China ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1992. On 19 and 20 September 2005, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) examined China’s Second Periodic Report. The delegation consisted of 17 representatives from the central government, 7 representatives from Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), and 9 from Macao SAR, headed respectively by H.E. Ambassador Sha Zukang, Mr. Stephen Fisher, and Mr. Jorge Costa Oliveira.

Opening Comments

Sha observed that the government had followed some of the Committee’s previous recommendations, including the establishment of a standardised system for the monitoring and assessment of data collection, the amendment of the Criminal Law to remove the death penalty for
children and the introduction of a firm legal foundation for the promotion of human rights in the Constitution. He acknowledged that there remained significant challenges, including the imbalance of development between rural and urban areas, the persistence of gender stereotypes, the difficulty of protecting migrant children, and the lack of adequate data collection and statistics.

The country rapporteurs were Ms. Lee, Mr. Krappmann and Ms. Katthab. They noted that China would achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 but would need to adjust some targets and indicators, facing inequality between the relatively rich coastal zones and the western and central regions. They noted the need for China to ratify a number of United Nations treaties and conventions, and observed that there were inconsistencies regarding treaty obligations between the mainland, Hong Kong and Macao. There was also concern that China had not adequately addressed all of the Committee’s previous recommendations.

**Domestic Legislation and the CRC**

The Committee asked if the CRC was considered a source of law and whether there was going to be a comprehensive review of domestic law to ensure full conformity with the CRC. The delegation noted that international commitments were strictly abided by and any necessary revisions to domestic legislation were made. If there was a conflict between national law and the CRC, the presiding judge decided which to follow. It was, however, usually dealt with by invoking domestic legislation.

**Information and Awareness**

The Committee requested details concerning measures to ensure that the general public was familiar with the CRC and asked about cooperation with the media. The delegation highlighted the training of officials, legal workers, social workers and the media regarding the basic content and principles of the CRC. The central television and radio stations provided special training courses, and special pages in newspapers were devoted to the issue of children’s rights. The CRC had been translated into seven minority languages including Mongolian, Tibetan and Korean.

**Data Collection**

The Committee highlighted the need to strengthen the data collection system, in particular to provide disaggregated data according to ethnic groups, refugees, children separated from their families or not attending schools, children with disabilities and so on.

**Coordination and Monitoring**

The Committee asked if there was an independent monitoring mechanism in China. The delegation explained that no such mechanism existed but that many government departments had similar responsibilities. Special departments existed in the National People’s Congress for collecting complaints from the general public, including those regarding children. There were also specialised state institutions such as the State Council’s Committee on Women and Children. In addition, there were various branches at different levels of government with units working on child protection.

The Committee asked for more information on the State Council’s Committee on Women and Children. The delegation explained that it was a coordinating organisation engaged in monitoring and supervising issues related to women and children. This Committee had expanded as a result of the growth of institutions working in areas such as health, education, civil affairs and culture. New bodies included the Ministry of Information and Propaganda, responsible for the media and the dissemination of information, had stepped up its efforts in the campaign on child-related issues. Every year, reports were produced with statistics. Special training was also provided at various levels of government. The Programme for the Development of Women and Children incorporated the rights enumerated in the CRC, and its monitoring system effectively served as a monitoring mechanism for the CRC.
Budget
The Committee asked if the maximum available resources were being allocated to children, noting that social investments had not kept up with overall increases in government revenues and spending. It wanted more exact information on the measures to ensure that the formal welfare system was also extended to the countryside as there were insufficient resources to provide adequate services. With regard to education, the Committee noted that expenditures had not yet reached the recommended six per cent of GDP. Moreover, these were unevenly distributed. The delegation explained that there were no separate allocations for children; rather, funds were allocated through general areas such as health and education. The latter had increased every year between 2001-2003, with large amounts devoted to children.

Civil Society
The Committee asked about the role of NGOs and their degree of independence. The delegation noted that NGOs were still in the formative state in comparison to those in developed countries. Large-scale reforms since 1978 had resulted in the rapid growth of NGOs, though their roles still needed developing. Their work focused on children and women, covering areas such as healthcare, social work, helping poor and disabled children, as well as in activities like fund-raising, training, organising projects and disseminating information. The delegation cited the “Spring Buds” programme, which raised around 600 million Yuan last year to assist children in more than 30 provinces. The delegation stated that NGOs were, by definition, separate and independent from governmental organisations.

The Committee enquired about the precise role of NGOs in the reporting process. The delegation responded that the drafting of the Report had involved extensive consultations with NGOs including organisations such as the China Centre for the Child, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Soong Ching-ling Foundation and the UNICEF China Office. The Committee also asked about the nature and the role of NGOs in the Committee on Women and Children (29 agencies, 5 NGOs). The delegation noted that five members of the Committee were NGOs. They included the Youth League, Trades Union, Women’s Federation, Disabled Federation and China’s Association for Scientists.

Family Policy
The Committee expressed concern about the imbalance in the birth rate. The delegation stressed the need for a family planning policy under their economic and developmental constraints. Even with such a policy, population pressure was great, with a total population growth reaching 15.9 million in 2004. The delegation recognised the consequences of the increasing gender imbalance in areas such as marriage, health and social stability. The rural tradition embodied a preference for boys for old-age protection; socio-economic growth meant a desire for a smaller-sized family and so chose boys; and availability of ultrasound technology provided the opportunity to determine the baby’s sex and be used for selective abortion. The government pursued a comprehensive package that was not simply a matter of “one couple, one child”. Minorities were, for example, allowed more children.

The Committee asked about the number of women without children. The delegation replied that some couples, mostly white-collar workers in major cities, chose not to have children. However, this was unrelated to the family planning policy, which emphasised fewer births rather than no births. A survey in Beijing indicated that 10 per cent of the 2.3 million women in registered couples had no children. The Committee enquired if there was a special programme to help families with difficulties conceiving. The delegation responded that there were techniques available and the government provided assistance.

The Committee asked for more information on determining the sex of the baby and abortions. The delegation explained that the Chinese National Medical Service was conducting a survey on gender selection, and measures taken by the government had produced some preliminary results. The 2001 law on population and family planning prohibited the determination of the sex and selective
abortion. There was greater supervision of certain medicines and ultrasound technologies, with training programmes on ethics and discipline for doctors. Doctors involved in such practices would be warned, fined or removed from their posts.

The Committee asked about measures to raise the status of girls. The delegation responded that there were campaigns of dissemination and training to eliminate prejudices and biases. They referred to projects in cooperation with the All China’s Women Federation, UNICEF and the British Department for International Development to help girls. Meanwhile, special task forces provided free medical check-ups, treatment and medicine to the poor.

The Committee noted the high suicide rate among women and asked whether there might be a connection with the family policy. The delegation responded that the overall suicide rate was higher in rural areas, with husbands working and women left with a great burden. Certain women had serious mental disorders, and the easy availability of poisonous pesticides had exacerbated the problem. Government measures included surveillance of the high-risk population, with psychological counselling and an information campaign on “love for life”. Doctors in emergency centres would be given training to help those who attempted suicide and there would be increased control on the use of poisonous pesticides.

**Birth Registration**

The Committee expressed concern about the non-registration of births and asked how access to social services could be ensured. The delegation replied that public security organs promulgated laws and regulations on birth registration with a particular focus on rural areas. Secondly, since 1996, the Public Security Ministry had a system whereby medical birth certificates were granted to each new-born baby to permit parents to register the baby at the registration organs. Finally, there was a larger-scale verification campaign, including the 2000 Fifth National Census in which more than 80,000 unregistered children were issued household registration.

**Adoption**

The Committee asked how children’s rights could be guaranteed regarding adoption. The delegation replied that it was seen as the best solution to reintegrate abandoned children and orphans into society. In 1998, the National People’s Congress had revised the adoption law of 1992 to bring it in line with the CRC and the Hague Convention. The principle of the primary consideration of the child’s interest was paramount. Certificates and other proof were examined to ensure a good environment for the children and to prevent abduction. The China Centre for Adoption Affairs was set up and adoption by foreign couples was made stricter. The prospective parents’ educational background, financial status, health status and motivation for adoption would be examined to ensure a suitable family was found.

The Committee asked for data on international adoption and enquired about the fee for foreign adoptive parents and this money was used. The delegation explained that there were specific stipulations on fees charged by local civil affairs bureaus. The state encouraged donations to social welfare institutions to improve conditions of care. The use of the money had to be reported to donors. There was a system with periodic auditing of institutions receiving donations.

**Health**

The Committee noted the difference in mortality rates between urban and rural areas. Programmes often focussed on big urban centres. There was insufficient health care provision in rural areas and ethnic minority areas such as Tibet. The delegation acknowledged that cities received more funding, as changes in the economic system resulted in the erosion of the old system. The target of immunisation, for example, was not fully met in the west of China. The government had set a target of ten years to restore the primary health care system. Pilot projects covering up to three million
people were undertaken, but the government was aware that they were insufficient. Major international cooperation projects were carried out with funding provided to the west of China.

The Committee noted the lack of information on adolescent health and asked about issues such as health education, hygiene and reproductive health, in addition to the growing problem of tobacco consumption. The delegation explained that education on hygiene and AIDS prevention was incorporated in the curriculum as part of the “general knowledge” class. Posters, bulletins and science booklets were provided in libraries and education, combined with biology and physical exercise classes. The rate of incidence of sexually transmitted diseases was 0.07 per cent.

HIV/AIDS

The Committee noted the need for proactive interventions to deal with the growing number of children infected with HIV/AIDS. The delegation recognised the sharp increase in the number of cases of HIV/AIDS, reaching around 100,000 and including about 1,500 children. The Clinton Foundation provided funding for medicine for 200 children. Cases were examined to reduce the incidence of mother-child transmission.

Abuse of Drugs

The Committee asked for the results of the strategy to address the increasing use of narcotics by young people and the potential for voluntary or compulsory treatment. The delegation stated that there was a comprehensive system for the registration of drug users, indicating that there were 790,000 abusers of which 5,860 were under 16. Chinese law meant that drug addicts were subjected to compulsory treatment. Minor users were put through a system of treatment within the family. If the treatment failed, the youth would be sent to an institution for a maximum of one year. If addicts reverted to their habit after detoxification, they would go through re-education through labour – but this did not apply to minors under 16. Since 2003, courses were offered on drug abuse from fifth grade to senior high school, and a mass education campaign was undertaken to raise awareness amongst youth. However, there was insufficient capacity to monitor drug use, in particular in the migrant population, as well as insufficient funds and medical facilities.

Children with Disabilities

The Committee noted that the definition of disabilities did not include children with autism and learning difficulties. It enquired about efforts to include such children in the mainstream compulsory education system. The delegation explained that the definition of a disabled child was established on the basis of a medical check-up; a case of slow learning or attention problems did not qualify as a disability. Around 77-80 per cent of disabled children were in compulsory education and the Ministry of Education was working on improving this figure. With regard to orphans, 600 million Yuan was to be raised over a period of three years (since 2004), so that orphans would receive effective surgery and rehabilitation by 2006.

The Committee suggested that the rule allowing parents with a disabled child to have a second child implied that the child with a disability was not an important part of society. The delegation highlighted the tradition of children providing old-age protection for parents, in particular in rural areas. Therefore, a second healthy child would provide a guarantee for the subsistence of the parents and the first child.

The Committee noted that oral education methods were preferred for children with hearing problems and suggested that this reflected the stigma against such children. The delegation noted that special and integrated education was carried out simultaneously. However, integrated education for all students would create too great a burden on the system, requiring special textbooks and training for teachers. Special classes were provided within general schools.

The Committee noted the large discrepancy between the number of children with disabilities in urban and rural areas. The delegation responded that around two million people were being surveyed
to get more accurate data on the situation. A Rural Subsistence Guarantee system was set up to provide periodic relief for particularly poor families, with pilot medical relief systems financed by different levels of government to assist families with members with disabilities.

**Alternative Care**

The Committee noted the large number of children living in often huge and modern orphanages, noting the disturbing accounts of death in such institutions and asking for data on such deaths and the means of investigating them. The delegation explained that children who could not be placed in family foster care were kept, as far as possible, in small family-like environment. There was a medical exam at the time of the entry into the institution and a record of the child’s growth was kept. In 2001, the Ministry of Civil Affairs established basic standards for the social welfare institutions for children, with specific requirements about the accommodation, food, care, rehabilitation, psychological care, education and so on. The mortality rate for children in institutions was the same as for other children.

**Education**

The Committee noted that, despite the absence of tuition fees, there were many hidden costs (desks, textbooks or even electricity). Fines for not paying these fees would worsen this problem for poorer families. The delegation emphasised that the right to education was a basic right for citizens as featured in the Constitution. Primary or secondary schools could not reject any child and if this right was violated, the victim could file a complaint and request a review. The state waived tuition fees for compulsory education but charges could be imposed to supplement inadequate financial resources. These charges could only cover specific items and had to fulfil certain standards decided by provincial governments. There was a “one fee” system in place since 2004. It was a fixed fee that included all items to be paid at the beginning of the year. Efforts were made to supervise the collection of fees and the delegation noted that complaints from the public had decreased significantly since inspection teams were established in 2003.

The Committee noted regional differences for education, and expressed concern about the very high teacher-student ratio in early childhood education (up to 67 pupils for one teacher in the countryside). The delegation referred to an on-going examination of expenditures in rural areas and the provision of subsidies for teachers’ salaries and adequate facilities. Measures were taken when schools did not meet the established standards and weak schools were reformed. Good teachers were rotated in a system of mobile instruction, with urban teachers travelling to rural areas. The government was exploring the possibility of establishing an assessment system for teaching quality and the creation of a national supervisory group was being considered.

The Committee asked for the attendance rates rather than the rates of enrolment at the beginning of the year. They noted the high dropout rates and asked how the government intended to prevent dropouts. The delegation declared that the primary school enrolment rate from 1995 to 2003 was between 98.5 and 99.1 per cent. The retention rate in primary school was 98.8 per cent in 2001, and for secondary school it was 85 per cent in 2003. Increased scholarships and free textbooks were provided for poor and rural students. When students left school because of the curriculum, the textbooks and syllabuses were revised to stimulate interest. Parents who stopped their children from attending schools, and businesses that employed children, were subject to punishment.

The Committee noted that there was little information on vocational training and asked about opportunities for adolescents not wanting to pursue an academic career. The delegation responded that there were practical skills classes and participation in community work for primary and secondary school. There were specialised vocational schools at senior high and an opportunity for distance learning.

The Committee noted the problem of bullying and aggression in schools, asking about the re-education of badly behaved children. The delegation explained that children were informed on how
to protect themselves, and teachers who came across violence reported and investigated the cases. Parents could submit a case, and if the school was found responsible, compensation was provided. Children with recurrent bad behaviour and a tendency for violence could be sent to re-education schools before returning to normal schools.

The Committee highlighted the great need for time and space for play and leisure activities. The delegation explained that the Ministry of Education prohibited any regular increase in the number of classroom hours or days, with regulations on the amount of homework for evenings, weekends and holidays. Parents, however, often organised training courses and extracurricular classes to increase the competitiveness of their children. The education department and the media tried to increase awareness of the problem of excessive pressure on children.

**Primary Consideration of the Best Interest of the Child**

The Committee asked how the best interest of the child was taken into consideration in decision-making processes. The delegation explained that there were special departments for children’s affairs. The Committee on Women and Children was studying problems regarding the protection of special groups such as migrant children and arranging seminars with the participation of children.

**Refugees, Migrants, Asylum Seekers and the Right of Abode**

The Committee noted the right of economic migrants to education and was concerned about restrictions that limited migrants’ access. The delegation explained that the local government in the receiving region was responsible for these children's education, with fees on a par with those for local children. In Beijing, 288,000 migrant children attended school. There were 20 schools for migrant children. The Committee noted the numerous (up to 87,000) children of former Indochinese parents who were unable to obtain citizenship. The delegation responded that the nationality of Indochinese refugees was not on the agenda. However, these refugees were provided with permanent residence certificates providing access to basic services and granting economic and social rights equal to those of Chinese citizens.

The Committee asked how the registration system could deal with “floating” migrants who regularly moved around. The delegation responded that registration was carried out from 16 years of age. There were pilot projects in certain areas and the government aimed to include all people, even those under 16. There were measures for migrants who only stayed in the same place for a few days, but in practice such movements were problematic. Although there was no figure for the entire country, a survey in nine cities and three regions showed that 90 per cent of children in the migrant population could go to school.

**Minorities**

The Committee asked how opportunities were guaranteed for minority children, in particular Tibetan children. The delegation noted that the Constitution and other regulations gave all groups the right to study their own culture. Facilities were provided to study language within the social and legal framework. There were 56 ethnic groups in China; most of them were religious believers. All citizens, irrespective of background, had a right to education, and their religions and languages had to be respected.

Regulations meant that both Tibetan and Han Chinese were to be used as official languages in Tibet but with an emphasis on Tibetan. Languages in theatres, restaurants, libraries, tourist sites, street signs, and so on, were in Chinese and Tibetan and the laws of the People’s Congress in Tibet were issued in both Han Chinese and Tibetan. In a court case where the individuals were Tibetan, proceedings would be held and documents would be issued in Tibetan. The Tibetan education system practiced bilingual teaching, with textbooks from primary to senior high school compiled in Tibetan. There was a television channel with Tibetan broadcasting and 14 magazines and
newspapers published in Tibetan including the Tibetan Daily, more than 100 titles of books with a circulation of over 100,000 every year. The Tibetans also had the right to follow their own traditions and customs and lead their lives in accordance with social practice. Traditional festivals such as Tibetan New Year and celebrations in the monasteries were all preserved. Over 40 traditional activities and festivals in Tibet were proceeding normally. During the period of 1980-2000, the Chinese Government had allocated 310 million Yuan for the protection and maintenance of Tibetan monasteries and 300 million Yuan to restore the palace and other cultural relics.

The Committee asked how the government could ensure the equality of education for children of ethnic minorities. The delegation explained that children of ethnic minorities had the same rights as other children, but that there were also special policies in place. Since 1990, special funding was earmarked for the education of ethnic minorities. The Ninth Five-Year Plan had included 2.2 billion Yuan for minority regions, especially in western parts of China, with 130 million Yuan provided as scholarships for poor families in minority areas. Extremely poor regions were afforded complete relief, with no fees for education. Tibetan schools were assigned 120 million Yuan every year. Teachers were encouraged to work in minority areas and there were plans for additional training. With regard to the quality of teachers, the main problem was the lack of adequate funding.

**Right to Participation**

The Committee asked how children’s views could be heard and how traditional attitudes could be overcome. The delegation observed that the right of children to participate was more mainstream within families, at schools and in society as a whole. Children were encouraged to express their own views through many means, including the press, radio and television. Schools were working actively to encourage parents to change their views and listen to and respect the views of children.

The Committee asked about the students’ councils at school and whether the students participated in disciplining their classmates or represented student opinion. The delegation explained that school children could elect monitors to participate in the management of the school, with students’ committees elected by the students themselves at secondary level. Students also went to the countryside to explore problems and present their own views and proposals.

**Freedom of Religion**

The Committee asked how government practices could guarantee that children had the right and opportunity to practice their own religion. They asked if religious activities were allowed in the family setting and if children were detained as a result of practicing their own religion. The delegation noted that China had over one million religious believers, covering Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Christianity. According to the Constitution and laws, people could choose what to believe. There was no law prohibiting religion for children but the delegation stressed the separation of religion and state. Advertisements and other commercial materials could not be derogative towards particular religions and there was a principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment within the framework of the law.

The Committee enquired about the rules and regulations on teaching religion in schools and the possibility of religious groups establishing their own schools. The delegation explained that there were 300,000 religious staff and 74 religious schools. There was no religious curriculum in state schools because China was a secular state. Nonetheless, classes were offered on religious knowledge, introducing the various religious traditions and practices. Religious organs could also establish religious schools and funding was provided for religious academic institutions. Religious organisations could also organise activities for the dissemination of knowledge, for example in Buddhist temples.

With regard to Falun Gong, the delegation emphasised that this was not a religion or a spiritual movement but a cult, the preachers of which had killed many innocent people. Members, among them children, had been induced to engage in self-mutilation and suicide. These children were
provided with education and help to lead normal lives, and criminals were punished according to the law.

The Committee required more information on the Panchen Lama who, at 16 years old, was still a child. The delegation stated that the Dalai Lama had appointed this boy in a procedure that was illegal and therefore void. The “Panchen Lama” was an ordinary Tibetan child in China, now in secondary school and leading a healthy and happy life like other children. The Committee recommended that the government allow an independent person to confirm the well-being of the boy and the delegation agreed to pass on these comments to the competent authority, noting, however, that the boy and his family did not wish to be interfered with.

The Committee enquired about the activities of the Religious Affairs Bureau. The delegation explained that the Bureau, under the State Council, was responsible for formulating policies and specific regulations on religion. It organised the implementation and monitoring of policies, protected the freedom of religious belief according to the law and the religious activities of religious staff, and protected religious groups and religious places.

Protection of Privacy

The Committee asked about the measures to raise awareness of parents, teachers and adults to recognise the principle of respecting the privacy of children, in particular in the context of institutions and places of detention. The delegation noted that schools protected children’s freedom of correspondence and would not open, destroy, or make public any mail or look at diaries. Any physical features or non-communicable diseases would be kept secret according to the wishes of the family. Rankings in tests were provided only to the students themselves and to their guardians, neither were portraits and intelligence made public without consent. Since 2003, the Ministry of Education organised training activities that were attended by over ten million teachers from primary and secondary schools.

Access to Information

The Committee asked how legislation allowed children to better access information (e.g. children with disabilities). It asked about measures to protect children and the means available to report harmful information. The Committee also noted the importance of Internet cafés in providing access to information and asked why children were not admitted in the cafés. The delegation noted that the management and control of websites and internet cafés did not mean that children were banned; rather, the aim was to remove websites and underground bars which did not have a licence. Children made up around 15.8 per cent of people online. Underground bars did not accept supervision and mainly engaged in activities such as pornography and violence. The public security bureaus and those in charge of culture had strengthened control, and there was a reporting system on cybercrimes.

Juvenile Justice

The Committee noted improvements such as the abolition of capital punishment for children and other amendments of the Criminal Code. It asked, however, how regulations were applied in practice and noted with concern the possibility of life imprisonment for 15-18 year olds. The delegation noted that the Penal Code theoretically meant that children under 18 could be subject to life imprisonment. However, there could be mitigating circumstances for children in the age group 14-18. Education was usually used to handle offenders, unless the crimes committed were extremely serious. Minors would not be sentenced to life imprisonment.

The Committee asked about the existence of juvenile courts, the training of judges in such courts and the provision of legal assistance for minors. The delegation explained that the first juvenile justice court was set up in 1994. There were at most 2,504 such courts, but the consolidation of cases into juvenile courts meant that the number of courts was reduced. Training courses were held for
judges every year. Juvenile courts organised exchanges between municipalities and conducted study trips abroad. In terms of legal assistance, a lawyer would immediately be appointed to enable a minor to defend himself.

The Committee asked about the procedures for re-education through labour. The delegation explained that the system, in place since 1957, constituted an educational approach for minor offenders. It had to be approved by the relevant departments and appeal was possible if the individual did not accept the ruling. A reform of the system was on the government’s agenda. The delegation explained that the increase in the incidence of juvenile crimes was largely accounted for by the large presence of the floating population and the associated problems of education and employment.

**Corporal Punishment**

The Committee noted that although corporal punishment was prohibited in schools it was widespread. It observed that corporal punishment was not prohibited in the family and asked if it was prohibited in alternative care settings. The delegation explained that, although there was no clear legal provision on the delineation of the crime, there was an understanding of what corporal punishment entailed. Teachers would be punished and possibly dismissed by the education organs, and in serious cases, their qualifications would be revoked. If a law was violated, teachers would be held accountable before the law.

**Abuse and Neglect**

The Committee referred to a recent UNICEF study among pupils indicating a large number of children suffered from abuse and neglect, in particular within the family. They asked if there was an effective system to report cases. The delegation noted that children could report abuse at home through their schools. There were centres and institutions providing legal assistance for children and women victims of family violence.

The Committee suggested the establishment of a special helpline for children. The delegation noted that the All China’s Women Federation had set up a hotline for children and women in August 2005. Although there was insufficient personnel, and opening hours were limited, it was hoped that it would play a greater role in future.

**Child Labour**

The Committee enquired about the steps taken to bring legislation in line with the ILO conventions. The delegation referred to the revision of a regulation prohibiting child labour, creating an obligation for employers to verify the identity of future employees. Laws had also been strengthened to create administrative, economic and criminal responsibilities for the use of child labour. The government was trying to set up a comprehensive monitoring system with safety inspectors carrying out routine inspections and handling complaints, reporting to the authorities in case of irregularities. Since 2001, annual inspections lasting a month were carried out, as well as an extensive information campaign with the use of mass media to publicise concerns. The minimum age for employment according to Chinese legislation was 16. For children of ages 16-18, there was a special regime prohibiting work in mines and other hazardous activities. Employers were subject to administrative sanctions if they used children in such activities.

**Concluding Remarks**

The country rapporteurs thanked the delegation for providing abundant information in its reports, written replies, and in the two days of discussion. They acknowledged the progress over the past ten years and looked forwards to a continuation of the dialogue to further improve the situation of children in China.
Sha thanked the Committee for its constructive suggestions and noted that any unanswered questions could be dealt with in a continued exchange following the end of the session. He again noted the remarkable progress made and declared that the government was aware of the arduousness of the task. He recognised the responsibility of the government but also noted the need for experts such as the members of the Committee, affirming that the conclusions of the Committee would be carefully studied.