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The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), and has the honor to draw the latter's attention to the document entitled "*Indigenous peoples and boarding schools: a comprehensive study*" (E/C.19/2010/11), distributed under Item 3 of the provincial agenda of the 9th Session of the UNPFII to be held from 19-30 April, 2010. In connection with this document, the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations wishes to make the following clarifications:

First, it is our understanding that the issue of indigenous rights pertains to peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of the present state boundaries and who irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions. In light of this understanding, the Permanent Mission of China wishes to reiterate that people of all ethnic groups in China have lived in China since ancient times and they are all part and parcel of Chinese society. In other word, there are no indigenous issues in China. Hence, it is inappropriate to include the development of the boarding education in China's minority regions into the document and in this regard, the Permanent Mission of China would appreciate if the paragraphs pertaining to China as contained in Para 31, 50 and 83 of the document be deleted and an revised vision of the document be distributed.

Second, the document contains some assertions and comments which are either not in conformity with reality and facts or obsolete. Those misrepresented conclusions are mainly contained in paragraph 31 of the document and are herewith quoted in italic fonts as follows:

1) *"During the Cultural Revolution, minority customs were denounced as 'primitive', and schools in these regions were forced to teach Mandarin only."*

As is well known, China experienced setbacks and disruptions during the Cultural Revolution. It should be born in mind that the whole country was in catastrophe and suffered economically, socially and politically during that period. To distinct minority from the rest of the population during that period without full reference to its complex historical context will lead to misunderstanding and distortion.

2) *"Since 1978, however, the governments has adopted various measures to improve relationships with minorities."*

Chinese government has followed consistently the ethnic policy featuring equality, unity, regional ethnic autonomy and common prosperity for all ethnic groups since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. All ethnic groups have all along live in harmony and unity. The year 1978 marks the start of the opening-up policy of China and the overall policies were adjusted at time to achieve common prosperity for all ethnic groups, rather than to "improve relationships with minorities".

3) *"Despite these efforts, the educational attainment of children in minority regions is far less that of other children"*

The Chinese government has always attached high importance to the development of education in the minority areas. Especially since the adoption of the reform and opening-up policies, minority areas have witnessed unprecedented development in elementary, vocational and higher education. By the end of 2008, the number of minority students attending schools of all levels and all types in the whole country amounted to 22 million. According to the fifth national census in 2000, for 14 ethnic minorities, including

the Korean, Manchu, Mongolian and Kazak, the number of years of education has surpassed the national average. There are university students from all the 56 ethnic groups, and for about a dozen ethnic groups, including the Uyghur, Hui, Korean and Naxi, the average number of university students per 10,000 people has already surpassed the national average. Those achievements are self evident and unequivocal and should not be denied.

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations would highly appreciate if the Secretariat takes into consideration the abovementioned points and make corresponding revisions to the document.

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues the assurances of its highest consideration.

New York, 5 April, 2010

Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
The United Nations, New York