



CHINA IN CONTEXT AND PERSPECTIVE

China's win-win at the UN Human Rights Council Just not for human rights

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Before the Human Rights Council (HRC) suspended its 43rd session due to Covid-19 on March 13, 2020, the PRC had tabled its second resolution on 'promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights'.¹ When the HRC resumes in mid-June to conclude its final week of the session, it's crucial that a vote be called on the PRC's resolution² and that governments concerned about China's efforts to weaken international human rights and mechanisms vote against it.³ The draft resolution aims to further embed Xi Jinping's ideas, discourse, and policy into the work and language of the Council, and subvert the purpose and mission of the HRC, which is to promote "universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all" and to address, and make recommendations on, situations of human rights violations.⁴ China wants to turn the HRC into something else entirely: a shell, emptied of universal values, substantive rights, and independent human rights monitoring mechanisms – a body in which individuals and civil society organizations seeking to hold governments to account for human rights violations have no place and no voice.⁵

The PRC's resolution would move the Council one step closer to becoming a 'Human Rights Council with CCP characteristics' in which sovereignty, non-interference, 'dialogue and cooperation,' 'mutual respect' and multilateralism would be prioritized as fundamental, non-negotiable principles, and the promotion and protection of human rights of individuals rendered an afterthought. The Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a

¹"Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights," A/HRC/43/L.31, 12 March 2020. The text of China's tabled resolution is located on the HRC Extranet, which can be accessed after obtaining a username and password, [here](#). (Click on the blue text, "HRC43 Extranet (new users access)".)

²Ibid.

³One of the EU's priorities for UN human rights engagements in 2020 is precisely this: "The EU will continue to take a strong stance against any attempts to redefine human rights in international law and international human rights standards..." See Council of the European Union, 17 February 2020, 5982/20, "Outcome of Proceedings: Council Conclusions on EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2020," para. 6.

⁴UN General Assembly Resolution, A/RES/60/251, adopted 15 March 2006, paras. 2, 3.

⁵References to "China" are to the Chinese Communist Party-state only, and not to the people of China, or anything else that might be construed as China or "Chinese."



state-led ‘cooperative mechanism’ based on ‘interactive dialogue,’ which the PRC has used to advance its own anti-human rights agenda,⁶ would effectively displace mechanisms staffed and led by independent experts, such as the special procedures and the treaty bodies, which the Chinese party-state (and other illiberal governments) routinely attack.⁷ The PRC’s ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ (MBC) initiative, coupled with its ‘development first’⁸ strategy and tactical use of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee (HRCAC, or Advisory Committee) to generate ‘studies’ to support its views and agenda,⁹ aim to insinuate China’s rights-negating vision and discourse into the work of the Council. Accordingly, governments supportive of human rights and the international human rights system should call for a vote on the PRC’s tabled resolution, and vote against its adoption. And they should also consider submitting comments and questions to the HRCAC on its troubling study of ‘the role of technical assistance and capacity-building in fostering mutually beneficial cooperation in promoting and protecting human rights,’ which was prepared for the 43rd session.¹⁰

Background: China’s first ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ resolution (March 2018)

China’s first ‘promoting mutually beneficial cooperation’ (MBC) resolution was adopted by the Human Rights Council in March 2018, after the United States called for a vote.¹¹ The U.S. was the only country to vote against the resolution; 17 States abstained, while 28 States voted in favor of the resolution.¹² In calling for a vote, the U.S. explained that China was attempting through the resolution “to weaken the UN human rights system and the norms underpinning it”.¹³ The U.S. diplomat added that “mutually beneficial cooperation” was “intended to benefit autocratic states at the expense of people whose

⁶Andréa Worden, “China Deals Another Blow to the International Human Rights Framework at its UN Universal Periodic Review,” *China Change*, 25 November 2018.

⁷Sadly, the U.S. recently found itself among this group, with its attack on then Special Rapporteur for extreme poverty and human rights, Professor Philip Alston, after his hard-hitting report on poverty in the U.S. See Ed Pilkington, “Nikki Haley attacks damning UN report on US poverty under Trump,” *The Guardian*, 21 June 2018.

⁸Andréa Worden, “With its Latest Human Rights Council Resolution, China Continues its Assault on the UN Human Rights Framework,” *China Change*, 9 April 2018.

⁹In an earlier piece for Sinopsis, I discussed another example of how the PRC has used the HRC Advisory Committee to further its illiberal agenda at the Council. See Andréa Worden, “The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee: A new tool in China’s anti-human rights strategy,” Sinopsis, 6 August 2019.

¹⁰UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, “The role of technical assistance and capacity-building in fostering mutually beneficial cooperation in promoting and protecting human rights,” A/HRC/43/21, 17 January 2020 [‘HRCAC MBC Report’].

¹¹The U.S. was still a member of the HRC when it called for the vote on China’s first MBC resolution, but withdrew from the Council in June 2018. Most HRC resolutions are adopted by consensus. For discussion and analysis of the 2018 ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ resolution, see, e.g., Worden, “With its Latest Human Rights Council Resolution...,” op. cit.; John Fisher, “China’s ‘Win-Win’ Resolution is Anything But,” Human Rights Watch (HRW), 5 March 2018; Stephanie Nebehey, “U.S. and China clash at U.N. rights forum on Beijing text,” Reuters, 23 March 2018; Sarah Brooks, “‘Feeling for stones’: how China found its footing at the UN Human Rights Council,” in Amnesty International Netherlands, Strategic Studies Initiative (Feb. 2020), *Shifting Power and Human Rights Diplomacy: China*, Feb. 2020, pp. 52-53 (insights into the negotiations process).

¹²UN Human Rights Council, “Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights,” A/HRC/RES/37/23, resolution adopted on 23 March 2018, 37th session of the HRC, [‘2018 MBC Resolution’].

¹³Worden, “With Its Latest Human Rights Council Resolution...” op. cit.; see also Worden, “The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee...” op. cit., p. 12.



human rights and fundamental freedoms” States were obligated to respect.¹⁴ Several of the abstaining countries made statements expressing their concern. Switzerland, for example, noted the resolution’s “vague and ambiguous language that weakens fundamental human rights principles.”¹⁵

The repeated use of catchphrases and the lack of clear, substantive content in the March 2018 MBC resolution makes for muddled reading – and that may be the point. Xi Jinping’s ‘building a community of shared future for human beings’¹⁶ appears in the resolution, together with another key concept from Xi’s October 2017 19th Party Congress work report, “fostering international relations based on mutual respect, fairness, justice and mutually beneficial cooperation”.¹⁷ The original draft English title and text had ‘win-win cooperation’ (合作共赢 *hezuo gongying*) but during negotiations (amid pushback from some delegations), Xi’s ‘win-win’ was replaced by ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ (互利合作 *huli hezuo*).¹⁸ While the last draft of the Chinese text reflected these changes,¹⁹ the final Chinese version had inexplicably reverted to the original: ‘win-win cooperation’ (合作共赢 *hezuo gongying*) reappeared in the title and throughout the resolution.²⁰

The terms refer to the same concept,²¹ but 合作共赢 *hezuo gongying* is clearly the preferred ‘New Era’ rendering in Chinese, appearing as it does in a key formulation in Xi’s 19th Party Congress report, and officially translated as ‘win-win cooperation’. This was a China-led resolution, its second ever in the HRC, and the PRC Mission in Geneva undoubtedly had a hand in the behind-the-scenes Chinese language word-smithing. Although these changes may have gone unnoticed elsewhere in Geneva – in China, they constituted a win for Xi Jinping and the CCP; the adoption of the resolution was marshalled to show that the international community, “especially nu-

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Frédéric Burnand, “China’s ‘win-win’ initiative makes waves in Geneva,” SWI, 26 March 2018.

¹⁶The phrase is a variation on the standard translation, which has ‘humankind’ instead of ‘human beings’. See Nadège Rolland, “Beijing’s Vision for a Reshaped International Order,” *China Brief* vol. 18, issue 3 (Jamestown Foundation), 26 February 2018.

¹⁷These two formulations, which appeared in Xi’s 19th Party Congress work report, have been referred to as the “two builds” or “two constructs” (两个构建 *liangge goujian*), because each phrase begins with the word 构建 (*goujian*), which can be translated into English as “build” or “construct.” They appear together in the 2018 MBC resolution, in the final preambular paragraph (just before the numbered operative paragraphs begin), and likewise in the current tabled resolution.

In an interview with the *People’s Daily* in December 2017, Foreign Minister Wang Yi described the “two builds” as to “build a community of shared future for humanity,” and to “build a new type of international relations that centers on mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation.” [Emphasis added.] (“... 推动构建新型国际关系, 推动构建人类命运共同体, ... 构建新型国际关系的核心是相互尊重、公平正义、合作共赢 [hezuo gongying]...” [Emphasis added.] “迈入新时代展现新作为” [Entering a New Era, Displaying New Actions], 人民日报, 25 December 2017.

¹⁸Fisher, “China’s ‘Win-Win’ Resolution,” op. cit.; Brooks, “Feeling for Stones”..., op. cit. The original title of China’s 2018 resolution was “Promoting the International Human Rights Cause through Win-Win Cooperation.”

¹⁹UN Human Rights Council, “促进人权领域的互利合作,” (*cujin renquan lingyude huli hezuo*), A/HRC/RES/37/L.36, 19 March 2018.

²⁰UN Human Rights Council, “促进人权领域的合作共赢,” (*cujin renquan lingyude hezuo gongying*), A/HRC/RES/37/23, adopted on 23 March 2018.

²¹Nadège Rolland, “China’s Vision for a New World Order,” National Bureau of Asian Research, NBR Special Report no. 83, January 2020, Appendix (“China’s Foreign Policy Tracker”), p. 54 (the first known use of the concept and term ‘win-win cooperation’ was in 2005; the concept is also rendered as ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’).



merous developing countries,” “supported and endorsed” the “Chinese wisdom” (中国智慧) and “China solution” (中国方案) offered in the resolution.²²

China’s resolution also took a step toward operationalizing the PRC’s vision for a scrutiny-free Human Rights Council by calling for the Advisory Committee, the Council’s ‘think tank,’ to “conduct a study on the role of technical assistance and capacity-building in fostering mutually beneficial cooperation in promoting and protecting human rights, and to submit a report thereon to the Human Rights Council before its forty-third session”.²³

The HRC Advisory Committee’s report on technical assistance, capacity building, and ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ (MBC)

The Advisory Committee report requested by China’s March 2018 resolution, the drafting of which was led by the PRC representative on the Committee, Liu Xinsheng 刘昕生,²⁴ was submitted to the HRC in advance of the 43rd session.²⁵ There was no interactive dialogue (as scheduled) in the Council on the HRCAC report; delegations were instructed to submit questions and comments to the Advisory Committee directly.²⁶ China’s currently tabled resolution on MBC states that the Human Rights Council “takes note of” the Advisory Committee’s report.²⁷

But should the HRC even acknowledge a confusing and troubling report that is biased in favor of the interests of the primary initiator and drafter of the report? This also raises a procedural question: how many delegations have actually read the report?²⁸ Not only does the report push CCP discourse and advance the party’s agenda-setting objectives at the Council, but on a more fundamental level, as some HRC members, NGOs, and other observers have rightly noted, it’s unclear what the Chinese party-state even means by ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ in the context of human rights. Australia, for example, expressed concern about this undefined term, stating that it was “a domestic concept of one particular State.”

The Committee’s report acknowledged that a substantial number of stakeholder submissions expressed concern that the meaning of this new term in a human rights context was unclear, and in any event, that the new term was unnecessary. For example, Switzerland said that the term “ ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ was not sufficiently

²²“联合国人权理事会通过决议呼吁构建新型国际关系、构建人类命运共同体,” [The UN Human Rights Council adopts a resolution calling for the building of a new type of international relations, and the building of a community of common destiny for humanity], *Xinhua*, 23 March 2018.

²³2018 MBC Resolution, para.5.

²⁴See Worden, “The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee...” op. cit, pp. 4-5, for more information on Liu Xinsheng, the PRC member of the Advisory Committee.. Liu also chaired the drafting group of the earlier China-initiated study, ‘the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights’.

²⁵HRCAC MBC Report, op. cit.

²⁶Human Rights Council, 43rd session, 29th Meeting, 11 March 2020, afternoon session, Agenda item 5, HRCAC studies, etc. via UN WebTV. See [Order of the day](#) for 11 March 2020.

²⁷“Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights,” A/HRC/43/L.31, op. cit.

²⁸See Human Rights Council, Report of the rapporteurs, “[Overview of consultations on the contribution of the Human Rights Council to the prevention of human rights violations](#),” January 14, 2020, Section III. A. para. 16: “The consultations highlighted, however, that the reports of the Advisory Committee were not sufficiently known and disseminated within the Council, let alone more widely.”



defined and remained skeptical about the added value of this new concept”.²⁹ The Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, France and Germany, among others, also expressed concern about this undefined term.³⁰ The UK further stated that

it did not support the introduction of a new and undefined term and concept that was not included in international human rights law, adding that, if the term ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ was to be used in human rights context, its meaning had to be clearly compatible with international human rights obligations. Without a definition, it was not clear whether mutually beneficial cooperation was compatible.³¹

The report noted these differing views: “The Advisory Committee observes from the . . . submissions that rather serious differences or conflicts of view with regard to the concept of ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’; further clarification and (re)-interpretation of the concept will therefore be required.”³² Since it was China’s initiative to apply the term “mutually beneficial cooperation” (i.e., “win-win cooperation”) in the human rights field, and the PRC’s 2018 MBC resolution asked for the study, and the PRC representative on the Committee led the study’s drafting group, it’s reasonable to assume that China provided the requisite “further clarification and (re)-interpretation of the concept.”

The Committee’s not particularly clear “clarification” appears to be based on a questionable reference to the 1955 Bandung Conference’s declaration of the Ten Principles,³³ an outcome of the historic gathering of 29 Asian and newly independent African countries held in Indonesia. The ninth principle is “promotion of mutual interests and cooperation.” The Advisory Committee claims that “the origin of the concept” of ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ can be found in the Ten Principles declaration. But ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ — the term and concept as coined and used by the CCP and repeatedly touted by Xi Jinping, most often as ‘win-win cooperation’ — emerged long after Bandung, in 2005.³⁴ In 2015, in a speech commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Bandung Conference titled “Carrying Forward the Bandung Spirit and Advancing Mutually Beneficial Cooperation,” Xi “stressed that we must endow the Bandung Spirit with new meaning of the contemporary time,” including mutually beneficial cooperation as a basis for a “new type of international relations.”³⁵ Notably, Bandung’s ‘mutual cooperation’ and the CCP’s more recent ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ are concepts rooted in economic and trade relations, not human rights.³⁶

Furthermore, the report claims, in an obtuse non sequitur, “[t]he movement itself should be considered a protest against the unilateral imposition of so-called ‘universal’ values by developed countries in the past.”³⁷ The unnamed movement is presumably the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), formed in 1961, which emerged from the 1955

²⁹HRCAC MBC Report, op. cit., para.46.

³⁰Ibid., para.36.

³¹Ibid., para.48.

³²Ibid., para.50.

³³“The Ten Principles of Bandung,” *Xinhua* via *China Daily*, 23 April 2005.

³⁴Rolland, “China’s Vision,” op. cit.

³⁵Ruan Zongze, “Give New Meaning to the Bandung Spirit,” *Qiushi* (English edition), January-March 2016, Vol. 8, No. 1, Issue No. 26, updated 8 March 2016.

³⁶Cf. Ibid.

³⁷HRCAC MBC Report, op. cit., para.54.



Bandung Conference. It's unclear what the Advisory Committee study is suggesting in its usage of the phrase "so-called 'universal' values." The Bandung participants in fact embraced universal human rights; indeed, the first of the Ten Principles is "respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."³⁸

In a final effort at "clarification," the report returns to the starting point, the original March 2018 resolution, which "reiterates" at operative paragraph 2, "the important role of technical assistance and capacity-building in promoting and protecting human rights, calls upon States to strengthen human rights technical assistance and capacity-building through mutually beneficial cooperation, upon the request of and in accordance with the priorities set by the States concerned..." Employing revisionist history and a tautology, the Advisory Committee declares: "This is the real meaning of mutually beneficial cooperation, rationally interpreted in its historical context where it emerged as a protest."³⁹ Finally, the Committee states that it "believes that the above clarification would, at least partially, ease the concerns raised by many countries in their submissions."⁴⁰ Really?

In addition to being vague and abstruse, the HRCAC report, and China's initiative that spawned it, is wholly unnecessary and redundant. As the report notes, OHCHR leads the efforts within the HRC on capacity-building and technical assistance, which is "aimed at identifying and addressing knowledge and capacity gaps by facilitating constructive dialogue and positive change with national counterparts."⁴¹ The OHCHR gave a presentation to the Advisory Committee on its work in the sphere of capacity-building and technical assistance for the study.⁴² There is no discussion in the HRCAC report about possible gaps, or shortcomings, if any, in OHCHR's leadership and work on technical cooperation. It's unclear what, if anything, China's 'mutually beneficial cooperation' adds to the efforts already undertaken by the OHCHR and other UN offices, such as the UN Office for South-South Cooperation.⁴³ Its purpose seems mainly to create an opening for China to elevate its role at the HRC (as supplier of such technical cooperation, for example, in poverty alleviation) while further sidelining human rights.

The report observes: "It is important to recall that the United Nations sees technical cooperation activities as a complement to, but never a substitute for, the monitoring and investigating activities of the human rights programme."⁴⁴ China probably was not responsible for the inclusion of this paragraph because in all likelihood its goal is precisely what the provision warns against: that is, the PRC would certainly very much like to see the use of technical assistance, capacity-building, and 'mutually beneficial cooperation' substitute for human rights monitoring and investigation, in-

³⁸Amitav Acharya, "Studying the Bandung conference from a Global IR perspective," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 70:40, (July 2016), published online 13 June 2016, 342-357, at 350.

³⁹HRCAC MBC Report, op. cit., para.56.

⁴⁰Ibid. It's difficult to believe that this attempt at clarification has actually cleared things up. Has the Advisory Committee consulted with those countries that expressed concern?

⁴¹HRCAC MBC Report, op. cit., para.6.

⁴²Ibid. paras. 69-88. Responding to a request made by the Advisory Committee (during its 22nd session), OHCHR provided an overview of its technical assistance programs, including an oral presentation, during the Committee's 23rd session (July 22-26, 2019). Input was also sought from UNDP and the UN Office of South-South Cooperation. See HRC Advisory Committee 23rd session web page, Draft Programme of Work; [Provisional agenda and annotations](#), A/HRC/AC/23/1, 20 May 2019.

⁴³See UN Office for South-South Cooperation's [webpage](#) for more information.

⁴⁴HRCAC MBC Report, op. cit., para.19.



cluding country-specific human rights situations,⁴⁵ and it's actively promoting that objective through its resolutions, Advisory Committee studies, and its overall "development first" strategy at the Council.

The Chinese Mission claimed in its formal submission to the Advisory Committee that it "had always upheld the spirit of equality, mutual trust, tolerance, mutual learning and win-win cooperation in different fields, including in human rights."⁴⁶ It stated that human rights issues have been used "to attack other countries and to interfere in their internal affairs, thus poisoning the global atmosphere of human rights."⁴⁷ China described technical assistance and capacity-building as playing "an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights through win-win cooperation."⁴⁸

The report concludes with 13 recommendations. Two contain the not-yet-clarified nor agreed-upon term, 'mutually beneficial cooperation'.⁴⁹ Four of the 13 relate to the Universal Periodic Review, the state-led mechanism that the PRC is promoting as a platform for "mutually beneficial cooperation," dialogue, exchange of best practices and technical assistance.⁵⁰ Some recommendations and statements are simply inaccurate or spun beyond recognition, for example, this statement:

The principles of international cooperation enshrined in the Charter imposes on Member States the duty to give full consideration to the principles of mutual benefits and win-win in all activities related to cooperation in the field of human rights, including and particularly in technical assistance and capacity-building.⁵¹

The UN Charter's provisions on international cooperation impose no such duty. The Advisory Committee (likely China, with "win-win") is simply making this up. In its final recommendation, the Advisory Committee asks that the Human Rights Council 'consider the opportunity of appointing a special procedure with a mandate to report and advise on technical assistance, capacity-building and mutually beneficial cooperation, and contribute to the development of international standards on those subjects.'⁵²

And thus, the HRCAC report endeavors not only to normalize the CCP terms of 'mutually beneficial cooperation,' 'win-win cooperation' and Xi Jinping's "two builds," but also to institutionalize them as the basis for a new special procedures' mechanism. The recommendation that the mandate-holder 'contribute to the development of international standards on those subjects' is a potential opportunity for China to propagate and standardize its murky concepts, and in the words of Professor Sun Jisheng,⁵³ vice president of China Foreign Affairs University, "turn China's words into global words."

⁴⁵Ibid. paras. 60-68.

⁴⁶Ibid. para.52.

⁴⁷Ibid., para.39.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., paras.105, 116.

⁵⁰Ibid., paras. 108-110, 115.

⁵¹Ibid., para.113.

⁵²Ibid., para.116.

⁵³China Foreign Affairs University, [Dr. Sun Jisheng](#) (last updated 24 November 2016). Quoted in Rolland, [China's Vision](#), op. cit., p. 46.



The significance of China's current draft "mutually beneficial cooperation" resolution (March 2020)

As expected, China's March 2020 draft resolution on the topic of 'mutually beneficial cooperation' addresses the Advisory Committee's report, by having the HRC 'take note of' it.⁵⁴ Even though "taking note" is a low bar — the resolution does not "welcome" the report— still this alone should be reason enough to vote against the resolution when the HRC's 43rd session resumes. Another reason to reject the pending resolution, in addition to the reasons already outlined above, is the 'decision' by the HRC (per the draft resolution) to convene a two-hour long meeting during its 46th session:

presided by the President of the Human Rights Council, on the theme of the role of poverty alleviation in promoting and protecting human rights, with participation of senior officials from States to share information on good practices and experience of their countries on particular aspects of the promotion and protection of human rights, encourages States to take this opportunity to facilitate relevant technical cooperation...

China is thus creating a platform and opportunity for it to take center stage while "senior officials" from States listen and learn. It will be China's show, with many good China stories to tell. And the PRC will offer to share its knowledge and experiences with interested countries through "relevant technical cooperation." During China's UPR in November 2018, this was a recurring 'recommendation'. For example, Guinea recommended that China "continue sharing its best practices concerning poverty reduction with other developing countries,"⁵⁵ and Iran recommended that China "continue its efforts to eliminate absolute poverty by 2020 and share best practice in poverty alleviation with other countries."⁵⁶

As with the 2018 MBC resolution, the 2020 MBC resolution — which repeats many of the same paragraphs contained in the earlier resolution — displaces the individual as the primary subject and beneficiary of human rights and turns human rights into a matter between States. The 2020 MBC resolution emphasizes "the need for a cooperative and constructive approach on the part of all stakeholders to resolving human rights issues," highlights technical assistance and capacity building between States, and emphasizes "the importance of the universal periodic review as a mechanism based on cooperation and constructive dialogue."⁵⁷ There is no mention of "individual" or "civil society" in the resolution, yet the word "States" appears 15 times and "dialogue" 9 times. In addition, there are 8 instances of "mutually beneficial cooperation" and 4 mentions of "multilateralism."

Given the various changes that were made to the final Chinese version of the resolution in 2018 after the resolution was voted on but before it was published, it's reasonable to assume that an effort will be made once again to replace 'mutually beneficial cooperation' (*huli hezuo*) with 'win-win cooperation' (*hezuo gongying*) in the final Chinese version of the resolution. Its adoption, which is very likely given the num-

⁵⁴"Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights," A/HRC/43/L.31, op. cit., para.5.

⁵⁵Human Rights Council, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: China," A/HRC/40/6, 26 December 2018, II. Conclusions and/or recommendations, para.28.51.

⁵⁶Ibid. para.28.122.

⁵⁷HRCAC MBC Report, op. cit., para.6.



bers in the HRC, will be another boon for the CCP domestically and internationally (in certain quarters at any rate) as it works to position itself as a global norms leader, an effort that has certainly suffered a setback as a result of the CCP's mishandling of Covid-19 and its brazen assault on Hong Kong's autonomy.⁵⁸ This is a good opportunity for rights-supporting States on the Council to push back against China's effort to redefine human rights. When the HRC's 43rd session resumes in June, like-minded States should vote against China's tabled resolution, make statements explaining their votes, and also request that the Advisory Committee revisit its 'mutually beneficial cooperation' report.

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⁵⁸Michael C. Davis and Victoria Tin-bor Hui, "China's new national security law for Hong Kong will erode Hong Kong's autonomy," *Washington Post*, (Monkey Cage / Analysis), 26 May 2020.