1. Brief Summary of overall Progress in Meeting the EFA goals

Since China implemented the reform and opening-up policy in 1978, Chinese education has entered the fast track of development. The enrollment rates for schools of different types at all levels swiftly climbed, people enjoyed substantially more opportunities to receive education, and the average national education years also continued to rise. In 1986, China promulgated The Law on Compulsory Education and began to implement the 9-year compulsory education. In 1993, the Chinese Government issued The General Plan for Educational Reform and Development and proposed the goal of “basically popularizing the 9-year compulsory education and basically eliminating illiteracy among youth and mid-aged population”. Through the joint efforts of the government and the whole society, China fulfilled this goal as scheduled. In 2000, the Two Basic Education had been realized in the counties with over 85% of the national population. From 1990 to 2000, the net enrollment rate of children of primary school age increased from 97.8% to 99.1%; the gross enrollment rate of the junior middle school rose from 66.7% to 88.6%; the illiteracy rate for population aged 15 or above dropped to 9.1%, and their average number of education years increased to 7.85.

As indicated in the 2006 Global Monitoring Report for Education for All 1 issued by UNESCO, the Educational Development Index (EDI) for Education for All of China was 0.954 in 2002, ranking 38th among all the 121 countries monitored, 16 places up from the 54th in 2001. Specifically, the index of the general net enrollment rate of primary education was 0.957, the adult literacy index was 0.909, the gender disparity index was 0.959, and the fifth grade survival rate was 0.990. The Chinese EDI for Education for All was not only higher than the other countries with large populations, but also higher than that of some high-income countries3.

Between 2001 and 2005, Chinese education has experienced a rapid development. The enrollment rates for education of different categories and levels further ascended, the teaching conditions improved significantly, and the educational quality reached a higher level. The 9-year compulsory education was popularized in a wider range, and the adult illiteracy rate continued to decline. Vocational education and training witnessed a fast development, and more than 150 million person-times of urban and rural laborers participated in the vocational training each year. The tertiary education entered a popularized development stage.

In 2009, 99.5% counties in China, which had 99.7% of the total population, realized the goal of “basically popularizing the 9-year compulsory education and basically eliminating illiteracy among youth and mid-aged population”. The net enrollment rate for children of primary school age rose further to 99.40%; the gross enrollment rate rose to 99.1% for the

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1 See The 2006 Global Monitoring Report for Education for All issued by the UNESCO.
junior middle school stage, 79.2% for the senior middle school stage, and 24.2% for tertiary education; up to 5.07 million person-times finished the non-formal tertiary education of various forms and 61.13 million person-times finished the non-formal secondary education. The average national education years increased to 9.2 years.

At present, China has the largest education population in the world, and the enrolled population in different schools at all levels surpasses 200 million.

2. key/major challenges in meeting the EFA goals and addressing marginalization in education

Since the Dakar Conference, the Education for All of China has made world-famous progress, but still faces numerous severe challenges due to the huge population of the country. At present, in general, the Education for All of China is still at a low level. The number of schooling years of the citizens is around 8.5 years, considerably lagging behind the advanced countries as well as some developing countries. The average number of schooling years of employees is lower than the level of advanced countries by more than 3 years. To fulfill its goals of Education for All, China has to continue to make great efforts.

2.1 Comparatively Low Level of Popularization of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Firstly, the popularization of three-year preschool education is still at a low level. There is still a distance between China and the advanced countries in terms of gross enrollment rate of preschool education and the expected number of schooling years. Secondly, the development of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is unbalanced between urban and rural areas and among different regions. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) of the western region has developed at a relatively slower speed, and has further lagged behind that of the eastern and central regions. The urban areas have basically popularized education for preschool children, but the rural areas still seriously lag behind. Noticeable disparity continues to exist between different social groups in terms of the opportunity to receive Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), and the enrollment rates of preschool education for the poverty-stricken areas and weaker social groups are comparatively low. For example, the proportion of the newly enrolled first-year minority ethnic students of primary schools with preschool education is much lower than the national average. Thirdly, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) faces scarcity of funds, has no formal system of governmental input, and receives comparatively inadequate support from the public finances. Some local governments have even reduced its financial support to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), and fully marketized it. In other areas, the expensive and arbitrary charges of kindergartens have become a heavy burden on the families, especially the low-income families, with preschool children. Shortage of funds has been the major factor leading to the slow development of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in the impoverished and rural areas. Fourthly, there is an urgent need to advance the quality of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Many kindergartens cannot guarantee good quality because they cannot meet the standards in terms of facilities and equipment, student-teacher ratio, and professional
development of teachers. The phenomenon of emphasizing knowledge but neglecting the physical and psychological health of the children still exists in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in rural areas is relatively backward in both concept and method. The pre-primary school classes have a trend of duplicating the primary school education. And some private kindergartens have poor conditions and nonstandard management, and cannot meet the basic quality requirements for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

2.2 Unbalanced Development of Compulsory Education and Noticeable Imbalance between the Urban and Rural Areas and among Different Regions

Firstly, the Education for All remains relatively backward in the rural areas. Because of inadequate educational funds, poor school conditions, and generally lower qualities of teachers, the educational quality of rural schools is obviously lower than that of the urban schools. Most of the adult illiterates live in the Rural. Many of the rural areas that have popularized the 9-year compulsory education need to consolidate the result. Some rural schools suffer from severe insufficiency of laboratory instruments and books and lack of qualified teachers, and cannot meet the basic requirements of the national teaching standards. Based on the 2005 statistics, among the primary schools nationwide, the ones failing to meet the standards for sports ground, musical instruments, painting devices, and laboratory instruments for the mathematics and natural sciences classes respectively accounted for 49%, 60%, 62% and 49%. Among the junior secondary schools nationwide, the corresponding proportions were 34%, 45%, 46% and 29% respectively. There is an urgent need to raise the quality of the teachers for the compulsory education of the Rural. Hundreds of thousands of rural teachers cannot satisfy the qualification requirements specified by the government, and a small number of personnel without teaching qualifications are still teaching in certain areas. In terms of age, the primary school teachers of the Rural have a serious aging trend. In terms of professional titles, a rather small percentage of the teachers of rural primary and secondary schools, especially the junior secondary schools, hold one of the senior or medium levels.

Secondly, the educational development is unbalanced among different regions. Today, most areas of the country have fully popularized the 9-year compulsory education and basically eliminated illiteracy among young adults. However, in 2006, there were still dozens of counties that had not attained the “two-basically” goal. These counties are largely located in the plateaus, Gobi deserts, big mountains, ethnic areas, and border areas. They are economically underdeveloped, have unfavorable natural conditions, and have extremely weak educational basis. For the areas that have popularized the 9-year compulsory education, those in the developed region and those in the underdeveloped regions are at obviously different levels of Education for All.

Thirdly, the guarantee of school enrollment for weaker social groups needs to be further enhanced. At present, China still has about 20 million impoverished population mainly
distributed in the remote rural areas. In cities, the children of migrant population and the disabled children also face certain difficulties in receiving compulsory education.

2.3 Challenging Tasks of Literacy Education for Adults

China’s literacy has accomplished huge progress and achievements, but it is still faced with numerous problems and challenges. China’s adult illiteracy rate, especially the young and middle aged illiteracy rate, is decreasing continuously, but the absolute number of adult illiterates, especially illiterates over 50 years old, is high because of the large cardinal number of China’s population.

2.3.1 Under-developed areas have more illiterates and less resource

China’s existing illiterates mainly live in the rural areas, remote areas, and especially the western provinces or autonomous regions for minority groups, of which the economy is usually not developed well. In 2008, illiterate rate in rural areas is 6 percentage points higher than that in cities and towns; illiterate rate in western China is respectively 4 and 3 percentage points higher than that in eastern China and Mid-China. Among 31 provinces, cities and autonomous regions (excluding Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Macao Special Administrative Region and Taiwan province), there still exist many regions with illiterate rate higher than 10%. These regions include Tibet Autonomous Region, 37.7%; Gansu province, 17.8%; Qinghai province, 16.7%, Guizhou province, 14.6%; Anhui province, 14.5%, Yunnan province, 13.3%, Fujian province, 10.04%, Sichuan province, 10.2% and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, 10.1%. Tens of dozens of counties failing to meet the standards of “two basics” are all national designated poor counties. These counties are mostly characterized by disagreeable natural conditions, sparse population, backward economic development, poor transportation, obstruction of information, lack of cultural life and educational resources.

2.3.2 Difficulty of literacy for women, minorities and elderly illiterates

Judging from population distribution, illiterates are mostly farmers, women, people from minority groups and people of older age. Sample survey of population in 2008 indicates that 72% of illiterates are farmers and 74% are women. National illiterate rate for women is 11.52%, 7.5 percentage points higher than that for men. There exist several provinces, cities and autonomous regions whose gender differential indexes for adult reading rate are lower than 0.9. They include Zhejiang province, 0.89; Hainan province, 0.87; Fujian province, 0.87; Anhui province, 0.86; Yunnan province, 0.85; Gansu province, 0.85, Qinghai province, 0.84, Guizhou province, 0.82 and Tibet Autonomous Region, 0.77. Compared with male illiterates, female illiterates bear heavier housework and face higher mental barrier to be involved in illiteracy elimination.

Judging from age distribution of illiterates, the older the people are, the higher the rate of illiteracy is. People over 50 are the main body of illiterates. Compared to young and middle
aged illiterates, the senior aged illiterates are inclined to lack motivation and skills to be involved in literacy. Accordingly, literacy on the senior aged illiterates is facing more challenges.

Judging from differences between ethnic groups, the illiterate rate of minority groups drops faster than that of Han people, and the gap between them is gradually shrinking. Some exceptional minority groups have witnessed that their illiterate rates are already lower than that of Han people. However, the illiterate rate of most minority groups is still higher than that of Han people and the national average level. The obstacle in literacy of minority groups mainly lies in language and words. Most of 55 minority groups use their own language in their daily life, but only twenty-two possess words of their own groups. Groups with relatively smaller population might have their own words, but the words are not frequently used and reading materials in their language are rare. Although some minority regions are making attempts to conduct literacy bilingually, there is still a long way to go on literacy in bilingual teaching and balancing the relationship between minority groups’ language, writing and Mandarin, Chinese characters. The difficulties which bilingual literacy is facing are as follows: qualified bilingual teachers are not sufficient, and bilingual textbooks and reading materials and those in minority groups’ language are rare, etc.

From the aforementioned analysis, it can be easily concluded that there are many difficulties in eliminating illiteracy for the remaining illiterates, at meantime, cost is high.

3. Key policies and/or good practices targeted at unreached, underserved, marginalized groups implemented as a result of the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment and the Mid-Term Policy Review or after the Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators in May 2009

3.1 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

--Formulate national and local plans for, and define the goals and measures of, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), in a unified manner and following the principles of striving for the goals, respecting the actuality, planning by region, and providing classified guidance.

--Boost the construction of public kindergartens, and ensure funds for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The school buildings that become redundant after the adjustment of school distribution will be preferentially utilized for operating kindergartens.

--Develop Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) of the Rural, and make efforts to expand the scale of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in the western region and the poverty-stricken areas.

--Encourage and support all social forces to operate kindergartens, and in the meantime strengthen the regulation of private kindergartens.
--Strengthen the management of the directors and teachers of kindergartens in relation to their qualification and examination.

--Guide and encourage Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) at homes; provide scientific guidance to parents for the education of children aged between 0 and 6, in cooperation with the health departments; and strengthen the scientific research of preschool education.

--Tighten the management of the prices of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), setting maximum and minimum standards for prices of public kindergartens (classes) and requiring the private kindergartens to report and publicize their prices. Subsidies will be provided to the children of low-income families and migrant parents as well as the orphans and vagrant children.

--Establish and improve a system of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) led by the government in a unified way, sponsored by the educational authorities, supported by related departments, and commonly participated by various kindergartens and the parents. The joint meeting mechanism led by the educational authority and participated by related departments will be established to solve the problems arising from Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The councils of urban residential communities and those of administrative villages are encouraged to play a role, and all social resources will be motivated and coordinated to boost the healthy development of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).

--Establish a system for supervision of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The state will formulate the provisional measures for assessment and supervision of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), and the provincial-level governments will formulate the standards for this purpose. The development, quality, and funds of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and the salaries of kindergarten teachers will all be included as indexes for the assessment by the provincial-level governments. Special supervision will be done to deal with the outstanding and hard issues of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The departments for educational administration and supervision at all levels of governments will execute periodic supervision and assessment of all kinds of kindergartens for their nursing and teaching quality and management levels, and publish the results and subject them to supervision by the parents and the society.

3.2 Popularization of Basic Education

--Balanced development of compulsory education will be pursued to reduce the differences between urban and rural areas and among different regions, and to enable every child to receive qualified compulsory education. The challenging “two-basically” goal will be realized as scheduled in the western region. The state will formulate the basic standards for the conditions and quality of schools of compulsory education, the provincial-level government takes charge of unified planning and implementation, and the governments of
and above the county level will be responsible for balancing the distribution of educational resources. The renovation of weaker schools will be further enhanced to ensure each school will be a qualified school and all the schools are roughly equal in terms of conditions, funds, investment, staffing of headmasters and teachers, and the salaries for teachers.

--The government will provide stronger support to the poverty-stricken areas and impoverished masses. The support from the eastern region to the education of western region will be continued, as will the one-on-one support from urban schools to rural ones. The support to the ethnic areas will be strengthened and bilingual (ethnic language and Chinese) education will be implemented in ethnic primary and secondary schools, so as to speed up the educational development of the ethnicities with smaller populations.

--The problem of the compulsory education for the children of migrant workers will be solved. They will mainly receive education at the full-time primary and secondary schools of the recipient city of the migrant workers, and enjoy the same treatment with local students of the city. Sufficient attention will also be paid to education of the children whom the migrant workers have left behind at their home villages.

--The conditions of the rural schools will be improved. An effective long-term mechanism for maintaining and repairing the buildings of the rural primary and secondary schools of the compulsory education stage will be implemented to ensure their safety. The basic conditions of the schools will be further strengthened to ensure that all the rural primary and secondary schools can have qualified campus, buildings, teaching equipment, books, and sport facilities. The project of renovating the buildings of the rural junior secondary schools of the central and western regions and that of constructing sanitary schools of the new Rural will be implemented to solve the problem of excessive class sizes, improve the canteens and drinking water facilities, and better the sanitary conditions.

--The project of modern distance education for rural primary and secondary schools will be further implemented, by which all the rural junior secondary schools will have computer classrooms, and all the rural primary schools will have the systems of receiving and playing the satellite teaching programs and popularize the use of discs in teaching. A distance education network that covers all the rural schools will be set up for them to share high-quality educational resources through distance education.

--The quality of the rural teachers for compulsory education will be promoted. A program for training rural teachers will be implemented to ensure that at least 50% of rural teachers can receive at least one session of professional training till 2010. Modern distance education will be fully utilized in raising the teaching levels of rural teachers. The training of the backbone teachers and “bilingual teachers” of the ethnic areas will be enhanced. A series of plans, including the plan for establishing special teaching posts at rural schools, the plan for training the teachers of rural schools by educational masters, and the plan of volunteer services by college students for the western region, will be implemented to encourage college graduates to teach at the grassroot schools of the rural areas. Urban teachers will
be encouraged to provide more help to rural education. The guarantee system for the funds for rural schools and the salaries of rural teachers will be strengthened to ensure that the teachers can receive their salaries on time and in full amount. Efforts should be made to improve the living conditions of rural teachers and check the loss of backbone teachers from the poverty-stricken areas.

--The financial aid policies for the compulsory education period will be legally implemented. Now that the miscellaneous fees have been exempted at the rural schools for compulsory education, the same aid will be available at their urban counterparts. The students from impoverished families will receive free textbooks as well as subsidies for their boarding expenses at the schools. Similarly, the students from low-income families in the cities will receive the same assistance. Free textbooks will be provided to more students.

--The plan for constructing special education schools for the central and western regions (between 2008 and 2010) during the “11th Five-Year” period will be implemented, whereby the central government and the local governments will make joint investment (600 million Yuan from the central government) to improve significantly the conditions of the existing special education schools. All the schools covered by this plan will meet, or basically meet, the standards specified by the state for school facilities and equipment, and can basically meet the needs of all disabled children to receive the 9-year compulsory education. The number of special education schools will increase from 1,012 in 2006 to 1,500, with at least one in each prefecture (city) and each of the counties with a population over 300,000 in the central and western regions. Thus the distribution of such schools will become more reasonable, and the needs of the disabled children in the central and western regions to receive compulsory education can be basically satisfied. When this program of action is fulfilled, the number of registered students at the special education schools in the central and western regions will increase from 80,000 in 2006 to 256,000, by a rate of 220% and a net number of 176,000, bringing benefit to 230,000 students. The needs of the disabled children in the central and western regions for receiving school education will be basically fulfilled.

--The education of the disabled children attending regular schools will be promoted. Guidance to this work and training of the related teachers will be provided. And the charges will be exempted for more and more diverse students.

3.3 Satisfaction of Needs of Youth and Adults for Skills

--The networks of vocational education and training will be expanded to cover both urban and rural areas, so as to ensure that every laborer, urban or rural, has adequate knowledge and skills. National projects of training technical talents will be implemented to speed up the training of the technical talents strongly demanded by the production and service sectors, especially the high-quality specialized technical talents urgently yearned for by the modern manufacturing and service sectors. The national projects of training rural laborers for their transfer to non-agricultural sectors and the national projects of training rural
practical talents will be carried out to induce reasonable and orderly transfer of rural labor force and increase the vocational skills and adapting ability of migrant workers. The “balanced development of three educations” (basic, vocational and adult educations) as well as the “combination of agriculture, science and education” will be promoted to train new types of peasants who have culture, know technologies and understand business, making contribution to the construction of the socialist new countryside of China. The projects of continuing education for adults and reemployment training will be implemented to provide training on vocational skills and business undertaking for the current employees, graduates of junior and senior secondary schools, unemployed urban residents, and migrant workers.

The teaching reform of vocational education will be brought to a greater depth. Always aiming at employment, ordered cultivation will be practiced, and a new mode of talent cultivation, which is characterized by cooperation between schools and enterprises, combination of work and learning, and simultaneous involvement as a student and an employee, will be exercised. The teaching contents and methods will be updated and improved to allow the students to acquire greater practical and vocational abilities and render them more competitive for jobs. The flexible study system will be established, and the credit system and the selective system will be gradually implemented. The joint enrollment and operation by vocational education institutions of the western and eastern regions, or of the rural and urban areas, will be encouraged. The education of professional ethics as well as employment guidance to students will be enhanced. The disciplinary structure of vocational education will be optimized, and the focus should be placed on launching and developing the majors needed by the new industries and modern service industries.

The building of the basic abilities of vocational education will be strengthened. The plan of building practice bases for vocational education will be continued to set up for the important majors. 2,000 practice bases that cover a lot of majors and subjects, have advanced equipment, and share excellent resources. The plan of constructing centers of vocational education will continue to be implemented, and support will be given mainly to 1,000 such centers. The plan of constructing high-quality exemplary vocational schools and colleges will be carried out, by which 1,000 exemplary secondary vocational schools and 100 exemplary vocational colleges will be constructed. The program of advancing the qualities of the teachers of vocational schools and colleges will be put in practice. Their training will be supported, and the system for their social practice will be established. The country will endeavor to build a team of “double-master” (master of teaching and master of professional knowledge, with respective qualifications) teachers.

3.4 Illiteracy Elimination for Young Adults

The responsibility system for the literacy work will be established, by which the local governments and village councils are responsible for motivation and organization and the rural primary and secondary schools will take responsibility for the teaching.
--The focus will be laid on illiteracy elimination for the poverty-stricken areas, the ethnic minority areas, and women.

--Curriculum reform and teaching reform will be carried out for literacy education. The mechanism for literacy education will take guidance from the learning needs of the illiterates and start from and aim to solve the actual problems.

--The system of assessment and acceptance for the literacy work will be sustained to monitor the progresses, and information technology will be fully tapped to transmit via the Internet the resources related to illiteracy-eliminating courses and training of literacy teachers.

--Larger inputs will be made and the working mechanism will be improved to consolidate and expand the fruits of illiteracy elimination.

--Universities will be motivated to participate in the research and implementation of illiteracy elimination to raise the theoretical level of the work.

3.5 Promotion of Gender Equality

--The laws and regulations on gender equality and education will be widely publicized to create a social environment conducive to education for women. In school education, the awareness of gender equality will be fostered among both the educators and the educated.

--The rate of girls completing the 9-year compulsory education will be increased, with particular attention to the poverty-stricken areas and ethnic minority areas, the disabled, and the migrant population. All social groups are encouraged to provide financial aid to school enrollment of girls.

--More vigor will be invested into the work of eliminating illiteracy among women, especially the women in the rural areas. Extensive social participation in illiteracy elimination for women will be motivated.

--Attention will be paid to cultivation of women in living skills and vocational techniques. Via formal diploma education and non-diploma vocational education as well as all kinds of training, the newly added female labor force as well as the current women employees will be able to receive various forms of vocational and adult education, and opportunities for continuing education will be provided to the girls among the graduates of junior secondary schools. The disabled women will have opportunities to receive education, especially vocational education and training, and raise their educational level to acquire a stronger ability for survival and development.

--Gender equality will be an important index of educational fairness during educational supervision and inspection.
3.6. Overall Improvement of Educational Quality

--The educational reform will be carried to greater depths. The state will implement comprehensive curriculum reform of the basic education, update the teaching contents, improve the cultivation patterns and teaching methods, advocate inspiring education, and emphasize fostering the innovative spirit, independent thinking, and practical ability of students. The study burden of primary and secondary school students will be substantially lightened to allow them time to get in contact with the social life and practice. Aesthetic education will be enhanced among students to promote their level of aesthetic appreciation. Better guidance will be provided for the extracurricular activities of the students, organizing them to participate in beneficial productive activities and those for public good to help them to foster enthusiasm for and respect to labor.

--The systems for appraisal, guidance and monitoring of basic education will be established. In order to boost the overall development of the students, the state will reform and improve the examination system, explore and establish a multifaceted system of student appraisal indicating the comprehensive qualities and specialties of the students, and gradually set up and complete the quality monitoring system for basic education, which will provide scientific proofs for the educational decisions.

--The students will achieve stronger abilities in speaking Putonghua (standard Chinese), writing the Chinese characters, and language application, and the teachers of the Chinese language classes for ethnicities will receive training in Putonghua (standard Chinese). The disabled children will receive training on living skills and various practical abilities.

--Placing health at the foremost position, the state will strengthen the physical and health education of the schools, requiring them to provide sufficient and qualified physical education courses, ensure that the students can do physical exercises for at least one hour a day, enhance the psychological education for them and instruct them on the value of life, help them to foster good sanitary habits and healthy lifestyles, and substantially improve their health standards.

--The education and training of teachers will be strengthened to raise their moral standards and teaching levels. The level of professional ethics of the teachers will be lifted, and their senses of responsibility and mission will be heightened. The state will reform the education of teachers, and build better normal colleges and teacher training schools and reform their operation. The country will attract excellent youth to attend normal colleges and teacher training schools, and encourage excellent talents to become teachers. The practice of free education for normal college students will be expanded to encourage a larger number of excellent youth to work as lifelong educators. The multidisciplinary universities with qualified conditions are encouraged to engage in cultivation and training of primary and secondary school teachers and an open, flexible, standard, and orderly system for education of teachers will be gradually formed to raise the qualities and levels of the teachers.
--The system for administration of teachers will be improved. The qualities of teachers will be ensured through strictly sticking to qualification system for the teaching profession and recruiting every new teacher of primary and secondary schools through open selection. The personnel system will be changed so that all teachers and staffs become employees, and the employment system for teachers will be further improved. Policy measures will be introduced or enhanced to attract excellent talents to teach, especially in rural areas. The state will have a stricter management of the personnel establishment of primary and secondary schools and realize reasonable distribution of teaching resources. The system of periodic exchange of teachers and headmasters among the public schools within a given area will be established. The system of hiring and administering part-time teachers for vocational education will be improved, and the vocational schools and colleges are encouraged to recruit teachers from enterprises. The state will improve the methods of classified management of teaching posts, open recruitment of teachers, performance assessment, and salary distribution. The assessment and management of teachers will be tightened to continuously optimize this team.

--The state will improve the working and living conditions of the teachers. The local governments at all levels will care about the teachers, try to improve their working, studying and living conditions, especially for the rural areas, solve their actual difficulties, and safeguard their legal rights and interests. It will be substantially guaranteed that the salary level of the teachers will not be lower, if not higher, than that of the public servants, and will be gradually raised. The Medicare and social security for teachers will be improved, and the publicity and commendation of teachers will be intensified.

4. Foreseen challenges in education beyond 2020

In July 2010, Chinese government issued 《Outline of China’s National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development(2010-2020). This Plan is formulated to enhance citizens’ overall quality, boost educational development in a scientific way, and speed up socialist modernization. Except preamble, this plan includes four parts: general strategy, development missions, educational system reforms and guaranteeing measures.

4.1 Foreseen challenges in education beyond 2020

In the face of unprecedented opportunities and challenges, we must stay levelheaded about the fact that education in this nation is still lagging behind the requirements of national socioeconomic development and people’s demand for fine education. Our concept of education and our teaching contents and methodology are relatively outdated, schoolwork burdens on primary and middle school students too heavy, the promotion of quality education arrested, our students weak in their adaptability to society, and innovative, practical and versatile professionals in acute shortage. Our education system and mechanisms are yet perfect. Schools lack vitality in their operations, and the structure and geographical distribution of education resources are yet to be put on an even keel.
Impoverished and ethnic autonomous areas are trailing behind in education development, which is also uneven between urban and rural areas and between different regions. Education funding cannot keep up with demands, and education is yet to be accorded the strategic priority it deserves. To receive quality education is the outcry of the people, and to deepen education reform has been public’s shared desire.

4.2 Strategic goals
The strategic goals to be attained by the year 2020 are to basically modernize education, bring a learning society into shape, and turn China into a country rich in human resources.

- **Further Popularize education.** By 2020, preschool education shall be basically universalized while popularization of nine-year compulsory education shall be consolidated and enhanced. Meanwhile, senior middle school education shall become the norm, with a 90% gross enrolment rate, and higher education shall be further popularized, with a gross enrolment rate of 40%. Illiteracy shall be eliminated among the young and the middle-aged. The average number of years of education received by newly-added members of the workforce shall rise from 12.4 to 13.5 years. The average number of years of education received by the working-age (20-59 years old) population shall extend from 9.5 to 11.2 years. Twenty percent of the working-age population shall have finished higher education by 2020, doubling that of 2009.

- **Delivering equal education to everyone.** Education should remain public welfare-oriented in nature, and equal access to it shall be safeguarded. All citizens should have access to fine education according to the law. A basic public education service network covering both urban and rural areas shall be set up, in which equal services are provided and regional disparities in this field are narrowed down. Stepped-up efforts should be made to run every school well, and bring the best possible education to every student. No child shall drop out of school due to family financial woes. Equal compulsory education opportunities for children of rural migrant workers in cities shall be provided in a down-to-earth way. Disabled people’s right to education shall be also guaranteed without fail.

- **Offering quality education in various ways.** The quality of education as a whole shall be enhanced, while its modernization level shall rise by a significant margin. The aggregate volume of high-quality education resources shall grow steadily to better meet people’s demands for quality education. Dramatic improvement shall be registered in students’ ideological awareness, moral conduct, scientific and cultural attainment, and physical health. The capabilities of professionals in all fields of endeavor to serve the nation and the people and to take part in global competition shall be increased vastly.

- **Building a consummate framework for lifelong education.** Diploma-granting education shall develop in coordination with non-diploma education. Vocational
education shall be connected with regular education, and there shall also be a smooth link between pre-job and on-the-job education. The attendance rate of further or continuing education shall go up by a wide margin, as 50% of the job-holders should have received such education. The modern national education system shall be perfected, and a basic framework for lifelong education shall be in place, so that everyone can be taught what they want to learn, excel at what they learn, and put what they have learned into use.

- **Establishing a full-fledged, vibrant education system.** It is imperative to further emancipate our mind, update our concepts, deepen educational reform, open education still wider, and bring about an education system that is congenial to the socialist market economy and the objective of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. Such an education system should also be vibrant, efficient, open, and well adapted to scientific development and the requirements to run world-class modern education with Chinese features.

**Box 1: Major goals for education development from 2009 to 2020**

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<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preschool education</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of children in kindergartens</td>
<td>Million</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross attendance rate for those entering kindergartens 1 year before starting school</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross attendance rate for those entering kindergartens 2 years before starting school</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross attendance rate for those entering kindergartens 3 years before starting school</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nine-year compulsory education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students in school</td>
<td>Million</td>
<td>157.72</td>
<td>161.0</td>
<td>165.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention rate of students</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior middle school education</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students in school</td>
<td>Million</td>
<td>46.24</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrollment rate</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students in secondary vocational schools</td>
<td>Million</td>
<td>21.79</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students in higher vocational colleges</td>
<td>Million</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total enrollments</td>
<td>Million</td>
<td>29.79</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of university/college students on campus</td>
<td>Million</td>
<td>28.26</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which: number of postgraduates</td>
<td>Million</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrollment rate</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Further or continuing education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of on-the-job learners in further or continuing education</td>
<td>million</td>
<td>166.0</td>
<td>290.0</td>
<td>350.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: * including students in secondary vocational schools; ** including students in higher vocational colleges.

### Box 2: Major goals for human resource development from 2009 to 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people with higher education</td>
<td>Million</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>145.0</td>
<td>195.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of years of education received by the working-age(20-59 years old) population of which: percentage of those having received higher education</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of years of education received by newly-added members of the workforce of which: percentage of those having received senior middle school or higher education</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3. Preschool Education

#### 4.3.1 Basically universalizing preschool education

Preschool education is key to physical and mental growth of the children and to their habit fostering and intellectual development. It is imperative to follow the law governing children’s mental and physical development, persist in scientific nursing and teaching methods, and ensure children’s happy and healthy growth. Efforts should be made to actively push forward preschool education. By 2020, one-year preschool education should become the norm, while two-year preschool education should be basically universalized, and three-year preschool education popularized in regions where conditions are ripe. Due importance shall be attached to the education of infants aged between 0 and 3.

#### 4.3.2 Defining government responsibilities

Preschool education shall be listed in urban and new socialist countryside development plans. A government-led kindergarten management mechanism, which includes social participation and pools both public and private resources, shall be established. Stepped-up efforts should be made to develop public kindergartens, and to support non-governmental ones. Government shall increase input, so that the costs involved are shared on a rational basis. Support shall be given to families that cannot afford preschool education. Management of preschool education should be improved, while kindergarten management standards shall be drawn up. An approval system for kindergarten establishment shall be established, and administrative approaches to regulate tuition fees shall be improved. We should strictly implement the qualification standards for preschool teachers, and enhance teachers’ trainings, so as to improve their overall quality.
Kindergarten teachers’ social status, salaries and benefits shall be guaranteed in accordance with relevant laws. Preschool education shall be put under the overall guidance and administration of the government’s education departments, and the departments concerned should perform their respective duties and mobilize the entire society to strengthen preschool education.

4.3.3 Strengthening preschool education in rural areas

It is necessary to universalize preschool education in rural areas, and make sure that all the children left behind by parents working away from their home villages are sent to kindergartens. Rural preschool education resources shall be replenished by all means. New kindergartens shall be built while old ones are rebuilt and expanded. Kindergarten (preschool classes) can be held by making full use of the surplus middle and primary school buildings and teachers. As authorities readjust the layout of the schools, the central kindergarten in townships must play a model role in guiding the village kindergartens. Preschool education in impoverished areas shall also be supported.

4.4 Compulsory Education

4.4.1 Consolidating, enhancing nine-year compulsory education

School-age children must receive compulsory education according to Chinese laws. Compulsory education in China is legal-biding, free, universal, and the most critical part of all phases of education. Compulsory education should focus on cultivating the students’ moral conducts, stimulating their learning interests and improve their physical health, and help them foster fine habits. By 2020, compulsory education shall be universalized at a higher level, while teaching quality should be improved comprehensively. The development of preschool education shall be basically balanced among different regions, and all school-age children and adolescents should be guaranteed with access to high-quality compulsory education.

Progress made in universalizing compulsory education shall be consolidated. According to the requirements for urban and rural development, geographical layout of schools shall be well planned, and necessary teaching venues should be set up, so that students can attend schools near their homes. The task of ensuring equal compulsory education for children living with migrant worker parents in cities shall be ensured primarily by local governments and allotted mainly to public primary and middle schools. Rules and regulations shall be studied and formulated to accommodate these children to take entrance examinations for higher schools upon finishing compulsory education without going back to their home villages. A care and service framework and a monitoring mechanism operated chiefly by the government and participated by the public for the children left behind in villages by rural migrant worker parents shall be set up and perfected. Establishment of rural boarding schools shall be accelerated, with priority given to the accommodation needs of the left-behind children. Necessary measures shall be
made to ensure that school-age children do not have to drop out of school for financial difficulties, lack of access to schools, or poor academic performance. Efforts should also be made to discourage students from giving up on their studies.

The quality of compulsory education shall be improved. Basic national standards and a monitoring system for the quality of compulsory education shall be established. The national curriculum standards for compulsory education and teachers’ credentials also shall be applied strictly. Curricular and teaching method reforms shall be deepened, while small-class teaching shall be promoted. Teaching posts of music, physical education, art and other subjects shall be filled, and schools shall offer all subjects required without omission. The use of Mandarin Chinese and the standard written forms of simplified Chinese characters shall be promoted vigorously in teaching.

Students’ physical health shall be improved. Studies, daily life and physical exercises shall be arranged on a scientific basis, while ample sleep hours should be guaranteed. “Sunshine sports” shall be promoted to ensure that every student has one hour each day to conduct keep-fit exercises to improve their physical health. Healthy diet shall be advocated to improve students’ nutrition, and the nutrition level of rural students in impoverished areas shall be raised. The eyesight of students must be protected.

4.4.2 Promoting balanced development in compulsory education

Balanced development is a strategic mission for compulsory education. To achieve this goal, a mechanism to safeguard balanced compulsory education development should be set up and perfected. Construction of standardized schools for compulsory education shall be promoted, and teachers, equipment, books, school buildings and other resources should be allotted in a balanced manner.

The teaching quality gap between schools shall be bridged in a down-to-earth way, and major efforts should be made to address the problem of parents choosing the best school for their children. Schools with of weak teaching abilities should be strengthened, and no effort should be spared to improve teachers’ proficiency level. Exchanges of teachers and school principals within counties should be realized. Quotas for enrollment in high quality senior middle schools and secondary vocational schools shall be distributed rationally among local junior middle schools. No elite schools and classes shall be installed in compulsory education. Under the prerequisite that school-age children and adolescents should attend public schools near home, nongovernmental schools shall be developed to offer more schooling choices.

Efforts to bridge the education development gap between urban and rural areas shall be accelerated. A framework shall be brought forth to integrate urban and rural areas in compulsory education development, with preference given to rural areas in fiscal funding, school construction and teachers’ allocation. Coordinated urban and rural development shall be realized first in counties before it is promoted in broader scope.

Every effort shall be made to reduce interregional disparities. Fiscal transfer payments shall be increased in favor of compulsory education development in old revolutionary base
areas, ethnic autonomous regions, border areas and poverty-stricken areas. Developed regions are encouraged to assist underdeveloped regions.

4.4.3 Lessening schoolwork burdens on primary, middle school students

Heavy schoolwork is harmful to the mental and physical well-being of youngsters and children. Reducing the schoolwork burdens on students is the society’s shared responsibility. Governments, schools, families and communities must jointly address the problem by addressing both its symptoms and root causes. Schoolwork burden reduction shall be implemented at primary and middle schools. We shall enable the students to learn in lively ways and grow up happily and healthily. Primary school students should be the first to have their heavy burdens cut down.

Governments at all levels shall regard reducing heavy schoolwork burdens as a major task for education work, as well as a goal that calls for overall planning and all-dimensional implementation. Textbook contents shall be readjusted and their degree of difficulty redesigned on a scientific footing. The ways and means to test and evaluate student performance and to appraise school operation shall be reformed. School-running operations shall be standardized, and a framework should be instituted to monitor students’ schoolwork burdens and inform the public of it. Schools can neither be ranked according to rate of students’ admission to higher schools, nor the enrollment indexes. Preparatory organizations and tutorial markets should be regulated. We shall also strengthen the construction and management of venues for extracurricular activities, to enrich the extracurricular activities for students.

Schools should reduce students’ schoolwork burdens so as to give students enough time to learn about the society, think deeply, practice more, and do exercises and amuse themselves. It is imperative to improve teachers’ professional quality, their teaching methods and efficiency, while cutting down on homework and classroom examinations. Students’ interest in studies and hobbies should be nurtured. The curricula and syllabi should be followed strictly, and on no account should teaching hours and lessons’ difficulty levels be increased. The scores of graded examinations and competitions of various kinds shall not be used to in school enrollment and advances to higher grades during compulsory education.

Family education should play its full part as children and adolescents grow. Parents should have the right concepts for education, master scientific ways of education, respect children’s salubrious interests and temperaments, help their children foster fine habits, and communicate and work more closely with schools to reduce students’ schoolwork burdens.

4.5 EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES

4.5.1 Valuing and supporting education for ethnic minorities
Speeding up educational development for ethnic minorities is of far-reaching importance to promoting socioeconomic development among these people and in the areas inhabited by them, and to enhancing unity between people of all ethnic backgrounds in striving for common prosperity and development. It is necessary to step up leadership over education for minority peoples, implement the Party’s ethnic policy, and work pragmatically to address the special impediments and outstanding problems that confront ethnic minorities and minority-inhabited areas in developing education.

Education in ethnic unity shall be conducted extensively in schools at all levels and of all varieties. The Party’s ethnic theory and policy, and state laws and ordinances shall be introduced in textbooks, lectured in classrooms, and borne in students’ minds, and guidance shall be given to teachers and students in fostering Marxist outlooks on the motherland, ethnicity and religion, consolidating the grand unity between people of all ethnic backgrounds, and enhancing national proud and cohesion.

4.5.2 Raising education quality for ethnic minorities

Public education resources shall be deployed in favor of minority-inhabited areas. The central and local governments shall expand financial assistance to education for ethnic minority peoples.

Promoting coordinated growth of all kinds of education at all levels in minority-inhabited areas. The achievements made by these areas in popularizing compulsory education shall be consolidated. The school-age children and adolescents must be ensured to receive compulsory education according to the law. Popularization rate and teaching quality shall be improved comprehensively. Border counties and impoverished counties in ethnic autonomous areas shall be supported to meet government standards for the construction of school buildings for compulsory education, with special efforts devoted to building boarding schools. Development in senior middle school education in the homelands of ethnic minorities shall be speeded up. Support shall also be granted to areas with a flimsy foundation for education to renovate, expand or build senior middle schools. No effort shall be spared to expand vocational education in minority-inhabited areas, and more support shall be granted to secondary vocational education in these areas. Higher education shall be developed in a big way in these areas as well. Universities for ethnic groups shall be aided in their efforts to step up development of disciplines and human resources, and their school-running quality shall be improved. A better job shall be done in running classes to prepare ethnic minority students for college. More support shall be granted to education development for ethnic minorities with small populations.

No effort shall be spared to advance bilingual teaching, open Chinese language classes in every school, and popularize the national common language and writing system. Minority peoples’ right to be educated in native languages shall be respected and ensured. Bilingual preschool education shall be promoted. State support shall be given to teacher
training, teaching research, and textbook compilation and publication.

Schools in minority-inhabited areas shall get more help from their counterparts in other parts of the country under a “pairing-assistance” program. A conscientious job shall be done to organize and implement the efforts of developed provinces and municipalities in support of education in minority-inhabited areas. We shall explore various ways to attract more ethnic minority students to study in other inland provinces, using fully quality educational resources in those regions. Vocational schools that enroll students from minority-inhabited areas shall be operated well. Cultivation and training of teachers for minority-inhabited areas shall be intensified, and teachers’ political awareness and professional quality enhanced. The state shall draft incentive policies to encourage and support college graduates to teach in schools in minority-inhabited areas. These areas shall get the support they need to develop modern distance education and extend the coverage of quality education resources.

References:
1. Progress in China’s Literacy—— Challenges and changes, National Center for Education Development Research 2010