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**Country Report**

*People's Republic of China\**

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**Report on Implementation  
Of Madrid International Plan of Action  
on Ageing 2002**

**China National Committee on Ageing**

**August 2007**

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**Report on Implementation**  
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**I. Preface**

The Chinese government sent a delegation to The Second World Assembly on Ageing held by The United Nations in Madrid, Spain April 2002. The assembly discussed and passed the Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002. The Office for All China Working Commission on Ageing and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held an Asian-pacific Follow-up action conference of The Second World Assembly on Ageing in Shanghai, September of the same year. The conference discussed and passed the Implementation Strategy of Asian-pacific region on Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 (Shanghai Implementation Strategy).

The Chinese government attaches much importance to and implements all the resolutions on ageing of the UN and all the promises of Political Declaration of the Second World Assembly on Ageing. Combining the goals and principles of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 and the general situation of China, the Chinese government adopts a series of policies, actively pushes the implementation of the Plan of Action, manages to bring ageing issues and the work on ageing into the overall strategy and plan of national economy and social development of central and local governments, and enhances the healthy and sustaining development of undertakings for the aged.

According to the top-down assessment resolution of five-year implementation of MIPAA by the UN globally, the Chinese government makes an assessment of the implementation of MIPAA for the past 5 years.

□. **Introduction of China's population Ageing**

The ageing of China's population accelerates with the fast development of its

economy and society, the decline of birthrate and mortality, and the prolongation of human life. By the end of 2006, there were close to 149 million people over the age of 60 in China, accounting for 11.3 percent of its entire population. According to the Projection of Population Ageing in China, which is made by the Office for All China Working Commission on Ageing with 2-year efforts, China will irreversibly become an aged society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The elderly population will reach 174 million by 2010, accounting for 12.8% of the total population, and it will reach 248 million by 2020, accounting for 17.17% of the total population, among which the elderly population over 80 will reach 30.67 million, accounting for 12.37% of the elderly population. There will be an increase of 133 million population during 2005 and 2020, among which 105 million are elderly population, with an annual increase of 6.6 million.

The population ageing in China has its own characteristics: the number of the older population is huge, ageing situation accelerates severely, the ageing process is in an uneven pace in different areas of the country, urban areas and rural areas inversed in terms of ageing, the number of older women is higher than that of older men, and the population ageing is ahead of the modernization. The family structure, the situation of the elderly population and the distribution of urban and rural elderly population changes a lot with the pace development of population ageing. These changes are: Firstly, only-older-people families (including those that live alone and those that have spouses) are increasing, extended families are declining, and families with 4-2-1(a couple support 4 parents and one child) structure are increasing. Only-older-people families account for 40.3% (in urban areas) and 37.8% (in rural areas) of families with older people, and the percentages are increasing. The second change is: the old old population are increasing sharply. The life expectancy of Chinese people is up to 72, and the elderly population over 80 years old is 15.2 million, and the figure will turn out to be 30.67 million by 2020. The third one is: the number of older women is higher than that of older men. The female population is 4.64 million more than male population, and this gap will reach a peak of 26.45 million by 2049. What need to be mentioned is that among this group of outnumbered women, 50% to 70% are old old women over 80 years old. Fourthly, urban areas and rural areas inversed in terms of ageing. The proportion of the older population in rural

areas is 1.24 percentage higher than that in urban areas, and 65% of the elderly population live in rural areas. And the situation will remain as the acceleration of urbanization and population immigration.

□. **Practices of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 in China**

The Chinese government has always cared for and paid attention to population ageing and its consequences. China's goals for the development of undertakings for the aged can be described as follows: all elderly people are to be provided for and enjoy proper medical care. They are to be given opportunities to pass on their experience as well as to learn new things. They should be given the opportunity to do what they can for the society, while enjoying their later years. The Chinese government has also set up working principles for undertakings for the aged ( the Chinese government guides the mainstream of undertakings for the aged, all sectors of the society participate in and the masses care for undertakings for the aged.). With the goals and the principles, the Chinese government has strengthened formulation of laws, regulations and policies regarding elderly people, worked out development plans for undertakings for the aged, perfected the work system for care of the elderly, encouraged the extensive involvement of the whole society in efforts to care for the aged, conducted international exchanges and cooperation in this regard, and promoted the undertakings for the aged.

**1. Perfect the framework of ageing institutions**

The State Council has established the China National Committee on Ageing to plan, coordinate and guide this work nationwide. It studies and formulates development strategies and major policies for undertakings for the aged; coordinates the relevant departments and guides them to implement the development plans for undertakings for the aged; and leads, supervises and checks the work at local levels. A vice-premier of the State Council serves as the director of the China National Committee on Ageing, which comprises 26 state-level departments, with one senior leader equivalent to a vice-minister from each department as its representative. An office with 60 staff under the committee is responsible for routine work. Committees on ageing and related routine work offices have been established throughout the country at the provincial (autonomous region, municipality directly under the central government), prefecture (city, league), county (city, district, banner) and township

(urban community) levels. Village and neighborhood committees have special personnel engaged in undertakings for the aged. These committees and offices have formed a complete system all the way from the central government down to the grassroots level.

## **2. Perfect the law and policy system on ageing**

The Chinese government has promulgated a series of laws, regulations and policies with regard to elderly people, covering such areas as social security, welfare, services, hygiene, culture, education and sports, as well as the protection of the rights and interests of elderly people and related industries. A framework of laws, regulations and policies in this regard has been established with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China as its foundation, and the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Elderly People as its backbone, together with other relevant laws, administrative regulations, local regulations, rules, regulations and related policies formulated by departments of the State Council and local governments.

The Chinese government has promulgated and implemented the Seven-Year Development Outline on Work Concerning Elderly People in China (1994-2000), Outline of the Tenth Five-Year Plan for the Development of China's Undertakings for the Aged (2001-2005) and Eleventh Five-Year Plan for the Development of China's Undertakings for the Aged (2006-2010). The State Council issued Decision on Strengthening the Work on Ageing in 2000, and Decision on systematically solving population problems by comprehensively strengthening the work of population and Birth Control in 2007. Relevant departments under the State Council and local people's governments at all levels have formulated action plans for work concerning elderly people in their departments and plans for the development of undertakings for the aged in their localities. The state has established a supervision and evaluation system to conduct mid-term and final checks on the implementation of these plans, to ensure that they are properly put into practice. It has also established a system of statistical indices for undertakings for the aged and a statistical work system which will provide basic data to help the formulation of plans, supervision and evaluation in this field. Nationwide censuses on the elderly have been made in 2000 and 2006, providing an important basis for scientific decision-making as regards undertakings for the aged. The promulgation and implementation of the laws, regulations and policies on ageing have effectively promoted the development of undertakings for the aged and safeguarded the rights and interests of the elderly.

## **3. work on the priority area of ageing and development**

### 3.1 Establish old-age insurance system in urban areas

In recent years, the Chinese government has gradually established a uniform basic old-age insurance system in urban areas that covers all the employees of different types of enterprises, persons engaged in individual businesses of industry or commerce, and people who are employed in a flexible manner. By the end of 2006, the number of people participating in the basic old-age insurance scheme across China had reached 188 million, 46.35 million of whom were retirees, and that is 28.5% more than that by the end of 2002. The disbursement of the old-age insurance fund was 284.3 billion yuan in 2002, and it reached 489.7 billion by the end of 2006, that is 72.7% higher than that of 2002. The Chinese government has also set up an adjustment mechanism of the basic pension, by which the state adjusts the level of the basic pension of enterprise retirees in light of price fluctuations and wage raises of enterprise employees. A retirement system for staff members of government agencies and public institutions has been established; these people get their pension either directly from the central government finances or from their former employers at the rate stipulated by the state.

The Chinese government raises funds for the basic old-age insurance through multiple channels so as to increase the fund reserve needed for the increasingly larger gray population and ensure that enterprises' employees get their basic pension in full and on time. By the end of 2006, the balance of China's basic old-age insurance funds was 631 billion yuan, and the total payment to the funds that year was 521.5 billion yuan. The government has also increased its financial input into the fund. In 2006 some 97.1 billion yuan of the basic old-age insurance fund came from government finances at different levels. Besides, a nationwide social security fund has been established, and by the end of 2006 the accumulated total was 282.8 billion yuan.

The Chinese government is actively developing supplementary old-age insurance. It guides and helps enterprises with adequate capacity to set up annuities for employees. Both enterprises and employees pay toward the annuity, so that funds are accumulated and managed under individual accounts. By the end of 2006, a total of 24,000 enterprises all over China had set up enterprise annuities, with 9.24 million employees participating. The state also encourages the development of old-age insurance attached to personal savings deposits; and guarantees the livelihood of elderly people through multiple channels.

### 3.2 Establish old-age security system in rural areas

About 60 percent of the elderly people in China live in rural areas. Based on the socio-economic development level in rural areas, the Chinese government emphasizes the role of the land and the family in providing for people advanced in age. It has



begun to study the establishment of an old-age social security system in rural areas in order to guarantee the basic livelihood of the elderly people there.

Giving full play to the role of the land in ensuring elderly people's livelihood and protecting farmers', including the elderly people's right to operate land contracted to them. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Elderly People stipulates that an elderly person's guardian is obligated to till the land contracted to the elderly person he/she supports, and also to tend forestry and livestock under the elderly person's charge. The revenue from these will go to the elderly person as a guaranteed source for his/her basic livelihood. The state encourages people to sign a "family support agreement," which stipulates how the elderly person is to be provided for and what level of livelihood he/she will have. Village (neighborhood) committees or other relevant organizations will supervise the implementation of the agreement in order to make sure that elderly people receive the support they are entitled to. At present, all families in rural areas are encouraged to sign a "family support agreement." By the end of 2005, some 13 million "family support agreements" had been signed.

Probe the establishment of an old-age social insurance system in rural areas. By the end of 2006, about 1,900 counties in 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities under the central government had established their own old-age social insurance systems. More than 53.74 million farmers were involved, with the accumulated insurance funds reaching some 35.4 billion yuan. And more than 3.55 million farmers now receive pensions, and the total disbursement of old-age insurance payments reached 3 billion yuan by the end of 2006.

The Chinese government actively develops social security systems of various forms, and priority is given to a special group of elderly people to be covered in the social security system in rural areas. These are elderly people who have lost the ability to work, who have no source of income, and who have no legal guardians whatsoever to support them, or their legal guardians do not have the ability to support them. They enjoy the state's "five guarantees" system, which means that their food, clothing, housing, medical care and burial expenses are taken care of and subsidized by the government. At present, more than 5.03 million elderly people across the country are benefiting from this government policy. For rural couples who have followed the state family planning policy and given birth to only one child (or two daughters), when they turn 60 they receive a bonus from a special fund made available by the central and local governments. By the end of 2005, some 1.35 million people had received such a bonus. The Chinese government pays attention to taking care of elderly farmers whose land has been requisitioned in the process of urbanization. By gradually including those farmers in the social security system, the government makes sure that their basic livelihood is permanently guaranteed. So far, 15 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the central government have drawn up social security policies regarding farmers whose land has been requisitioned.

About six million farmers are now covered by social security schemes, and some 50 billion yuan has been raised for this purpose.

### 3 . 3 Establish aid system for impoverished elderly people

The Chinese government has included the alleviation and elimination of poverty among elderly people in its anti-poverty strategy and the plan for the development of undertakings for the aged. The Chinese government has established a system that guarantees a minimum standard of living for urban residents. Families with per-capita income lower than what is needed to ensure the minimum standard of living in their area are entitled to a special allowance according to the standard. In 2006, some 22.33 million impoverished urban residents (including impoverished elderly people) received such allowances, including almost all the people eligible for receiving the minimum living allowance. In the rural areas, the Chinese government practices an aid system by which families in most straitened circumstances receive a fixed amount of aid regularly or other livelihood assistance when the need arises. In regions where conditions are appropriate, the Chinese government is actively probing the establishment of a system that guarantees the minimum standard of living for rural residents. At present, 8.65 million rural residents have been designated as people in the most serious financial difficulties, and they receive fixed aid from the government regularly. Some 9.85 million rural residents are entitled to receive the minimum living allowance, including poor elderly people who do not meet the requirements of the "Five Guarantees" system. The Chinese government has decided to establish minimum living standard system for rural population all over the country in 2007, to further settle the living problems for impoverished rural population.

The Chinese government encourages areas with adequate capacity to build homes for the aged, grant old-age subsidies and, for those over the age of 80, a special allowance in order to improve the lives of elderly people. Meanwhile, local governments are actively organizing "helping the poor through production" schemes. They are doing their best to help poor people in their 60s who are generally healthy and strong enough to work to engage in farming, aquaculture and processing business, so that they can support themselves. China should give full play to the role of all social sectors in helping poor elderly people, encouraging NGOs like the old-age foundations to be found all over the country, as well as enterprises, public institutions and individuals to provide charitable and other assistance. Various other forms of assistance are officially encouraged, such as pairing up between a well-off family and a poor elderly person so that the former may give more help to the latter, making commitments to support poor elderly people, doing volunteer work for them or paying visits to convey greetings to them. Therefore, various types of assistance are provided to the poor elderly people.

### 3 . 4 Encourage older persons' participation in social development

The Chinese government values and cherishes senior citizens for their knowledge, experience and skills, and respects them for their good ethical values. It thus makes vigorous efforts to create conditions for senior citizens to bring into full play their expertise and capability, and gives them encouragement and support to integrate into society and continue to make contributions to the social development of China.

The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Elderly People has a special chapter on protecting the rights and interests of elderly people to participate in social development. China has issued a development plan for elderly people that includes, as an important component, the encouragement of elderly people to participate in social development, and has made special policies to bring into full play the expertise of retired scholars and professionals. In urban areas, governments at all levels guide senior citizens to participate in the fields of education and training, technological consultation, medical and health work, scientific and technological development and application, and care for the younger generation, in accordance with the demands of economic, social, scientific and technological development. In rural areas, governments encourage people in their 60s to engage in farming, aquaculture and processing activities. Statistics show that among the elderly people of China, in urban areas 38.7 percent participate in public welfare activities, and 5.2 percent still have paid work; in rural areas, 36.4 percent are engaged in farming. In 2003, the Chinese government started to organize the Silver Hair Action program, aimed at enabling senior intellectuals to apply their scientific and technological knowledge and expertise to aid the western regions and other under-developed areas in their localities. So far, senior citizens involved in the Action program have treated over 200,000 patients and trained 38,000 medical personnel and primary and middle school teachers in 24 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government. And a volunteer program named Loving Care for Helping the Growth of the Young is being carried out around the country. Volunteers from among healthy people in their 60s, through the Moral Education Action, Publicity Action, Inspection Action, Protecting Children Action and Caring Action programs, are helping teenagers to solve study, life and psychological problems. These programs have already been launched in over 100 cities nationwide.

The Chinese government pays attention to and support non-governmental organizations on ageing to provide the elderly with services. 13 national associations for senior citizens have sprung up, including the China Senior Professors Association, Association of Senior Scientists and Technicians and Association of Senior Lawyers, branches of which have appeared all over China. The membership of China Senior Professors Association and Association of Senior Scientists and Technicians together exceed 650,000. In local areas, societies with senior intellectuals as the mainstay have been founded, such as the Association of Retired Engineers, Association of Senior Teaching Staff and Association of Retired Medical Workers, which help their members to continue to make contributions to the social and economic development of China. Local governments attach importance to the building of grassroots senior

organizations in urban and rural areas. By the end of 2005, China had 317,000 such associations in both urban and rural areas, playing an active role in organizing large numbers of elderly people to take part in grassroots community construction and public welfare activities, and safeguarding the rights and interests of elderly people.

### 3 . 5 Enhance cultural education for the older persons

The promotion of cultural education for elderly people is a requirement for enhancing the level of their spiritual and cultural life. China pays much attention to the development of cultural education for the aged in order to enrich their cultural life and satisfy their needs in this regard.

The Chinese government has set up comprehensive activity centers with adequate multi-functional facilities for seniors in large- and medium-sized cities; cultural activity centers for seniors in counties (cities, districts and banners); activity stations (sites) for seniors in townships, towns and communities; and activity rooms for seniors in grassroots villages and neighborhoods. By the end of 2005, there were over 670,000 amenities for seniors' recreational activities in Chinese urban and rural areas. Governments at all levels have designated special activity venues for seniors in both old and new public-welfare cultural establishments, and cultural activity venues under the administration of government institutions have also been opened to the elderly. Public cultural service establishments such as libraries, cultural centers, art galleries, museums, and science and technology centers supported by state funds, as well as public recreation places, including parks, gardens and tourist sites, are open to seniors free or at a discount. As a result, the social and cultural life of the elderly is continuously improving.

The Chinese government has made positive efforts to provide spiritual and cultural products suitable for senior citizens. Central and provincial radio and TV stations broadcast programs and special features for elderly people. By the end of 2005, China had published 24 newspapers for seniors, with a total circulation of 2.8 million copies, and 23 magazines and periodicals, selling some 3.058 million copies.

Large quantities of literary and artistic works popular among elderly people have been created in literary, movie and television, theatrical and publication circles. Cultural departments and institutions at various levels organize art troupes to create and give performances warmly welcomed by elderly people at grassroots units.

The Chinese government positively promotes and supports all kinds of cultural and recreational activities beneficial to the mental and physical health of seniors, and allocates special funds every year for such large-scale activities as national

performances by elderly people and the Chinese Elderly People's Chorus Festival, and for international cultural and artistic exchanges for the elderly. Diversified and healthy cultural activities for the elderly are frequently organized in communities throughout the country.

Public cultural institutions such as art centers, cultural centers and cultural stations make it a point to give guidance to elderly people's cultural activities, and meanwhile, have cultivated a contingent of amateur art and literary activists among seniors, who play an important role in enlivening and enriching the spiritual and cultural life of the elderly. Mass recreational organizations of elderly people in both urban and rural areas are growing rapidly, forming the backbone of elderly people's cultural activities.

The Chinese government attaches importance to protecting elderly people's right to education, and has increased financial support for such endeavors. Governments of different levels, departments concerned, enterprises and public institutions have established model institutions of higher learning for the elderly.

On the basis of existing provincial, municipal and county-level mass cultural facilities, education for seniors has been developing through different channels and at various levels, aiming to achieve the goal of making higher education available for elderly people in every county, and extending to townships and communities.

In some places, modern means of telecommunications have been fully utilized to open TV and online schools for the elderly to expand coverage of education for the aged. Today, an educational system for elderly people that is multi-level, multi-form and multi-disciplinary with different lengths of schooling has taken initial shape. Studying in elderly people's schools helps seniors to broaden their knowledge, enrich their lives, refine their sentiment, improve their health and serve society. By the end of 2006, there were over 42,000 such schools in China, with a total enrollment of 4.3 million elderly students.

#### **4. Enhance health and well-being of the elderly population**

##### 4.1 Promote medical care for the aged in rural and urban areas

The Chinese government has established a basic medical insurance system which combines the unified planning program with individual accounts for urban employees. Under this system, retirees do not have to pay the basic insurance premiums, and they are given appropriate consideration in the ratio of medical costs paid between what is put into their individual accounts by their former employers and the part they have to pay personally. The general practice now is that large amounts for the medical costs for elderly people's common and chronic diseases are covered by the funds under the unified planning program, thus reducing the percentage paid by the individual retirees. By the end of 2006, retirees covered by the basic medical insurance in China had

reached 41.52 million, compared with 16.78 million by the end of 2002. The Chinese government has decided to launch a pilot program on basic medical insurance both in rural and urban areas in 2007, to complete the goal of establishing a medical security system covering all the citizens in China.

The Chinese government has taken supplementary medical care measures to reduce the burden of medical costs for the elderly, and has set up a medical subsidy program for civil servants, and such expenditure, including the part for retirees, is covered by the state revenue. The government encourages the establishment of a subsidy system to cover hefty medical costs throughout the country. The fund collected from individual or enterprise payments will be used to cover medical costs in excess of the maximum coverage under the unified planning program for employees and retirees who suffer from major, serious or chronic diseases. Where conditions permit, enterprises have set up a supplementary medical insurance system to cover medical costs in excess of the maximum coverage under the basic medical insurance. The Chinese government is exploring ways to set up a social medical aid system in cities by pooling medical-aid funds from many channels, such as state revenue allocations, public lottery welfare funds and public donations, to subsidize the medical costs of people in dire need. By the end of 2006, experimental work had been conducted to provide medical aid in 1.455 million cases annually.

Experimental work began in 2003 to set up a new type of rural cooperative medical system by pooling funds from individual payments, collective support and government subsidies. By the end of June 2006, such experimental work had been extended to 1,399 counties (cities, districts, banners), covering 495 million rural dwellers. Up to 396 million farmers, and over 73 percent of the elderly people in the experimental areas, had participated in this new type of rural cooperative medical system. A total of 14.412 billion yuan had been paid in 282 million cases as subsidies to farmers covered by the new type of rural cooperative medical system. The central government requires local governments to give appropriate preferential treatment to people over the age of 70 participating in the new type of rural cooperative medical system to meet their special needs. A rural medical aid system has been established, with funds from government appropriations and public donations to help the elderly covered by the "five guarantees" system and poor farmers to join the new type of rural cooperative medical system. The medical aid system provides certain subsidies to poor farmers whose high medical costs for serious diseases have affected their basic family life, and has to a certain degree alleviated the basic medical burdens on the aged. So far the rural medical aid system has been set up in all of the 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government. In 2006, a total of 890 million yuan of medical aid subsidy was given to farmers in 2.868 million cases.

Special activities to provide the aged with dedicated medical aid and healing aid are going full steam ahead in China. The National Development Outline for the Disabled and the Action for Helping Seniors to Regain Their Eyesight, conducted mostly in the

western areas, have given operations to about six million elderly people in remote areas suffering from cataracts, and helped poor and disabled seniors to recover or regain physical functions by providing artificial limbs or hearing aids for free.

#### 4.2 Promote medical service for the older persons

The Chinese government has strengthened the planning and leadership of medical and health work for seniors, and has formulated and implemented the Plan for Medical and Health Work for Seniors in the Eighth Five-Year Plan Period (1991-1995), issued policy documents twice on improving medical and health work for seniors, including work in a series of health development plans such as the Outline for National Health Education and Health Improvement Work (2005-2010), Outline for the Development of China's Nursing Work (2005-2010) and Plan for China's Mental Health Work (2002-2010). The National Health Work for Seniors Leading Group and the Experts Consultative Committee for Health Work for Seniors have been set up to strengthen the guidance, coordination and scientific decision-making in this regard. To solve the problem of supporting the elderly, the Chinese government will launch a project of providing professional nursing for senior citizens.

The Chinese government encourages large- and medium-sized medical institutions, where conditions permit, to open special departments or outpatient departments for senile diseases to provide specialized services to seniors. The establishment of medical service institutions according to regional health plans is also encouraged to help prevent and treat senile diseases, provide healing service for the aged and hospice care. Priority and preferential treatment for people over the age of 70 are generally provided in Chinese medical institutions in terms of registration, treatment, obtaining medicine and hospitalization. The Outline for National Economic and Social Development in the 11th Five-Year Plan Period issued by the government in 2006 included the Nursing with Care Project and speeding up the development of nursing facilities for elderly patients and the disabled as key tasks.

The establishment of an urban community health service system has been speeded up nationwide, with emphasis on medical and health work for the aged, so as to provide safe, efficient, convenient and economical health services to the elderly. Grassroots medical institutions all over the country are encouraged to convert into community health service institutions, and to provide health care, medical treatment, nursing and healing services for the aged.

By the end of 2006, over 23,000 community health service centers had been set up in Chinese cities, and urban community health services were available in 95 percent of the cities at or above the prefectural level, and in 86 percent of the districts under municipal jurisdiction and the county-level cities. With visiting and taking care of patients at home, daily care and hospice care provided by grassroots medical

institutions according to the special needs of the elderly, their health problems can be basically solved within the community.

In consideration of health and physical characteristics of the aged, the Chinese government has made positive efforts in organizing hygiene and health care publicity work. Radio, TV, newspapers and community bulletin boards are all used to publicize common knowledge of how to keep fit and healthy in old age. Hospitals at various levels provide regular health lectures throughout the year to local communities, providing health advice to those suffering from chronic diseases.

The Chinese government has set the standard for healthy seniors, and organized national public appraisals of healthy seniors as a way to promote a scientific and healthy lifestyle. The "three-level prevention and treatment work" (of heart, brain and blood diseases as well as diabetes and other chronic diseases) is being stressed, and the prevention and treatment guidance and management plan for high blood pressure and diabetes has been formulated and gradually promoted to facilitate the early discovery, diagnosis and treatment of chronic diseases related to old age. Starting in 1991, the Chinese government began to include the prevention and treatment of senile diseases in the state scientific and technological plan. So far, more than 50 institutions in the country are engaged in research to prevent and treat senile diseases.

#### 4 . 3 Promote Mass sports and fitness exercise among the elderly population

The Chinese government promotes mass sports and fitness exercises among elderly people with an aim to improve their physique and health. By the end of 2005, all counties and higher administrative units, 70 percent of urban communities and 50 percent of townships in rural areas had established sports associations for seniors, which are strengthening organization work and guidance for the mass sports activities of the aged. In recent years, the state initiated the National Fitness Project, which helps to set up public sports and fitness grounds and facilities, and to provide space for elderly people to do physical exercises.

At present, there are over 30,000 such sports grounds throughout the country. Since 2001, the "Millions of Seniors' Fitness Exercise Activities" organized in China have attracted more and more senior participants, so it is estimated that there are now more than 58 million elderly people doing regular sports and fitness exercises in China.

### **5. Ensure supportive environment**



## 5.1 Enhance the standardization of public facilities and facilities for the aged and the construction of Barrier-Free Facilities

In recent years, the Chinese government has promulgated the Design Codes for Accessibility of Urban Roads and Buildings, and formulated the Tenth Five-Year Plan on Constructing Barrier-Free Facilities, and a number of similar regulations such as Standards for Barrier-Free Facilities and Equipment in Civil Airport Passenger Terminal Areas, Design Codes for Accessibility of Railway Stations and Junctions, Design Codes for Construction of Railway Stations for Passengers, Design Codes for Equipment Used for Passenger and Freight Transport at Railway Stations and Premises.

Construction of barrier-free facilities on roads, in stations, airports, shops, at bus stops, in residential areas and other public buildings in large and medium cities have been developing rapidly, creating convenience for senior citizens in their daily lives and enabling them to engage more fully in social activities. A campaign to build demonstration cities/districts of barrier-free facilities is being carried out around the country, and 12 cities, including Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, have been listed among the first to build such bases.

## 5.2 Enhance the services for the aged

To speed up the building of a social service system suitable for an ageing society is an important measure to meet elderly people's growing needs for social services. In recent years, the Chinese government has made great efforts to develop community services for the aged and to continually improve elderly people's living environment. Meanwhile, social service institutions for the aged are being encouraged to meet seniors' needs for diversified social services. So far, a social service system for the elderly has taken initial shape, based on family care for the aged, and supported by community services and supplemented by institutional services for seniors.

The Chinese government has promulgated a series of policies and documents, such as Opinions on Promoting Urban Community Construction Nationwide and Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Community Services, and has taken active measures, increased its input, strengthened community construction and service work, so as to provide diversified and more convenient services to community residents, including the aged, and to constantly improve the social service environment for them.

By the end of 2006, there were 120,000 urban community service amenities and 9,817 comprehensive social service centers in China. Family visits, regular service

provided at fixed venues, and mobile service are available in most places, providing care and housekeeping services, emergency aid, and other free or reduced-payment services for the aged.

In the period 2001-2004, the Chinese government invested a total of 13.4 billion yuan in the "Starlight Program" to build community welfare service facilities for seniors. The program helped to set up 32,000 "Starlight Centers for Seniors," which provide family visit, emergency aid, day care, health and healing services, and organize recreational activities, benefiting over 30 million elderly people.

In recent years, the Chinese government has increased its investment in the building of social welfare institutions, targeting elderly people who have lost the ability to work, who have no source of income, and who have no legal guardians whatsoever to support them, or their guardians do not have the ability to support them. The government actively promotes the construction of senior citizens' lodging houses, elderly people's homes and nursing homes for the aged, to provide institutional services for seniors with different financial and physical conditions, especially those over 80, sick and disabled.

The building of elderly people's homes is also promoted in rural areas for people in the "five guarantees" category. The government has issued policy documents including Opinions on Accelerating Socialized Welfare Services and Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Social Services for the Aged to speed up the development of institutional social services for the aged. Various modes are encouraged to mobilize social resources for this purpose: state built and privately run, privately operated with government support, government subsidy, and services purchased by government.

By the end of 2006, there were 39,000 institutions providing services for seniors, such as social welfare institutions for the aged, elderly people's homes, senior citizens' lodging houses, and nursing homes for the aged, with a total of 1,753 million beds, including 29,681 rural elderly people's homes with 895,000 beds. The state has intensified its administration of standardized social institutional services for the aged by issuing the Assessment Standard for State-level Social Welfare Institutions for the Aged and the Basic Norms for Social Welfare Institutions for the Aged, to improve the quality and level of such services.

The Chinese government is endeavoring to train management and service personnel to provide services for the aged through educational course in school, work-and-learning programs and on-the-job training. The Provisional Regulations on the System of Assessing the Professional Level of Social Workers and the Methods for Implementing Professional Proficiency Tests for Social Workers, both promulgated by the state, encourage professional social workers and college graduates majoring in social work to work in social welfare institutions.

The Chinese government has also laid down the standards and qualifications for the occupation of professional nurses for the aged, in order to strengthen the building of professionalism and standardization of this contingent. By the end of 2005, nearly 20,000 people had obtained such qualifications.

The Chinese government encourages establishment of volunteer organizations to carry out the program known as Golden Sunshine Action throughout the country, has mobilized many teenagers and people of all walks of life to join volunteers to take care of the aged. Their services cover many areas including taking care of seniors' everyday lives and providing medical and health care as well as legal aid by serving in social service institutions for the aged and forming one-on-one relationships with the aged at home. So far, more than 630 million hours of volunteer service have been provided in 13 million cases for over 2.8 million elderly people, and volunteers have set up over 60,000 service centers for the aged.

## **6. Safeguard Elderly People's Legitimate Rights and Interests**

The Chinese government respects and protects the legitimate rights and interests of elderly people, and employs legal and ethical means to strengthen this work so as to promote realization of legitimate rights and interests of the aged.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China stipulates that "Chinese citizens have the right to material assistance from the state and society when old, sick or unable to work;" "Citizens above the age of 18 are obliged to support their parents;" and "There must be no mistreatment of senior citizens, women or children." The basic laws of China, including the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Elderly People, General Principles of the Civil Law of the People's Republic of China, Law of Succession of the People's Republic of China, Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China, Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China, and Law of the People's Republic of China on Public Security Administration Punishments, all clarify the rights of senior citizens and stipulate the legal punishments for acts infringing on their rights.

So far, 30 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government have promulgated and enforced local regulations on the protection of the rights and interests of senior citizens. The state fully respects and cares for senior citizens in social life. In 2005, 21 nation-level government sectors issued Opinions on Strengthening the Work of Care for Senior Citizens, requiring the departments concerned to give preference to senior citizens regarding economic support, medical care, everyday services, cultural recreation and exercise, and rights protection. Similar policies on special treatment for senior citizens have been promulgated in all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government, enabling seniors to fully enjoy social respect and care.

The People's Court takes very seriously the handling of cases of mistreating, abandoning and harming seniors, punishing in accordance with the law crimes infringing on senior citizens' rights of person and property, and gives priority to lawsuits concerning seniors' support and medical care in putting on file, adjudicating and executing these cases. Some grassroots people's courts have set up "senior's tribunal" to handle civil cases concerning senior citizens, and established the jury system for cases involving seniors.

The Supreme People's Court of China has formulated regulations on judicial assistance, and on postponing, reducing or exempting court costs for poor senior citizens. In 2005, more than 30,000 seniors received judicial assistance. Public security agencies severely crack down on illegal acts or crimes infringing on the legitimate rights and interests of senior citizens in accordance with the law, so as to protect the safety of their persons and property.

Judicial and administrative departments make vigorous efforts to provide legal assistance and services to senior citizens. And local legal assistance and service agencies give top priority and preferential treatment to seniors. Grassroots people's mediation organizations in both urban and rural areas are playing a significant role in settling disputes concerning senior citizens and protecting their rights and interests. From 2001 to 2005, each year legal service agencies provided assistance to seniors involved in over 40,000 cases, served as agents and provided services in over 400,000 similar lawsuits and non-lawsuits, and settled over 400,000 senior-concerned disputes.

The standing committees of the people's congresses at all levels conduct regular or irregular inspections on law enforcement in this regard, ensuring that government departments are fulfilling their responsibility to protect the legitimate rights and interests of senior citizens. From 2001 to 2005, standing committees of people's congresses above the county level made altogether more than 3,000 inspections on the enforcement of laws and regulations relating to senior citizens.

Meanwhile, people's political consultative conferences at all levels fulfill the function of democratic supervision, offering advice to governments on how to improve the work of protecting the rights and interests of senior citizens. From 2001 to 2005, members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference made nearly 1,000 proposals concerning senior citizens. Government departments at all levels are improving the work of handling petitions and visits, in order to make sure that the channel for the people's supervision is unimpeded.

By letters and visits, senior citizens protect their rights and air their opinions and advice. In 2005, agencies on ageing around China handled altogether nearly 400,000 letters and visits from senior citizens. The news media too has carried out different forms of supervision by public opinion centering on the issue of protecting the rights and interests of senior citizens.

The Chinese government attaches importance to publicizing and popularizing laws, regulations and policies concerning senior citizens. It has included the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Elderly People in the Third Five-Year (1996-2000), Fourth Five-Year (2001-2005) and Fifth Five-Year (2006-2010) plans on spreading general knowledge of the law, and launched educational activities in varied forms, strengthening the people's awareness of the importance of protecting seniors' legitimate rights and interests, as well as seniors' self-protection awareness. Governments at all levels have adopted a variety of methods to invigorate the tradition of the Chinese nation of respect and support for elderly people, and improve people's awareness of the importance of respecting seniors. Senior Citizens' Day is celebrated nationwide.

On the Double Ninth Festival (the ninth day of the ninth lunar month) and local Senior Citizens' Day, government departments concerned actively organize large-scale educational activities and activities for respecting senior citizens. Local governments target teenagers for education in respect for senior citizens, include relevant content in primary and middle school courses, and conduct the Educational Activity of Respecting, Loving and Helping Senior Citizens among teenagers, and boost a sound social environment for giving respect to and providing for the aged.

#### □. **Future Development**

China's undertakings for the aged has achieved a lot in recent years, especially in the past 5 years. But China becomes an aged society when it is not economically developed, and thus is a country which becomes old before getting rich. As the fast development of population ageing, the undertakings for the aged of China is still confronted with severe challenges: the current old-age security system faces severe challenges; it is hard for the current medical care security system to meet medical needs of the huge elderly population, which is still increasing rapidly; it is difficult for the current service system to meet the needs of the elderly; the current social management system can not adjust itself to the demands of the increasing elderly population for social management and services; ethical construction of respecting the elderly and publicity can not meet the requirements of forming the benign social environment of respecting, supporting and helping the elderly.

Confronted with the challenges of population ageing, The 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan for the Development of the Ageing Cause (2006-2010) has been made to enhance the development of undertakings for the aged, to share the fruits of social and economic development with the elderly. The overall goals of the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan for the Development of the Ageing Cause (2006-2010) are: until 2010, establish a better law and regulation system on the elderly; establish an old-age security system in urban areas which adapts to socialist market economy; probe the establishment of an old-age security system in rural areas; establish and perfect the social services system, which combines family care and social care, for the aged, and incipiently establish markets especially sell old-age goods, which meet the needs of older persons; enhance the construction of older-people-friendly infrastructure; perfect the ageing working system, to make it more effective and adapt to population ageing; create an atmosphere of respecting, loving and helping the elderly, and harmony among generations; to create more favorable social advantages to realize the goals of ageing work, which are: All elderly people are to be provided for and enjoy proper medical care; they are to be given opportunities to pass on their experience as well as to learn new things; they should be given the opportunity to do what they can for the society, while enjoying their later years.

To realize the above goals, the Chinese government will quicken the step to establish and perfect the social old-age security system, to guarantee the basic life of the elderly; further perfect the old-age security system in urban areas that covers all the employees of different types of enterprises, the basic medical insurance system in urban areas, and the minimum living standard system; make every effort to increase the coverage of basic old-age insurance and basic medical insurance systems; quicken the step to establish a medical aid system in urban areas and increase the coverage of it, probe and establish the financial support mechanism for medical security system of the elderly, to guarantee the basic medical needs of the impoverished elderly; establish and perfect basic old-age pension standard and the normal adjustment mechanism of minimum living standard.

Gradually establish and perfect the living aid system for impoverished older persons in rural areas; roundly establish old-age insurance and minimum living standard system in rural areas; push the new-type rural cooperative medical system and medical aid system in rural areas, to alleviate the burden caused by illnesses of disabled older persons, old old persons and impoverished persons.

Vigorously push forward the construction of social services for the aged, and accelerate that development of the service industry for the aged; speed up the building of a social service system for the elderly, based on family care for the aged, and supported by community services and supplemented by institutional services for seniors, to provide the elderly with services, including living care, spiritual support, medical care, cultural education, fitness, and safeguarding of rights and interests etc.; speed up the construction of community-are service institution and facilities, to

establish a service network with reasonable structure, a complete set of facilities, well-trained staff, good service, and standardized management system.

Strengthen the ethical and legal construction, to create better social atmosphere of respecting, supporting and helping the elderly; vigorously educate the masses of respecting, supporting and helping the elderly, advocate the ethics of respecting the elderly and taking good care of the young, and strengthen the publicity of laws and ethics on the elderly to the masses, especially to adolescents, to inform the whole society of the entitled rights and interests of the elderly and of the obligation that families, society and units should fulfill to the elderly, and to strengthen the sense of protecting the legal rights and interests of the elderly and serving the elderly.

Revise the Law of The People's Republic of China on Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly, implement and perfect the laws, regulations, measures and policies which protect the rights and interests of the elderly, establish policies and mechanisms which roundly guarantee the. Conduct legal service and legal aids in communities, to provide the elderly in their neighborhoods with effective legal service and aids on time. Strengthen the enforcement of the laws, and seriously punish the law crimes infringing on legal rights and interests of the elderly, including bilking, harming, mistreating, and abandoning the elderly etc..

Actively promote cultural education for elderly people, to enrich their cultural and spiritual life. Actively develop education for the elderly, and create conditions to set up universities (schools), TV and online schools for the elderly. Positively promote and support all kinds of cultural and recreational activities beneficial to the mental and physical health of the elderly. Actively advocate scientific, healthy and civilized lifestyle.