

## China denies discrimination against minorities

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(Reuters) The People's Republic of China (PRC) will give more support to disadvantaged ethnic minorities to protect their culture and boost living standards, according to Dondrub Wangben, vice-minister of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission. The Minister said money would be pumped into education and health care in minority areas, which are often remote and poor, and special emphasis would be put on minority languages. <"Since the country began reforming and opening up, ethnic minorities have made rapid progress", he told a news conference. "But because of historical, environmental and social reasons, the development of ethnic affairs is still lagging." "This severely hinders the building of a harmonious society", the official added, referring to President Hu Jintao's oft-repeated goal of removing the causes of social tensions. China officially has 56 ethnic groups, but more than 90 percent of the 1.3 billion population are Chinese (Han).

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**Website:** [www.tibetinfonet.net](http://www.tibetinfonet.net)  
**Phone:** +44 (0) 20 300 206 33  
**Fax:** +49 (0) 2238 9494466  
**Email:** [tin@tibetinfonet.net](mailto:tin@tibetinfonet.net)