeframe of the research question.

and threatening governments, rallying developing countries for support, and, more recently, sponsoring its own resolutions (Foot 2020; Inboden 2021). China has become less unapologetic in using its growing economic and political clout to gain influence in multilateral mechanisms and shape their procedures and underlying principles. Some NGOs and authors claim that China's activities have the intention and potential to essentially undermine the human rights system, aspiring to neutralise its ability to enforce human rights globally and to hold governments accountable for their violations (HRW 2020; Richardson 2020).

The following subchapters will extensively document these activities, so there is no need to delve deeper at this stage. They are thematically structured according to the main issues around which the literature on China's interaction with the human rights regime has focused on: China's compliance with human rights obligations, tactics and strategies of engagement with the regime, and human rights views.

2.1 Compliance with the human rights regime and its obligations

It is widely known that the PRC commits systematic human rights violations at home. This is considered the issue area where China's behaviour most clearly contradicts the international order's dictates (Mazarr, Heath, and Cevallos 2018). The PRC massively violates civil and political rights in particular due to its fundamental goal of maintaining one-party rule: the state uses all means available to preclude the development of any sort of political opposition to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (Johnston 2019).

China's domestic human rights record remains the 'Achilles heel' of its foreign policy, sparking frequent condemnation and eroding its international status (Zhu 2011). In recent years, China's treatment of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang lead to widespread international outcry. It is estimated that over a million Uighurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim peoples have been arbitrarily detained in facilities to be subjected to forced labour, mass surveillance, forced cultural assimilation and political indoctrination (Freedom House 2020; Amnesty International 2021). This builds up on years of persecution and repression of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang and Tibet (Human Rights Watch 2021).

Over the years, the party-state has also maintained a tight control over the media, mounted an extensive system of online censorship, curbed freedom of assembly by restricting and suppressing protests, and resorted to arbitrary detentions and torture, just

to name a few examples⁴. Multiple observers have noted that China’s human rights record has deteriorated on many dimensions during Xi Jinping’s terms (HRW 2020; Shirk 2022).

This contrasts with China’s notable progress in ensuring economic and social rights, lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty and providing increasing levels of education, healthcare and social security over the years. In fact, the government has been playing a growing role in ensuring welfare and social services, having built a “residual state welfare and social insurance system” (Li 2019, 219). Nonetheless, China still suffers from some serious shortcomings in protecting economic, social and cultural rights. There is a pressing need to bridge the rural-urban areas divides, address widespread discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation, put an end to unsafe working conditions, eliminate food insecurity and malnutrition in rural areas, and ensure adequate access to education, healthcare, employment and social security for rural-to-urban migrants, international migrants, ethnic minorities and people from poor rural areas (OHCHR 2018). In any case, the government has shown commitment in gradually advancing economic, social and cultural rights, fostering, in recent years, efforts of poverty alleviation in rural areas and reforms of the *hukou* system to improve rural-to-urban migrants’ access to social services (Li 2019).

Overall, the PRC’s human rights record is poor, exhibiting low compliance with international standards and obligations, especially regarding civil and political rights. This contrasts with China’s active participation in the international human rights regime for more than four decades. China is part of seven of the nine core international human rights covenants (ratified all seven except the ICCPR), was a member of the UNCHR, and is now a frequent and active member of the HRC, submits to international monitoring by participating in the UPR and reporting to treaty bodies, and has allowed some independent experts to visit China (OHCHR 2023a; HRW 2017; Inboden 2021). This does not mean that this participation is necessarily constructive – in fact, China often obstructs human rights scrutiny and challenges human rights standards, as will be documented in the next two sub-sections. However, its formal or procedural compliance with the regime is undeniable, unlike its domestic compliance.

Ann Kent (1999) reached the same conclusion in her seminal study of China’s compliance with different parts of the human rights regime – her findings have proven to

⁴ See Machado (2023, 201–2) for a more complete overview of China’s violations of civil and political rights.

be prescient, holding great relevance more than twenty years later. She noted that China's compliance was high on the international level, but low on the domestic level, meaning that the signing of treaties and the participation in the regime's procedures were not accompanied by a *de facto* implementation of human rights standards on the PRC's domestic practices, even though a few were incorporated *de jure* in domestic law. However, "most part of this legislation did not alter the incidence of its human rights abuses" (Kent 1999, 242). China demonstrated a pattern of instrumental organisational learning, through which it learned it was easier to comply with institutional procedures than to avoid them; the knowledge acquired through participation allowed China to shape norms and procedures in its favour, offsetting international human rights pressure and, consequently, genuine cognitive learning (Kent 1999).

Beijing's deep concern with promoting a positive international image and to be seen as a 'responsible major power' pushed it to participate in and cooperate with the international human rights regime (Inboden 2021; Zhu 2011). As mentioned before, China realised that engaging with the regime was the best way to blunt criticism and seek legitimisation, so it could continue with its human rights abuses. The PRC is hardly the only state to opt for this strategy, marked by procedural, but not domestic compliance:

"The global institutionalization of human rights may have compelled states to sign and ratify international human rights treaties as a matter of international legitimation. However, because of the weak institutional mechanisms to monitor and enforce implementation, many governments sign and ratify international human rights treaties not as a serious commitment to universal human rights in practice but rather as a matter of window-dressing. The international legitimacy conferred by treaty ratification often provides a convenient shield for governments to continue their repressive human rights behaviour after ratification, as human rights legal regimes remain powerless to stop them" (Zhang and Buzan 2019, 11).

However, some influential theoretical models of human rights diffusion predict that initial instrumental participation and tactical compliance may unintentionally lead to internalisation of human rights standards in domestic law and state practice (Risse and Sikkink 1999). Why was this not the case with China?

As explained before, compliance with human rights standards, especially in the civil political dimension, is obstructed by contrary domestic interests, namely the imperative

of maintaining undisputed CCP rule. Participation in international organisations has strong effects on states, but “in critical instances affecting sovereignty or state security, the state’s self-interest will prevail over organizational norms” (Kent 2007, 219). Internalisation is unlikely in the absence of convergent domestic interests, so it has “worked more effectively in areas of governance where the power of the Chinese party-state is acknowledged, not curtailed” (Inboden and Chen 2012, 56). In addition, the PRC has ruthlessly cracked down on human rights defenders and NGOs, successfully preventing the emergence of a robust domestic human rights civil society in China, which significantly impairs the effectiveness of the socialisation process (Zhu 2011; Kinzelbach 2013).

More legal-oriented studies reveal a very flexible approach to international law: even though international law provisions, including on the issue of human rights, may be acknowledged by the domestic legal system, the government and the courts have plenty of latitude to ignore them, which precludes the meaningful incorporation and enactment of international human rights obligations in domestic law (Ahl 2015). Potter (2007) has explained this pattern through the lens of ‘selective adaptation’, which posits that local interpretive communities adopt non-local legal standards in light of their normative perspectives. If we take into consideration Chinese elites’ normative views of human rights as a violation of the state’s sovereignty and a constraint to state power, one realises that the low domestic compliance in both law and practice results from the PRC leadership’s determination to ensure regime security, understood as CCP’s one-party rule.

Overall, the literature on Chinese compliance with the human rights regime converges in the observation of “resistance on the domestic level with efforts to increase the appearance of international human rights compliance on the international level” (Ahl 2015, 642).

2.2 Tactics and strategies of engagement

This sub-chapter surveys the tactics and strategies employed by China in its interaction with the human rights regime. Here, the focus is on concrete actions, whereas the next sub-chapter covers elements of discourse.

As mentioned before, although China is an active participant of the regime, it can at times obstruct or even try to thwart its procedures and principles. China’s engagement with the regime is therefore varied, as it tries to balance its concern with promoting a

positive international image of a cooperative regime participant with other often conflicting goals: (i) block criticism of its own human rights record; (ii) avoid scrutiny of specific countries' human rights situations; and (iii) promote China's views on human rights (Sceats and Breslin 2012; Worden 2020; Dukalskis 2022). Some authors argue that these are part of a broader goal to fundamentally weaken the human rights regime, completely undermining its ability to monitor human rights violations and to hold governments accountable (Piccone 2018; Richardson 2020). While some of China's actions do seem to be aimed at this, it is hard to measure such wholesale intentions empirically. Leaving that debate aside for a moment, I will try to overview China's tactics and strategies of engagement in the regime, which definitely seem to be deployed to attain the three aforementioned objectives.

China has displayed a selective approach regarding the Special Procedures of the HRC. China did not issue standing invitations, and in fact rejects or postpones most of the requests. Until March 2023, it has received ten country visits from Special Procedures on issues of freedom of religion, freedom from arbitrary detention, right to food, right to education, freedom from torture, discrimination against women, impact of foreign debt on human rights, extreme poverty, and older persons (Meng and Haina 2020; OHCHR 2023b). While this does reveal a preference for accepting visits on issues pertaining to economic and social rights, which are expected to yield positive reviews (Ahl 2015; Worden 2020), it also shows that in some circumstances, China was willing to receive visits on sensitive issues like torture and arbitrary detention.

During the visits, the government has sometimes interfered, monitoring experts' movements and trying to impede civil society members to meet with them (HRW 2017; Inboden 2021). However, Meng and Haina (2020) note that this was only reported to have happened in two visits, and that the government's attitude has been generally cooperative. Conversely, they also observe that the PRC was more open and cooperative in the first visits; over time, we can also see that China ceased to accept visits on sensitive topics. China's response to reviews has also been varied: sometimes it silently or explicitly acknowledges them, while other times it accused mandate holders of being biased against China, opposed country-specific mandates, called for equal respect of all categories of rights and for mandate holders to not exceed the scope of their mandate (Meng and Haina 2020).

Despite not having advocated for their elimination, China is very wary of Special Procedures because they can raise direct criticism of its human rights violations;

therefore, it has selectively accepted visits, tried to constrain their action, for example, by proposing a code of conduct, and sometimes challenged their authority when it dislikes their findings (Y.-J. Chen 2019; Inboden 2021).

China has the same concern towards the Treaty Bodies. While it is part of most of them and regularly complies with its reporting duties, it has also pushed back against some and tried to limit their authority (Inboden 2021). Experts and NGOs denounced attempts to inappropriately approach experts, offering meals and trips to China to try to obtain more favourable reviews, harassment and intimidation of staff members to dissuade criticism, efforts to obstruct the participation of civil society in reviews, and failure to respond to requests for information (HRW 2017; Y.-J. Chen 2019; Brooks 2020). In line with its conduct regarding the Special Procedures, China has also accused treaty bodies of presenting false information and proposed reforms that would weaken them in favour of the state (HRW 2017).

In addition, China has opposed the creation and tried to curtail the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (Worden, 2020). For example, it has called for more geographic representativeness of the staff, which would increase the number of Chinese staff, for tighter budget scrutiny and transparency, and for the Commissioner to give more emphasis to the promotion of economic, social, and cultural rights (Sceats and Breslin 2012; Foot 2020). China has also applied a lot of pressure to the Office. This was visible in 2022 ahead of the publication of an OHCHR report on Xinjiang. Michelle Bachelet, then High Commissioner, confirmed to be under tremendous pressure from China to not publish the report (Y. Yuan and Foy 2022). This led the Commissioner to delay the publication of the report against the will of OHCHR staff, publishing it eventually in the last day of her term, which she did not renew. Bachelet was criticised for acquiescing to China's language of 'counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation', and for failing to provide a full account of the atrocities taking place in Xinjiang (Cheung 2022).

The PRC has also been very active in the Human Rights Council since its inception. As I have explained, it has managed to successfully shape the HRC's rules and procedures during the negotiations, undermining the new body's capacity to scrutinise China and ensuring sufficient representation of friendly governments that support China's positions and initiatives. Chinese action in the HRC is multidimensional, but some aspects have merited the experts' attention: the use of economic and political pressure on other

governments, the opposition to country-specific action, the coalitions with developing countries, the manipulation of the UPR, and the obstruction of civil society participation.

Since the aftermath of Tiananmen, China has not been afraid to threaten countries to not criticise its human rights record – or to punish those who did. In the UNCHR, China cancelled diplomatic visits and economically retaliated against EU countries who supported a resolution that condemned China in 1997; for example, Denmark, one of the co-sponsors, saw its exports for China diminish in approximately half a billion Danish Kroner (Kinzelbach 2019). As China's political and economic clout have grown over the decades, the country has had more capacity to apply pressure and to sway other delegations. In the HRC, the PRC reportedly resorts to economic and political pressure – for example, threatening to withdraw development assistance, access to the Chinese market, and trade deals, or to impose a diplomatic freeze – to silence criticism of its human rights record and to get support for its positions (HRW 2017; Worden 2020; Inboden 2021). A paradigmatic case took place in 2019, when the Chinese representative threatened other delegations, suggesting in a letter that their attendance at a side event on Xinjiang would damage relations with China (Dukalskis 2022; Richardson 2020).

It has also punished countries that went against China on human rights issues (Brooks 2020). After awarding Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo with a Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, the PRC imposed heavy sanctions on Norwegian imports and severely limited diplomatic interactions with the country (Kolstad 2020). Economic inducements might also be a part of this, with some authors suggesting that countries might support Chinese positions in the Council due to their reliance on Chinese development aid or trade. It seems like China's growing economic and political power has allowed it to put in place a 'system of rewards and punishments' in the HRC, deployed to silence criticism and extract support (Worden 2020).

Other trend in China's engagement is the opposition to country-specific action, especially country-specific resolutions. This is also a trend visible since the UNCHR, where China opposed such instruments, arguing that they violate state sovereignty or that they illegitimately interfere in domestic affairs (Foot 2000). This position has evolved over the years – nowadays, China argues that 'dialogue and cooperation' should prevail over 'confrontation' and 'naming and shaming' (Foot 2020). In any case, China usually votes 'no' on HRC's country-specific resolutions that address human rights violations in a country:

“Of the 63 country-specific resolutions that have been adopted during all UNHRC sessions in which the PRC was a member, China abstained twice, voted NO 44 times, and voted YES 15 times. Nearly all of those YES votes were about resolutions on human rights in Palestine or other areas occupied by Israel” (Dukalskis 2022, 8).

This reveals that although a general pattern of rejecting country-specific action can be noted, China has not shied away from supporting resolutions that condemn Western countries, especially those concerning Israel’s actions in Palestine. Primiano (2019) shows that China rarely votes in favour of country-specific resolutions that target developing countries, but consistently supports those which condone developed countries. The PRC has also criticised the human rights records of developed countries as a response to their criticism of China’s own human rights record (Nathan 2011; HRW 2017). China’s actions reveal a consistent opposition to country-specific action, but one that seems to be instrumental rather than principled, serving to deflect scrutiny of its own and its partners’ human rights violations.

Shielding developing countries from human rights condemnation is part of a broader strategy to court this large group of countries. China has been able to consistently marshal support from these countries by supporting issues of their interest, praising their human rights record, and defending them against scrutiny and criticism (HRW 2017; Inboden 2021). Sceats & Breslin (2012) report an extremely high voting coincidence with Asian and African states, with China frequently co-sponsoring or voting favourably resolutions sponsored by groups of developing countries.

In return, these countries help China deflect criticism, and support China’s positions and initiatives. After Tiananmen, China found a consistent reservoir of support among these countries, which helped it defeat every critical resolution that was tabled. When it assumed a more assertive posture to shape the human rights regime in the HRC, it has rallied extensive and consistent support from the so-called Like-Minded Group (LMG). This is a group of authoritarian states with similar human rights ideas such as the opposition to country-specific action, the privileging of economic-social rights and the right to development over civil and political rights, and the emphasis on state sovereignty *vis-à-vis* the authority of the human rights regime (Inboden 2022). The support of this group is a major source of Chinese influence in the regime: its large membership is decisive to ensure the success of China’s initiatives (e.g., HRC resolutions) and the promotion of its human rights views.

China has also relied on these countries' participation in its UPR reviews, where they commend China's human rights record. By filling the list of speakers with friendly countries and government-organised NGOs (GONGOs) instructed to praise China, it substantially reduces time for critical statements (Richardson 2020; Y.-J. Chen 2019). The PRC's delegation then reciprocates during these countries' reviews.

Finally, China has undertaken a myriad of actions to silence or reduce participation of critical human rights NGOs and activists. Over the years, it has tried to block critical NGOs from getting UN accreditation, and sought to blacklist accredited activists through its membership of the ECOSOC's NGO Committee (Piccone 2018; Worden 2020). China has also impeded Chinese activists to travel to Geneva, intimidated, harassed and expelled Chinese activists on UN premises, and barred NGOs from attending sessions (HRW 2017). It has also resorted to procedural tactics to interrupt critical civil society speakers, and harassed and threatened international NGOs (Worden 2020; Dukalskis 2022). In general, it consistently opposes a bigger role for civil society. It also objects to resolutions on human rights defenders, claiming that there is no clear definition of such and that they should not enjoy special rights or status (HRW, 2017).

Overall, it can be said that China generally complies with the procedures of the human rights regime, but often engages in obstructive and subversive behaviour meant to block criticism of itself and its partners, and, more recently, to advance its human rights views. The deployment of these ideas has been promoted through the same tactics, namely the support of the LMG. The content of this counter-narrative is the object of the next sub-chapter.

2.3 China's human rights views

As mentioned before, scholars have converged around the idea that China has been actively promoting its own conception of human rights in recent years, and that these ideas challenge existing international human rights norms and standards to some extent (T. C. Chen 2019; Potter 2021). This sub-chapter surveys the main ideas on international human rights that China has been putting forward. The overview of the Chinese arguments is structured around the five main issues of contention with international standards: universality, the hierarchy between economic, social and cultural rights, and civil and political rights, human rights monitoring, the relation between human rights and sovereignty, and the role of civil society in the human rights regime.

China has long recognised the universality of human rights, frequently acknowledging it in official statements, but it has also argued that it should be tempered by sovereignty and cultural diversity. The exact articulation with these principles has varied over time and is a matter of internal debate (Zhao 2015). Since early times, China has insisted that sovereignty is the main principle governing international affairs, applying to all issues, including human rights. Following this line of thought, China has argued that state sovereignty is the base for realising human rights, therefore states have the right to formulate their own human rights policies; similarly, human rights criticism is seen as illegitimate interference in a state's internal affairs (Liu 1995; Hsu and Chen 2020; Renouard 2020). However, China rarely challenges universality this explicitly (Kinzelbach 2012). The far most common argument regarding universality is that there is no common universal blueprint for human rights, so one cannot impose one specific model on others. States should interpret and implement human rights according to their national conditions, namely their historical, social, economic and cultural backgrounds, as well as their levels of development (T. C. Chen 2019; Potter 2021; Zhao 2015). This cultural relativist argument does not essentially, or explicitly, dispute the idea of universality because it acknowledges rights entitlements and the state's obligation to enforce them. At the same time, it seeks to provide states with leeway to cherry-pick the rights they want to implement and with a justification to not fulfil their obligations, which has led many experts to denounce this argument as *de facto* countering and threatening universality (Potter 2021; Y.-J. Chen 2019; Inboden 2021).

The second contentious issue is the hierarchical relation between categories of rights. Whereas all categories are formally equal, China has insisted that, in practice, UN human rights bodies have overemphasised civil and political rights, and hence should pay more attention to economic, social and cultural rights, so they are *de facto* treated equally (Voss 2019; Foot 2020). However, China's human rights conception does not treat all categories of rights equally, placing the right to subsistence and the right to development as the most important rights and, together with sovereignty or national independence, the pre-requisites for all other human rights (Kinzelbach 2012; Z. Yuan, Li, and Zhufu 2017). Although there is a clear prioritisation of economic and social rights over civil and political rights in China's human rights philosophy that stems from its Marxist roots (Svensson 2002), scholars are divided as to how this argument is exactly formulated in international rhetoric. While some argue that China places the former category as unequivocally more important than the latter (T. C. Chen 2019; Inboden 2021), others

claim that China more frequently argues for a conditional or sequential logic – civil and political rights can only be enforced after fully realising economic and social rights, or the right to development (Kinzelbach 2012; Foot 2020; Potter 2021).

The third issue is international human rights monitoring, towards which China is very wary, showing consistent opposition to country-specific action. While initially China tended to deny the legitimacy of monitoring wholesale because it constituted interference in internal affairs (Foot 2000), its position has evolved to a more sophisticated argument, according to which ‘naming and shaming’ and ‘confrontation’ should be replaced by ‘dialogue and cooperation’, ‘mutual respect’ and ‘non-confrontation’ (T. C. Chen 2019; Dukalskis 2022; Piccone 2018). These are frequently seen as euphemisms meant to disguise the intention to replace multilateral monitoring and enforcement with harmless inter-state consultation and state’s authority in implementing human rights (Foot 2020).

Besides evincing principled opposition to country-specific action and its specific mechanisms, putting forward arguments like the aforementioned, China has also challenged the particular ways in which it is exercised (Kinzelbach 2012). For example, it has accused human rights institutions of being biased towards, or of disproportionately targeting, developing countries (Primiano 2019). When faced with criticism, China has very frequently accused UN bodies and critical states of being biased against China, presenting false information, and having political or ulterior motives (e.g. ‘containing China’) (HRW 2017; Inboden 2021). Whether this is merely dissatisfaction with specific instances of monitoring or a way to contest its legitimacy wholesale is uncertain.

The fourth issue concerns the relation between human rights and sovereignty. As mentioned before, China’s line of argument about this is not clear and has changed over time. This has led some scholars to claim that China views sovereignty as supreme, hence not susceptible to be overridden by human rights concerns (Hsu and Chen 2020; Inboden 2021), while others state that China most commonly demands a higher respect for sovereignty in particular instances (e.g., when it is criticised) or claims it as a fundamental principle in abstract terms (Kinzelbach 2012). The exact nature of the articulation between sovereignty and human rights in China’s narrative is not adequately ascertained in the existing literature. Another common argument according to the some experts is the idea that state’s collective rights are more important than individual rights, and that states, not individuals, are subjects of human rights (Sun 2016; Z. Yuan, Li, and Zhufu 2017; Y.-J. Chen 2019). Besides, China has contested monitoring for allegedly violating state

sovereignty and framed human rights as internal affairs not be interfered with by external actors (Nathan 2011).

The final issue relates with civil society participation in multilateral human rights proceedings. I have documented how China has consistently obstructed the participation of civil society NGOs and activists. On the level of discourse, it has attacked human rights defenders and NGOs for being threats to public order, politically motivated entities and threats to sovereignty and territorial integrity (Voss 2019; Foot 2020). It has also argued that there is no consensus on the definition of human rights defenders, that this controversial concept should not be imposed, and that they should not enjoy special rights or freedoms (HRW 2017; Piccone 2018; Voss 2019). Some authors claim that the PRC has expressed opposition to NGO participation in general (Kent 1999), while others argue instead that it has only called for diminishing it or to better regulate it (Foot 2020; Nathan 2016). The scholarly assessment of China's arguments regarding civil society participation seems to also need more clarity.

Throughout this section, I have summarised those considered to be the main tenets of China's counter-narrative on human rights, which has been espoused confidently in the last years of interaction with the human rights regime in conjunction with other tactics as part of a broader strategy of engagement. However, this sub-chapter also revealed the uncertainties regarding the content of the Chinese conception of human rights. The next chapter explores these research gaps to outline the research question of this thesis.

3. The research question

This thesis seeks to contribute to the last strand of the literature: China's views on human rights and how they challenge international human rights standards. I will now identify research gaps on the matter, thereby contextualising and justifying my research question, which I state in the end of the chapter.

The discussion on the nature of China's challenge to international human rights standards can be framed within the wider debate about whether China is trying to overthrow the liberal international order (LIO). According to some, the LIO, perceived to have promoted poverty alleviation, economic growth, democracy and human rights in the last decades, is facing a crisis that is in part driven by the challenges posed by illiberal states, especially China (Lake, Martin, and Risse 2021).

Scholars have heatedly debated the extent to which China is challenging the LIO. Some argue that this challenge is wholesale, and that China wants to replace the current order by one of its own making (Mearsheimer 2019; Economy 2021; Doshi 2021). Others argued that, on the contrary, this order has integrated China and served its interests, therefore China will preserve the order and its principles, elevating only its place in the order's hierarchy (Stuenkel 2016; Ikenberry 2018).

A third strand of scholars has called for more nuanced assessments, which ultimately reveal the inadequacy of these binaries, underlining conversely how China interacts with the LIO in varied ways (de Graaff, ten Brink, and Parmar 2020). They stress how the LIO is heterogeneous and composed of issue-areas (or 'sub-orders') governed by different, sometimes even conflicting, rules, norms and institutions (Johnston 2019). Then, they empirically analyse how China behaves towards these multiple issues, norms and institutions, often concluding that there is variation across them: China supports some and opposes others (Johnston, 2019; Mazarr, Heath, & Cevallos, 2018; Nathan, 2016).

Nonetheless, it is consensual that China shows a trend of opposing the most liberal elements of the order, namely political democratisation and the protection of individual civil and political liberties (Weiss and Wallace 2021; Johnston 2019). Along with China's poor human rights record, the latter is often the chief piece of evidence mobilised to corroborate assertions that China threatens the order as a whole. Such argument deserves further scrutiny because it is grounded on two misconceptions.

First, although it is unquestionable that China is a major human rights violator, this *per se* does not mean that China is trying to eradicate norms of human rights protection.

Not every instance of non-compliance is necessarily a challenge to the respective norm; that depends if the rule-breaker questions that norm (Weinhardt and ten Brink 2020, 273). The extent to which the norm is affected depends on discursive acts and on whether they challenge the norm. For example, if a violation is accompanied by a justification that acknowledges the existence of a norm, and criticised by others through the same yardstick, that means that the norm is actually strong. On the contrary, if the violation is not met with pro-norm criticism, it might mean that the norm is waning (Percy and Sandholtz 2022). Norm violations *alone* are unlikely to destroy norms, especially in issue-areas that do not rely on reciprocity such as human rights⁵ (Inboden 2021).

This means that to measure the size of the challenge that China poses to human rights norms, one needs to look at whether China discursively challenges these norms. However, the second misconception is that every instance of discursive disapproval is an existential challenge to the norms. Theoretical and empirical works on norm contestation have distinguished between types/degrees of contestation and their different impacts on norm robustness or strength⁶ (Krebs and Jackson 2007; Kinzelbach 2012; Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2020; Weinhardt and ten Brink 2020). A serious assessment of China's challenge to human rights norms must analyse its discourse bearing this in mind.

The existing scholarly work on the matter has not adequately addressed this. The literature on China's foreign relations in general has disproportionally focused on the way China complies with global norms or integrates in international institutions, and much less on the way China impacts these same norms and institutions (Weiss and Wallace 2021, 643). This problem is also characteristic of the literature on China's interaction with the human rights regime, which has focused mostly on China's response to human rights obligations and domestic compliance, while paying insufficient attention to China's impact in the regime's norms and institutions (Kinzelbach 2012; Sceats and Breslin 2012; Inboden 2021).

Second, these works are usually devoid of theory, failing to appreciate the rich literature on norm contestation and its fundamental insight: there are different types of contestation with different implications to a norm's robustness. As a result, several works misguidedly believe that a whole range of China's behaviours (chiefly domestic non-compliance) threatens human rights norms. While these actions may definitely affect the

⁵ This means that the actions of one cannot affect others' interests.

⁶ This will be elaborated in the theoretical section.

human rights regime, only the consistent espousing of a discourse that fundamentally challenges these norms has the potential to affect them.

“It is generally recognized that China continues to obstruct civil and political rights domestically, but to alter the role that human rights play in world affairs is a decidedly different agenda. [...] Such a fundamental challenge would require, it is posited, not only a high degree of international influence but also a coherent counter-discourse. That is, China would have to act as a norm entrepreneur in coherent opposition to international human rights norms” (Kinzelbach 2012, 300).

Third, very few works systematically analyse this counter-discourse. The works that do analyse China’s impact on the regime focus more on its obstructive tactics, like the attempts to block civil society participation or the rallying of developing countries. While they often mention the advancement of China’s human rights views as part of this set of tactics to respond to or to shape the regime, they do not systematically analyse this narrative. The works that do characterise China’s human rights discourse are not usually grounded on systematic empirical analysis nor on comprehensive sets of empirical evidence. Sometimes they mobilise a few ad-hoc pieces of primary empirical evidence (e.g., a few of China’s HRC resolutions), but they mostly draw on existing secondary literature. Since this literature rarely conducts such rigorous analyses, accounts of China’s counter-discourse to human rights norms are essentially an ‘echo chamber’ of empirically uncorroborated findings. The weak empirical and methodological foundations of these set of works contrast with their often bold and general conclusions, such as the widespread idea that China seeks to essentially undermine human rights norms. I am not saying that this is not true, but simply saying that there are not enough studies grounded on (systematic) empirical evidence to support this claim (Kinzelbach 2012, 299).

This also highlights another problem in this research, which concerns the often normative tone that underlies some influential publications (T. C. Chen and Hsu 2021, 231), especially those stemming from human rights NGOs or activists. Regardless of the importance of normative interventions in these debates and in the policy-world, they are no replacement for rigorous empirical work.

There are, of course, some notable exceptions. In a pioneering and prescient work, Kinzelbach (2012) analysed the totality of China’s human rights statements in the UN between 2000 and 2010 through a through a theoretical framework that distinguished

statements challenging the framing (or general validity) and the implications (or prescriptions of conduct) of human rights norms. She concluded that although China engaged mostly in implication contests, they still harboured the risk to undermine human rights norms and the potential to rewrite the normative order. Her analysis of Chinese statements remains the most complete and rigorous account of China's counter-discourse on human rights I know of.

In the meantime, Chen and Hsu (2021) analysed an impressive set of official Chinese statements on human rights in several international organisations to unravel the difference between Xi Jinping's and Hu Jintao's human rights foreign policies. Despite the rigorous methodology, and some important findings regarding Xi's communicative engagement and discourse, they do not have the goal of comprehensively reconstructing Xi's human rights narrative, let alone distinguishing degrees of contestation. Titus Chen's (2019) 'Flamboyant Mandarin' draws on a similar dataset to provide such a reconstruction, putting together the main topics of Chinese counter-discourse. However, he does not consider different degrees of contestation and his analysis only goes until 2017, which is the year that, for multiple authors, marks the beginning of a more aggressive attempt to change international norms (Inboden 2021; Piccone 2018; Potter 2021; Worden 2020).

Studies like Potter's (2021) and Foot's (2020) draw on equally impressive datasets, but their studies have broader goals, so they only marginally look at China's human rights counter-discourse and their dataset naturally does not cover such statements comprehensively.

These research gaps raise the need for a study that analyses a comprehensive and recent set of China's international human rights statements in a systematic way, bearing therefore the potential to generate an accurate representation of China's human rights discourse, disclosing its main arguments, degrees of contestation and, consequentially, the nature of the challenge it poses for human rights norms. That is the goal of this thesis, which departs from the research question:

To what extent is China contesting human rights norms at the Human Rights Council?

This question comprises two different, but interrelated, aims: (i) identifying patterns of arguments and themes of contestation; and (ii) assessing the degree(s) of contestation that China puts forward. Knowing the types of contestation that China presents may also

tell us something about the impact such contestation may have on the norms, but such inferences lie outside of this thesis' scope. I will only offer some reflections about it in the concluding section, which are necessarily tentative due to the limited knowledge we have about the relationship between contestation and norm robustness (Sandholtz 2019). Nevertheless, they may be informative for debates on whether China is trying (or is likely to) revise international human rights standards. Overall, this thesis is expect to yield a so far inexistent systematic representation of China's discursive contestation of human rights norms in recent years.

I conduct a qualitative content analysis of all Chinese statements and resolutions at the Human Rights Council between 2017 and 2022, which amounts to 279 documents. I will discuss matters of data collection and methodology on the chapter dedicated to the thesis' research design. For now, I will outline my theoretical and analytical framework.

4. Theoretical and analytical framework

This chapter lays out the theoretical and analytical framework used for this thesis. The first sub-section establishes the broader theoretical framework and respective philosophical assumptions. The second sub-section provides a short overview of norm and norm contestation theoretical research in International Relations. Finally, the third sub-section outlines the conceptual and analytical framework employed in the analysis.

4.1 Theoretical framework and philosophical assumptions

This thesis departs from a constructivist theoretical approach to International Relations, more specifically what some have termed conventional, mainstream, systemic (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001) or modernist (Adler 2013) constructivism.

Ontologically speaking, this approach is both idealist and holist: first, it considers reality to be *mostly* determined by ideas as opposed to material factors; second, it emphasises objective and partially independent social structures that constrain and constitute agents (Wendt 1999).

Its basic postulate is that structures and agents are mutually constituted (Wendt 1987). On the one hand, international politics is made out of structures of subjective, but most importantly, intersubjective knowledge that are partly independent from agents and confront them as external ‘social facts’ (Wendt 1999). Thus, structures can orient agents’ behaviours or even constitute their identities and interests. On the other hand, it is the practice of agents that creates and transforms these structures, whose existence hinges upon the effect they have on agents (Wendt 1987). Structures are produced and shaped by the intended and unintended consequences of actions (Giddens 1984).

In a similar fashion, agents also have partially autonomous subjectivities, being partially endogenously generated (e.g., domestic politics in the case of states), but also constituted by international intersubjective structures to some extent. This implies that actors retain reflexivity towards social structures, hence are able to resist, contest and change them.

Very simply put, the social construction of international politics can be said to operate essentially via two processes. Socialisation refers to how actors are led to adopt the values, norms and behaviours of a group or society, generating pro-social behaviour through social pressures or even genuine internalisation (Johnston 2001; Checkel 2005; Johnston 2008). Contestation in a very broad sense refers to discursive and behavioural

acts that put forward or imply different, and often conflicting, understandings about norms, harbouring the potential to provoke institutional and normative change (Sandholtz 2008b; Stimmer and Wisken 2019). The first process reveals how structures constitute agents, whereas the second illustrates how the latter shape and produce the former. Taking a more agent-centred approach, this thesis focuses on norm contestation.

Systemic constructivism is anchored in a realist philosophy of science⁷ (Wendt, 1999), and so is this thesis. Basically, it is postulated that there is a reality ‘out there’ that is independent from the observer (separation of subject and object), and that can be ascertained by rigorous rule-bound scientific enquiry. It differs from positivism insofar as it assumes that the ‘real’ goes beyond the ‘observable’ – there are real, but unobservable social facts that cause and constitute observable things (Wendt 1999). This is why realist philosopher of science Roy Bashkar (1975) insisted in the separation of ontology from epistemology. The positivist epistemological stance implies the ontological claim that only the things that are observable and that we know of are real. Realism puts ontology first: reality is a property of the world itself, not our knowledge of it, so the former cannot be reduced to the latter.

Axiologically speaking, research should be value-free and oriented towards arriving to the ‘scientific truth’, i.e., to unravel reality. The natural implication is that every scientist, regardless of their subjectivities and values, should be able to reach similar findings if they look at the same data and follow the same methodological procedures.

Realism also engages in debates with positivism about the nature of causation, insisting in more diverse ways to conceive it, namely through the concept of ‘constitution’ (Wendt 1998; 1999). These are not important for this thesis since it is a descriptive work. However, it does follow realist precepts by seeking to ascertain a part of social reality (‘China contestation of human rights norms at the HRC’) through value-free and rule-bound scientific enquiry, oriented towards ‘objective’, valid and reliable findings. Systemic constructivism in general, and norm contestation in particular, provide the ontological and theoretical underpinnings for this endeavour. I now briefly reconstruct the literature on norm contestation and show how it frames my analysis.

⁷ There is some debate on the specificities of ‘scientific’ and ‘critical’ realisms, but I want to eschew this by using just a minimal understanding of ‘realism’ and being transparent about what I mean by it.

4.2 Norms and norm contestation

“Norms are one of the most widely studied topics of contemporary International Relations scholarship” (Winston 2018, 638). Norms have been one of the major concepts in the discipline of International Relations, orienting decades of extensive theoretical and empirical research.

On a broad systematic review of this literature, Peez (2022) traces it back to the 1980s, even though the actual first generation of norms research is only really born in the early 1990s. This early norm research was concerned with processes of norm emergence, diffusion and subsequent conformance by states (Hoffmann 2010). This ‘behavioural approach’ (Wiener 2004) or ‘moral cosmopolitanism’ (Acharya 2004) takes compliance or internalisation by states as the dependent variable, being determined to show how this followed from the ‘universal’ diffusion of norms. For example, Finnemore and Sikkink’s (1998) influential three-staged ‘norm life cycle’ model argues that norms are promoted by norm entrepreneurs and, when accepted by a ‘critical mass of states’, hence crossing a ‘tipping point’, become ‘taken-for-granted’, i.e., are internalised by states.

Such works contained obvious problems: they assumed that norms were static and immutable; downplayed the role of agency, dismissing local resistance and transformation of norms, thereby treating actors as passive norm-takers; were biased towards liberal ‘good’ norms, overestimating also how ‘universal’ and ‘consensual’ they were; and assumed linear progress, focusing on cases of ‘successful’ norm diffusion, therefore neglecting the nuances and multiple possible outcomes of this process such as resistance, localisation, contestation, norm change, or even norm decay (Acharya 2004; Bloomfield 2016; Orchard and Wiener 2023). In any case, these contributions were important in a context of affirmation of constructivism, being able to demonstrate that ideas mattered in international politics (Hoffmann 2010).

The early 2000s saw the birth of conceptual innovations on norm research. Wiener (2004) proposed the concept of ‘contested compliance’, which highlighted how expected norm followers contest compliance conditions, in a context of a broader proposal of a ‘reflexive agenda’, where the meaning of norms is the dependent variable of norm research instead of compliance. This ground-breaking work founded the research agenda of norm contestation, which became a prolific theoretical lens to observe important processes whereby actors try to clarify, resist and change international norms.

In the same year, Acharya (2004) suggested that ‘norm localisation’ was a more adequate lens than compliance or internalisation to understand the local incorporation of international norms. Shifting the agency to local or domestic actors, it designates the “active construction [...] of foreign ideas by local actors, which results in the former developing significant congruence with local beliefs and practices” (Acharya 2004, 245). This problematized the early research assumptions of automatic internalisation and passive norm taking, inaugurating a research agenda that illuminates local agency and creativity in the interaction with and incorporation of international norms.

Departing from Wiener’s observation of the inherent dynamism of international norms, Sandholtz (2008a; 2008b) proposed a theory on the cycles of norm change, a four phase model that illustrates how norms are modified as a result of ‘dispute-driven normative arguments’ (Sandholtz 2017, 8). This shed further light on the ways norms evolve and change.

Subsequent works brought about more theoretical innovations, which refined our understandings about these general processes. Acharya proposed the concepts of ‘norm subsidiarity’ (Acharya 2011), and then ‘norm circulation’ (Acharya 2013) to integrate the former with the concept of localisation. Panke and Petersohn (2012; 2016) focused on explaining why norms decay or die sometimes. Bloomfield (2016) theorised about norm antipreneurs: “actors who defend the entrenched normative status quo against challengers” (321). Carla Winston (2018) proposed viewing norms as ‘clusters’, rather than isolated, as a way to better account for norm diffusion and evolution. Building on the work of Krebs and Jackson (2007), Stimmer (2019) distinguishes contestation aimed at the ‘frames’ (justifications) and ‘claims’ (actions that follow from the latter) of a norm. On normative debates, she argues, the agreement or disagreement on these two dimensions of a norm combined in different ways can lead to four outcomes beyond internalisation: norm clarification, impasse, recognition or neglect.

Turning to contestation in particular, Deitelhoff and Zimmermann (2013) highlighted different forms that norms can be discursively contested – ‘norm justificatory’ or ‘norm applicatory discourses’ – and the different consequences they have on a norm’s validity. These ideas were further refined in a posterior works (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2019; 2020), and will be dealt with in detail on the next sub-section.

Wiener (2014) published the seminal book ‘A Theory of Contestation’ focusing on the concepts of ‘contestedness’ and ‘legitimacy gap’. She observed that often norms lack legitimacy due to the contradiction of highly accepted fundamental meta-principles, but

highly contested micro-level standards of procedure. Taking a normative turn, she argues that establishing access to regular contestation for all affected stakeholders (contestedness) as an organising principle is the solution to address the legitimacy gaps of norms (Wiener 2014). For empirical work, this book is particularly relevant for relating Wiener's previous conception of the three types of norms (Wiener 2008) with the idea of the legitimacy gap, which situates norm contestation at the second level of norms' structure. This will be elaborated ahead.

More recently, Wiener (2018) also proposed a distinction between 'reactive' and 'proactive' contestations, and forthcoming work will add a third 'interpretive contestation'. Reactive contestation objects to compliance with or to the violation of a norm; proactive contestation refers to constructive dialogical engagement with a norm at its constitutive stage; interpretive contestation "reflect that any given agent may have interpretive variance on how they understand a given norm" (Orchard and Wiener 2023, 55).

Very importantly also, Stimmer and Wisken (2019) distinguish between discursive and behavioural contestation. The former refers to "a situation in which relevant political actors engage in discursive debates about different understandings of the meaning and/or (relative) importance of a norm", whereas the latter refers to actions that imply such conflicting understandings (Stimmer and Wisken 2019, 520–21).

Speaking of the LIO in particular, Börzel and Zürn (2021) came up with a typology of its contestations that cross-tabulates two dimensions: position in the contested international organisation (strong vs weak) and rejection of liberal authority (for its own sake vs the way it is exercised). The outcome are four strategies of contestation followed by states, predicted from their cumulative positioning on those dimensions: pushback, dissidence, reform and withdrawal.

This modest overview has shown how the norms' theoretical literature has become prolific and diverse over time, despite still exhibiting some biases and shortcomings (Peez 2022). I will focus particularly on different conceptions of and approaches to norm contestation, which will ground the construction of my analytical framework in the next sub-section.

4.3 Analytical framework

The analytical framework bridges theory with operationalisation by identifying, explaining and justifying the specific set of logically interrelated concepts that are going to be employed in the analysis to answer the research question.

The first central concept for the analysis is ‘norms’. A norm is defined as “standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 891). First, they are ideational and inter-subjectively shared, rather than material, elements. Second, their prescriptions of conduct are directed to *specific* sets of actors in *specific* contexts. Third, they have a prescriptive quality that comes with a sense of ‘moral oughtness’: what distinguishes them from other social facts is that norms prescribe a certain conduct on the basis of a shared moral agreement on its righteousness (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Sandholtz 2017). This characteristic produces very strong pressures for acting accordingly, as non-compliance may provoke social and material sanctions from other actors or even psychological pain if the norm is internalised; conversely, compliance may lead to praise, as well as improved status and self-image (Johnston 2001). Winston’s (2018) model of the tripartite structure of norms is helpful to understand how norms work and how to identify them in practice:

“First, a norm presupposes a problem, which is the issue to be addressed. Second, the norm includes a value. It is the enjoyment or attainment of something “good” or the avoidance of something “bad” and, as such, gives moral weight to the problem. Third, a norm enjoins a particular behavior: the action to be taken to address the given problem that allows the actor to better express or practice the value” (Winston 2018, 640).

Fourth, norms “vary in formality, specificity, and organized enforcement” (Sandholtz 2017, 2). Wiener’s (2008; 2014) model of types of norms captures very nicely these variations, suggesting three types of norms that possess important heuristic value. Fundamental (or type 1) norms are located at the meta-level, entailing universal moral claims that are usually widely agreed upon, for example, human rights or democracy (Wiener 2007). Organising principles (or type 2 norms) are at an intermediary level, providing “a link between the moral claims attached to fundamental norms on the one hand, and the practical enactment of standardised procedures, on the other” (Wiener 2014,

60). Put simply, they are principles that guide the operationalisation of fundamental norms, such as ‘transparency’ and ‘proportionality’ (Wiener 2007). Standardised procedures (or type 3 norms) “entail specifically defined standards, rules and regulations for specific policy measures” (Wiener 2014, 37). They are likely to be highly controversial for being specific and clear, and for being the type of norm that is more clearly capable of countering state’s interests (Wiener 2014). Wiener’s model also comprises the expectation that contestation is more likely to happen at the intermediary level (type 2 norms) for being the analytical space where normativity becomes negotiable (Wiener 2014, 37).

These definitional and operational clarifications are fundamental for my analysis. My question is about China’s contestation of human rights norms, so it is crucial to have the conceptual tools to identify them, so I know what exactly China is contesting. An inductive mapping of China’s arguments (sub-section 5.4) confirms Wiener’s expectation and reveals the heuristic importance of her model. China actually contests type 2 norms, such as ‘universality’ and ‘equality of the categories of rights’, but not the general idea that human rights should be promoted and protected (type 1 norm), nor the prescriptions to safeguard specific human rights, such as the freedom from torture or the right to education (type 3 norms).

The next important concept is norm contestation. For the purpose of this thesis, contestation is defined as the range of “social practices, which *discursively* express disapproval of norms” (Wiener 2014, 1, emphasis added). This is not an uncontroversial definition. Stimmer and Wisken (2019), for example, take into account both behavioural and discursive acts, and conceive contestation not only as disapproval, but more broadly as debates or different understandings about the meaning of a norm. However, Wiener’s narrower definition of contestation is better suited for my research objectives.

My research question is aimed at describing China’s contestation of human rights norms, aiming to clarify or the extent to which China challenges these standards, which in turn will contribute to broader debates about China’s impact in the decay of the liberal international order. In this case, I need to choose a definition of contestation that covers instances of China’s action regarding human rights norms that *actually* have the potential to impact them, i.e., to affect their robustness or strength. Well, some authors on the norm contestation literature argued that non-compliance acts alone can hardly impact the strength of a norm (Panke and Petersohn 2012; 2016; Percy and Sandholtz 2022). Compliance is an inadequate measure of norm strength. The extent to which the norm is

affected by it depends on discursive acts and on whether they challenge the norm. For example, if a violation is accompanied by a justification that acknowledges the existence of a norm, and criticised by others through the same yardstick, that means that the norm is actually strong, and may even come out stronger from this public outcry (Percy and Sandholtz 2022). It is a very common practice from norm violators to adhere to or try to justify that action in terms of shared normative understandings to avoid reputational costs (Stimmer and Wisken 2019). On the contrary, if the violation is not met with pro-norm criticism, it might mean that the norm is waning, or that its importance is low or declining, especially if the violation is discursively framed and acknowledged as a violation of that norm (Percy & Sandholtz, 2022). This means that the extent to which behavioural contestation affects norm resilience depends on the public discursive practices that follow (Stimmer and Wisken 2019; Percy and Sandholtz 2022).

This is not to say that compliance is not important. It certainly has an impact on norm robustness and is important to measure it (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2013; 2020). However, for analytical purposes it makes more sense to look at discursive contestation only, not only because it has more impact on norm robustness and is easier to measure and operationalise, but also because I am interested in intentional and visible attempts to challenge norms, which necessarily take the form of discursive acts. Also, behavioural contestation would probably not yield a lot of findings in the case of China. This country is extremely concerned with its international image, so it rarely or never admits to have committed human rights violations, making use of the aforementioned strategy of resorting to shared normative understandings to frame and legitimise its abusive practices – for example, calling Xinjiang’s actions ‘anti-terrorism measures’ or China’s political system a ‘democracy’ (Potter 2021)⁸.

Thus, I only consider instances of discursive contestation through Wiener’s (2014) aforementioned definition. This definition also helps me clearly identifying the instances of my data that count as contestation, and separate them from those which do not (see sub-section 5.3).

The last important concepts are validity and applicatory contestation, proposed by Deitelhoff and Zimmermann (2013; 2019; 2020). According to the authors, the

⁸ I want to thank my colleagues Caitlin Patterson and Cole Kovarik for rightfully pushing me to clarify this idea.

fundamental rationale for these is that different types (or degrees) of contestation have a different impact on a norm's robustness.

Validity contestation discourses “deal with the question of which norms a group of actors wants to uphold. [...] Hence, validity contestation questions whether (existing) normative claims are righteous” (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2020, 56). Simply put, they question the very legitimacy of the norm itself. “Typical questions arising in such discourses are thus: (1) Are the norm's claims congruent with our moral standards? Are they fair? And (2) should a different norm be given permanent priority?” (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2020, 56).

Applicatory contestation discourses question the appropriateness of a norm to a specific situation. “In addition, application discourses negotiate (2) which actions the norm requires in the specific situation and (3) which norm must be prioritized in a specific situation if several norms apply, without making such a ranking permanent” (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2020, 57). This is a type of contestation oriented towards the *application* of a norm to a *specific context*, hence does not call into question the righteousness of its normative claim (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2013, 5).

As mentioned before, the selected definition of contestation will guide the collection of instances of contestation from my data. One part of my descriptive inferences (or results) is to map the frequencies of arguments or issues of contestation. Another part of my inferences will be about the frequencies of the types of contestation, meaning that I will classify every instance of contestation as either validity or applicatory contestation and then report the relative weight of each.

My third research goal is to *speculate* about China's contestation impact on the robustness of human rights norms. I use ‘speculate’ instead of ‘infer’ because the theoretical literature is still not decisive about how exactly contestation and its types affect norm robustness. Deitelhoff and Zimmermann (2020) expect validity contestation to weaken norm robustness, especially if becomes widespread or endorsed by several norm addressees. This is an intuitive conclusion because validity contestation directly calls into question a norm's righteousness. However, they argue that permanent applicatory contestation over time may also weaken norm robustness. If not permanent, it is likely to strengthen robustness for sparking debate, therefore contributing to the re-actualisation and clarification of the norm's content (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2020, 58).

I agree with these theoretical arguments and they will guide my analysis. However, my observations about the impact of China's contestation on human rights norms'

robustness will take the form of speculations rather than inferences (unlike for the two other research objectives) for two reasons. First, I think the authors are too quick to dismiss the role of ‘strategic applicatory contestation’, i.e., applicatory contestation “as a back-door strategy for watering down norms more generally” (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2020, 57). They argue it nevertheless strengthens norms, but do not elaborate sufficiently on the issue to effectively dismiss this important counter-argument. Second, there are simply not enough empirical studies that test the effects of different types of contestation on norm robustness, which undermines our collective confidence on these theoretical propositions (Sandholtz 2019). Nevertheless, the argument is plausible enough and supported by some anecdotal empirical evidence to allow for speculations, which, despite not being inferences, may still be informative for debates on the case and useful for future research. The following figure 1 visually summarises my theoretical and analytical framework:

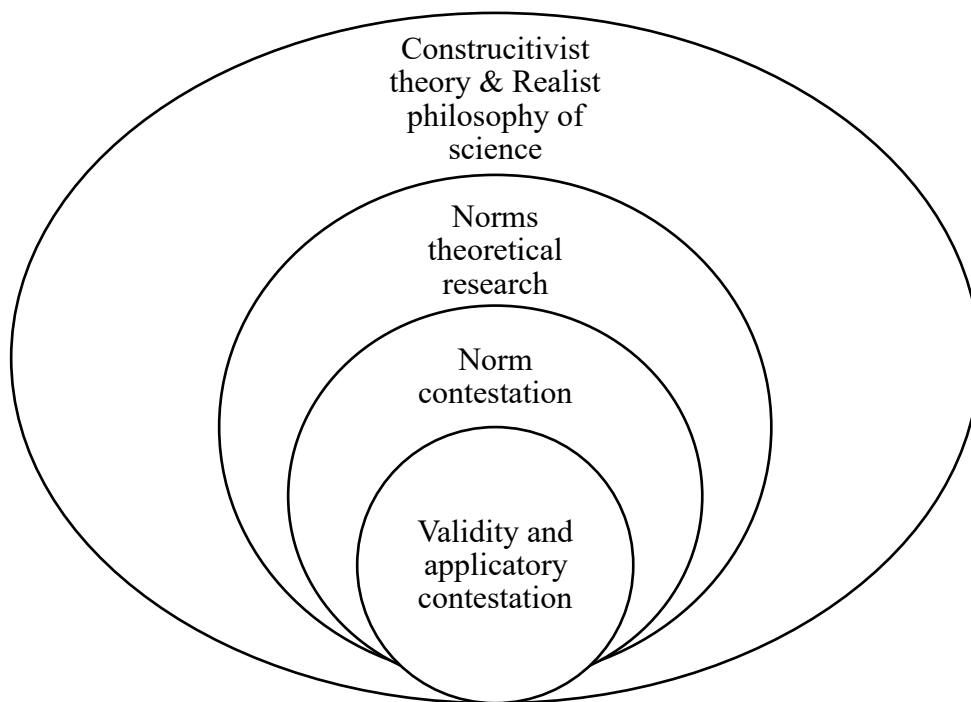


Fig. 1. Theoretical and analytical framework of the thesis

5. Research Design

This thesis takes the form of a descriptive single case study. A case is an “instance of a class of events” (George and Bennett 2005, 17) that is “spatially and temporally delimited” (Gerring 2017, 26). A case study is a detailed and intensive examination of a particular aspect of a case that promises to shed light on the larger class of cases it is part of (George and Bennett 2005; Gerring 2017). Mine is a *descriptive* case study, as it does not aim at causal statements, but rather at a systematic description of a *single* case. Qualitative content analysis (QCA) is the method of analysis employed for this purpose.

The first sub-section outlines my strategy of case selection. The second clarifies my data collection process, disclosing my evidence-gathering procedure, the material, and respective justification. The third sub-section discusses QCA, my chosen method, reflecting on its nature, utility, steps, and how it fares in terms of quality criteria. The fourth sub-section lays out the coding frame employed to code the material in the analysis, revealing how it was constructed, the meaning of the categories, and the guidelines for operationalisation. The fifth sub-section critically reflects about the research design, highlighting its strengths, but mainly anticipating limitations and ethical issues.

5.1 Case selection

My case is ‘China’s contestation of human rights norms at the Human Rights Council’. There are two levels of case selection here that must be justified. The first pertains to the selection of the HRC: why was it selected from the broader instance of events ‘China’s contestation of human rights norms’? The second relates with the latter: why was this phenomenon selected to be studied in the first place?

There is a wide array of case selection strategies for case studies, which vary in adequacy, and whose appropriateness depends on the type of case study one wants to conduct, or more broadly, on our research objective(s) (Gerring 2017). For descriptive case studies more specifically, researchers usually opt for the selection of cases that represent the most common features of a population (‘typical’) or for cases that more or less exhaustively capture variation of a given subject or phenomenon on a population (‘diverse’) (Gerring 2017, 56–57).

The selection of the Human Rights Council for the broader instance of ‘China’s contestation of human rights norms’ is justified for being ‘typical’ of this phenomenon. The global, and even the UN, architecture of human rights is quite large, containing

multiple bodies, courts, organisations, *inter alia* (Kozma 2014; Donnelly and Whelan 2017). It would be unfeasible to analyse China's contestation on all these; one has to inevitably choose a venue (or a few) whose analysis would more adequately respond to the research question. The HRC was chosen for being "the principal UN human rights body" and "the lynchpin of the UN human rights machinery" (Freedman 2020, 181). It is also the main *political* body, gathering a large membership of states, UN experts and staff, and civil society participants, and presenting plenty of room for debate and deliberation in its, at least, three sessions per year (Kozma 2014; Freedman 2020). Thus, the HRC's importance, large audience and room for deliberation create the reasonable expectation that China concentrates its contestation efforts in this body, or at least that the contestation put forward there more or less *represents* China's broader contestation efforts. However, I cannot generalise beyond the HRC because I do not consider empirical evidence from other human rights fora. This is one of the limitations of the methodology as will be discussed later on the chapter⁹.

Secondly, the selection of 'China's contestation of human rights norms' as a broader case followed the strategy of 'intrinsic importance' (Gerring 2017, 42–43). The promotion and protection of human rights is a core pillar of the LIO. As detailed in the chapters 1 and 3 of this thesis, my study is justified for potentially yielding important insights to pressing scholarly and policy debates about China's contribution to the crisis of the LIO and to the erosion of the international human rights regime (respectively: Lake, Martin, and Risse 2021; HRW 2020). The impact of China's contestation of human rights norms on these very important phenomena justifies the selection of this case.

5.2 Data collection

The dataset used in this study comprises all of the *available* Chinese sponsored and co-sponsored statements and resolutions at the HRC between 2017 and 2022, i.e., from the 34th to the 51st regular sessions and from the 27th to the 35th special sessions of the HRC (27 sessions). These were collected from the HRC Extranet website¹⁰, opening individually every meeting of the said sessions, and then collecting all the statements and

⁹ I thank my colleague Cole Kovarik for bringing this issue to my attention.

¹⁰ <https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed between February 12, 2023 and March 1, 2023).

resolutions authored or co-authored by China. After reviewing the dataset, thereby deleting corrupted and repeated files, it amounted to 279 documents.

The timeframe for data collection was chosen for two reasons. First, several authors argue that 2017 marks the abandonment of China's previous low profile posture to pursue a more confident and proactive human rights diplomacy, clearly aimed at revising international human rights standards (Inboden 2021; Piccone 2018; Potter 2021; Worden 2020). Their arguments are more convincing than the ones of those who argue that this started earlier as a consequence of Xi Jinping's rise to power. I conducted a very preliminary and unsystematic look at statements from different years over the decade, which showed that only in the late 2010s can we see a real change in China's proactiveness. Only then it starts to put forward much more statements, which also become much more solely authored, departing from the previous pattern of making most statements with groups of countries like the LMG (Sceats and Breslin 2012; Inboden 2022; see also sub-section 7.7). This resonates with Chen and Hsu's (2021) finding that there are no significant differences between the Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping administrations in terms of their international human rights rhetoric.

Second, there is a need to empirically and systematically account for China's international human rights discourse in recent years. The dataset of the most recent study that did this (T. C. Chen and Hsu 2021) only covered statements until 2018. This thesis seeks to fill this gap, providing a much-needed (and to the best of my knowledge, the first) systematic description of this phenomenon in recent years.

This sub-section sought to justify my data collection and to make the steps of this process explicit, so that hopefully other researchers could replicate it if they wanted, which enhances the reliability of my analysis. Bearing this in mind, the next sub-section describes and justifies the method employed for the analysis, laying out all the steps of the process.

5.3 Methodology

Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) "is a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material. It is done by classifying material as instances of the categories of a coding frame" (Schreier 2013, 1). It is systematic for following an explicit and tested set of rules, distinguishing it from mere 'free analysis' (Mayring 2022). It is also governed by external quality criteria for research, namely validity and reliability

(Schreier 2013; Krippendorff 2018; Mayring 2022). Its qualitative character dictates that validity is the utmost concern of the method, especially if we take into account that it seeks to systematically *describe* a given material (Schreier 2013). It achieves this by combining inductive and deductive techniques. The definition of the research question determines which parts (and aspects) of the material are relevant for the analysis. A combination of theory and previous research on the matter along with an initial look at the material guide the inductive formation of categories for the initial coding frame. This process is aimed at constructing a *valid* coding frame that actually represents the material, which is also why it needs to be tested in a pilot phase where the author tries the coding frame in a part of the material, sees if it works and revises it accordingly. Then, this final revised coding frame is used to deductively classify all the material, assigning all of its coding units to categories of the coding frame. These are the central procedures of Schreier's (2013) model of QCA, which I follow on this thesis.

On the one hand, validity is achieved by considering the material to build the coding frame, which is anyway aimed at representing it. On the other hand, reliability is also taken into account by laying out all the steps of the process transparently and by undertaking consistency checks, i.e., measures of inter or intra-coder agreement for both the pilot and the main analysis phases (Schreier 2013; Mayring 2022). Both these phases should be conducted twice and the respective coding compared between both, whether by two different coders or by the same person after a time interval, to attest the reliability of the process. This reveals the essentially realist nature of this method, fitting neatly with my philosophical assumptions. It seeks to describe the material (or 'reality') as it is through rigorous scientific methods to arrive at a socially shared understanding of the phenomenon that transcends individual assumptions, and that hopefully others would arrive at too if they were to follow the same procedures (Schreier 2013; Hardy, Phillips, and Harley 2004).

Although perfect replicability would be hard to attain given the qualitative, hence to some extent interpretive, nature of the process, the method is more concerned with reliability than other qualitative methods, even though validity is the main goal (Schreier 2013). One last characteristic worth mentioning is the centrality of the coding frame as the instrument of analysis, being both a means to summarise and represent the data through categories, but also to classify the data and to draw descriptive inferences from it (Kuckartz 2014). I will now lay out and explain the specific steps of the process.

The first thing to do is to read existing literature on the topic to identify gaps and come up with a research question, which will guide the QCA. The QCA cannot describe everything; it is meant to describe the data regarding specific aspects. The research question and the theory guide the selection of the parts of the material that should be taken into account for the analysis, and also partly orient the formation of categories for the initial coding frame. In my case, I have already stated and justified the research question, which restricted the scope of my QCA to instances of contestation of human rights norms.

Second, one has to build an initial coding frame, which must be at least partly based in the material. Authors diverge on exactly how much material should be taken into account for this, but I chose to go beyond the most demanding standard in QCA literature – 40% (Mayring 2022) –, considering 50% of the material for this step. Utilising the technique of subsumption (see Schreier 2013, 115–20), I formed categories of contestation from the part of the material that I looked at. Theory played a complementary role here. Before looking at the material, I did an extensive literature review to collect categories of contestation that other authors identified, which naturally helped forming my own from the material. I also bore in mind the concepts of ‘contestation’, ‘validity contestation’ and ‘applicatory contestation’ (see sub-section 4.3) to form the categories, since they are how I decided to structure my analysis (via the coding frame, see sub-section 5.4).

The third step is segmentation. Here, one goes over the entire material and selects the coding units, using a thematic criterion (coding unit ends where the topic changes) (Schreier 2013). From here on, one only considers these coding units when coding for both the pilot phase and the main analysis. This obviously makes replication and consistency checks easier, contributing to the reliability of the process (Mayring 2022). In my case, I resorted to the definition of ‘contestation’ (sub-section 4.3) to select the instances of the material that count as coding units. In the end, there were 464 coding units, disclosed on Appendix 2.

Fourth, one conducts a pilot phase of coding, trying out the coding frame on a part of the material to check how well it fares. Here, the authors converge that in most cases, 20% of the material is enough (Schreier 2013; Kuckartz 2014; Mayring 2022). At this stage, it is very important to check for the consistency of the coding, which ideally would be made by having two coders doing the trial coding separately, reporting inter-coder reliability indicators, discussing the reasons for coding differently, and how to best resolve the instances of disagreement and revise the coding frame. However, when this is

not possible, a single author can still code the material twice with 10 to 14 days of interval, reporting measures of intra-coder reliability and revising the coding frame accordingly (Schreier 2013; Kuckartz 2014). Due to the facts that I am doing this research alone and that I do not have the resources to hire another coder, I will opt for the latter option, reporting also the percentage agreement between the two rounds of trial coding and the Cohen's kappa coefficient. This is obviously a limitation of the study, but it can still enhance reliability and increase the validity of the coding frame. The final coding frame needs to be disclosed (see next sub-section) and to fulfil quality requirements (Schreier 2013, 71–78).

Having revised the coding frame according to the results of the trial coding, one arrives at the final version of the coding frame and is ready to move onto the fifth step: the main analysis. Here, one applies the coding frame to all the material, assigning all coding units to categories of the coding frame. Again, this must be done twice, either by the researcher or by two different coders, and consistency checks between the two coding rounds should be reported. I coded the entire material twice with an interval of 10 to 14 days and report two intra-coder agreement measures: percentage agreement and the Cohen's kappa coefficient. The same issue with intra-coder agreement on the pilot phase applies to the main phase. After checking the instances of disagreement between the two rounds, one does a small final round, deciding which category should be assigned to the coding units where there was disagreement (also called resolving).

The basic result of the main analysis is this final coding frame with all the categories and the number of times they appear in the material. In the sixth step – reporting (section 6) –, I provide an overview of how many units of coding were assigned to which category, sub-category and sub-subcategory. This will reveal what is the relative weight/importance of both the *issues* and the *degrees* of contestation in China's discourse at the HRC. This will be followed by proper interpretation and analysis of the results, being also put into perspective with the existing literature (section 7). This will answer my research question and the two sub-questions it comprises.

The QCA was undertaken with resort to MAXQDA, a software to assist qualitative data analysis.

5.4 The coding frame

The final coding frame used for the main analysis is presented in figure 2. It is the result of the steps outlined in sub-section 5.3. The final version of the coding frame was attained after the two trial coding rounds and subsequent revision. After that, the coding frame was no longer altered, being used as is presented in fig. 2 for the main analysis. The codebook with the definitions and examples for each category is on Appendix 1.

This is a hierarchical coding frame composed of three levels: the categories (first level; in dark gray), the sub-categories (second level; in light gray), and the sub-subcategories (third level; in white). The first level corresponds roughly to the human rights (type 2) norms contested by China, namely universality, monitoring of country-specific human rights situations, equality of categories of human rights and civil society participation in the human rights regime. Having logically arrived at these categories mainly inductively, I benefited from the work of several authors that pointed out to these norms as the ones that are the most contested by China (e.g., Kinzelbach 2012; Piccone 2018; T. C. Chen 2019), which, of course, helped constructing the categories.

The second level contemplates the two possible types or degrees of contestation that the norm (represented by a first level category) can receive: validity or applicatory contestation. This level of the coding frame was built deductively, being entirely based on my analytical framework, more specifically on the works of Deitelhoff and Zimmermann (2013; 2020).

The third level comprises the specific topics or arguments that China puts forward to contest a norm (first level), being aggregated as either instances of validity or applicatory contestation (second level). The categories at this level are numerous due to the goal of comprehensively capturing the range of arguments China presents to contest human rights norms. The process of building these categories was similar to the one for the first level categories – they were built inductively, but with the support of extensive previous research on China's human rights views (see sub-section 2.3), which helped me familiarise with and interpret the data, providing also clues on what issues (or categories) to expect.

I only use the third level categories to actually code the data. Because this is a hierarchical coding frame, knowing where a coding unit is assigned at the last and more detailed level allows us to know automatically where it is assigned on the other levels. For example, if I assign a coding unit to the sub-subcategory 'Particularism', we know

immediately that this coding unit is simultaneously part of the sub-category ‘Validity Contestation of Universality’ and of the category ‘Universality’. It is unnecessary and redundant to use the first and second level categories to code.

Some coding units were challenging to assign to categories. The language used by the Chinese HRC delegation is often vague, ambiguous and highly polished, making it hard to understand the exact meaning of some statements or excerpts. Several scholars have alerted to this Chinese strategy of intentionally putting forward anodyne statements, noting also the difficulty in understanding China’s international vocabulary (Sceats and Breslin 2012; Brooks 2020; Oud and Drinhausen 2023). When faced with coding units with these characteristics, the strategy was the following. First, I looked at the context unit, searching for information that would help to unravel the meaning of the coding unit. Second, I interpreted the meaning of the coding units in light of the existing literature, since other authors have dealt with similar statements and provided insights about their meaning. For example, it is well documented that China’s defence of ‘dialogue and cooperation’ as an alternative to ‘provocation’, ‘pressure’ or confrontation’ is a way of suggesting that the human rights situations of individual countries should not be discussed or condemned (HRW 2017; Foot 2020, 202; Brooks 2020, 54). Disclosing how I tackled ambiguity in the assignment of categories to coding units should help others to replicate my study, therefore enhancing its reliability.

This coding frame was built taking into consideration the several quality criteria for coding frames, namely uni-dimensionality, mutual exclusiveness, exhaustiveness and saturation (Schreier 2013, 72–77), and should fulfil each of them.

There was a 95.88% percentage agreement between the two rounds of trial coding and Cohen’s kappa coefficient (κ) was 0.95, indicating almost perfect agreement; additionally, no coding unit was considered ‘miscellaneous’. These facts suggest that the coding frame fared well in terms of reliability and validity (respectively) until then. Nonetheless, the few instances of intra-coder disagreement still led me to refine the coding frame further, showing the utility of the trial coding. Although this phase does not allow a definitive assessment of the validity and reliability of the coding frame because it only uses 20% of the material, it is very helpful to improve the coding frame. The ‘definitive’ test of the coding frame will be the main analysis (100% of the material), whose results are reported in section 6 and discussed in section 7. The next sub-section discusses the strengths, limitations and ethical issues of my methodology.

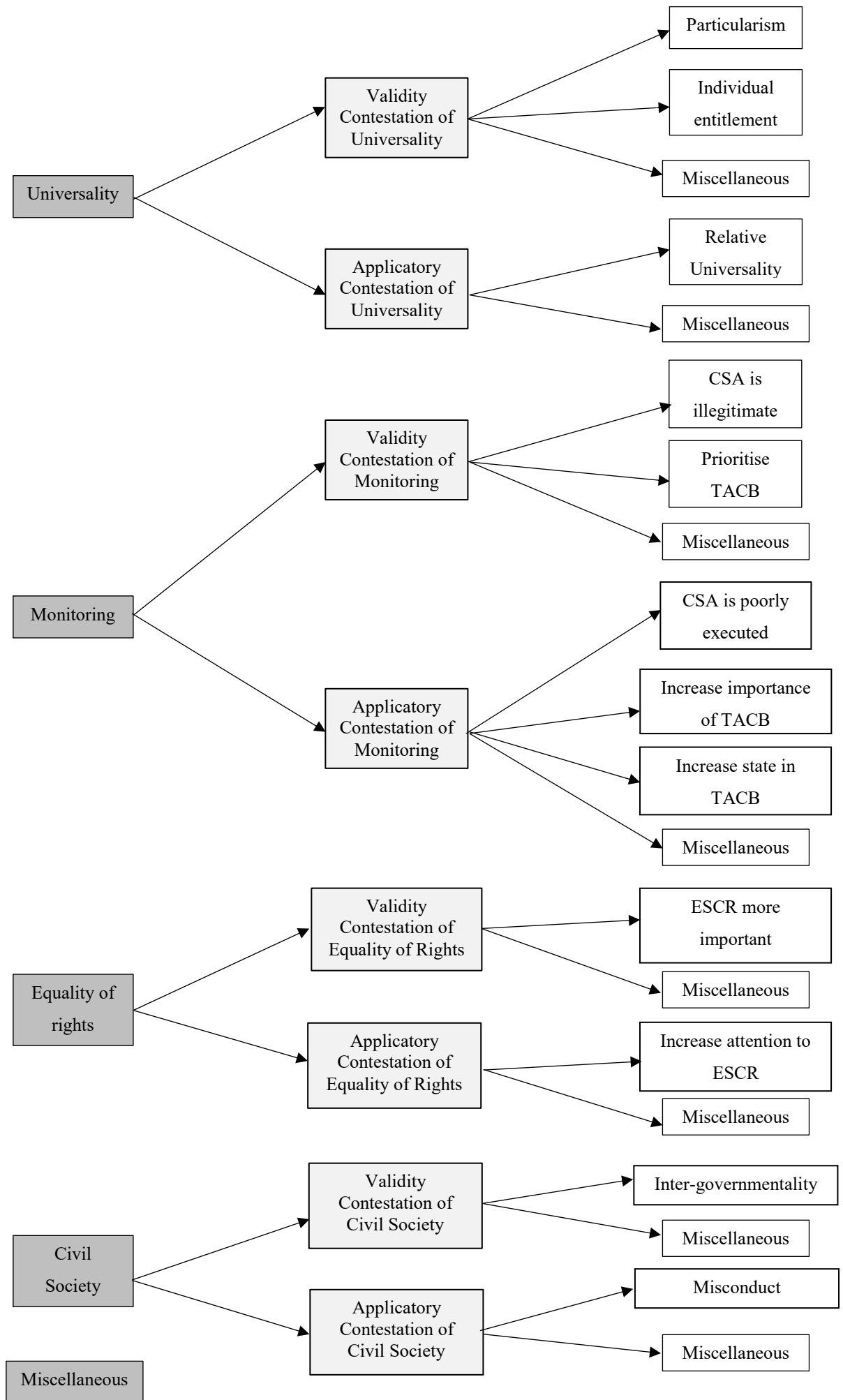


Fig. 2. Final coding frame

5.5. Strengths, limitations and ethical issues

Qualitative Content Analysis' greatest strength lies in the combination of typical qualitative and quantitative elements, which allows it to fulfil to a great extent the quality criteria associated with each of these research traditions: validity and reliability (respectively). On the one hand, the fact that the coding frame is partly data-driven, i.e., built inductively from the material itself, and revised across several steps of the method ensures that it adequately represents the material at hand, therefore 'capturing what it is set out to capture' (Schreier 2013, 7). On the other hand, QCA follows an explicit and tested set of rules and steps to build its inferences, including consistency checks (measures of inter or intra-coder agreement). Provided that QCA always follows the same sequence of steps that are made explicit, the whole research process is transparent and in principle any researcher could replicate it – the fact that QCA is very systematic makes it reliable (Schreier 2013, 34).

QCA even fares well in terms of replicability, which would be the 'hardest' form of reliability, designating a situation where "researchers working at different points in time and perhaps under different circumstances should get the same results when applying the same technique to the same phenomena" (Krippendorff 2018, 24). Perfect replicability would be very unlikely due to the qualitative nature of the method, which entails an inevitable interpretive element in the analysis, unlike in quantitative content analysis (Schreier 2013). However, the consistency checks in QCA are meant to measure replicability and to revise the coding frame in such a way that other coders could code very similarly given the same coding frame, contextual information and material. The method tries to make the analysis the most replicable possible under the inherent constraints of qualitative research. This allows the results to be inter-subjectively shared, which is the explicit goal of QCA (Schreier 2013).

QCA is also very well equipped for descriptive research, which is not surprising given that it is aimed at "systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material" (Schreier 2013, 1). Due to the characteristics discussed above, QCA can very competently describe the meaning of the material *it considers* through a coding frame. However, if we were to make inferences beyond this material, we would probably need additional evidence or to prove that the material provides valid information about the external

phenomenon (Schreier 2013). Additionally, QCA alone would hardly generate causal inferences¹¹. Nevertheless, it is a very powerful method for descriptive research.

My thesis bears the strengths of the method. Since I follow scrupulously all the QCA steps and requirements, my results will fare well in terms of validity and reliability. My research is also descriptive, and my inferences are limited to the material that is analysed, which is what QCA is tailored to do. Additionally, I use the totality of the material available for the case, rather than a sample. Thus, my study possesses high internal validity, being able to provide a trustworthy answer to the research question via valid and reliable inferences (Gerring 2017; Andrade 2018).

However, my methodology has at least three significant shortcomings.

First, the fact that I do not employ inter-coder agreement, relying instead on a single coder (myself), necessarily undermines the reliability of my findings. Using at least another coder is very important because then one can really test if a different researcher would reach to the same description of the material using the same coding frame. This is, of course, the best way to check if the findings bear the capacity to be inter-subjectively shared. The fact that I did not bring in another coder and did this process all by myself raises questions of bias, since I built the coding frame and am therefore very familiarised with it, so then I could easily code in a similar way even after the 10-14 days recommended by Schreier (2013)¹². It is hard to see if another researcher not so familiarised with coding frame and the study could code in a similar way given the same coding frame and the same material, therefore being difficult to assess if my description of the material is systematic, reasoned and able to be socially shared (Schreier 2013). Thus, intra-coder agreement is not completely trustworthy to assess reliability and replicability, even though it still has value as a consistency check, and it is still better than no consistency check at all or than using an unsuitable coder (Schreier 2013, 191–92).

Second, my research design lacks external validity, i.e., it is not possible to generalise the findings of the (case) study to other contexts or to a larger population of cases (Gerring 2017; Andrade 2018). QCA can only do this if one presents evidence that the material used in the analysis is a valid representation of that external context one seeks

¹¹ In theory, a systematic description of a given material could be used at the service of a causal research endeavour. What I am trying to say is that the causal inference is not the result of the QCA itself, but of the broader research design it is a part of – the description yielded by the QCA is then used for the causal inference.

¹² In reality, this did not happen. The interval of time is actually very effective in making the coder forget about the previous category assignments.

to generalise about. I provide no such evidence. I did this consciously, because the intention to generalise would massively increase the bulk of work and the scope of the thesis, making it unfeasible within my time and constraints. In practice, this means that the findings about my case ‘China’s contestation of human rights norms in the Human Rights Council (2017-2022)’ do not seek to and cannot be generalised to the broader class of cases ‘China’s contestation of human rights norms’, or even to other periods of time within the HRC or to other human rights fora. Since I do not analyse empirical evidence from other cases or from the broader class of cases, I cannot know whether my findings apply to them, therefore I restrict my findings to the material I analyse and to my specific case study, foregoing any intention to generalise beyond that¹³. The fact that I do not intend to generalise might take some value away from my research endeavour, but I believe that a description of a single case with a high internal validity is still a very important contribution, especially when such comprehensive and valid description is lacking in the existing literature on the topic (see section 3). I opted for filling this gap right now, preferring to keep high internal validity at the expense of external validity – this is an inevitable trade-off in the context of a Masters Thesis, since the attempt to generalise would lead to less valid inferences due to my time and space limitations. Hopefully, others (or even myself later on) can build on my systematic description to engage in generalising or causal endeavours.

Third, some of the documents that are part of my dataset were in Chinese. Since I do not currently speak or understand the language, I resorted to DeepL, a free translation software, to translate them into English. I then analysed DeepL’s translations of these documents. Even though DeepL usually produces high quality translations, these translation software are always fallible and never a perfect replacement for deep human knowledge of the language. I acknowledge this limitation of mine, and the fact that this might have distorted the original meaning of some segments of the material, constituting a potential source of error of the analysis¹⁴. Nonetheless, and having read all the material several times, I can say to the best of my knowledge that the translations seemed quite good and presented no major issues to their understanding and analysis.

¹³ I thank my colleague Cole Kovarik for pushing me to signal and clarify this limitation.

¹⁴ This issue was discussed with my first supervisor, a Sinologist and Chinese speaker, who agreed that using DeepL produced good (enough) translations and was the best available solution for the problem at hand taking into account my resources.

A final consideration on this sub-section must be made about the ethics of my research. Anticipating ethical issues and how they can affect one's research is an essential step. I will do this by disclosing my situatedness in broader social hierarchies, towards the research subject and regarding the research topic (Ackerly and True 2008).

First, it is important to acknowledge that I am a white, European, middle-class, healthy, male young adult, studying in a German university and living in Germany. This position of a relative privilege cannot bias my research. This possibility is minimised by the fact that I am not working with sensitive topics or vulnerable/marginalised groups. I am, however, in a position of power to 'orientalise' my research subject (Said 1978) China (a non-Western country) as many have done under arguments of the 'China threat' or the 'yellow threat' (Mahbubani 2020). I am well aware of these strands of literature, and will do my best to just describe what China says in a way that accurately represents the data, avoiding judgements and Orientalist considerations.

Second, I, of course, have political views and I have to make them explicit so others can check whether they affect my research. In this case, I am a strong human rights defender and strongly condemn China's human rights violations. My disapproval of China's human rights record cannot bias my findings, so I will leave this at the door and focus on pure description, eschewing evaluation and policy-prescription.

I am also working with publicly available data from a powerful state, so it is virtually impossible to 'do harm' to my research subject. I can think of no other potential ethical issues, but remain open for others' suggestions and scrutiny.

6. Results

This chapter presents the main results of the thesis. The first sub-section reports the quality criteria, while the second displays the results. Appendix 2 contains the list of all the coding units and the category to which each was assigned.

6.1 Quality criteria

After having applied the coding frame to all the material twice in the main analysis phase, assigning a category to each coding unit, there was no coding unit left unassigned or labelled ‘miscellaneous’, which suggests that the coding frame was able to accurately describe the material, indicating high validity. For this reason, ‘miscellaneous’ categories will not be represented in the tables and data on this section.

In terms of intra-coder agreement, the percentage agreement was 92.67% and the Cohen’s kappa coefficient (κ) was 0.92. This indicates almost perfect agreement between the two rounds. However, there were 34 instances of disagreement (out of 464 coding units). Appendix 3 shows the frequencies of each sub-subcategory on the two main phase rounds. I then undertook a final round where I resolved every instance of disagreement. The results displayed in this section are the outcome of this final round.

6.2 Frequencies of the categories

The following table 1 contains the frequencies per document¹⁵ for each sub-subcategory.

Table 1 shows that the sub-subcategories ‘CSA is illegitimate’, ‘CSA is poorly executed’ and ‘Particularism’ were the most frequent in the material (by this order). These were the arguments China put forward the most to contest human rights norms. The first was present in 30.47% of its statements (and in over half of the statements where there was contestation (or ‘codes’)), the second in 26.52% of the statements (and in over 45% of the statements where contestation occurred), and the third, present in about 20% of the statements (and in about 34% of those where contestation took place).

¹⁵ I opted for displaying the frequencies per documents in all the tables, i.e., the quantity of documents where the category is present, instead of the frequencies per segment, i.e., the number of coding units assigned to the category, since documents sometimes contain many coding units belonging to the same category. The first indicator accounts for these repetitions, allowing a fairer evaluation of the weight of the categories throughout the chapter.

Sub-subcategory	Frequency	Percentage (total docs)	Percentage (docs w/ code(s))
CSA is illegitimate	85	30.47	51.83
CSA is poorly executed	74	26.52	45.12
Particularism	56	20.07	34.15
Increase ESCR	30	10.75	18.29
Relative Universality	30	10.75	18.29
Increase state in TACB	27	9.68	16.46
Increase TACB	19	6.81	11.59
ESCR more important	12	4.30	7.32
Inter-governmentality	7	2.51	4.27
Prioritise TACB	4	1.43	2.44
Misconduct	3	1.08	1.83
Individual entitlement	3	1.08	1.83
Documents with code(s)	164	58.78	100
Documents without code(s)	115	41.22	
Analysed Documents	279	100.00	

Table 1. Frequencies per document of the sub-subcategories (third level)

Other topics were somewhat frequent in the material, even though significantly less than the former. Each of the sub-subcategories ‘Increase ESCR’, ‘Relative Universality’ and ‘Increase state in TACB’ was present in about 10% of the documents and in a range of 16% to 19% of the documents where there was contestation. The sub-subcategories ‘Increase TACB’ and ‘ESCR more important’ were even less frequent, being present in 11.59% and 7.32% of the documents where contestation occurred (respectively). The remaining sub-subcategories ‘Inter-governmentality’, ‘Prioritise TACB’, ‘Misconduct’ and ‘Individual Entitlement’ had virtually no expression in the material – each was only present in less than 5% of the material where contestation took place.

This table also tells us that contestation occurred in 58.78% of the Chinese statements at the HRC between 2017 and 2022, meaning, conversely, that 41.22% of them were not dedicated to contesting human rights norms.

Table 2 takes us to the first level of the coding frame, showing the quantity and percentage of documents that contained each of the main categories.

Main category	Documents	Percentage (total docs)
Monitoring	137	49.10
Universality	83	29.75
Equality of Rights	40	14.34
Civil Society	8	2.87
Documents with code(s)	164	58.78
Documents without code(s)	115	41.22
Analysed Documents	279	100.00

Table 2. Frequencies per document of the main categories (first level)

This table gives us an impression of the relative importance of each main category in China’s HRC statements. Contestation of ‘Monitoring’ was by far the most prominent (present in 137 statements), being present in almost half (49.1%) of China’s statements between 2017 and 2022. Contestation against ‘Universality’ was also very significant, being the second most frequent (83 documents), addressed in almost 30% of the statements (29.75%). Contestation over the ‘Equality of Rights’ was less relevant, being the subject of 14.34% of the documents (n=40), while contestation of ‘Civil Society’ was very rare, being present in only 8 documents (2.87% of total documents).

The last table of this section (table 3) speaks of the relative weight of each type of contestation (validity and applicatory) across the material.

	Documents	Percentage (total docs)
Validity Contestation		
Documents with code(s)	115	41.20
Documents without code(s)	164	58.80
Analysed Documents	279	100.00
Applicatory Contestation		
Documents with code(s)	116	41.60
Documents without code(s)	163	58.40
Analysed Documents	279	100.00

Table 3. Frequencies per document of the two types/degrees of contestation

Validity (n=115; 41.2%) and applicatory (n=116; 41.6%) contestation are present in almost the same amount and percentage of documents, which suggests that China resorted to these types of contestation to a similar extent.

7. Discussion

This section analyses the results of my QCA, discussing them in depth, comparing them with the existing literature, and answering my research questions.

For now, a good way to start the discussion in a general level is to take another look at the coding frame (fig. 2). The coding frame itself is an important result, even before the assignment of the coding units in the main analysis phase. Especially on the third level, the coding frame provides a very systematic and valid description of China's counter-discourse on human rights at the HRC (2017-2022). These categories were inductively built, and then tested and revised, to represent exhaustively and comprehensively the variety of arguments that China puts forward to contest human rights norms. Thus, the coding frame is a very important outcome of the study and a significant contribution to the literature insofar it maps China's discursive contestation of human rights norms systematically and based on empirical evidence, something that was lacking in the recent literature on the topic (see section 3).

I structure this section around topics. First, I explore the main arguments of contestation, answering to my first sub-research question. Second, I go over each main category in detail, describing how contestation goes by and providing example quotes. Third, I turn to the degrees or types of contestation, assessing which one (if any) is more prevalent in China's discourse at the HRC. A final section will discuss some additional, but less relevant, findings that can be extracted from the data.

7.1 Most frequent issues of contestation

Table 2 shows that the monitoring of individual countries' human rights situations ('Monitoring') was by far the most contested issue by China, being the subject of nearly half of its statements. This observation is consistent with the sub-subcategory data (table 1), which shows that the opposition to the principle that individual countries situations can be monitored ('CSA is illegitimate') and the disapproval of the way this goes by in practice ('CSA is poorly executed') were the two most frequent topics.

This questions the conventional wisdom saying that China abandoned its traditional defensive posture of shielding itself from scrutiny to pursue an offensive one aimed at revising human rights standards (e.g., Piccone 2018; Y.-J. Chen 2019; Wan 2022; Inboden 2022). Although the latter is also true, these results show that China’s main concern seems to still be protecting itself and its friendly states from human rights scrutiny, pursuing a dual-track strategy of advocating for the abolishment of this practice, but also of denouncing its wrongdoings and trying to shape it. This strategy and respective arguments¹⁶ are hardly innovative – they can be traced back to the post-Tiananmen period, revealing the continuity in China’s human rights discourse (Foot 2000; Nathan 2011, 211).

The universality of human rights (‘Universality’) was the second most contested issue, taking up almost 30% of China’s statements at the HRC (table 2). Here, it is very interesting to see at the sub-subcategory level that arguments under ‘Particularism’ were present in almost twice as many documents as arguments of ‘Relative Universality’ (table 1). This shows that China in the recent years has focused more in advocating that states should be free to determine if and how they implement human rights, rather than just asking for more flexibility or diversity in ways to implement them. In practice, this is equivalent to dismissing states’ obligations to uphold human rights, leaving their implementation fully up to the respective governments.

This is, in fact, an innovation in Chinese discourse. China has rarely questioned the universality of human rights this explicitly and on the validity level (Kinzelbach 2012). The far most common argument identified by scholars is the rejection of a single universal model, defending multiple paths for human rights, which must take into account national conditions and particularities (e.g., Kinzelbach 2012; Y.-J. Chen 2019; Potter 2021). In the last big systematic reconstruction of China’s discursive contestation of human rights norms (2000-2010), Kinzelbach concluded that “only very few, of China's statements explicitly seek to limit the principle of universality” (2012, 308). Today, this has changed. China changed its strategy and chose to run more directly counter universality, arguing that human rights implementation is subjected to the will of governments. However, statements pertaining to ‘Relative Universality’ are still present and a significant element of China’s human rights discourse.

¹⁶ The exact content of these arguments will be discussed further on the respective category’s subsection (7.4).

The contestation of the equality of categories of rights ('Equality of Rights') was also significant, albeit much less than the former two issues, being present in almost 15% of the documents (table 2). The results on this issue are hardly surprising. Looking at the sub-subcategories (table 1), China insisted that there has been an overemphasis on civil and political rights, and that more attention should be paid to economic, social and cultural rights, so that all categories of rights are *de facto* treated equally ('Increase ESCR'). China has also argued sometimes that the last set of rights, and especially the right to development, should be prioritised over, or given more attention than, civil and political rights ('Prioritise ESCR'). Nonetheless, the first argument had more expression in Chinese discourse whereas instances of the latter were significantly fewer (table 1). Both of these elements have been observed for decades, constituting an element of continuity in China's human rights discourse (Foot 2020; Inboden 2021).

Calls for increasing state control over the process of Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building (TACB) ('Increase state in TACB) and to intensify the efforts of TACB ('Increase TACB') were also very significant (table 1). These were rather surprising results, since these topics were virtually absent from the literature about the Chinese discourse on human rights. This would indicate that TACB has recently become a bigger concern for China, something that for sure merits more academic attention.

On the contrary, contestation of Civil Society actors' recognition and/or participation in the human rights regime ('Civil Society') had virtually no expression in the data (table 2). Such arguments were identified by some authors such as Piccone (2018), Voss (2019) and Foot (2020), but they do not seem to be very salient in China's human rights discourse, even though they are indeed (rarely) present. However, they are relatively new elements of the discourse, which opens the possibility that they might become more prominent in the near future.

In conclusion, the most prominent contested issues in China's human rights discourse were monitoring mostly, but also universality, and, to a lesser extent, the equality of categories of rights. The most frequent arguments were statements opposing the monitoring of specific countries' human rights situations, criticising the ways in which such monitoring was conducted, and claiming that states have full authority to implement human rights as they wish.

7.2 Contesting Civil Society participation

The following table 4 shows the frequency and percentage per document of every type of contestation for each main category, helping us understand how contestation went by on each issue.

Type of Contestation	Frequency	Percentage (total docs)
Civil Society		
ACCS	3	1.08
VCCS	7	2.51
Equality of Rights		
ACER	30	10.75
VCER	12	4.30
Monitoring		
ACM	95	34.05
VCM	86	30.82
Universality		
ACU	30	10.75
VCU	58	20.79

Table 4. Frequencies per document of the two degrees of contestation regarding the main categories (first level). Note: on the left column, ‘AC’ always stands for applicatory contestation of the given category, while ‘VC’ refers to validity contestation.

Contestation of Civil Society actors’ recognition and/or participation in the human rights regime was rare, but it took mostly the form of validity contestation (n=7). Grouped under the sub-subcategory of ‘Inter-governmentality’, China engaged in two strands of arguments. First, it stressed the intergovernmental character of the human rights regime in order to grant states the leading role in its operation, side-lining non-governmental agents and organisations. Second, it refused to grant human rights defenders any legal status or protection, subjecting them to regular state law, which gives full discretion to governments regarding their treatment. A typical statement would go like this:

“There is no clear and unified definition of "human rights defenders" at the international level, and "human rights defenders" have no special rights or special legal status” (Chinese Delegation 2022).

The instances of applicatory contestation ('Misconduct') were accusations directed at NGOs and human rights defenders, namely claims that they break the law, subvert state power, are politically motivated, and do not act in good faith.

7.3 Contesting the equality of the categories of rights

Contestation on this issue was the third most salient on China's human rights discourse, taking primarily the form of applicatory contestation. On this regard, China called for an equal treatment of both categories of rights – civil and political, on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural, on the other. China argues that there has been an overemphasis on first set of rights and an under-investment on the second (including the right to development), therefore the agents of the human rights regime should increase the input and attention given to the latter so all types of human rights are treated in a balanced manner.

“The pandemic has exposed the prolonged underinvestment in economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development by multilateral human rights mechanisms. We call on the OHCHR to take concrete measures to increase its input in this respect” (Chinese Delegation on behalf of a group of countries 2022).

These statements do not essentially contest the overarching norm that the categories of human rights are interrelated and of equal importance (indivisibility). They only question the way this norm is implemented in practice – or, at least, the way China perceives its implementation –, therefore being instances of applicatory contestation. Curiously enough, China is calling for a different application that would actually be *in line* with the original norm (treating all types of rights equally).

However, China has also challenged this norm on validity grounds, even though less frequently. The most common argument on this regard is that economic, social and cultural rights should be prioritised, which evidently places them in a higher rank in relation to civil and political rights. Another argument, albeit less common, is that development is the foundation or the basis for other rights, which makes them conditional and subordinate to the right to development, creating a hierarchy between groups of rights. Both these arguments follow from traditional Chinese thought and from materialism, both of which emphasise economic, social and cultural rights, having left a

lasting influence on the Chinese conception of human rights (Sun 2016; Hsu and Chen 2020).

As mentioned before, all these arguments are not new and have been observed by other scholars. What is perhaps more interesting is the quantification of the frequencies of each, revealing that China is more focused on calling for the equal treatment of sets of rights, and for the increase in the investment in economic, social and cultural rights.

7.4 Contesting the monitoring of country-specific human rights situations

‘Monitoring’ was the most avidly contested issue. We can see in table 4 that validity and applicatory contestation occurred with very similar intensity, although the latter was slightly more prominent.

Looking at the coding frame (fig. 2) and at table 1, applicatory contestation to ‘Monitoring’ took multiple forms, namely criticism of the way the monitoring of individual countries' human rights situations is conducted (‘CSA is poorly executed’), calls for increasing state control over TACB (‘Increase state in TACB’), and for expanding efforts of TACB (‘Increase TACB’). These had very disparate weights in China’s statements: 74, 27, and 19 frequencies per document, respectively (table 1).

As for ‘CSA is poorly executed’, the second most frequent topic, China put forward a myriad of arguments, having in common the characteristic of being critical of the way that the countries’ human rights situations are discussed, supervised or condemned. Special Mandate holders were frequent targets, being charged with multiple wrongdoings:

“More and more often certain thematic and country specific mandate-holders go beyond their mandates, name and shame countries in a politically biased manner, make use of unreliable sources, unchecked, uncorroborated and sometimes completely false information, deliver unsubstantiated public statements, violate provisions of the Code of Conduct in their interaction with the States” (Russian Delegation on behalf of the LMG 2017).

China also frequently criticised Western states, which coincide loosely with the states that are critical of China’s human rights record. China highlights their human rights violations and consequently their ‘double standards’ and ‘hypocrisy’, but also accuses them of having ill-intentions, such as ‘political motivations’, ‘power politics’,

‘interference in internal affairs’, ‘imposing their values’, ‘coercing countries’, and ‘smearing China’ or ‘undermining China’s development’, just to name a few.

“It is well known that these countries have alarming human rights problems of their own, but it is puzzling that we never hear them reflect on their own human rights problems, nor do we hear them criticize the human rights problems of other Western countries in the Human Rights Council, but we see them frequently exerting high-profile pressure on China and other developing countries on human rights issues, which is a typical manifestation of double standards and politicization of human rights.

China advises these countries to start from themselves, seriously reflect on and correct their own human rights problems” (Chinese Delegation 2019).

Whoever the critic is, be it Western states, Special Procedures, the High Commissioner or others, China is not afraid to counter-attack in order to discredit them and their criticism of its own or other friendly states’ human rights records. The accusations of bad practices include using unverified or even false information, being biased against China or against developing countries, disrespecting mandates and the Code of Conduct, having political purposes, overlooking Western states’ human rights violations, dismissing ‘authentic information’ provided by states, being partial, non-objective and selective, interfering in internal affairs of countries under the pretext of human rights, *inter alia*. China has also complained about specific procedures of the human rights regime, such as letters to specific countries sent by the High Commissioner during the UPR, and demanded institutional reforms like, for example, the increase of the regional diversity of the OHCHR staff.

These are hardly new arguments and are in line with the findings of other authors. Primiano (2019) and Dukalskis (2022) have noted how China opposes country-specific action in principle, but criticises Western states regularly in practice as a way to shield itself from criticism. Several authors over the years have also observed China’s accusations against critical states and human rights bodies/mechanisms (Foot 2000; Kinzelbach 2012; HRW 2017; Renouard 2020; Potter 2021).

Conversely, the other two topics under applicatory contestation to ‘Monitoring’ – ‘Increase state in TACB’ and ‘Increase TACB’ – are relatively new¹⁷. The first includes statements that reclaim more state control over the process of TACB. Most of the coded statements in this regard claimed that TACB requires the request, consent and full consultation with the state, asking also sometimes that it respects national priorities and conditions. However, a few statements go a bit further:

“China believes that technical assistance for human rights should follow the following principles: First, it should abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned, and avoid using technical assistance for human rights as a tool to serve political purposes. Secondly, we should adhere to win-win cooperation, respect the will and leadership of the country concerned, and provide constructive assistance and support on the basis of full consultation with the country concerned” (Chinese Delegation 2021b).

As for the remaining topic (‘Increase TACB’), it was much less salient than the former (table 1). The statements under it were uniform and straightforward, asking for intensifying or increasing TACB efforts. All of the statements and topics so far fall under applicatory contestation, because they do not question the righteousness of ‘Monitoring’ activities, or their current relation to TACB, but only question the way they are conducted.

Validity contestation of ‘Monitoring’ was equally prominent. In tandem with asking for the increase of TACB, China also advocated in some occasions that the HRC and the OHCHR should ‘Prioritise TACB’, making it the main activity of that body, which would, of course, occur at the expense of monitoring, reversing the rank between the two. However, such statements were very scarce (n=4, table 1).

Conversely, ‘CSA is illegitimate’ was the most frequent sub-subcategory, hence the topic present in the highest number of documents (table 1). Unlike in ‘CSA is poorly executed’, the statements are very homogeneous and their central message is that the supervision, discussion and condemnation of individual countries’ human rights situations is illegitimate and should be abolished. China usually calls for genuine, constructive or mutually beneficial ‘dialogue and cooperation’, claiming also that we

¹⁷ To the best of my knowledge, only Piccone (2018) and Yu-Jie Chen (2019) observed that China was demanding more state control over TACB.

should put an end to ‘public or open pressure’, ‘naming and shaming’, ‘confrontation’, ‘politicisation’, ‘polarisation’, ‘selectivity’, and ‘interference on international affairs’. The statements coded under this category are mostly different combinations of these elements. Again, such arguments have been observed by scholars over the years and have been consensually considered to be calls for ending country-specific action (e.g., T. C. Chen 2019; Inboden 2021).

To conclude, contestation of ‘Monitoring’ has combined validity and applicatory contestation, mounting a fierce and multifaceted opposition to country-specific action regarding human rights. This has been *and remains* a priority for China, due to concerns with its international image and a desire to avoid criticism of its human rights record (Foot 2000; Inboden and Chen 2012; Inboden 2021).

7.5 Contesting the universality of human rights

‘Universality’ was the second most contested issue, figuring prominently in the Chinese counter-discourse on human rights at the HRC. Put simply, it encapsulates statements that somewhat question the idea that everybody is *unconditionally* entitled to all human rights. On this topic, validity contestation was more employed than applicatory contestation, being present in almost twice as many documents (table 4).

The most frequent arguments made under the former sub-category pertained to ‘Particularism’, i.e., the idea that states have full authority to determine the implementation of human rights norms, which in practice equates to giving them the choice of implementing them or not. The arguments were varied in this regard. China sometimes argued that states had the primary responsibility for protecting and fulfilling all human rights. In other instances, China placed human rights issues (often cases of violations) under the full jurisdiction of states, or their ‘internal affairs’. China has also “reiterate[d] the need to unconditionally respect the inalienable right of every State to choose its political, economic, social and cultural system (Cuban Delegation on behalf of a group of countries 2019).

However, the most common strand of argument by far is the idea that one must respect the ‘development paths’ or ‘human rights development paths’ independently chosen by countries. It is also interesting to note that China mostly brings up this argument when it is defending the human rights records of friendly countries, especially Belarus, Venezuela and Burundi.

It is paradoxical that this is the most frequent particularistic argument, yet the only of those I collected that is not mentioned in the existing literature; it is therefore a novel finding of this thesis and something that was probably only recently introduced in Chinese human rights discourse, meriting therefore more scholarly attention. As explained before, it is also surprising that most of the contestation of ‘Universality’ takes the form of validity contestation, directly questioning the applicability of this norm by seeking to explicitly grant states the authority to determine the implementation of human rights obligations. This is also an innovation in Chinese discourse, since contestation of this norm used to take mostly the formula of ‘Relative Universality’, i.e., rejection of universal models of human rights, calling instead for flexibility and adaptation to local conditions (Kinzelbach 2012).

Before moving on to that sub-subcategory, it is worth mentioning the other validity contestation sub-subcategory: ‘Individual entitlement’. Such arguments were observed by other scholars, but were very scarce in this dataset (n=3, table 1). They include statements that run counter the idea of *unconditional* entitlement by introducing conditions to the enjoyment of individual rights, such as the provisions of the law and “the interests of the State, society, the collective and the legitimate freedoms and rights of other citizens” (Chinese Delegation 2021a).

As for applicatory contestation and ‘Relative Universality’ in particular, it had a very significant expression in this main category, even though less than validity contestation. It includes statements that do not forsake states’ human rights obligations, but ask for more flexibility and autonomy to implement these norms. The specific arguments are once more varied.

China commonly recalls the importance of taking into account local particularities such as ‘national conditions’, ‘national resources’, ‘levels of development’, ‘national needs’ and ‘national priorities’, just to name a few, in implementing human rights. Some authors have interpreted this as cultural relativist, hence particularistic, arguments, but what sets them aside from the latter is the fact that China recalls and pleads allegiance to human rights rules and obligations when it asks for such flexibility or adaptation. When not said in a way that makes such commitments obviously void, this I entirely consistent with the idea of relative universality as originally conceived by Donnelly (2007) and enshrined in multiple human rights conventions. Different local ways of implementing

human rights are legitimate as long as they remain within the spirit of relevant international rules and commitments¹⁸ (Donnelly 2007). Here's an illustrative example:

“Reaffirming that each State has the inalienable right to choose freely and develop, in accordance with the sovereign will of its people, its own political, social, economic and cultural systems, without interference from any other State or non-State actor, in strict conformity with the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international instruments” (China 2020).

China also protested against a single universal model or blueprint of human rights, arguing that there are diverse paths to implement them, which should be adjusted to the local particularities as mentioned before. The buzzword ‘One Size Fits All’ was often repeated to convey this idea:

“Human rights related challenges are diverse in nature and beset us all in different forms and manifestations. Thus, the Council’s response should be diverse as well and should not be inspired by a “one-size-fits-all” approach” (Pakistani Delegation on behalf of the LMG 2019).

The idea of relative universality was also defended in vague calls for respecting state sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries, or in opposition to interference in internal affairs and to the imposition of others’ models or values.

Overall, the arguments under this sub-subcategory were not new (see Kinzelbach 2012). The novelty lies in the prevalence of ‘Particularism’ over ‘Relative Universality’ in Chinese discourse. China has stepped up its contestation against universality, running now directly counter this norm.

7.6 Most frequent types of contestation

As explained in sub-section 4.3, different types of contestation have different impacts on norm robustness, therefore identifying the types of contestation that norms face is important to evaluate the seriousness of the challenges they are subjected to. I

¹⁸ I was very influenced by Donnelly’s work to define this category. It was also very helpful to help distinguishing ‘Relative Universality’ from ‘Particularism’.

adhered to Deitelhoff and Zimmermann's (2013; 2020) typology of degrees of contestation – validity and applicatory contestation –, which claims that the former has more potential to erode a norm's robustness, even though the latter may have similar effects if undertaken consistently over long periods of time. Bearing all this in mind, I integrated these theoretical ideas in my analytical framework (and later even in my coding frame) so that I could assess the degree(s) of contestation that China is putting forward *vis-à-vis* human rights norms, which in turn would allow me to speculate about such contestation's impact on those norms' robustness.

Recalling table 3, we can see that China makes an equivalent use of both types of contestation. Katrin Kinzelbach's work (2012) is the only I know which also considered different types of contestation when analysing China's human rights discourse, albeit with another theoretical framework¹⁹. She observed implication contests (similar to applicatory contestation) in all of her four categories, and some instances of framing contests (similar to validity contestation) only in two. In the end, she concluded that "Beijing accepts, by and large, the normative frame provided by international human rights, but it rejects many of its implications" (Kinzelbach 2012, 331).

That seems to have changed. Between 2017 and 2022, China has engaged as much in validity contestation as in applicatory contestation. China is now openly challenging the righteousness and legitimacy of many human rights norms. In most cases, China's strategy has been to question these norms' core claims and their practical application *simultaneously*. This finding sustains the observation that in recent years China has turned to a more assertive human rights foreign policy seeking to fundamentally change and revise international human rights standards (T. C. Chen 2019; Foot 2020; Inboden 2021). Being increasingly stronger in material power, supported by large groups of states with similar human rights views, and pushing forward a consistent discourse fiercely contesting human rights norms, China today presents a serious challenge to human rights norms and to the human rights regime more broadly.

¹⁹ Kinzelbach used the concepts 'frame' and 'implication' contests from Krebs and Jackson (2007) to classify the degrees of contestation in Chinese statements. These concepts are not too dissimilar from validity and applicatory contestation, which is natural given that the latter built on the former. In my opinion, this allows loose comparability between my study and Kinzelbach's, which is useful to see how Chinese discourse on human rights evolved over time.

7.7 Additional insights

The dataset is extensive, so one can make further remarks that, though not being directly relevant for the research question(s), are relevant on its own and may be interesting for further research.

First, we could see on tables 1 and 2 that over 40% of China's statements did not contain any instance of contestation of human rights norms, even though I used a very minimal, therefore comprehensive, definition. This is rather surprising because the vast majority of studies on Chinese international human rights discourse work under the assumption that China is mostly challenging international human rights understandings and focus their analysis on that. My data raises the possibility that we may be overestimating Chinese contestation efforts. Being true that most statements are aimed at contesting norms, it is also true that a very large portion is not. Could China also be making constructive contributions to human rights and human rights norms that we have been neglecting by overwhelmingly focusing only on its contestation? I cannot answer this, since I too only analysed contestation segments, but this is something that requires more scholarly attention – could be interesting to see what China is saying at the HRC when it is not contesting human rights norms.

Second, this extensive dataset contains information about the number and authorship of China's statement and resolutions across the time period from 2017 to 2022 (fig. 3). These data can be mobilised to loosely test two assumptions in the literature:

- i. has China really become more proactive on international human rights diplomacy? (Y.-J. Chen 2019; T. C. Chen and Hsu 2021)
- ii. is China still avoiding leadership and keeping a low profile, maintaining a strategy of letting others speak on its behalf? (Sceats and Breslin 2012)

Regarding the first, one can see that China in 2017 and 2018 put forward a very low number of resolutions (less than 20 each year). In 2019, this amount increased considerably (slightly over 40) to then rise exponentially, reaching around 100 initiatives in 2021 and 2022.

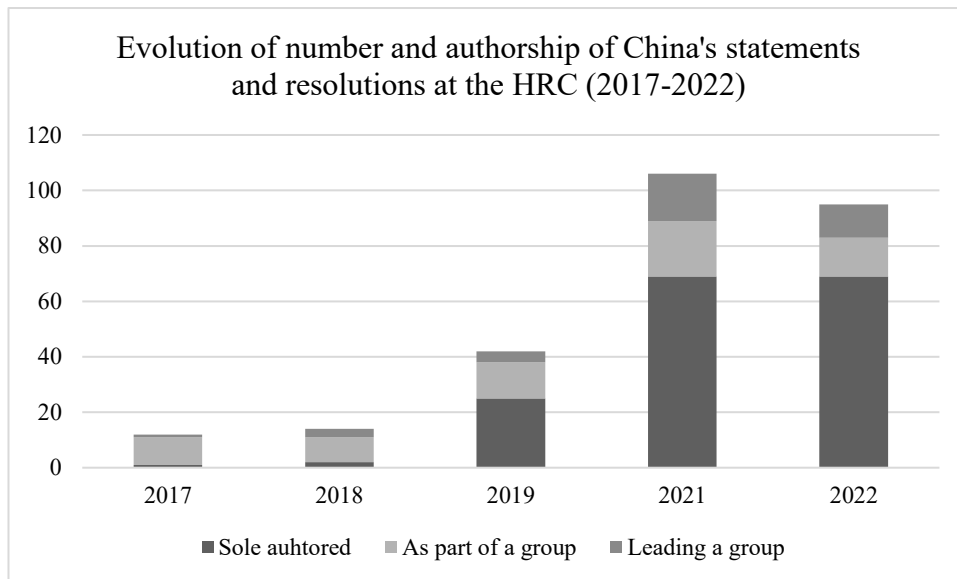


Fig. 3. Evolution of the number and authorship of China's statements and resolutions at the HRC (2017-2022). Source: author's calculations from his own dataset²⁰.

This seems to show that China has become more proactive at the Human Rights Council over this period, presenting an increasingly larger number of statements and resolutions. However, it is interesting to note that such increase in proactiveness seems to start in 2019, though timidly, becoming full-fledged in 2021. This questions the popular assumption that this more assertive human rights diplomacy started with and because of Xi around 2012-13 (T. C. Chen 2019; Inboden 2021; Potter 2021). The timing of the rise in proactiveness does not coincide with the beginning of Xi's leadership, so probably this change in proactiveness was caused by a different factor. Chen and Hsu (2021) also concluded that the intensity of Xi's discursive engagement with UN human rights mechanisms in his early years did not significantly differ from Hu's. It would be interesting to try to explain this change in proactiveness in future research.

Regarding the second question, there is also a significant change in China's discursive engagement starting around the same time as the former. As we can see, China starts by producing barely any sole authored statements and resolutions between 2017 and 2019 to present *mostly* sole authored initiatives in 2021 and 2022 (fig. 3). There is not only a strong increase in the number of initiatives, but also a stark rise in the proportion of solely authored ones. The proportion of initiatives presented by China in

²⁰ 2020 is absent from the graph, because China did not participate in the HRC that year (mandatory 1 year break after 2 consecutive terms). Although it still co-sponsored a few resolutions and statements, the number was very low. This would bias the interpretation of the graph, since China did not have full participant rights, which undermines its capacity to participate as it would otherwise.

representation of a group, instead of presented by others on behalf of a group that China belongs to, has also risen significantly.

While still spearheading initiatives with like-minded and friendly countries²¹, China is no longer afraid of putting forward its own initiatives alone, constituting the majority of China's statements and resolutions today. This is a significant change in China's strategy at the HRC, which previously consisted of not taking overt leadership and letting other countries speak on its behalf by co-sponsoring group statements and resolutions (Sceats and Breslin 2012). China seems to be no longer committed to keeping a low profile, displaying increasing proactiveness and assertiveness in its human rights diplomacy at the HRC.

²¹ This is likely to remain significant despite the growth of China's own initiatives, because working with such groupings and building these convergences are cornerstones of China's strategy for international human rights diplomacy (Inboden 2022).

8. Conclusion

The rise of China as the second greatest power is considered to be one of the most formidable challenges that the liberal international order is facing today as this country displays increasingly resolute efforts and ambitions to reform the global norms and institutions. The issue of human rights has been a major point of contention between China and the order. Besides the systematic human rights violations at home, in recent years China has also channelled energies into trying to shape international human rights standards according to its views. The extent of the challenge this poses to human rights norms has been a matter of debate.

This thesis sought to contribute to these discussions by inquiring about the extent to which China has contested human rights norms at the Human Rights Council between 2017 and 2022. My analysis departed from constructivist theories of norm contestation that highlight the different degrees it can take, being able to question the very legitimacy of the norm (validity contestation) or merely the way it should be implemented (applicatory contestation). I conducted a Qualitative Content Analysis of all the available Chinese sponsored and co-sponsored statements and resolutions at the Human Rights Council's sessions between 2017 and 2022, amounting to a total of 279 documents. This analysis was geared to identify the main contesting arguments and the main degrees of contestation. Such systematic representation (or description) of the recent Chinese discourse on human rights, which was lacking in the literature, is an important contribution to the aforementioned debates because it clarifies exactly how China is contesting human rights norms in practice, shedding also light on the possible impact this might have on said norms. That is the advantage of employing the above theoretical framework: since different degrees of contestation have different impacts on norm robustness, we can *estimate* how China's contestation might affect human rights norms.

The results showed that the monitoring of individual countries' human rights situations, the universality of human rights, and the equality of categories of rights (civil and political, and economic, social and cultural rights) were the most contested issues. Remarkably, the issue of monitoring concentrated by far the most contestation efforts, followed by universality as the second most contested, and equality of categories of rights as the third, albeit with a considerable margin from the issues mentioned before.

The most frequent specific arguments were statements opposing the legitimacy of monitoring specific countries' human rights situations, criticising the ways in which such

monitoring was conducted, and claiming that states have full authority to implement human rights as they wish (particularism). Calls for increasing the investment in economic, social and cultural rights, for more tolerance for different paths of human rights implementation, and for increasing state control over the process of Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building were also frequent, although significantly less than the former set of arguments.

The results also showed that China made an equivalent use of both types of contestation (validity and applicatory). Previous empirical studies had noted that China rarely questioned the core claims or the legitimacy of human rights norms, contesting mostly their application in practice (Kinzelbach 2012). Now, it seems like China is doing both simultaneously, which constitutes a novel and important finding.

This thesis contributes to the literature by constructing a systematic, comprehensive and empirically grounded description of China's counter-discourse on human rights norms, the only I know in recent years. Scrupulously following methodological instructions and relying on the entire population of data rather than a sample, this study possesses high internal validity and sought to maximise the validity and reliability of the inferences. Some of this study's limitations include the impossibility to generalise my findings beyond my case (low external validity), the reliance on intra-coder instead of inter-coder agreement, and the fact that some of the data was translated through software.

Future research is needed to test and corroborate (or falsify) *empirically* the relation between the degrees of contestation and norm robustness (Sandholtz 2019). Specifically on China, it would be interesting to conduct similar studies in other human rights bodies to assess the consistency of this discourse across institutional fora; this would also increase our capacity to compare and perhaps generalise findings on the topic. Additionally, this study has revealed major changes in China's counter-discourse on human rights that need to be explained, such as the shift towards validity contestation, and the exponential increase of (sole authored) statements and resolutions after 2019. It has also revealed a bias towards contestation in the literature, begging the need for more works that analyse other elements of China's human rights discourse – eventually even neglected constructive contributions.

For now, we know that China is fiercely contesting human rights norms, both on the validity and applicatory fronts. About a decade ago, an influential author said that China required a coherent counter-discourse and a high degree of international influence to alter the human rights normative order (Kinzelbach 2012). Those two requirements are

fulfilled today. China's material power has never been greater, it has been espousing a consistent and well-known discourse contesting human rights norms over the years, and its views have the widespread and constant support of large groupings in human rights bodies. Additionally, China has recently started to directly question the validity of the norms, which is said to have a strong negative impact on norm robustness (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2020). On China's side, the conditions are met to mount a very serious challenge to human rights norms, and consequently to the human rights regime. However, norms are very resilient, especially those with such a universal legitimacy and appeal like human rights. It remains to be seen how the said norms will fare in face of the real threat posed by China's contestation.

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Appendix 1 – Codebook

Category	Definition	Example
Universality	Statements that express disapproval regarding the norm of universality, i.e., the idea that all human beings are unconditionally entitled to all human rights	N/A because this category will not be used for coding
Validity Contestation of Universality	Statements that question the righteousness of universality or seek to replace it with another norm, for example state sovereignty.	N/A because this category will not be used for coding
Applicatory Contestation of Universality	Statements that question the application of universality without calling into question its righteousness	N/A because this category will not be used for coding
Particularism	Claims that states have or should have the authority to freely determine domestic circumstances related with the implementation of human rights. For example, argues that states can choose their development paths and political systems, or that human rights are internal affairs.	“We reiterate the need to unconditionally respect the inalienable right of every State to choose its political, economic, social and cultural system, as an essential condition to ensure peaceful coexistence among nations and consolidate peace.”
Relative Universality	Claims that states should have more autonomy to determine domestic circumstances related with the implementation of human rights. This includes, for example, calls for more respect of state sovereignty or more flexibility in implementing human rights. Decision rule: ‘Particularism’ is different from ‘Relative Universality’ insofar the former implies that states are or should be completely free to decide if they implement human rights and how	“Reaffirming that each State has the inalienable right to choose freely and develop, in accordance with the sovereign will of its people, its own political, social, economic and cultural systems, without interference from any other State or non-State actor, in strict conformity with the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international instruments”

	they do it, whereas the latter only claims they have or should have more autonomy in the implementation of human rights, but still acknowledges their obligation to do so.	
Individual entitlement	Seeks to restrict the individual entitlement to human rights. For example, suggests that individual rights are subordinated to the state's interests/rights, or that states possess human rights.	"China's Constitution and laws guarantee citizens' right to freedom of assembly, while citizens should abide by the provisions of the law in exercising the above-mentioned rights and should not harm the interests of the State".
Monitoring	Statements that express disapproval regarding the norm of monitoring, i.e., the idea that national, transnational and international actors may scrutinise states' human rights practices.	N/A because this category will not be used for coding
Validity Contestation of Monitoring	Statements that question the righteousness of monitoring or seek to replace it with another norm, for example Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building	N/A because this category will not be used for coding
Applicatory Contestation of Monitoring	Statements that question the application of monitoring without calling into question its righteousness.	N/A because this category will not be used for coding
Country-specific action (CSA) is illegitimate	Expresses disapproval of the idea that the human rights situations of individual countries can be monitored, discussed or criticised. This includes, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertions that the activity of monitoring violates state sovereignty • Calls for ending naming and shaming, politicisation, 	"The Group of Like-minded countries, expresses its deep concern over the continuation of the discriminatory practice of selective adoption of country specific resolutions in the Human Rights Council. We believe that such policy is a tool that abuse human rights for political

	<p>confrontation, pressure, and for promoting dialogue, cooperation and non-confrontation instead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principled opposition to country-specific mechanisms, such as country-specific resolutions. 	<p>purposes and breaches the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in addressing human rights issues”.</p>
<p>CSA is poorly executed</p>	<p>Expresses disapproval of the way that the monitoring of individual countries' human rights situations is exercised. This includes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accusations of bias against China or developing countries • Accusing critics of reprehensible practices like using false information, being hypocritical or having ulterior motives • Proposal of institutional reform to improve the conduct of monitoring <p>Decision rule: ‘CSA is poorly executed’ differs from ‘CSA is illegitimate’ because the first statements never question the legitimacy of the practice of monitoring nor imply that it should not take place; coding units which do so should be coded under the latter category.</p>	<p>“We are also gravely concerned that a few special procedure mandate holders indiscriminately take unauthenticated information from western media and political groups to make groundless accusations against sovereign States”.</p>
<p>Prioritise Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building (TACB)</p>	<p>Suggests that Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building (TACB) is or should be the main activity of human rights promotion. This includes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claiming that TACB is more important than monitoring 	<p>“By focussing on the technical cooperation and capacity building, we can overcome any diversion towards polarization, confrontation and politicization of the Council”.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arguing that TACB should be prioritised 	
Increase importance of TACB	<p>Suggests that TACB should have a bigger role in human rights promotion. For example, calls for strengthening the importance of TACB, or for giving it more attention.</p> <p>Decision rule: what separates this category from the former is that it only calls for a bigger role for TACB without suggesting a permanent ranking between this and other activities of human rights promotion (namely monitoring). When a coding unit does this, it should be coded under the former category.</p>	“Reiterating the need to further enhance the role of the Human Rights Council in promoting technical assistance and capacity-building”.
Increase state in TACB	Seeks to increase state control over the process of TACB.	“We are of the view that the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights plays a pivotal role in extending technical assistance and capacity building to States upon their request and according to their national needs and priorities”
Equality of rights	Statements that express disapproval regarding the norm of equality of rights (indivisibility), i.e., the idea that all categories of rights are equally important and should be treated in an equal manner.	N/A because this category will not be used for coding
Validity Contestation of Equality of Rights	Statements that question the righteousness of equality of rights or seek to replace it with another norm, for example the idea that economic, social and cultural rights are intrinsically more important than civil and political rights.	N/A because this category will not be used for coding

Applicatory Contestation of Equality of Rights	Statements that question the application of equality of rights without calling into question its righteousness.	N/A because this category will not be used for coding
Economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) are more important	Suggests that economic, social and cultural rights (ECSR), including the right to development, are more important than civil and political rights. This includes, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims that the right to development is a pre-requisite for other human rights • Calls for prioritising ESCR 	“We call upon the UN human rights bodies, including the Human Rights Council and the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, to prioritize the right to development”
Increase attention ESCR	Suggests that ESCR and civil and political rights are not treated equally in practice, suggesting that this imbalance should be corrected. This often takes the form of calling for the devotion of more attention to economic, social and political rights. <p>Decision rule: what separates this category from the former is that it accepts that the categories of rights are equally important, demanding only they are treated accordingly in practice. Coding units suggesting a higher permanent ranking for ESCR should be assigned to the former category.</p>	“In the functioning of the Council, the imbalance between civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other is stark and needs to be addressed”.
Civil Society	Statements that express disapproval regarding the norm of civil society, i.e., the idea that civil society human rights actors (e.g., human rights NGOs and activists) are protected by and entitled to participate in the human rights regime.	N/A because this category will not be used for coding

Validity Contestation of Civil Society	Statements that question the righteousness of ‘Civil Society’ or seek to replace it with another norm.	N/A because this category will not be used for coding
Applicatory Contestation of Civil Society	Statements that question the application of ‘Civil Society’ without calling into question its righteousness.	N/A because this category will not be used for coding
Inter- governmentality	<p>Calls for reducing or eliminating the protection of civil society human rights actors or their participation in the human rights regime. This includes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposition against the legal recognition of human rights defenders • Defending the primacy of states in the human rights regime’s institutional architecture 	“Stick to the intergovernmental nature of the UN human rights mechanism and the Member States-driven principle”.
Misconduct	<p>Accuses civil society human rights actors of reprehensible behaviour or motivations, such as, for example, using false information, interfering in states’ internal affairs, breaking the law or being politically motivated.</p> <p>Decision rule: what separates this category from the former is that it does not question the protection of civil society human rights actors, nor their right to participate in the human rights regime, including only accusations of wrongdoings.</p>	“The Office should make sure that the relevant non-governmental organizations are acting in good faith and free from politically motivated stands or contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations”.
Miscellaneous	Instances of a category level that cannot be assigned to any of the other categories.	

Appendix 2 – List of coding units and their assigned categories

Note: This appendix serves simultaneously as a list of the coding units (the result from the segmentation process) and as list of the codes/categories assigned to each coding unit (after the two final rounds of the main analysis phase and the resolve of their disagreements). Each coding unit has the document source from which it was retrieved under the code to which it was assigned. The documents are named in a way that facilitates their retrieval from their original source (the HRC Extranet), fostering replicability. For resolutions, the format resembles their official naming on the UN Database, signalling their year, UN body, document type, and document code. For statements, there is the date (year, day and month), the respective HRC session and the country who delivered the statement. Parenthesis after the latter mean that the statement was delivered on behalf of a group of countries (LMG=Like-Minded Group; NAM=Non-Aligned Movement; GC=a group of countries). The excerpts and respective documents cited in the body of the thesis throughout section 7 can easily be identified in this Appendix by looking at their specific date and authorship in the ‘References’ section.

the Sustainable Development Goals and targets are integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable, take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respect national policies and priorities, while remaining consistent with relevant international rules and commitments,

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2017, A, HRC, RES, 35, 21

efforts towards the achievement of this goal should be strengthened

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2017, A, HRC, RES, 35, 21

Emphasizing also that genuine dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights should be constructive and based on universality, indivisibility, non-selectivity, non-politicization, equality and mutual respect, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding, expanding common ground

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2018, A, HRC, RES, 37, 23

strengthening constructive cooperation, including through capacity-building and technical cooperation,

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2018, A, HRC, RES, 37, 23

Recognizing the importance of technical assistance and capacity-building provided in consultation with, and with the consent of, the States

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2018, A,HRC, RES, 37,23

Reiterates the important role of technical assistance and capacity-building in promoting and protecting human rights, calls upon States to strengthen human rights technical assistance and capacity-building through mutually beneficial cooperation

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB

2018, A,HRC, RES, 37,23

upon the request of and in accordance with the priorities set by the States concerned

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2018, A,HRC, RES, 37,23

Calls upon the international community to continue to assist developing countries in promoting the full realization of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including through access to medicines, in particular essential medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, medical devices and other health products that are affordable, safe, effective and of quality, and through financial and technical support, training of personnel and other capacity-building measures, while recognizing that the primary responsibility for respecting, protecting and fulfilling all human rights rests with States

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2019, A, HRC, RES, 41, 10

the 2030 Agenda is of unprecedented scope and significance, accepted by all countries, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities; its goals and targets are universal, integrated and indivisible, and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2019, A, HRC, RES, 41, 19

Recognizing the importance of ensuring universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of human rights issues, and the elimination of double standards and politicization

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2020, A, HRC, RES, 43, 21

Reaffirming that each State has the inalienable right to choose freely and develop, in accordance with the sovereign will of its people, its own political, social, economic and cultural systems, without interference from any other State or non-State actor, in strict conformity with the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international instruments,

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2020, A, HRC, RES, 43, 21

Recognizing the importance of technical assistance and capacity-building provided in consultation with, and with the consent of, the States concerned

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2020, A, HRC, RES, 43, 21

Stresses the critical role of the Human Rights Council as the principal intergovernmental body dealing with human rights within the United Nations system

Code: Civil Society > VCCS > Inter-governmentality
2020, A, HRC, RES, 43, 21

Calls upon all States and other stakeholders to undertake constructive and genuine dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights, based on universality, impartiality, objectivity, indivisibility, non-selectivity, non-politicization, equality and mutual respect,

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2020, A, HRC, RES, 43, 21

calls upon States to strengthen human rights technical assistance and capacity-building through mutually beneficial cooperation

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2020, A, HRC, RES, 43, 21

upon the request of and in accordance with the priorities set by the States concerned

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2020, A, HRC, RES, 43, 21

Emphasizing that genuine dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights should be constructive and based on universality, indivisibility, non-selectivity, non-politicization, equality and mutual respect

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, A, HRC, RES, 46, 13

Recognizing the importance of technical assistance and capacity-building provided in consultation with, and with the consent of, the States concerned

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2021, A, HRC, RES, 46, 13

Reiterating the need to further enhance the role of the Human Rights Council in promoting technical assistance and capacity-building

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2021, A, HRC, RES, 46, 13

Calls upon all States and other stakeholders to undertake constructive and genuine dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights, based on universality, impartiality, objectivity, indivisibility, non-selectivity, non-politicization, equality and mutual respect

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2021, A, HRC, RES, 46, 13

calls upon States to strengthen human rights technical assistance and capacity-building through mutually beneficial cooperation

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB

2021, A, HRC, RES, 46, 13

upon the request of and in accordance with the priorities set by the States concerned

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2021, A, HRC, RES, 46, 13

reaffirming that the 2030 Agenda is of unprecedented scope and significance, accepted by all countries, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities; its goals and targets are universal, integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2021, A, HRC, RES, 47, 11

Reaffirming also that everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to the realization, through national efforts and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his or her dignity and the free development of his or her personality,

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2022, A, HRC, RES, 49, 19

Recalling the obligations and commitments of States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to take steps, individually and through international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights without discrimination of any kind, by all appropriate means

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2022, A, HRC, RES, 49, 19

Emphasizing the crucial importance of strengthening international assistance and cooperation in support of national efforts of States

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB

2022, A, HRC, RES, 49, 19

the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building upon their request

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2022, A, HRC, RES, 49, 19

Emphasizes that States have the responsibilities and commitments to use their maximum available resources to promote and protect economic, social and cultural rights in responding effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic and other global challenges, including to provide adequate investments, in accordance with the organization and resources of each State and its national legislation, in public health systems, education, social protection, decent work, housing, food, water and sanitation systems

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2022, A, HRC, RES, 49, 19

Encourages the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Council, the United Nations development system, international financial institutions, regional organizations and other stakeholders, as appropriate and within their respective mandate, to take into consideration the needs of States, especially in developing and least-developed countries, to fulfil their responsibilities to better promote and protect economic, social and cultural rights, address inequalities, implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promote the well-being of all human beings in their relevant strategies and policies

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2022, A, HRC, RES, 49, 19

Requests the Office of the High Commissioner to enhance its work, within its mandate, in the field of economic, social and cultural rights,

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR

2022, A, HRC, RES, 49, 19

Calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner to guide its work and set its priorities on economic, social and cultural rights,

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important

2022, A, HRC, RES, 49, 19

Calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner to continue its work and set its priorities on economic, social and cultural rights

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important

2022, A, HRC, RES, 50, 13

Diversity of States and the right of States to exercise their sovereignty in pursuit of their people's welfare are recognized principles, including in the UN. Every State thus has the inalienable

sovereign right to choose its legal and criminal justice systems, without interference by other States. The adoption of OPI in the 71st UNGA resolution “Moratorium on the use of the death penalty” clearly and explicitly reaffirms the sovereign right of all countries to develop their own legal system.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2017, 1-03, 34th session, SING (GC)

The issue of capital punishment and the types of crimes for which the death penalty is applied to, is therefore a question that every State has the sovereign right to decide for itself, taking into account its own circumstances.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2017, 1-03, 34th session, SING (GC)

encourage all stakeholders to work on strengthening the international partnership in the field of the capacity building and technology transfer, with a view ensuring the full access to medicines for all.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2017, 8.-03, 34th session, INDON (GC)

If there is one overarching feature that characterizes humanity, it is its diversity. Hence, all our collective efforts towards ameliorating the human condition, through various initiatives such as building a community of shared future for mankind, must have a strong understanding and respect for our differences. No one can claim monopoly over virtue and wisdom. Throughout their history human societies have flourished with diversity of views and cultural practices, and hence, bringing this approach into the functioning of Council should not be a mission impossible as long as we have the requisite political will.

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2017, 10-03, 34th session, IND (LMG)

In this Council, our passionate and reasoned deliberations on the manifestations of human rights violations at times tend to degenerate into a confrontational discourse. This should be avoided through addressing the root cause of existing problems

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2017, 10-03, 34th session, IND (LMG)

In the functioning of the Council, the imbalance between civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other is stark and needs to be addressed to enhance the Council’s credibility.

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2017, 10-03, 34th session, IND (LMG)

Meanwhile we are concerned by continuous attempts by some Special Procedures to arbitrarily interpret their mandates. Moreover, we have witnessed recently some cases of Special Procedures’ involvement in the issues that are not only beyond their mandates, but also out of the competence of the Human Rights Council itself. That not only deflects them from the issues of

genuine significance for the HRC, but gravely undermines their credibility. We urge all Special Procedures to strictly comply with the mandates given to them by the Council.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2017, 16-07, 35th session, RUS (LMG)

Special Procedures act and speak on the basis of unchecked reports and inaccurate information. This deplorable practice must be eliminated.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2017, 16-07, 35th session, RUS (LMG)

We emphasize that Special Procedures are subsidiaries of the Council, and therefore must not be instructed by any State or non-State agent, including NGOs, academia or international bodies. It is particularly relevant to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, which serves as their secretariat and therefore may exercise certain influence upon mandate holders, both during their country visits and in the day-to-day activities.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2017, 16-07, 35th session, RUS (LMG)

It is high time for the Council to develop and put in place accountability mechanisms for Special Procedures mandate holders.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2017, 16-07, 35th session, RUS (LMG)

Using the façade of effectiveness to tinker with these rules carries the potential of paving the way for politicization and polarization-issues which have already started corroding some other mechanisms of the Human Rights Council.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2017, 19-07, 35th session, IND (LMG)

Attempts to force a state to focus on a particular set of issues, or to implement UPR recommendations not based on ground realities, to score political points is unacceptable and is sure to adversely impact a country's voluntary and objective participation.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2017, 19-07, 35th session, IND (LMG)

We do agree that the implementation of accepted UPR recommendations is important. However, for that to happen this mechanism needs to continue to provide policy space and flexibility to the member states taking into account their respective social, political and economic circumstances. The primacy of national or domestic mechanisms has to be respected when it comes to transforming UPR commitments into positive developments on the ground.

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2017, 19-07, 35th session, IND (LMG)

More and more often certain thematic and country specific mandate-holders go beyond their mandates, name and shame countries in a politically biased manner, make use of unreliable sources, unchecked, uncorroborated and sometimes completely false information, deliver

unsubstantiated public statements, violate provisions of the Code of Conduct in their interaction with the States.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2017, 20-09, 36th session, RUS (LMG)

To prevent this from happening and to safeguard the credibility and reputation of the Council and its subsidiary bodies and to ensure the full compliance of the Special Procedures with the Code of Conduct it is necessary therefore to develop and put in practice mechanisms of their accountability before the Council

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2017, 20-09, 36th session, RUS (LMG)

We also note with concern that although thematic mandate-holders are appointed for the term of three years there is actually no official procedure of their reappointment after the first term. Rather it is extended by default. This question has to be addressed too.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2017, 20-09, 36th session, RUS (LMG)

The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each state must be respected, the social system and development path independently chosen by each state must be respected.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2017, 27-02, 34th session, CH+AFRICAN GROUP

the Right to Development should be at the heart of a strengthened global partnership and should guide practical international collaboration for the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Human Rights Council should take the lead in assigning it the priority it deserves.

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important
2017, 27-02, 34th session, EGY (LMG)

the existence of an open and constructive dialogue, between different cultures and civilizations, taking into account the different national circumstances, facilitates the promotion of a culture of peace, understanding, tolerance, moderation and respect for diversity.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2017, 27-02, 34th session, EGY (LMG)

s. In the field of human rights, constructive dialogue and cooperation will lead to mutually beneficial results whereby all stakeholders can learn from each other and advance together. Multilateral human rights mechanisms should follow the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity and avoid politicization, in order to promote sound development of the international human rights cause.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2018, 2-07, 38th session, CH (GC)

We are of the view that the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights plays a pivotal role in extending technical assistance and capacity building to States upon their request and according to their national needs and priorities

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2018, 04-07, 38th session, EGY (LMG)

In this context, we underline the necessity that this technical assistance and capacity building should be extended in such a way that is strictly “technical”, objective and avoids all forms of politicization.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2018, 04-07, 38th session, EGY (LMG)

Our countries deeply believe that one of the most efficient ways to radically combat all forms of violations of human rights is to enhance the technical assistance and capacity building pillar of the human rights system in its various forms

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2018, 04-07, 38th session, EGY (LMG)

We need to pursue sustained, inclusive, and equitable growth and respect the right of States to independently choose their own path of poverty eradication and sustainable development in accordance with their national circumstances

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2018, 14-09, 39th session, CH (GC)

We noted the appearance on the web-page of the 3rd cycle of the UPR the letters from the High Commissioner addressed to the States who had undergone their review. In these letters he asks the States to report on voluntarily selected by his Office recommendations which in his words «require the particular attention». We believe that all recommendations made by the States during the UPR have equal value and importance and providing any kind of hierarchy is not acceptable.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2018, 19-03, 37th session, RUS (GC)

Sending such letters the High Commissioner on his own account seeks to raise the role of the OHCHR to the UPR process. The same is true to the one-minute video clips that have been prepared by the Office and give the impression that States are rendering account and receiving recommendations only from representatives of civil society. We would not wish to undermine their role, but would like to draw the attention to the existing modalities for the UPR upheld by the relevant Human Rights Council’s resolutions. We call on High Commissioner and his Office to respect these. We also urge him to replace these video clips with the full videos of the review or delete them.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2018, 19-03, 37th session, RUS (GC)

We acknowledge and support the efforts of the Office to provide technical assistance to the countries in implementing recommendations arising from the UPR. However, we would recall, this should be done only upon the request and with agreement of the interested State, otherwise, such assistance is nothing more than interference in internal affairs.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2018, 19-03, 37th session, RUS (GC)

We note with regret that, in the past few years, there have been many things in the work of the OHCHR that we find unacceptable or dissatisfactory, namely undue focus on a few developing States while ignoring the grave concerns in other regions, the use of unverified information, lack of willingness to engage with states in a constructive manner, lack of respect for basic UN principles

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2018, 19-06, 38th session, CH (LMG)

failure to put economic, social and cultural rights on an equal footing with the civil and political rights

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2018, 19-06, 38th session, CH (LMG)

and insufficient attention to technical assistance and capacity building in the field of human rights

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2018, 19-06, 38th session, CH (LMG)

We believe that ensuring transparency in the work of OHCHR is of paramount importance.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2018, 19-06, 38th session, CH (LMG)

Strictly abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, truly respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and their right to choose their paths of human rights development in accordance with their circumstances.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2018, 19-06, 38th session, CH (LMG)

Refrain from exerting public pressure, politicization and double standards, and avoid making irresponsible comments based on unverified information.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2018, 19-06, 38th session, CH (LMG)

Stick to the intergovernmental nature of the UN human rights mechanism and the Member States-driven principle. Governments should be the driving force in promoting and protecting human rights.

Code: Civil Society > VCCS > Inter-governmentality

2018, 19-06, 38th session, CH (LMG)

Promote all categories of human rights in a balanced manner, increase input in economic, social and cultural rights as well as the right to development

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR

2018, 19-06, 38th session, CH (LMG)

Prioritize technical assistance and capacity building in the field of human rights

Code: Monitoring > VCM > Prioritise TACB

2018, 19-06, 38th session, CH (LMG)

providing constructive technical assistance to States with their consent and according to their needs.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2018, 19-06, 38th session, CH (LMG)

We would like to draw the attention of Madame High Commissioner for Human Rights to the non-consensual practice, established by her predecessor, of addressing letters to States who undergo their UPR. The letters ask to report on recommendations selected by the OHCHR, who claims that they «require particular attention».

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2018, 21-09, 39th session, RUS (GC)

Establishing of any kind of hierarchy among them undermine the spirit of the UPR as well as the principle of sovereign equality of the States – the cornerstone of the UN system.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2018, 21-09, 39th session, RUS (GC)

We acknowledge, respect and support the mandate and efforts of the Office to provide technical assistance to the countries in implementing recommendations arising from the UPR. However, we would recall, that this must be done only upon the manifest and informed request of the State concerned.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2018, 21-09, 39th session, RUS (GC)

We call upon the High Commissioner to reconsider the practice of sending abovementioned letters to States in order to bring it to conformity with existing modalities and rules of procedure.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2018, 21-09, 39th session, RUS (GC)

The Human Rights Council should play a constructive role in this regard, rather than just exerting pressure.

It is clear that the draft resolution does not respect the views of Myanmar as a concerned country and unilaterally pressurises Myanmar, including through the use of the terms "ethnic cleansing" and "genocide". It contains very controversial elements such as "ethnic cleansing", "genocide",

referral to the International Criminal Court and the establishment of a new investigation mechanism.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2018, 27-09, 39th session, CH (translated)

We call on all parties to seriously consider the right way to promote the resolution of the Rakhine State issue, adhere to dialogue and cooperation, reject confrontation and pressure, provide constructive help to Myanmar and Bangladesh, and play a positive role in the resolution of the Rakhine State issue

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2018, 27-09, 39th session, CH (translated)

We reiterate the need to unconditionally respect the inalienable right of every State to choose its political, economic, social and cultural system, as an essential condition to ensure peaceful coexistence among nations and consolidate peace.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2018, 27-09, 39th session, CUB (GC)

We demand full respect for the sovereignty of Venezuela, in accordance with the universal principles of non-interference in the internal affairs, the right to exercise the constitutional, political, economic and social system that Nations have sovereignly chosen.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2018, 27-09, 39th session, CUB (GC)

We condemn any initiative to disturb the peace and the democratic stability of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and that threatens its sovereignty. The right to determine the future of the country belongs solely to the people of Venezuela acting on the basis of respect for the Constitution and national legislation.

5. We call upon all responsible members of the international community to refrain from any manifestation of interference in the internal affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

6. For the reasons exposed, we do not support the Draft Resolution “Promotion and protection of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela”.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2018, 27-09, 39th session, CUB (GC)

We believe that the mandate of the Council can be better served by providing technical assistance to the States and focusing on the capacity building of relevant institutions

Code: Monitoring > VCM > Prioritise TACB
2018, 27-09, 39th session, PAK (LMG)

By focussing on the technical cooperation and capacity building, we can overcome any diversion towards polarization, confrontation and politicization of the Council.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > Prioritise TACB
2018, 27-09, 39th session, PAK (LMG)

The discourse of naming and shaming needs to be abolished.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2018, 27-09, 39th session, PAK (LMG)

Every State whether developed or developing faces its own peculiar challenges in the realization of basic human rights and therefore, there cannot be a ‘One Size Fits All Policy’.

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2018, 27-09, 39th session, PAK (LMG)

In this regard, the priorities of OHCHR and the Special Procedure Mandate Holders must be streamlined to give equal emphasis to the economic, social and cultural rights including the right to development

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2018, 27-09, 39th session, PAK (LMG)

In line with the principles set forth in the UNGA resolution 60/251 and IB Package, technical cooperation and capacity building must not be viewed as a tool for interference in the internal affairs and must be done in the spirit of strengthening State’s capacity on its request and consent to overcome human rights related challenges

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2018, 27-09, 39th session, PAK (LMG)

We noted a new practice, established by the High Commissioner, of addressing letters to the States who undergo their UPR. The letters ask to report on recommendations arbitrarily selected by the OHCHR, which in its opinion «require the particular attention».

Attaching great importance to the UPR as an important and useful mechanism promoting international dialogue and cooperation for the advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms, we strongly believe that such establishing of a hierarchy among recommendations is unacceptable.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2018, 29-06, 38th session, RUS (GC)

We acknowledge and support the efforts of the Office to provide technical assistance to the countries in implementing recommendations arising from the UPR. However, we would recall, that this should be done only upon the request and with the agreement of the State concerned.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2018, 29-06, 38th session, RUS (GC)

We reaffirm the role of the OHCHR in the UPR process as clearly spelt out in paragraphs 15 to 19 of the HRC resolution 5/1, and no more. We call on the High Commissioner and his Office to strictly observe intergovernmentally agreed rules and regulations.

We remind that the Council with its current structure and rules of procedure was created by all Member States of the United Nations. Any changes in its work, whether they are substantive or procedural, can be made only through established procedures, which do not include the self-will of the Secretariat or its mechanisms.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2018, 29-06, 38th session, RUS (GC)

The promotion and protection of human rights, however, could be best pursued through the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue as recognized by resolution 60/251.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 01-07, 41st session, IN (LMG)

It may be worth noting that VDPA factored in the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds while States pursue promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2019, 01-07, 41st session, IN (LMG)

Taking these factors into account, it is vital to provide geographical, professional, legal and cultural diversity to all the HRC bodies and mechanisms including the OHCHR which is crucial in comprehending diverse countries.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 01-07, 41st session, IN (LMG)

The current geographical composition in all HRC bodies and mechanisms is far from reaching the desirable levels. The imbalance is widely prevalent in the composition of the Special Procedures Mandate Holders, the staff of the OHCHR and members of the committees of various treaty bodies. The report submitted by the OHCHR on the composition of the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in September 2018 showed the stark asymmetric representation.

While acknowledging the commitment of the High Commissioner towards increasing the diversity of the OHCHR staff, renewed effort is encouraged in this regard utilizing the restored authority of the High Commissioner to achieve the broadest possible geographical diversity. This will enrich the expertise of the OHCHR that would in turn be contributive to more cooperation from member states

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 01-07, 41st session, IN (LMG)

China has always advocated that countries deal with differences in the field of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 02-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

Human rights are an important part of the economic and social development of all countries and must and can only be promoted in accordance with their national conditions and the needs of their people.

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2019, 02-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

All parties should uphold and respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria.

The future and destiny of Syria should be decided by the Syrian people themselves.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 02-07, 41st session, CH2 (translated)

The Human Rights Council's discussion on the human rights situation in Syria should respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria.

The Human Rights Council's discussion on the human rights situation in Syria should respect Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and help advance the political settlement process in Syria.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 02-07, 41st session, CH2 (translated)

On the issue of Burundi, China has always supported the Burundian people in their independent choice of development.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 02-07, 41st session, CH3 (translated)

The international community should respect Burundi's national sovereignty and independence,

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2019, 02-07, 41st session, CH3 (translated)

The Human Rights Council should fully respect Burundi's sovereignty when discussing the issue of Burundi, avoid politicizing human rights issues and refrain from doing anything that is detrimental to the resolution of the issue and further complicates the Burundi issue.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 02-07, 41st session, CH3 (translated)

China will continue to support Myanmar in pursuing a development path that is in line with its own national conditions. The international community should respect Myanmar's

The international community should respect Myanmar's sovereignty, take a comprehensive, fair and objective view of Myanmar's human rights progress, and understand the difficulties and challenges faced by Myanmar.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 02-07, 41st session, CH4 (translated)

China believes that the experts of the special mechanism should adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, act in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Mechanisms, conduct dialogue and cooperation with the Governments of Member States, attach importance to the authoritative information provided by the Governments of Member States

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 02-07, 41st session, CH4 (translated)

abandon the practice of open pressure.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 02-07, 41st session, CH4 (translated)

China has always advocated that all countries should, on the basis of equality and mutual respect, engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights.

China has always advocated constructive dialogue and cooperation among countries in the field of human rights on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 03-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

In their statements, some countries ignore the facts and make unfounded accusations against China's human rights situation.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 03-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

They are once again politicising the issue of human rights, exerting open pressure and engaging in confrontation.

China is firmly opposed to this.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 03-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

It is well known that these countries have alarming human rights problems of their own, but it is puzzling that we never hear them reflect on their own human rights problems, nor do we hear them criticize the human rights problems of other Western countries in the Human Rights Council, but we see them frequently exerting high-profile pressure on China and other developing countries on human rights issues, which is a typical manifestation of double standards and politicization of human rights.

China advises these countries to start from themselves, seriously reflect on and correct their own human rights problems

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 03-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

abandon the wrong approach of politicization and confrontation, and truly make the Human Rights Council a platform for dialogue and cooperation among all parties.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 03-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

China believes that the special mechanisms, as experts of the United Nations, should abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, and perform their duties in an objective and impartial manner in accordance with the mandate of the Human Rights Council and the Code of Conduct for Special Mechanisms. The special mechanism should conduct dialogue and cooperation with governments in a constructive manner, respect the opinions of Member States, pay attention to authoritative information provided by Member States, refrain from adopting unverified information, refrain from interfering in the judicial sovereignty and internal affairs of countries

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 03-07, 41st session, CH2 (translated)

abandon the practice of using public statements and other means of exerting pressur

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 03-07, 41st session, CH2 (translated)

The work of the special mechanisms should be more transparent and the serious under-representation of experts from some regions should be changed.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 03-07, 41st session, CH2 (translated)

The Human Rights Council should draw up rules for the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Special Mechanisms to guide the Special Mechanisms to better fulfil their mandates, and the Human Rights Council should hold the Special Mechanisms' experts accountable in case of irregularities.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 03-07, 41st session, CH2 (translated)

The Group of Like-minded countries, expresses its concern over the continuation of the discriminatory practice of selective adoption of country specific resolutions in the Human Rights Council. We believe that such policy breaches the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in addressing human rights issues.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 03-07, 41st session, VEN (LMG)

We express our concern about the proliferation of the practice of naming and shaming some countries, with the aim of intervening in the internal affairs of States, violating the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 03-07, 41st session, VEN (LMG)

We are concerned about the growing politicization in the debates under Item 4 of the Council's Agenda, which is far from addressing human rights situations that require the attention of the Council.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 03-07, 41st session, VEN (LMG)

preventing the occurrence of practices of double standards, selectivity and political manipulation in the works of the Human Rights Council.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 03-07, 41st session, VEN (LMG)

We take note that, since the beginning of the third cycle of the UPR, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has acted beyond its mandate by sending letters in the name of the High Commissioner to the countries under review attempting to intervene in their follow-up actions. These letters, in their annexes, contain unverified information and recommendations chosen in a selective manner, including those that have been rejected by the countries during their review. Serving as the secretariat of the UPR mechanism, the OHCHR has violated the rule of the UPR that all member states implement recommendations on a voluntary basis. We call on the OHCHR to stop the wrongdoing and act in accordance with its mandate in an objective and just manner to uphold the rules of the UPR mechanism.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 05-07, 41st session, CH (LMG)

We call on all parties to carry out genuine dialogue and cooperation during the UPR and raise recommendations applicable to the realities of the countries under review. All member states enjoy the right to accept and implement recommendations on a voluntary basis

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2019, 05-07, 41st session, CH (LMG)

Therefore, upon their prior consent and based on their national priorities, the international community should act in a constructive way to provide technical assistance for the countries concerned

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2019, 05-07, 41st session, CH (LMG)

First, all parties should abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respect the development paths chosen by other countries on their own

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 08-07, 41st session, CH2 (translated)

address differences in the field of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation, and reject politicization and the use of force.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 08-07, 41st session, CH2 (translated)

the primary responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights lies with national governments

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 10-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

To this end, China calls on the Human Rights Council to attach greater importance to technical assistance and capacity-building work and on OHCHR to invest more in technical assistance and capacity-building.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2019, 10-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

China believes that human rights technical assistance should follow the following principles First, it should adhere to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country concerned, and avoid politicizing human rights issues and interfering in the internal affairs of the country concerned in the name of technical assistance and capacity building

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2019, 10-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

China is concerned about the current trend of the Human Rights Council's discussion on technical assistance becoming more and more a discussion on country-specific human rights issues, and that issue 10 of the Human Rights Council must not become another issue

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 10-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

Secondly, China should respect the wishes and needs of the countries concerned, provide constructive assistance and support on the basis of full consultation with the countries concerned

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2019, 10-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

respect the path of development chosen by the people of the countries concerned

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 10-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

Thirdly, we should treat all types of human rights in a balanced manner and attach greater importance to the rights of economic and social affairs and the right to development.

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2019, 10-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

First, uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and work consistently in an impartial, objective, constructive and non-selective manner, and oppose the politicization of human rights agenda and double standards.

Second, promote dialogue and cooperation among various parties and oppose naming and shaming and public exertion of pressure.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 10-09, 42nd session, CH (LMG)

Third, increase investment in economic, social, cultural rights and the right to development, highlight the role of development in promoting and protecting human rights

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR

2019, 10-09, 42nd session, CH (LMG)

Fourth, respect the development path independently chosen by a country

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2019, 10-09, 42nd session, CH (LMG)

China has always advocated addressing differences in the field of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

The international community should respect the sovereignty of Belarus, the path of human rights development and the priorities chosen by the people of Belarus

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

, abandon politicization of human rights issues, open pressure and confrontation, and engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation with Belarus.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

Draft resolution L.12 "Situation of human rights in Belarus" ignored the efforts and achievements of the Government of Belarus in promoting and protecting human rights and pressured the Government of Belarus, which violated the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity and was not conducive to international human rights dialogue and cooperation.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

Given the serious financial difficulties of the United Nations and the insufficient budget to cover the mandate of the Human Rights Council resolution, we do not agree with the establishment of such a special mechanism by the Human Rights Council, which will incur huge expenses without the consent of the country concerned and will only lead to confrontation.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH1 (translated)

China has always advocated that countries address their differences in the field of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH2 (translated)

It is regrettable that some foreign countries have ignored the views of the countries concerned and the region by forcing a country-specific resolution against Eritrea under Issue 2 at the last minute, in an attempt to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur previously established by resolution under Issue 4.

This is a violation of the established rules and regulations of the Human Rights Council. This violates the spirit of the founding resolutions of the Human Rights Council and artificially provokes conflict in the Council

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH2 (translated)

In a context of serious financial difficulties for the United Nations, the Human Rights Council continues to spend considerable resources on special mechanisms that are not recognized by the States concerned.

This is totally unconstructive. This has also fully exposed its politicization of human rights issues and its use of the Human Rights Council as a tool to impose on sovereignty.

It also fully reveals its essence of politicizing human rights issues and using the Human Rights Council as a tool to exert pressure on sovereign countries.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH2 (translated)

China has always advocated that all parties deal with differences in the field of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation, and opposes the politicization of human rights issues and interference in the internal affairs of a country on the grounds of human rights.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH3 (translated)

China has repeatedly stressed that the Human Rights Council's resolution on the situation of human rights in Syria is not a matter for the international community.

China has repeatedly stressed that the discussions on the human rights situation in Syria in the Human Rights Council should respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH3 (translated)

Draft resolution A/HRC/41/L.25, which continues the content of previous Human Rights Council resolutions on Syria, is not conducive to a political solution to the Syrian issue, does not help alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people and does not help promote and protect human rights.

In view of the above, China will vote against draft resolution A/HRC/41/L.25.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH3 (translated)

China has always advocated that all parties address their differences in the field of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation. We believe that open pressure and confrontation will only intensify conflicts and will not help to resolve the issue.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH4 (translated)

National governments have the primary responsibility to promote and protect human rights in their countries.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH4 (translated)

Against this backdrop, the push by the countries concerned for the adoption of a resolution on the Philippines by the Human Rights Council is a politicization of human rights issues, which will not only not help to solve the problems faced by the Philippines, but will also interfere with the good momentum of interaction between the Philippines and various parties, including OHCHR, and undermine the atmosphere of dialogue and cooperation in the Human Rights Council.

In view of this, China will vote against the draft resolution

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH4 (translated)

Development creates the conditions for the realization of all human rights. Only through better development can human rights be better promoted.

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH5 (translated)

China has always advocated constructive dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights, and supports the work of the Human Rights Council in accordance with the principles of objectivity, transparency, non-selectivity, constructiveness, non-confrontation and non-politicization, so as to make a positive contribution to the healthy development of the international human rights cause.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH6 (translated)

We urge some countries to respect the facts, abandon their prejudices, abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and stop politicizing human rights issues and interfering in China's internal affairs through issues related to Xinjiang.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH6 (translated)

China has repeatedly stressed that Xinjiang affairs are purely an internal affair of China and are a matter of Chinese sovereignty, security and territorial integrity. The Chinese Government and the Chinese people have the most right to speak on issues related to Xinjiang.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 11-07, 41st session, CH6 (translated)

The Group of Like-minded countries, expresses its deep concern over the continuation of the discriminatory practice of selective adoption of country specific resolutions in the Human Rights Council. We believe that such policy is a tool that abuse human rights for political purposes and breaches the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in addressing human rights issues.

We express our concern about the proliferation of the practice of naming and shaming some countries, with the aim of intervening in the internal affairs of States, flagrantly violating the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 12-03, 40th session, LMG

preventing the occurrence of practices of double standards, selectivity and political manipulation in the works of the Human Rights Council.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 12-03, 40th session, LMG

China has always maintained that the Human Rights Council should conduct its work according to the principles of objectivity, impartiality, non-selectivity and constructiveness, and opposes double standards and the politicization of human rights issues

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 17-09, 42nd session, CH (translated)

However, despite their own serious human rights problems, individual countries are once again exerting pressure on developing countries, including China, in the Human Rights Council. China firmly opposes this and advises them to reflect on their own problems first.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 17-09, 42nd session, CH (translated)

The human rights problems of the above-mentioned countries are alarming, but we seldom hear them reflect on their own human rights problems or criticise the human rights problems of other Western countries, instead we see them frequently using human rights as a political tool to put pressure on China and other developing countries, which is a typical manifestation of double standards and politicisation of human rights.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 17-09, 42nd session, CH (translated)

The Human Rights Council is a platform for dialogue and cooperation among all parties. We advise these countries to reflect on their own human rights issues and abandon the wrong approach of politicization and confrontation.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 17-09, 42nd session, CH (translated)

The Group of Like-minded countries, expresses its concern over the continuation of the discriminatory practice of selective adoption of country specific resolutions in the Human Rights Council. We believe that such policy breaches the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in addressing human rights issues.

We express our concern about the proliferation of the practice of naming and shaming some countries, with the aim of intervening in the internal affairs of States, violating the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 17-09, 42nd session, VZ (GC)

preventing the occurrence of practices of double standards, selectivity and political manipulation in the works of the Human Rights Council.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 17-09, 42nd session, VZ (GC)

We also share the view that technical assistance should be given to countries, on a strict voluntary basis, without politicization, and taking in account country priorities and specificities.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2019, 20-03, 40th session, CAM (GC)

Unfortunately, we have seen that in some cases, technical assistance is misused and instrumentalized for purposes that have nothing to do with Human Rights, nor even tend to improve them on the ground.

Those cases include, political pressures and interference in internal affairs.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 20-03, 40th session, CAM (GC)

By focussing on the technical cooperation and capacity building, we can overcome any diversion towards polarization, confrontation and politicization of the Council

Code: Monitoring > VCM > Prioritise TACB
2019, 20-03, 40th session, PAK (LMG)

The discourse of naming and shaming needs to be abolished.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 20-03, 40th session, PAK (LMG)

We are witnessing a troubling trend in the Council whereby States are pressurized and coerced by a group of States into accepting support from HRC mechanisms.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 20-03, 40th session, PAK (LMG)

technical cooperation and capacity building must not be viewed as a tool for interference in the internal affairs and must be done in the spirit of strengthening State's capacity on its request and consent to overcome human rights related challenges.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2019, 20-03, 40th session, PAK (LMG)

The States have primary responsibility for the promotion and protection of all human rights

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 20-03, 40th session, PAK (LMG)

Every State whether developed or developing faces its own peculiar and particular challenges in the realization of basic human rights and therefore, there cannot be a ‘One Size Fits All Policy’

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2019, 20-03, 40th session, PAK (LMG)

the priorities of OHCHR and the Special Procedure Mandate Holders must be streamlined to give equal emphasis to the economic, social and cultural rights including the right to development

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2019, 20-03, 40th session, PAK (LMG)

The review mechanism should follow the principles of objectivity, transparency, non-selectivity, constructiveness, non-confrontation and non-politicisation.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 23-09, 42nd session, CH1 (translated)

Since the third cycle of the country review, OHCHR has exceeded its mandate by sending letters to participating countries, using unsubstantiated information and selectively requesting action from the country concerned in relevant areas, including a large number of recommendations that were explicitly rejected by the country concerned when it participated in the country review. This violates the provisions of the country review mechanism on the voluntary implementation of accepted recommendations by countries and runs counter to the spirit of the country review mechanism.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 23-09, 42nd session, CH1 (translated)

China has always believed that countries should engage in sincere dialogue and cooperation in the process of country-specific human rights reviews and make actionable recommendations to other countries that are in line with their national conditions.

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2019, 23-09, 42nd session, CH1 (translated)

the international community should provide constructive assistance to them on the basis of the consent of the countries concerned.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2019, 23-09, 42nd session, CH1 (translated)

First, all parties should follow the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respect the development paths chosen by other countries on their own

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 23-09, 42nd session, CH3 (translated)

address differences in the field of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation, without politicization or double standards.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 23-09, 42nd session, CH3 (translated)

Secondly, all parties should, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, attach equal importance to all categories of human rights

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2019, 23-09, 42nd session, CH3 (translated)

The politicization of human rights agenda and double standards should be avoided.

Second, engage in dialogue and cooperation with Member States, oppose naming and shaming and public exertion of pressure, and ensure adherence to the rules of UN human rights mechanisms including the UPR.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 25-06, 41st session, CH (LMG)

increase investment in economic, social, cultural rights and the right to development, highlight the role of development in promoting and protecting human right

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2019, 25-06, 41st session, CH (LMG)

enhance transparency of internal management and decision-making, respect the views of Member States, and take immediate action to address the imbalance in the geographic representation of the staff in the OHCHR.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2019, 25-06, 41st session, CH (LMG)

Fifth, respect the development path independently chosen by a country, recognize the progress and efforts of states in the field of human rights.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 25-06, 41st session, CH (LMG)

respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2019, 25-06, 41st session, CH (translated)

engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation with governments

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2019, 25-06, 41st session, CH (translated)

further increase its investment in ESC rights and the right to development

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2019, 25-06, 41st session, CH (translated)

respect the development paths independently chosen by countries.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 25-06, 41st session, CH (translated)

We encourage and support OHCHR to, within its mandate, increase its input on cutting-edge issues such as development for human rights and science and technology for human rights,

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2019, 25-06, 41st session, CH (translated)

The affairs of Hong Kong are purely an internal affair of China, and no country, organization or individual has the right to interfere in them.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 25-06, 41st session, CH (translated)

Issues relating to Xinjiang are a matter of Chinese sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 25-06, 41st session, CH (translated)

Diversity of States and the right of States to exercise their sovereignty in pursuit of their people's welfare are recognized principles, including in the UN.

Every State thus has the inalienable sovereign right to choose its legal and criminal justice systems, without interference by other States.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 26-02, 40th session, SING (GC)

The decision whether to retain the death penalty, impose a moratorium or to abolish it, as well as the types of crimes for which the death penalty is applied to, is therefore the sovereign prerogative of every State, taking into account its own circumstances and international obligations. And this should be respected.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 26-02, 40th session, SING (GC)

The primary responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights lies with national governments.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2019, 26-09, 42nd session, CH

The Human Rights Council should make this one of its priorities, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should also invest more in human rights technical assistance and capacity building.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2019, 26-09, 42nd session, CH

First, it should adhere to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country concerned, and avoid interfering in the internal affairs of the country concerned in the name of technical assistance and capacity building. We are concerned about the trend of introducing discussions on country-specific human rights issues under Issue 10.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2019, 26-09, 42nd session, CH

Secondly, we respect the wishes and needs of the countries concerned, provide constructive assistance and support on the basis of full consultation with the countries concerned, respect the path of development chosen by the people of the countries concerned,

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2019, 26-09, 42nd session, CH

Thirdly, we should treat all types of human rights in a balanced manner, give sufficient attention to the rights of ESC and the right to development

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2019, 26-09, 42nd session, CH

the worrisome tendency of polarization, confrontation and politicization at the Council.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2019, 26-09, 42nd session, PAK (LMG)

Human rights related challenges are diverse in nature and beset us all in different forms and manifestations. Thus, the Council's response should be diverse as well and should not be inspired by a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2019, 26-09, 42nd session, PAK (LMG)

Regrettably, we are witnessing a troubling trend, whereby countries are coerced by a group of States in the name of technical cooperation. In line with the principles set forth in the UNGA resolution 60/251 and IB Package, technical cooperation and capacity building must neither be used as a tool for advancing political agenda nor a pretext for interference in domestic affairs.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2019, 26-09, 42nd session, PAK (LMG)

Instead, technical assistance must strengthen State's capacity on its request and with its consent. States have the primary responsibility for promotion and protection of all human rights

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2019, 26-09, 42nd session, PAK (LMG)

The reason was simple and clear that the Council's objectives can be best achieved through building consensus through genuine dialogue on all outstanding issues. Politicization of the Council would lead to erosion of trusts between all relevant stakeholders and this in turn, has proved counter productive to the overall promotion of human rights

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2020, 05-03, 43rd session, IND (LMG)

the functions of the Council including its contribution towards the prevention of human rights violations, should not lead to undermining the UN Charter Principles such as acknowledging the primacy of States in promotion and protection of human rights, respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, non-selective and transparent approach.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2020, 05-03, 43rd session, IND (LMG)

we call on the Human Rights Council to reassess the human rights situation in Yemen in a comprehensive and objective way by supporting national mechanisms, namely: the Ministry of Human Rights and the National Commission of Inquiry in Yemen as mechanisms that operate on the ground and are aware of the complexities of the political, social and regional aspects of the conflict, and their ability to collect evidence, monitor and analyze violations in a realistic and professional manner.

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2020, 05-10, 45th session, BAHRAIN (GC)

El Grupo de Países de Ideas Afines, expresa su profunda preocupación por la continua práctica discriminatoria de adopción selectiva de resoluciones específicas de países en el Consejo de Derechos Humanos. Creemos que dicha política viola los principios de universalidad, objetividad y no selectividad al abordar las cuestiones de derechos humanos.

Expresamos nuestra preocupación por la proliferación de la práctica de “señalar y avergonzar” a algunos países, con el objetivo de intervenir en los asuntos internos de los Estados, violando flagrantemente los principios establecidos en la Carta de las Naciones Unidas.

Nos preocupa la creciente politización en los debates del Tema 4 de la Agenda del Consejo, que está lejos de abordar situaciones de derechos humanos que requieren la atención del Consejo, y en algunos buscan socavar la soberanía de los Estados.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2020, 25-09, 45th session, VNZ (LMG)

previniendo las prácticas de doble rasero, selectividad y manipulación política en los trabajos del Consejo de Derechos Humanos.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2020, 25-09, 45th session, VNZ (LMG)

This makes it very significant that the mandate holders must carry out their activities in strict adherence to the Code of Conduct and in conformity with their mandates.

3. The Like Minded Group of countries takes note of the press releases and statements by the mandate holders. Adherence to verifiable information as emphasized in Article 6 and 8 of the Code of Conduct and due analysis of comments and responses by all mandate holders would strengthen constructive engagements with States. Imprudent use of mass media by both mandate holders for self-glorification and easy publicity through unfounded and sweeping generalizations should be avoided. All Comments and recommendations by mandate holders should also conform to their respective mandates.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2020, 29-09, 45th session, INDIA (LMG)

Currently, more than half of mandate holders continue to be from one region raising our serious concerns on lack of equitable geographical representation, different legal systems and cultural and professional diversity which is fundamental to understand diverse countries with which the mandate holders engage. We encourage all initiatives to address these concerns.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2020, 29-09, 45th session, INDIA (LMG)

We view that all stakeholders should consciously and collectively work towards promoting the independent, unbiased and impartial nature of the Special Procedures. It is important that mandated activities regarding special procedures are undertaken independently, are of equal importance and are not unduly influenced by the source of funds. We emphasize the need for full transparency in the funding of the special procedures.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2020, 29-09, 45th session, INDIA (LMG)

The Council needs to prevent politicization of all human rights issues and all mandate holders have important responsibility on this.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2020, 29-09, 45th session, INDIA (LMG)

The review must continue to be an intergovernmental process, UN Member-driven and action-oriented

Code: Civil Society > VCCS > Inter-governmentality
2021, 01-10, 48 session, INDIA (GC)

Conducted in an objective, transparent, non-selective, constructive, non-confrontational and non-politicized manner

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 01-10, 48 session, INDIA (GC)

Therefore, renewed emphasis must be placed in the review on enhancement of the State's capacity and of technical assistance

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2021, 01-10, 48 session, INDIA (GC)

in consultation with and with the consent of the concerned State. While considering such capacity-building and technical assistance, of all the recommendations, those that enjoy the support of the concerned State must be focussed upon. This would strengthen the mechanism and lead to the desired impact on the ground

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2021, 01-10, 48 session, INDIA (GC)

We are gravely concerned that some countries fabricate and spread disinformation out of political purposes, and smear others under the pretext of human rights, in an attempt to make excuses for interfering in other countries' internal affairs, imposing unilateral coercive measures and setting up country-specific mechanisms at the Human Rights Council

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 02-07, 47th session, CH (GC)

We are also gravely concerned that a few special procedure mandate holders indiscriminately take unauthenticated information from western media and political groups to make groundless accusations against sovereign States

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 02-07, 47th session, CH (GC)

We urge countries concerned to immediately stop fabricating and spreading disinformation and refrain from using human rights as a political tool. We also hope that relevant special procedure mandate holders will perform their duties in a fair and objective manner, and respect the authoritative information provided by the governments of States so as to avoid being used by those with ulterior motives.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 02-07, 47th session, CH (GC)

China's Constitution and laws guarantee that its citizens enjoy all rights, including freedom of expression, while the right to freedom of expression is not absolute and must be exercised within the framework of the law, without prejudice to the State, society, collective interests and the legitimate rights and interests of other citizens, as clearly stipulated in international human rights conventions.

Code: Universality > VCU > Individual entitlement
2021, 02-07, 47th session, CH1 (translated)

China hopes that the Special Rapporteur will perform his duties in an objective and impartial manner, engage in constructive dialogue with member countries, stop participating in politically motivated side events and avoid becoming a political pawn of certain countries, which will damage the credibility of the special mechanism.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 02-07, 47th session, CH1 (translated)

China notes with regret that the study contains a large amount of content that does not fall within the mandate of the Working Group and that most of the negative information is directed at

developing countries, which once again demonstrates that the current UN human rights mechanism has prominent double standards.

China hopes that the Working Group will work in an objective, impartial and non-selective manner, adhere to the code of conduct for special mechanisms, avoid the use of unverified information and reject the politicization of human rights issues.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 02-07, 47th session, CH2 (translated)

China regrets that the Special Rapporteur has repeatedly failed to submit country visit reports. We hope that the Special Rapporteur will adhere to the code of conduct for special mechanisms, engage in constructive dialogue with Member States and work within the mandate of the Human Rights Council.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 02-07, 47th session, CH3 (translated)

In order to achieve lasting peace and promote and protect human rights, all countries should abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, adhere to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, and refrain from imposing their will and models on others.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2021, 04-10, 48 session, CH1 (translated)

We call on all countries to adhere to the priority of development

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important
2021, 04-10, 48 session, CH1 (translated)

There is no set model of democracy. What is true democracy should not be defined by a handful of countries. The key is whether it fits the particular situation in a country, whether it represents the will of the people, safeguards people's interests and enjoys their support, and whether it brings about political stability, social progress and well-being for the people.

We are concerned about double or even multiple standards that are applied on democracy, by which democracy is used as a tool to impose one's values and political model on others. To contain others and interfere in their internal affairs under the pretext of democracy is the very opposite of democracy and will only bring chaos and turmoil, and undermine the fundamental interests of people concerned around the world.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2021, 04-10, 48session, CH1 (GC)

China has always advocated constructive dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights, and opposes the use of human rights issues to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, engage in political confrontation and exert open pressure.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 05-07, 47th session, CH1 (translated)

The United States, Britain and others have their own poor human rights record and are deeply rooted in systematic racial discrimination and xenophobia, and they are not genuinely concerned

about human rights issues, but rather use them as a pretext and tool for aggression, interference, bullying and smearing other countries.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 06-07, 47th session, CH2 (translated)

1. It is imperative that the OHCHR deliver its mandate in conformity with its founding Resolution (A/RES/48/141), placing the OHCHR to function within the UN Charter and under the obligation to respect the sovereignty and domestic jurisdiction of the state.

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (GC)

1. it has to be guided by the recognition that all human rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social – including the right to development, must be treated in a fair and equal manner on the same footing, with the same emphasis

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (GC)

1. In exercising its mandate, the OHCHR should rely solely on objective and dependable facts, while giving the state concerned an opportunity to comment on them.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (GC)

1. The OHCHR should make sure that the relevant non-governmental organizations are acting in good faith and free from politically motivated stands or contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations

Code: Civil Society > ACCS > Misconduct
2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (GC)

1. stress that the exercise of the freedoms carries with it special duties, responsibilities and limitations

Code: Universality > VCU > Individual entitlement
2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (GC)

1. An affiliation with a political party and civil society organization, including with a banner of the human rights defenders, has never been a license to break the law with impunity.

Code: Civil Society > ACCS > Misconduct
2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (GC)

1. To construe law enforcement as suppression of freedoms is to denigrate the rule of law and equal application to all citizens as warranted by the Constitution. It is the duty of everyone, including the purported human rights defenders, to exercise their rights responsibly within the boundary of the law.

Code: Civil Society > VCCS > Inter-governmentality

2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (GC)

1. States have the primary responsibility for the promotion and protection of all human rights. Therefore, national ownership will reap maximum and sustainable benefits in the long run

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (GC)

1. Technical cooperation must always be demand-driven with the full consent of the state concerned and be aligned with the national priorities and efforts to implement the accepted UPR recommendations. It must neither be used as a tool for advancing political agenda nor a pretext for interference in domestic affairs.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (GC)

Human rights technical assistance and capacity building is an important mandate of the Human Rights Council. The Human Rights Council should give high priority to this, and, on the basis of the consent of the State concerned, should continue to increase its input and take practical action to overcome the challenges posed by epidemics, etc., so as to play a constructive role in the development of human rights in the country concerned. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should also increase its input in this regard.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB

2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (translated)

China believes that technical assistance for human rights should follow the following principles: First, it should abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned, and avoid using technical assistance for human rights as a tool to serve political purposes. Secondly, we should adhere to win-win cooperation, respect the will and leadership of the country concerned, and provide constructive assistance and support on the basis of full consultation with the country concerned.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (translated)

Thirdly, we should treat all kinds of human rights in a balanced manner, and pay special attention to economic and social rights and the right to development

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important

2021, 07-10, 48session, CH (translated)

In order to reap its dividends, technical assistance should remain a State and demand-driven process, as enshrined in the UNGA resolution 60/251. In this regard, supporting States in implementing the recommendations agreed by them during the UPR process provides an important avenue.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2021, 07-10, 48session, PAK (GC)

Unfortunately, these well-established and agreed principles, governing the design and delivery of HRC-led technical assistance, are being sidestepped.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2021, 07-10, 48session, PAK (GC)

In many cases, technical assistance has been packaged in such a way that it creates hierarchy among human rights

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2021, 07-10, 48session, PAK (GC)

serves as a pretext for interference into domestic affairs of sovereign States

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2021, 07-10, 48session, PAK (GC)

In other cases, countries have been coerced to accept technical assistance, without taking into due consideration the local context, challenges and perspective.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2021, 07-10, 48session, PAK (GC)

Australia frequently disseminates false information for political purposes and interferes in the internal affairs of other countries on the pretext of human rights.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 08-07, 47th session, CH1 (translated)

The Like-Minded Group opposes and rejects politically motivated country-specific resolutions and expresses its concern over this continued selective and discriminatory practice.

We believe that this practice violates the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, non-politicization, and double standards in addressing human rights issues.

We also express our concern over the proliferation of “naming and shaming”, which aims to interfere in States’ internal affairs, violating the universal principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 12-03, 46th session, VNZ (LMG)

avoiding the practice of politicization, selectivity, and double standards in the work of the Human Rights Council.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 12-03, 46th session, VNZ (LMG)

China will continue to support the people of Ethiopia to achieve peace and stability, development and prosperity, and believes that the Government of Ethiopia has the ability and wisdom to overcome difficulties, deal with internal affairs and properly address the current challenges

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2021, 13-09, 48session, CH (translated)

Under the current situation, we hope that the OHCHR will increase its investment in ESC rights and the right to development

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2021, 14-09, 48session, CH (translated)

At the same time, we firmly oppose any attempts to politicise the visit, to take the opportunity to interfere in China's internal affairs and to exert pressure on China.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 14-09, 48session, CH (translated)

China is deeply concerned about human rights issues in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and other countries. Under the banner of human rights, these countries interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, impose unilateral coercive measures and military interference on sovereign countries, and seriously violate the human rights of the people of other countries. The Office of the High Commissioner should pay due attention and concern to the above-mentioned issues.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 14-09, 48session, CH (translated)

we oppose the interference in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka by the countries concerned on the pretext of human rights

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 14-09, 48session, CH (translated)

China calls on all countries to respect the development path independently chosen by the Venezuelan people

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2021, 14-09, 48session, CH (translated)

Under the pretext of so-called democracy and human rights, the U.S. has spread lies and disinformation, pursued power politics, interfered in other countries' internal affairs, and tried to impose its own values on others

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 14-09, 48session, CHI (GC)

We urge the U.S. to reflect seriously and correct its mistakes, take concrete actions to address its serious human rights problems, stop imposing its own ideology and values, end using human rights as pretexts to coerce and suppress others, and halt military intervention in other countries.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 14-09, 48session, CH1 (GC)

We should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, refrain from imposing one's will on others

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2021, 14-09, 48session, CH3 (GC)

Second, differences should be bridged through dialogue and consultations, and conflicts should be resolved through political negotiations.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2021, 14-09, 48session, CH3 (GC)

We encourage the Office of the High Commissioner to carry out its duties within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other international instruments of human rights and international law, while respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and domestic jurisdiction of States

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2021, 14-09, 48session, EGY (GC)

Moreover, the Office of the High Commissioner in exercising its mandate should rely solely on objective facts, while giving the concerned state the opportunity of commenting on them

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 14-09, 48session, EGY (GC)

The Office should make sure that the relevant non-governmental organizations are acting in good faith and free from politically motivated stands or contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Code: Civil Society > ACCS > Misconduct

2021, 14-09, 48session, EGY (GC)

China has always respected the development path independently chosen by the Belarusian people in accordance with their national conditions, and opposes interference in the internal affairs of Belarus by external forces on the pretext of human rights. China believes that the people of Belarus can maintain political stability and social tranquillity through their own efforts.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2021, 15-02, 46th session, CH (translated)

We should give priority to development

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important

2021, 16-09, 48session, CH (GC)

We should respect the development path independently chosen by each country

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2021, 16-09, 48session, CH (GC)

We call upon the UN human rights bodies, including the Human Rights Council and the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, to prioritize the right to development and mainstream it in the UN system.

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important

2021, 16-09, 48session, CH (GC)

Development is the key to solving all problems. Only through better development can human rights be better promoted and protected.

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important

2021, 16-09, 48session, CH2 (translated)

The United States and others have fabricated a lot of lies to smear China's image, destabilize Xinjiang and curb its development, slandering and attacking China on issues related to Xinjiang and taking the opportunity to impose unilateral coercive measures on relevant entities and individuals in Xinjiang, seriously undermining the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises in Xinjiang and the basic human rights of Xinjiang people, such as the right to development and the right to work. China expresses its serious concern and resolute opposition to this.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 16-09, 48session, CH3 (translated)

China has always stood for respecting the right of countries to choose their own social systems and development paths,

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2021, 16-09, 48session, CH3 (translated)

China urges the Working Group to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, perform its duties impartially and objectively in accordance with the mandate of the Human Rights Council and the Code of Conduct for Special Mechanisms, stop using unsubstantiated and false information, and stop interfering in the internal affairs and judicial sovereignty of other countries.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 20-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

Under the banner of "democracy" and "human rights", the United States and other Western countries have relied on lies and false information to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and impose unilateral coercive measures indiscriminately.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 20-09, 48session, CH3 (translated)

Respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states and non-interference in internal affairs of sovereign states represent basic norms governing international relations. Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet related issues are China's internal affairs that brook no interference by any external forces

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2021, 21-06, 47th session, BLR (GC)

respect the right of the people of each state to choose independently the path for human rights development in accordance with their national conditions

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2021, 21-06, 47th session, BLR (GC)

treat all human rights with the same emphasis.

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2021, 21-06, 47th session, BLR (GC)

We call upon all states to uphold multilateralism, solidarity and collaboration, and to promote and protect human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation. We oppose politicization of human rights and double standards.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 21-06, 47th session, BLR (GC)

We also oppose unfounded allegations against China out of political motivation and based on disinformation

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 21-06, 47th session, BLR (GC)

interference in China's internal affairs under the pretext of human rights.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 21-06, 47th session, BLR (GC)

The Newcastle pneumonia epidemic has further exposed the serious lack of investment in ESC rights and the right to development by multilateral human rights mechanisms. In order to achieve a better recovery from the epidemic, all parties should pay more attention to and invest in ESC rights

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2021, 21-06, 47th session, CHI (translated)

Diversity is what defines our world and diversified forms of democracy are practiced in various countries. The key judgment is whether it fits the particular situation in a country, whether it

represents the will of its people, and whether it safeguards people's interests and enjoys their support, as true democracy brings about political stability, social progress and well-being for the people, and contributes to the promotion and protection of human rights.

To impose, under the pretext of democracy, one's own social system and model of democracy on others, interfere in other countries' internal affairs and impose unilateral coercive measures are the very opposite of democracy

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2021, 21-06, 47th session, CH2 (GC)

We are deeply concerned that the report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea uses unsubstantiated information and repeats the accusations made against Eritrea in the past, and does not reflect the true situation in Eritrea in a comprehensive and objective manner.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 21-06, 47th session, CH2 (translated)

China has always advocated constructive dialogue and cooperation among countries in the field of human rights, and opposes the politicization of human rights issues and interference in internal affairs.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2021, 21-06, 47th session, CH2 (translated)

Canada has also repeatedly used human rights as an instrument to promote its political agenda.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 21-06, 47th session, CH3 (GC)

We regret to note recently increased practices by the OHCHR and HRC Special Mandate Holders to interpret themselves the provisions of the intergovernmental decisions and to use the abusive and disrespectful language in its public statements and news releases. Such tendencies are extremely worrying

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 21-06, 47th session, RU (GC)

We would also like to request the HC and OHCHR which act as the UN Secretariat servicing the HRC and its subsidiary bodies, to provide the HRC Special Mandate Holders with additional advanced courses and training on the UN Staff Rules and Regulations and the IB package, in particular the Code of Conduct of Mandate Holders in order to instil them a proper knowledge of the existing rules and behaviour, including in the field of language norms accepted in the UN.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 21-06, 47th session, RU (GC)

The Council's technical assistance mandate should complement States' domestic human rights efforts. The central principle of securing consent of and consulting with concerned States is enshrined in UNGA resolution 60/251.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2021, 22-03, 46th session, PAK (LMG)

Technical assistance is packaged in such a way that it creates hierarchy among human rights

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2021, 22-03, 46th session, PAK (LMG)

often serves as a pretext for interference into domestic affairs of sovereign States. In certain cases, countries have been pushed to accept technical assistance.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2021, 22-03, 46th session, PAK (LMG)

multilateral human rights institutions have long under-invested in ESC rights and the right to development, a situation that urgently needs to be changed. We call on this Council to attach equal importance to all categories of human rights

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2021, 22-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

combining the universal principles of human rights with China's reality

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2021, 22-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

people's well-being being the greatest human right

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important
2021, 22-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

China has always advocated constructive dialogue and cooperation among all parties on human rights issues and opposes the politicization of human rights issues and overt pressure.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 23-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

The Human Rights Council should terminate the mandate of the South Sudan Human Rights Commission, which has not been agreed to by the States concerned

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 23-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

and whose biased work has added complications to the political transition process in South Sudan.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 23-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

The reality has proved that external intervention, provocation and confrontation, and pressure and sanctions cannot solve the problem and will only bring the Syrian people great suffering.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 23-09, 48session, CH2 (translated)

calls on the international community to fully respect Burundi's sovereignty and independence and support it in resolving domestic issues on its own.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2021, 23-09, 48session, CH3 (translated)

China has always been in favour of addressing differences in the field of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation, and opposes the politicisation of human rights issues.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 23-09, 48session, CH3 (translated)

China is deeply concerned about the manipulation of international public opinion by some forces under the banner of human rights, the dissemination of false information and the smearing and slandering of Bu.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 23-09, 48session, CH3 (translated)

China has noted that the government of Burundi has repeatedly and explicitly requested the Human Rights Council to abolish the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi and not to set up any more human rights mechanisms against Burundi. The Human Rights Council should act accordingly.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 23-09, 48session, CH3 (translated)

China has always advocated dealing with differences in the field of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation, and opposes the use of human rights as a political tool and the establishment of country-specific mechanisms without the consent of the countries concerned. We note that both Eritrea and regional countries oppose the continued establishment of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea by the Human Rights Council, and we call on the Human Rights Council to terminate this country-specific mechanism.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 24-02, 46th session, CH2 (translated)

I hope that the Special Rapporteur will use correct information and stop the practice of "labelling" Member States on the basis of unsubstantiated information.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 24-06, 47th session, CH1 (translated)

Today, a few countries are once again spreading false information and making unfounded accusations against China for political purposes, which China firmly opposes and totally rejects.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 24-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

These countries are not genuinely concerned about human rights issues, and their aim is to use human rights as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, undermine their

stability and curb their development, which in the final analysis is unilateralism and power politics at work.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 24-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

If these countries really care about human rights, they should seriously address their own serious human rights problems, such as racial discrimination, human trafficking, forced labour, and violations of the rights of migrants and indigenous people; they should stop illegal military intervention and occupation, immediately abolish illegal unilateral coercive measures, stop creating disasters for the people of other countries, and stop hindering the development of other countries.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 24-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

We advise these countries to change their exclusive mentality and bullying behaviour, respect the path of development independently chosen by the people of other countries, respect the history, culture and political systems of other countries

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2021, 24-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

engage in dialogue with other countries on the basis of equality and mutual respect

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2021, 24-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

continue to be obsessed with imposing their own values and institutional models on others, interfere in the internal affairs of other countries,

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2021, 24-09, 48session, CH1 (translated)

China has always respected the development path independently chosen by the Belarusian people in accordance with their national conditions, as well as the national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Belarus.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2021, 24-09, 48session, CH2 (translated)

The work of the Human Rights Council should be guided by the principles of impartiality, objectivity, non-politicization and non-selectivity. Human rights should not be used for political purposes

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2021, 24-09, 48session, CH2 (translated)

The international community should jointly oppose the politicisation of human rights issues and interference in the internal affairs of other countries on the pretext of human rights.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2021, 24-09, 48session, CH2 (translated)

China insists on upholding the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms of international relations, respects the path of development decided by the Venezuelan people on their own, supports the search for a political solution within the constitutional framework, and resolutely opposes interference in the internal affairs of Venezuela by external forces.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2021, 24-09, 48session, CH3 (translated)

The Like-Minded Group opposes and rejects politically motivated country-specific resolutions and expresses its concern over this continued selective and discriminatory practice.

We believe that this practice violates the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, non-politicization, and constitutes double standards in addressing human rights issues.

We also express our concern over the proliferation of “naming and shaming”, which aims to interfere in States’ internal affairs, violating the universal principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2021, 24-09, 48session, VNZ (LMG)

avoiding the practice of politicization, selectivity, and double standards in the work of the Human Rights Council as well as of the Office.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2021, 24-09, 48session, VNZ (LMG)

This crisis has exposed the persistent and severe inadequacy of inputs in economic, social and cultural rights and right to development by multilateral human rights bodies as well as the issue of inequality within and among States. We call on the international community to attach importance to addressing inequality, in and between states, and increase inputs in areas such as economic, social and cultural rights and right to development, protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, fight against racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR

2021, 25-02, 46th session, CH (LMG)

We urge the OHCHR to enhance its constructive dialogue and engagement; redouble its efforts to gain trust and cooperation from States; conduct its work in a fair and objective manner and in line with its mandate; duly reflect the information provided by States in the preparation of its reports and give equal visibility to State comments on OHCHR Reports.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2021, 25-02, 46th session, CH (LMG)

The situation in Belarus is an internal affair of the country, and the affairs of Belarus must and can only be decided by the Belarusian people on their own. China has always respected the path of development independently chosen by the Belarusian people in accordance with their national conditions, as well as the national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Belarus.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2021, 25-02, 46th session, CH1 (translated)

China has always advocated constructive dialogue and cooperation among all parties in the field of human rights, and opposes the politicization of human rights issues and interference in the internal affairs of other countries by any country under the pretext of protecting human rights.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 25-02, 46th session, CH1 (translated)

China notes with regret that the OHCHR report on Belarus uses a lot of unsubstantiated information, makes unfounded accusations against Belarus and makes recommendations that interfere in the internal affairs of Belarus, which is not conducive to political stability and social tranquillity in Belarus.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 25-02, 46th session, CH1 (translated)

We call on this Council and the OHCHR to adhere to the principles of impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity and non-politicization, respect the sovereignty and political independence of Belarus, and reject interference in the internal affairs of Belarus and the practice of political pressure.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 25-02, 46th session, CH1 (translated)

China has always advocated addressing differences in the field of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation, and opposes the use of human rights issues to exert pressure on other countries and the forced establishment of country-specific human rights mechanisms when the countries concerned explicitly oppose them.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 25-02, 46th session, CH2 (translated)

China is concerned about the use of unconfirmed information in the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on Yemen and the conclusions made on this basis

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 25-02, 46th session, CH2 (translated)

China hopes that the Working Group will adhere to the code of conduct of the special mechanism, engage in constructive dialogue with Member States and refrain from engaging in activities that target sovereign countries based on false information.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 25-06, 47th session, CH2 (translated)

China is firmly opposed to the United States and others using human rights as a pretext to arbitrarily smear Chinese enterprises and use any means to sanction and suppress them in an attempt to suppress the development of Chinese enterprises and to safeguard the United States' monopoly position in science and technology and its unjustified business interests

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 28-06, 47th session, CH4 (translated)

China is firmly opposed to the Working Group exerting pressure on China based on false information

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 28-06, 47th session, CH4 (translated)

urges the Working Group to uphold the principles of objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity in its work, to stop politicizing human rights issues and to stop using false information.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 28-06, 47th session, CH4 (translated)

The international community should step up cooperation on poverty eradication, in particular provide assistance to developing countries. We call on international human rights bodies, including the special rapporteur, to play a more active role in advancing international efforts on poverty alleviation.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2021, 29-06, 47th session, CH (GC)

China is firmly opposed to the Special Rapporteur's unfounded accusations against China based on false information and poor lies. We hope that the Special Rapporteur will abandon his prejudice against China and carry out his duties in a responsible, impartial and objective manner.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 29-06, 47th session, CH1 (translated)

China's Constitution and laws guarantee citizens' right to freedom of assembly, while citizens should abide by the provisions of the law in exercising the above-mentioned rights and should not harm the interests of the State, society, the collective and the legitimate freedoms and rights of other citizens

Code: Universality > VCU > Individual entitlement
2021, 29-09, 48 session, CH1 (translated)

China is seriously concerned about the "double standards" applied by the United States and other Western countries on the issue of peaceful protests. The demonstrators were glorified as "heroes of democracy". A similar scene at the US Congress in January this year was unanimously condemned by US politicians as a "violent incident" and these people were "thugs" and "extremists". Such "double standards" fully demonstrate that the United States does not really

care about human rights, but uses them as a tool to attack and accuse other countries and interfere in their internal affairs.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 29-09, 48 session, CH1 (translated)

China urges the countries concerned to immediately stop interfering in the internal affairs of other countries on the pretext of human rights issues, to stop double standards

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2021, 29-09, 48 session, CH1 (translated)

Karama had exceeded his mandate and politicized human rights issues, which was a serious violation of the code of conduct for special mechanisms. We hope that Mr. Special Rapporteur will uphold the principles of objectivity and impartiality, engage in constructive dialogue with Member States and work within the mandate of the Human Rights Council.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2021, 30-06, 47th session, CH1 (translated)

China appreciates Eritrea's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and supports Eritrea in exploring a development path that is in line with its own national conditions

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 04-03, 49session, CH2 (translated)

China has always advocated dealing with differences in the field of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation, opposing the use of human rights as a political tool to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and the establishment of country-specific mechanisms without the consent of the countries concerned. We note that both Eritrea and regional countries oppose the continued establishment of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea by the Human Rights Council, and we call on the Human Rights Council to end this country-specific mechanism.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 04-03, 49session, CH2 (translated)

China has always opposed the politicization of human rights issues and interference in the internal affairs of other countries on the pretext of human rights issues.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 04-03, 49session, CH3 (translated)

We call on all parties to respect the sovereignty and political independence of other countries, to respect the path of human rights development chosen by each country according to its own circumstances

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 04-03, 49session, CH3 (translated)

to engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation, and to reject the practice of exerting pressure on other countries under the pretext of interference to serve their own political purposes.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 04-03, 49session, CH3 (translated)

China is firmly opposed to the practice of the countries concerned of interfering in the internal affairs of Cambodia and infringing on the legitimate rights and interests of the Cambodian people on the pretext of human rights.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 05-10, 51session, CH1 (translated)

We hope that all parties will adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Cambodia, respect the development path chosen by the Cambodian people on their own,

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 05-10, 51session, CH1 (translated)

Pay equal attention to and guarantee all basic human rights for all,

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2022, 07-03, 49 session, CH (gov, translated)

effectively raise the level of protection of the right to development and ESC rights of vulnerable groups

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2022, 07-03, 49 session, CH (gov, translated)

strengthen technical assistance and capacity building

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2022, 07-03, 49 session, CH (gov, translated)

China respects the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Nicaragua and the right of the Nicaraguan people to decide their own future and destiny on their own, appreciates the efforts made by the Government of Nicaragua to promote and protect human rights, and firmly opposes interference by external forces in the internal affairs of Nicaragua.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 07-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

China firmly supports Nicaragua's efforts to safeguard national sovereignty and defend its legitimate rights and interests, and supports the international community in providing constructive support to the Nigerian side on the basis of respect for the will of the Nigerian Government and people.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2022, 07-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

We believe that the Sudan has the wisdom and ability to handle its internal affairs properly. China is opposed to any interference in the internal affairs of the Sudan by external forces.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 07-03, 49 session, CH2 (translated)

China opposes open pressure. The international community should create a favourable external environment for the Sudanese parties concerned to resolve their problems through dialogue.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 07-03, 49 session, CH2 (translated)

China opposes the attempt by the countries concerned to interfere in the internal affairs of Ethiopia by forcibly promoting the establishment of a country-specific mechanism against Ethiopia despite the opposition of Ethiopia and without respecting the good offices efforts of African countries

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 07-03, 49 session, CH4 (translated)

The pandemic has exposed the prolonged underinvestment in economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development by multilateral human rights mechanisms. We call on the OHCHR to take concrete measures to increase its input in this respect

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2022, 08-03, 49 session, CH (GC)

The OHCHR needs to actively provide human rights technical assistance

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2022, 08-03, 49 session, CH (GC)

respect the human rights and development path independently chosen by countries in light of their national conditions

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 08-03, 49 session, CH (GC)

oppose the practice of using human rights as a political tool. We believe that mutual trust and respect between the OHCHR and States, especially respect to the authentic information provided by governments, are of vital importance

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 08-03, 49 session, CH (GC)

China firmly opposes the Special Rapporteur's unwarranted attacks and slander against China in his report, based on lies fabricated by Western media and anti-China forces.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 10-03, 49 session, CH3 (translated)

The Special Rapporteur has not mentioned a single word about China's efforts and achievements in safeguarding freedom of religion and belief, but is willing to serve as a political tool of the West and anti-China forces to make groundless accusations against China, which fully reveals the extreme prejudice and ignorance of the Special Rapporteur and seriously damages the credibility of the special mechanisms. The work of the Human Rights Council and the special mechanisms should not be based on lies and false information, otherwise they will only lead human rights work astray.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 10-03, 49 session, CH3 (translated)

There is no clear and unified definition of "human rights defenders" at the international level, and "human rights defenders" have no special rights or special legal status.

Code: Civil Society > VCCS > Inter-governmentality

2022, 11-03, 49 session, CH3 (translated)

Those who, under the guise of "human rights defenders", engage in activities such as inciting subversion of state power, splitting the country, undermining social stability and order, and compromising the rights and freedoms of others should be punished in accordance with the law

Code: Civil Society > VCCS > Inter-governmentality

2022, 11-03, 49 session, CH3 (translated)

he persons involved in the case are criminals who have committed serious offences such as subversion of state power, and are not "human rights defenders" in any way, and the case has nothing to do with the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.

Code: Civil Society > ACCS > Misconduct

2022, 11-03, 49 session, CH3 (translated)

China urges the Special Rapporteur to perform his duties objectively and impartially and to stop interfering in China's judicial sovereignty.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 11-03, 49 session, CH3 (translated)

In recent years, politicization and confrontation at the Human Rights Council has been on the rise, so has "double standards" and selectivity.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 12-05, 50 session, CH

While the HRC frequently holds Special Sessions regarding certain countries, it fails to take effective actions regarding those countries that have long been slandering and making rumors about the human rights situations in others, that willfully waged wars of aggression on others, killing civilians in overseas military operations, that abused unilateral coercive measures, and those where racism is rampant, gun violence goes incessant and where refugees and migrants are subject to abuse. This has severely undermined confidence in the objectivity and impartiality of the HRC, tarnished the HRC's credibility, and entailed division within the HRC.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 12-05, 50 session, CH

Human Rights Council resolution 46/1 is a product of politicization, which does not follow the principles of impartiality and objectivity and non-selectivity, has not been accepted by the country concerned and has not played a positive role in the promotion and protection of human rights in Sri Lanka

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 12-09, 51session, CH (translated)

urges the parties concerned to respect the path of human rights development independently chosen by Sri Lanka in accordance with its own national conditions

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2022, 12-09, 51session, CH (translated)

to abandon the practice of using human rights issues to exert political pressure and interfere in Sri Lanka's internal affairs.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 12-09, 51session, CH (translated)

. All countries should strike a balance between all human rights, including ESC rights and the right to development,

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR

2022, 13-06, 50session, CH1 (translated)

China has always advocated the promotion and protection of human rights through dialogue and cooperation, and opposes the politicisation and instrumentalisation of human rights issues and interference in the internal affairs of other countries under the pretext of human rights. Both Eritrea and regional countries oppose the continued establishment of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea by the Human Rights Council, which has exacerbated confrontation in the Human Rights Council and consumed valuable resources of the United Nations

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 13-06, 50session, CH2 (translated)

We are deeply concerned that the OHCHR, without the authorization of the Human Rights Council and the consent of the country concerned, released the so-called “assessment” on Xinjiang

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 13-09, 51session, CH1 (GC)

which is based on disinformation and draws erroneous conclusions.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 13-09, 51session, CH1 (GC)

We are deeply worried that it will undermine dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights, and exaggerate the existing trend of politicization and polarization at the Human Rights Council.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 13-09, 51session, CH1 (GC)

We believe that the OHCHR should abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respect countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2022, 13-09, 51session, CH1 (GC)

respect the authoritative information provided by the government of Member States

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 13-09, 51session, CH1 (GC)

conduct constructive dialogue and cooperation with Member States on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 13-09, 51session, CH1 (GC)

firmly supports the Nicaraguan Government and people in their independent choice of a development path that is in line with their national conditions

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 13-09, 51session, CH1 (translated)

The Human Rights Council should adhere to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, uphold the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, actively engage in constructive dialogue, and not provide a stage for hegemony and confrontational pressure.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 13-09, 51session, CH1 (translated)

The pandemic exposes serious under-investment in economic, social and cultural rights, the right to development, and the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health by multilateral human rights mechanisms. We therefore call on the OHCHR to attach greater importance and channel more resources to these rights

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2022, 13-09, 51session, CH2 (GC)

The HRC should serve as a platform for constructive dialogue and cooperation for all parties. All parties should refrain from politicization and double standards at the Human Rights Council. The OHCHR is expected to adhere to the principles of impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, and non-politicization

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 13-09, 51session, CH2 (GC)

respect the right of each state to choose independently the path for human rights development in accordance with their national conditions.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2022, 13-09, 51session, CH2 (GC)

We are deeply concerned that in recent years, the Human Rights Council has become increasingly politicized and confrontational, and disinformation has become rampant, which seriously runs counter to the original purpose of the Human Rights Council.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 14-06, 50session, CH (GC)

Multilateral human rights mechanisms should serve as a platform for cooperation and dialogue, rather than a venue for division and confrontation.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 14-06, 50session, CH (GC)

and oppose the politicization and instrumentalization of human rights issues, double standards, as well as interference in the internal affairs of Member States under the pretext of human rights.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 14-06, 50session, CH (GC)

while constructive dialogue and cooperation be carried out on the basis of equality and mutual respect

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 14-06, 50session, CH (GC)

Multilateral human rights mechanisms need to work on the basis of authentic and objective information

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 14-06, 50session, CH (GC)

respect the sovereignty of States and the human rights development path chosen by each country in light of its national conditions

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism

2022, 14-06, 50session, CH (GC)

provide technical assistance with the consent of the countries concerned.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2022, 14-06, 50session, CH (GC)

The staff composition of multilateral human rights mechanisms, including the OHCHR and Special Procedures, should reflect the principle of equitable geographical distribution, and absorb more talents from developing countries, so as to make multilateral human rights mechanisms truly representative

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 14-06, 50session, CH (GC)

Just now, the Netherlands, on behalf of a group of countries, once again used lies and rumours to smear and attack China for political purposes, saying something about the High Commissioner's visit to China and speculating on the so-called report on Xinjiang.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 14-06, 50session, CH2 (translated)

These countries ignore the serious human rights problems they have and try to engage in political manipulation under the guise of human rights.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 14-06, 50session, CH2 (translated)

Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Tibet related issues are China's internal affairs.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 14-06, 50session, CUBA (GC)

We oppose politicization of human rights and double standards, or interference in China's internal affairs under the pretext of human rights.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 14-06, 50session, CUBA (GC)

respect the right of the people of each state to choose independently the path for development in accordance with their national conditions.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 14-06, 50session, CUBA (GC)

All human rights should be treated with the same emphasis, with sufficient importance attached to economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development in particular.

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2022, 14-06, 50session, CUBA (GC)

The Special Rapporteur, relying on lies fabricated by anti-China forces and out of obvious political bias, has made unfounded accusations and slanders against China, which China firmly opposes and totally rejects.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 15-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

This only shows that the Special Rapporteur is being selective in fulfilling his mandate and lacks the basic ability to screen out true and false information. The fact that the Special Rapporteur has referred to a common statement against China by a handful of countries as a "resolution" in his report fully demonstrates his lack of the most basic professional knowledge and education.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 15-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

We regret that the Human Rights Council has wasted its resources and time in engaging in dialogue with such a Special Rapporteur. We would like to advise the Special Rapporteur not to be caught up in his arrogance and prejudice

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 15-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

China has always advocated that all parties should promote and protect human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation. China opposes any interference in the internal affairs of Sudan by the countries concerned on the pretext of human rights.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 15-06, 50session, CH1 (translated)

China strongly condemns the Special Rapporteur's biased listening to the lies and false information concerning Xinjiang fabricated by the United States and other Western countries and anti-China forces, maliciously smearing and slandering China in his report, and acting as a political tool of anti-China forces.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 15-09, 51session, CH1 (translated)

The manipulation of Xinjiang-related issues by some forces and the fabrication of false information about so-called "forced labour" are in essence attempts to undermine the prosperity and stability of the Xinjiang region and curb China's development and revitalisation under the guise of human rights

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 15-09, 51session, CH1 (translated)

China urges the Special Rapporteur to respect the basic facts, abide by the mandate of the Human Rights Council and the code of conduct of the special mechanisms, perform his duties impartially and objectively, and stop politicizing and instrumentalizing human rights issues.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 15-09, 51session, CH1 (translated)

- We reiterate the importance of ensuring universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of human rights issues by the Human Rights Council, and the elimination of double standards and politicization, in line with GA resolution 60/251 that established the Council. We urge for renewed emphasis on the work of the Council to be guided by constructive international dialogue and cooperation

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 16-03, 49 session, INDIA (GC)

- enhancing the promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, without distinction of any kind and in a fair and equal manner

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR

2022, 16-03, 49 session, INDIA (GC)

- The Council must place greater emphasis on promoting human rights education and learning as well as providing advisory services, technical assistance and capacity-building

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB

2022, 16-03, 49 session, INDIA (GC)

- The human rights agenda, including the Council's contribution towards prevention of human rights violations, must be pursued in a fair manner with due respect for the principles of UN Charter such as national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs of States

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2022, 16-03, 49 session, INDIA (GC)

- Selective focus of the Council on certain human rights issues and situations runs counterproductive to its mandate of global promotion and protection of all human rights.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 16-03, 49 session, INDIA (GC)

- We are of the view that the proliferation of country-specific initiatives that do not enjoy the support of the concerned countries is not conducive to improving the human rights situation on the ground.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 16-03, 49 session, INDIA (GC)

China respects the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Nicaragua, the right of the Nicaraguan people to decide their own future and destiny on their own

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 16-06, 50session, CH1 (translated)

China has always advocated constructive dialogue among all parties on human rights issues on the basis of equality and mutual respect, and opposes the politicization and instrumentalization of human rights issues and interference in the internal affairs of other countries under the pretext of human rights

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 16-06, 50session, CH1 (translated)

We firmly support Nicaragua's efforts to safeguard national sovereignty and defend its legitimate rights and interests, and urge the countries concerned to immediately stop interfering in Nicaragua's internal affairs on the pretext of democracy and human rights.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 16-06, 50session, CH1 (translated)

China respects the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Belarus and the path of human rights development chosen by the Belarusian people independently in accordance with their national conditions

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 17-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

The work of the Human Rights Council should be guided by the principles of impartiality, objectivity, non-politicization and non-selectivity. China opposes the adoption of Human Rights Council resolution 46/20, which ignores the efforts and achievements of the Government of Belarus in promoting and protecting human rights and interferes in the internal affairs of Belarus on the pretext of human rights issues, thus undermining the credibility of the Human Rights Council.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 17-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

The report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights contains a large number of unsubstantiated allegations.

The OHCHR report contains a lot of unsubstantiated information and fails to reflect the human rights situation in Belarus in a comprehensive and objective manner. China calls on the Office to fully respect the authoritative information provided by the Government of Belarus and to avoid being used by political forces.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 17-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

China has always advocated constructive dialogue and cooperation among countries in the field of human rights, and opposes the politicization of human rights issues and open pressure.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 17-03, 49 session, CH2 (translated)

The enjoyment of human rights cannot be separated from the socio-political conditions and historical and cultural traditions of different countries. China hopes that the international community will take a fair and objective view of the human rights situation in Iran and respect the path of human rights development independently chosen by the Iranian people

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2022, 17-03, 49 session, CH2 (translated)

China opposes the establishment of country-specific mechanisms without the consent of the countries concerned, which will only undermine dialogue and cooperation and lead to confrontation.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 17-03, 49 session, CH2 (translated)

China insists on upholding the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms of international relations, and respects the path of development independently decided by the Venezuelan people. China believes that the Venezuelan Government and people are capable of handling their own internal affairs and firmly opposes interference in Venezuela's internal affairs by external forces.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 17-03, 49 session, CH3 (translated)

The work of the Human Rights Council should be guided by the principles of impartiality, objectivity, non-politicisation and non-selectivity.

It should not become a tool for some countries to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 17-03, 49 session, CH3 (translated)

Peace and development are the basis and guarantee for the enjoyment of human rights.

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important
2022, 18-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

Pressure and confrontation will not help to solve the problems and will only lead the work of the Human Rights Council into a wrong direction. The Human Rights Commission of South Sudan has not obtained the consent of the countries concerned, which has added complications to the political transition process in South Sudan, and the Human Rights Council should terminate its mandate at the request of South Sudan.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 18-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

. China notes with regret that most of the negative information in the report submitted by the Working Group is directed at developing countries, which once again demonstrates the prominent double standards of the current UN human rights mechanism.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 19-09, 51session, CH1 (translated)

China hopes that the Working Group will perform its duties objectively and impartially, adhere to the code of conduct of the special mechanisms, fully respect the information provided by the countries concerned

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 19-09, 51session, CH1 (translated)

respect the judicial sovereignty of each country and abandon the practice of politicizing human rights issues.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 19-09, 51session, CH1 (translated)

People's well-being is the greatest human right.

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important
2022, 20-09, 51session, CH2 (translated)

promote the economic, political, social, cultural and environmental rights of all people in a coordinated manner in accordance with their national conditions and the demands of their people

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2022, 20-09, 51session, CH2 (translated)

Development is the basis for the enjoyment of human rights

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important
2022, 20-09, 51session, CH2 (translated)

Now, more than ever before, there is need for the Council to ensure balance in its work by giving due attention to the effective enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights.

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2022, 20-09, 51session, INDIA (GC)

The Council should further promote human rights education and learning as well as provide greater advisory services, technical assistance and capacity-building

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2022, 20-09, 51session, INDIA (GC)

The human rights agenda, including the Council's contribution towards prevention of human rights violations, must be pursued with due respect for the principles of UN Charter such as national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs of States

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality

2022, 20-09, 51 session, INDIA (GC)

In our view, proliferation of country-specific mandates that do not enjoy the support of the States concerned does not lead to improvement in the human rights situation on the ground.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 20-09, 51 session, INDIA (GC)

The Chinese delegation expresses its regret that Myanmar, as the country concerned, was unable to participate in this dialogue. China is firmly opposed to the Special Rapporteur's publication of the so-called "conference room paper", which exceeds his mandate and makes unjustified accusations against sovereign countries.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 21-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

The Special Rapporteur has abused his status as an expert of the United Nations, frequently exceeded his mandate, distorted facts, confused the public, slandered the normal military trade of sovereign countries for no reason, attempted to interfere with the work of United Nations agencies and served the political agenda of individual countries, seriously violated the Code of Conduct of the Special Mechanism, seriously damaged the credibility of the Special Mechanism and will further complicate the situation in Myanmar.

China urges the Special Rapporteur to carry out his work in strict accordance with his mandate in an objective and impartial manner, to stop the practice of public slander and double standards, to stop serving the political aims of the countries concerned under the banner of the United Nations, and to do more to help stabilize the situation in Myanmar.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed

2022, 21-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

The Like-Minded Group opposes and rejects politically motivated country-specific resolutions and expresses its concern over this continued selective and discriminatory practice.

We believe that this practice violates the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, non-politicization, and constitutes double standards in addressing human rights issues.

We also express our concern over the proliferation of "naming and shaming", which aims to interfere in States' internal affairs, violating the universal principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

In this context, we are concerned about the increasing politicization in the debates taking place under Item 4 of the Council's Agenda, which are far from addressing human rights situations that require its attention, for which it was conceived.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate

2022, 21-03, 49 session, VNZ (LMG)

avoiding the practice of politicization, selectivity, and double standards in the work of the Human Rights Council as well as of the Office.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 21-03, 49 session, VNZ (LMG)

China also hopes that the Special Rapporteur will perform his duties in an objective and impartial manner, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States, keep a distance from separatist forces and avoid being exploited by them.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 22-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

In order to address the impact of the epidemic and the rising inequalities globally, countries should put people at the centre, increase investment in ESC rights and the right to development, safeguard the rights of vulnerable groups and eliminate inequalities within and between countries. The Human Rights Council and OHCHR should work constructively with Member States to support them to better promote and protect ESC rights.

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2022, 22-03, 49 session, CH2 (translated)

The Syrian crisis has shown that external intervention, provocation of confrontation and pressure and sanctions are not conducive to solving the problem. China has always advocated that the Syrian people be allowed to decide their own national future without foreign interference. Every year, the Human Rights Council spends a lot of time and resources on the Syrian issue, but fails to play a positive role.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 22-09, 51 session, CH1 (translated)

The international community should continue to respect Burundi's national sovereignty and independence, respect Burundi's efforts to resolve its domestic problems on its own

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 22-09, 51 session, CH2 (translated)

China has always advocated that differences in the field of human rights should be dealt with through constructive dialogue and cooperation, and opposes the politicization of human rights issues

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 22-09, 51 session, CH2 (translated)

Some countries have been smearing and slandering Bu on the basis of false information, ignoring the repeated requests of the Bu government not to set up any more human rights mechanisms against Bu, and forcing the establishment of a special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burundi in the Human Rights Council, using the Human Rights Council as a political tool to fix developing countries and intensifying the atmosphere of confrontation, which is not conducive to solving the problem.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 22-09, 51 session, CH2 (translated)

The Human Rights Council should uphold the principles of non-selectivity and non-politicization, abandon "double standards"

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 22-09, 51 session, CH2 (translated)

respect the path of human rights development chosen by the people of Burundi on their own

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 22-09, 51 session, CH2 (translated)

China urges the countries concerned to stop using human rights as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of the country and to return to the right path of dialogue and cooperation.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 22-09, 51 session, CH2 (translated)

We are concerned with the fabrication and spreading of disinformation by some countries out of political purposes to smear others under the pretext of human rights.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 24-03, 49 session, CH (GC)

Their acts are designed to find excuses for interfering in other countries' internal affairs, imposing unilateral coercive measures and setting up country-specific mechanisms at the Human Rights Council. This violates the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, runs counter to the principles of universality, impartiality and objectivity, constructive dialogue and cooperation of the work of the Human Rights Council, and will misdirect the work of international human rights mechanisms and undermine their credibility.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 24-03, 49 session, CH (GC)

We are also concerned with the breach of the Code of Conduct by certain special procedure mandate holders, who work on the basis of disinformation and issue misleading opinions.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 24-03, 49 session, CH (GC)

Special procedure mandate holders should discharge their duties in a fair and objective manner, screen more closely the information they receive, and respect the authoritative information provided by governments so as to avoid being used by those with ulterior motives.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 24-03, 49 session, CH (GC)

At the same time, China is seriously concerned that individual experts of the special mechanisms are selectively fulfilling their mandates, smearing Member States on the basis of false information and serving as tools of political forces. This is a serious violation of the Code of Conduct for Special Mechanisms and seriously damages the credibility of the Human Rights Council and the Special Mechanisms.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 24-03, 49 session, CH (translated)

China urges the special mechanisms to effectively abide by the Code of Conduct for Special Mechanisms, respect the sovereignty of Member States and the authoritative information provided by their governments, and refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign countries on the pretext of human rights issues. The Human Rights Council should effectively hold the experts of the special mechanisms concerned accountable for their violations.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 24-03, 49 session, CH (translated)

At the same time, the composition of the experts of the special mechanism should reflect the principle of geographical equity and the representation of different legal systems, and the problem of under-representation of experts from the Asia-Pacific region should be resolved at an early date.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 24-03, 49 session, CH (translated)

It must continue to be a UN Member-driven and action oriented intergovernmental process

Code: Civil Society > VCCS > Inter-governmentality
2022, 24-03, 49 session, INDI (LMG)

conducted in an objective, transparent, non-selective, constructive, non-confrontational and non-politicized manner.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 24-03, 49 session, INDI (LMG)

Renewed emphasis needs to be placed by the Council on the enhancement of States' capacity and provision of technical assistance,

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2022, 24-03, 49 session, INDI (LMG)

While considering such capacity-building and assistance, the focus should be on implementation of the recommendations accepted by the concerned State

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB
2022, 24-03, 49 session, INDI (LMG)

Democracy and human rights are a common pursuit of humanity. In the meantime, the world we live in is diverse and colorful, and diversity is a fundamental feature of human society. Countries with different histories, cultures and national conditions may choose different forms of democracy. The key to democracy in a country lies in whether its people are truly masters of their country and whether problems that its people face are solved.

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 25-03, 49 session, CH1 (GC)

The promotion and protection of democracy and human rights is the common responsibility of the international community and should not be used as a tool to exert pressure on other countries.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 25-03, 49 session, CH1 (GC)

The Like-Minded Group opposes and rejects politically motivated country-specific resolutions and expresses its concern over this continued selective and discriminatory practice.

We believe that this practice violates the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, non-politicization, and constitutes double standards in addressing human rights issues.

We also express our concern over the proliferation of “naming and shaming”, which aims to interfere in States’ internal affairs, violating the universal principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

In this context, we are concerned about the increasing politicization in the debates taking place under Item 4 of the Council’s Agenda

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 26-09, 51 session, VNZ (LMG)

avoiding the practice of politicization, selectivity, and double standards in the work of the Human Rights Council as well as of the Office.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 26-09, 51 session, VNZ (LMG)

First, respect the path of human rights development chosen autonomously by the former colonial countries. Today, with the democratisation of international relations, no country can ride over the heads of others to bully and oppress them, or to dictate to them what to do

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 28-09, 51 session, CH1 (translated)

We urge the countries concerned to abandon the practice of using human rights issues to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, and not to politicize and instrumentalize human rights issues.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 28-09, 51 session, CH1 (translated)

China supports the DRC government's efforts to promote and protect human rights and calls on the international community to fully respect the national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the DRC

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 29-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

China supports the Malian Government's efforts to promote and protect human rights and hopes that the international community will fully respect Mali's national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 29-03, 49 session, CH2 (translated)

China has always advocated constructive dialogue and cooperation among all parties on human rights issues and opposes the politicization of human rights issues and overt pressure.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 29-03, 49 session, CH3 (translated)

China hopes that all parties will respect Cambodia's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, respect the path of human rights development chosen by the Cambodian government and people on their own

Code: Universality > VCU > Particularism
2022, 29-03, 49 session, CH4 (translated)

All countries should conduct dialogue and cooperation on human rights issues on the basis of mutual respect and in accordance with the principles of non-confrontation, non-politicization and non-selectivity.

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 29-03, 49 session, CH4 (translated)

We also hope that the experts of the Special Mechanism will abide by the Code of Conduct of the Special Mechanism and perform their duties impartially and objectively based on verified information and the specific situation of the country concerned.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 29-03, 49 session, CH4 (translated)

Human rights technical assistance and capacity building is an important mandate of the Human Rights Council and can play a constructive role in the development of a country's human rights cause. The Human Rights Council should give high priority to this

Code: Monitoring > VCM > Prioritise TACB
2022, 30-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should also increase its input in this regard.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB

2022, 30-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

China believes that technical assistance in human rights should follow the following principles: First, it should abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned, engage in sincere dialogue and cooperation, and avoid using technical assistance in human rights as a tool to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and serve its own political purposes. Secondly, we should respect the will and leadership of the countries concerned, and provide constructive assistance and support on the basis of full consultation with the countries concerned, so as to achieve win-win cooperation.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2022, 30-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

Third, we should treat all types of human rights in a balanced manner, and pay particular attention to the promotion and protection of ESC

Code: Equality of Rights > VCER > ESCR more important

2022, 30-03, 49 session, CH1 (translated)

We reaffirm our full support to the Council's technical assistance mandate, which should be extended to States

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2022, 30-03, 49 session, PAK (LMG)

Unfortunately, technical assistance is often packaged in such a way that it creates hierarchy among human rights

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR

2022, 30-03, 49 session, PAK (LMG)

thereby serving as a pretext for interference into domestic affairs of sovereign States. In certain cases, countries have been forced to accept technical assistance.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2022, 30-03, 49 session, PAK (LMG)

The COVID pandemic is a sober reminder that under investment in protection and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights bears a huge cost in terms of human lives and livelihoods.

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR

2022, 30-03, 49 session, PAK (LMG)

The mandate should be carried out in a spirit of dialogue and giving deference to national priorities as determined by the concerned country.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase state in TACB

2022, 30-03, 49 session, PAK (LMG)

We also call on all States to extend necessary political and financial support to OHCHR for strengthening its capacities in promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2022, 30-03, 49 session, PAK (LMG)

including through provision of technical assistance to developing and least developed countries

Code: Monitoring > ACM > Increase TACB
2022, 30-03, 49 session, PAK (LMG)

which must adhere to the leadership of Member States

Code: Civil Society > VCCS > Inter-governmentality
2022, 30-09, 51 session, CH1 (translated)

and should follow the principles of objectivity, transparency, non-selectivity, constructiveness, non-confrontation and non-politicization

Code: Monitoring > VCM > CSA is illegitimate
2022, 30-09, 51 session, CH1 (translated)

China calls on all countries to engage in sincere dialogue and cooperation in the process of country-specific human rights reviews, to make recommendations to other countries that are in line with their national conditions and stages of development, to avoid smearing and pressuring in the name of commenting on recommendations, and to work together to promote the healthy development of the international human rights cause.

Code: Monitoring > ACM > CSA is poorly executed
2022, 30-09, 51 session, CH1 (translated)

Secondly, to promote the two categories of human rights in a balanced manner. Insisting on the unity of the equality and indivisibility of human rights is an important historical contribution of the Programme of Action. We should promote ESC rights and civil and political rights in a balanced manner,

Code: Equality of Rights > ACER > Increase ESCR
2022, 30-09, 51 session, CH3 (translated)

Different paths of human rights development should be taken into account, exchanged and learned from each other, and improved together.

Code: Universality > ACU > Relative Universality
2022, 30-09, 51 session, CH3 (translated)

Appendix 3 – Frequencies per document of the sub-subcategories on the two main phase rounds

Round 1

Sub-subcategory	Frequency	Percentage (total docs)	Percentage (docs w/ code(s))
CSA is illegitimate	85	30.47	51.83
CSA is poorly executed	76	27.24	46.34
Particularism	61	21,86	37.20
Increase ESCR	32	11.47	19.51
Relative Universality	26	9.32	15.85
Increase state in TACB	26	9.32	15.85
Increase TACB	17	6,09	10.37
ESCR more important	11	3.94	6.71
Inter-governmentality	7	2.51	4.27
Prioritise TACB	4	1.43	2.44
Misconduct	3	1.08	1.83
Individual entitlement	3	1.08	1.83
Documents with code(s)	164	58.78	100
Documents without code(s)	115	41.22	
Analysed Documents	279	100.00	

Round 2

Sub-subcategory	Frequency	Percentage (total docs)	Percentage (docs w/ code(s))
CSA is illegitimate	84	30.11	51.22
CSA is poorly executed	73	26.16	44.51
Particularism	56	20.07	34.15
Increase ESCR	31	11.11	18.90
Relative Universality	30	10.75	18.29
Increase state in TACB	27	9.68	16.46
Increase TACB	19	6.81	11.59
ESCR more important	11	3.94	6.71
Inter-governmentality	7	2.51	4.27
Prioritise TACB	4	1.43	2.44
Misconduct	3	1.08	1.83
Individual entitlement	3	1.08	1.83
Documents with code(s)	164	58.78	100.00
Documents without code(s)	115	41.22	-
Analysed documents	279	100.00	-

