

NPC



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《中国人大》对外版

National People's Congress of China

A WINTER WONDERLAND OF ICE AND SNOW



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Love Wall Stickers

融情四季



Wi-Fi



新江湾城一周年



上海市长宁区
全过程人民民主



区虹桥街道
主基层实践基地

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Remarks by President Xi Jinping
At the Global Trade in Services
Summit of The 2021 China International
Fair for Trade in Services

中国服务贸易 发展成就展

ACHIEVEMENT EXHIBITION OF
CHINA'S TRADE IN SERVICES



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COVER: A sculpture depicting Olympic figure skaters stands at Shougang Park in Beijing on November 7. Zhang Chenlin



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Remarks by President Xi Jinping At the Global Trade in Services Summit of The 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services

2 September 2021

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

Good evening. On behalf of the government and people of China and also in my own name, I wish to extend a warm welcome and cordial greetings to all the distinguished guests of the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS).

This year's CIFTIS is themed "Towards Digital Future and Service Driven Development". I believe that the active participation of you all will make this year's event a special and productive one.

Trade in services is a key component of international trade and an important area of economic and trade cooperation between countries. It has a big role to play in fostering a new development paradigm. We will work with all other parties to uphold openness, cooperation, mutual benefit and win-win, share opportunities in the growth of services trade, and promote world economic recovery and growth.

We will open up at a higher level, by implementing across the country a negative list for cross-border services trade and by exploring the development of national demonstration zones for the innovative development of trade in services. We will create more possibilities for cooperation, by scaling up support for the growth of the services sector in Belt and Road partner countries and by sharing China's technological achievements with the rest of the world. We will further improve rules for the services sector, by supporting Beijing and other localities in piloting the alignment of domestic rules with the ones in high-standard international free trade agreements and in building demonstration zones of digital trade. We will continue to support the innovation-driven development of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), by deepening the reform of the New Third Board (National Equities Exchange and Quotations) and setting up a Beijing Stock Exchange as the primary platform serving innovation-oriented SMEs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

Let us join hands to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic and get through these tough times. Using peace, development and win-win cooperation as the "golden key", we will be able to address the challenges facing the world economy and international trade and investment, and create a brighter future for all.

Thank you.





Venue of the China International Fair for Trade in Services at the China National Convention Center in Beijing on September 4. Chen Zhonghao



An exterior view of the China National Convention Center, venue of the China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing, on September 6. *Wang Tiancong*

A visitor tries a VR-powered ski simulator during the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing on September 3. *Zhang Chenlin*



Visitors tour the Germany exhibition booth during the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing on September 5. *Wang Tiancong*





President Xi Jinping addresses the Global Trade in Services Summit of the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services via video on September 2. Yue Yuewei

Visitors tour the cultural tourism services exhibition hall during the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing on September 5. Zhang Chenlin



Service trade fair drives transformation and brings opportunities

By Li Xiaoyang



President Xi Jinping addresses the Global Trade in Services Summit of the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services via video on September 2. Yue Yuewei

Major global financial services provider Ernst & Young (EY) was a highlight of the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS), taking place in Beijing from September 2 to 7. Especially its China Overseas Investment Network caught great attention. The system covers around 70 countries and regions, and helps Chinese companies enter these markets through services such as feasibility analysis, risk evaluation, policy introduction and legal consulting.

“EY has provided these services to over 3,000 Chinese enterprises, launching more than 60,000 overseas investment projects over the past three years,” Beatrice Lian, Public Relations Manager of EY Beijing, told Beijing Review. The company was one of the enterprises attending the digital service zone at this year’s CIFTIS.

Established for the first time in 2021, the zone carried the theme Enabling a Digital Future, Driving Development With Services. CIFTIS is a major platform for trade in services in China. With an exhibition area of approximately 130,000 square meters, the 2021 edition attracted more than 10,000 enterprises from 153 countries and regions. Among them, 2,400 firms showcased their products and services offline, with the remainder making use of the fair’s digital platforms. It also featured eight thematic exhibitions.

Digital trade and services such as online education, medical care and financial services for foreign trade enterprises were a major focus this year. These sectors have recently seen growing demand, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of September 7, a total of 1,672 agreements had been signed, according to its organizers.

A growing market

In contrast to merchandise trade, trade in services refers to the sale and delivery of intangible products such as transportation, tourism, telecommunications, construction, advertising, computing and accounting.

China has continuously expanded opening up in the service industry. According to a report that was released during this year’s CIFTIS, in 2020, China had 21 pilot free trade zones and 31 cities where trade in services were encouraged. After the government unveiled its plan to build a digital trade demonstration zone in Beijing in 2020, it added four new pilot zones for trade in services in Hainan Province, Tianjin, Shanghai and Chongqing in April.

Data from the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) showed that China’s trade in services rose by 7.3 percent year on year to nearly 2.81 trillion yuan (\$435.02 billion) in the first seven months of this year. The share of trade in technology-intensive services in the total service imports and exports exceeded 40 percent. In January-July, Chinese enterprises signed service outsourcing contracts worth about 976 billion yuan (\$150.47 billion), up 27.8 percent year on year.

Wang Dongtang, a senior official at MOFCOM, said during a CIFTIS forum that China’s digital trade, which includes services provided through online channels and technology outsourcing services, has expanded in recent years. It has seen improving digital infrastructure, legal systems on digital trade and opening up of the telecommunication sector. Chinese digital service providers have also gained growing shares of global markets.

“The CIFTIS can drive the export of China’s services and expand the opening up of the service industry. To boost trade in services, more efforts will be made, including easing market access in key sectors, introducing a nationwide negative list of restrictions for cross-border trade in services and rolling out more supporting policies,” Wang Bingnan, Vice Minister of Commerce, told a press conference prior to the fair.

Smarter and greener

As the number of Chinese enterprises in the service industry increases, many have pursued technological competitiveness and green development. At CIFTIS 2021, many home-grown enterprises presented technologies and products in the fields ranging from artificial intelligence (AI), 5G and big data to digital payment, remote sensing and smart medical treatment.

Tech companies such as Alibaba, Huawei and Baidu showcased the way in which they apply new technologies to industries such as medical care, transportation, e-commerce and manufacturing.

To support small and medium-sized enterprises engaging in cross-border business, Alibaba provides one-stop global trading solutions covering procedures including customs clearance, logistics and tax payment.

Huawei’s exhibits focused on its 5G and AI technologies. Baidu gave prominence to its Apollo driverless cars, which have been licensed for road tests in most cities across China. On-demand service platform Meituan said the built-in smart devices now allows users to unlock its for-hire bikes using the mobile touch solution based on the near field communication technology adopted by the digital yuan wallet service, even when the phone is not connected to the Internet.

Many of the smart technologies focus on improving the



The 2021 China E-commerce Convention, an event of the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services, is held in Beijing on September 3. Chen Yehua

We will work with all other parties to uphold openness, cooperation, mutual benefit and winwin, share opportunities in the growth of services trade, and promote world economic recovery and growth.

quality of life for the elderly. For example, Baidu's AI-based voice assistant system Xiaodu can make it easier for senior people to use home appliances.

Exhibitors from the tourism and culture sector delivered experiences to visitors through virtual reality and 3D technologies.

Emerging startups also made a splash at the fair. Attending for the first time this year, Livox Technology Co., a lidar sensor company established by drone maker DJI in 2016, showcased an autonomous logistics vehicle equipped with its proprietary lidar system. "Our system can sense the external environment in a more accurate manner than other lidars, which can improve the safety and operation of driverless vehicles," Zhu Yanchen, a big data engineer at Livox, told Beijing Review. According to Zhu, the company's partners include several domestic autonomous delivery vehicle makers and electric vehicle startup Xpeng, as well as other enterprises in 20 countries and regions.

For many Chinese enterprises, green operation and production have become increasingly important, as China aims to peak its carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. At the fair, Huawei

displayed its new-generation data centers that only use refrigeration facilities in summer. During other seasons, the centers use renewable power resources such as wind to cool down machines.

Beijing-based CHN-Run Super Lube Technology Development Co. Ltd. has cooperated with several domestic research institutes in the creation of an environmentally friendly graphene lubricant. As company representative Liu Shuang told Beijing Review, compared with its counterparts on the market, the company's product can form a protective coat on components that can reduce their maintenance needs and thus extend their durability, subsequently cutting carbon emissions.

During the fair, Amap, a mobility and location-based service platform, and a subsidiary of Beijing Construction Engineering Group (BCEG) signed a cooperation agreement to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 15,000 tons. Under the deal, the first of its kind in China, users of the Amap app can obtain coupons for public transportation if they choose green methods of travel. The results are submitted by Amap to the transportation authorities for the calculation of saved emission allowances, which later can be purchased by the BCEG subsidiary.

Two-way exchanges

This year's CIFTIS illustrated how Chinese enterprises are going global and are widening China's gateway for international products and services.

China National Biotec Group, a subsidiary of Chinese vaccine producer Sinopharm, presented its self-developed vaccines. Sinopharm developed the world's first inactivated COVID-19 vaccines; these have been approved by the World Health Organization for emergency use.

Engineering companies are also gaining global presence at "China speed." "With subsidiaries in over 30 countries and regions, BCEG has participated in the building of the Capella Hotel, a landmark in Bangkok, Thailand, and the National Stadium in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire," Guo Shuangchao, vice manager of the General Contracting Department of the company, told Beijing Review.

Enterprises and organizations from over 60 countries brought distinctive goods and services to the event.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Peru. The Peruvian Embassy's booth showcased organic food made from grains and vegetables, coffee beans, and toys made from alpaca wool. Paola Rosario Gutierrez Ramos from the embassy told Beijing Review that the trade between China and Peru has become more diversified in recent years.

"Chinese enterprises operating in fields including medical facilities, mining and telecommunication services have established subsidiaries in Peru. Some of them have also participated in the building of infrastructure in Peru," she said.

Four Irish state agencies shared a booth to



A visitor takes a photo during the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing on September 7. Xu Qin



Visitors watch an HD film about the Palace Museum during the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing on September 7. *Wu Wei*

promote the European country's dairy products, beverages, medical technologies and university-based consulting services. China and Ireland have developed strong cooperation on trade in services, especially in education, tourism, financial service and pharmaceutical sectors. Over the past three years, trade in services between the two sides has increased by 30 percent.

"Although challenges remain when doing business in China, there are many opportunities as China is the world's largest consumer market and it's still opening up. Trade between Chinese enterprises and their European counterparts is going to increase in the coming years," Gareth Hargadon, head of the Economic Section of the Embassy of Ireland, told Beijing Review.

Irish Ambassador to China Ann Derwin said the CIFTIS shows that China is ready to drive trade in services along with other countries. "China's opening-up measures, especially those in the financial industry, are inspiring and can encourage the entrance of more foreign investors. Foreign enterprises expect a more open Chinese market with a more favorable business environment," she said.

Unleashing potential

China's trade in services has more room for expansion than its trade in goods, Yu Miaojie, Deputy Dean of the Na-

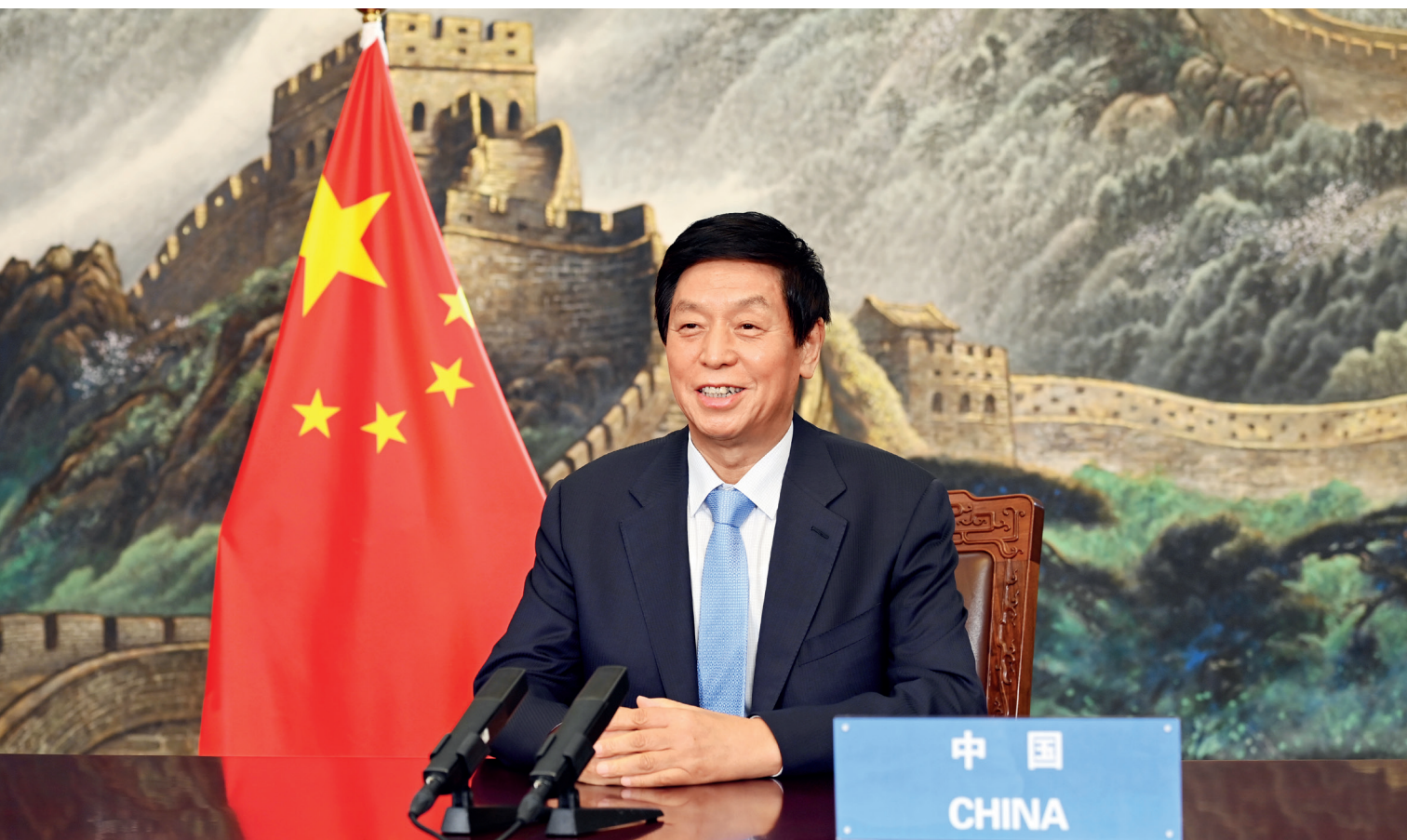
tional School of Development at Peking University, said. Currently, the service industries that have a trade surplus are mainly tourism, engineering and transportation, which feature lower added value compared with sectors such as finance and insurance.

The service industry contributed around 54 percent to China's GDP growth in 2020, lower than the global average level of 67 percent. Experts said policies for opening up the service sector are inadequate and the competitiveness of Chinese service exports have been slow to rise.

"Efforts are needed to reduce our service trade deficit through developing high value-added industries, and expanding the global presence of engineering and processing services through increasing their competitiveness. To improve opening up, a nationwide negative list for trade in services is needed," Yu told Beijing Review.

Growth potential is seen in exports of digital, traditional Chinese medicine and culture services. China's imports and exports of digital services or services through digital platforms are likely to exceed \$400 billion by 2025, accounting for 50 percent of total trade in services, according to Wang Dongtang of MOFCOM.

"Nevertheless, a lot remains to be done to improve the research and development of key technologies, the training of hi-tech professionals, as well as the policies and laws on trade in digital services," he said. ■



Li Zhanshu, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, addresses the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament via video on September 7. Yao Dawei

Li Zhanshu vows enhanced cooperation with Inter-Parliamentary Union

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, said on Tuesday China's NPC is ready to continue enhancing cooperation with Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and legislative bodies of all countries to jointly counter global challenges and promote the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

Li made the remarks when addressing the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament held in Vienna Austria via video link.

Li said the international situation is undergoing profound and complex changes, as demonstrated by the repeated resurgence of COVID-19 pandemic as well as global and regional issues. People of all countries are increasingly aspiring for life safety, and the call for peaceful development is becoming stronger.

Noting people's life should be the priority, Li called for bringing the pandemic under control as soon as possible, and

conducting international cooperation on vaccines production and distribution, pandemic response, essential supplies and public health, among others.

While battling the coronavirus, Li said the world should also keep fighting the political virus, and oppose the practices of putting politics above science and politicizing issues such as origins-tracing.

Li called for respecting the development paths and systems independently chosen by the people of various countries and settling disputes and hotspot issues through political and peaceful means; and safeguarding the international system with the United Nations as the core and the international order based on international laws, and promoting global governance on a more just and reasonable track.

Hosted by the IPU, the conference is the largest gathering of world parliaments at the highest level. It has been held every five years since 2000. (Xinhua) ■

Top legislator stresses multilateralism in G20 legislatures cooperation

Top legislator Li Zhanshu on Thursday called for strengthening cooperation between legislatures of the G20 countries and upholding true multilateralism.

Li, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, made the remarks while addressing the 7th Conference of the Parliamentary Speakers of the G20 Countries via video link, which is being held in Rome, Italy from Oct. 7 to 8 both online and offline.

Stressing solidarity and science in the fight against the pandemic, Li said all parties should put lives first, and actively promote international cooperation in epidemic prevention and control, key supplies, public health and other fields.

He said China has provided more than 1.4 billion doses of

vaccine to more than 100 countries and international organizations, and will strive to provide 2 billion doses of vaccine throughout the year. He added that China resolutely opposes putting politics above science.

Li also called for boosting robust, green and healthy global development.

Meanwhile, he called on all parties to adhere to true multilateralism, improve the global governance system, strengthen macroeconomic policy coordination and promote the construction of an open world economy.

He noted that China's National People's Congress is willing to enhance exchanges and cooperation with legislatures of all countries to address various challenges and jointly create a better future for the people of the world. (Xinhua) ■



Li Zhanshu, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, addresses the 7th Conference of the Parliamentary Speakers of the G20 Countries via video in Beijing on October 7. *Bi Nan*

Symposium in pics

By Lu Yan

China's NPC and parliaments of five Central Asian countries vowed to strengthen cooperation and jointly oppose any move that undermines global solidarity against the pandemic, as they held an online seminar on September 27.

The seminar marks the first collective exchange between China's NPC and the parliaments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

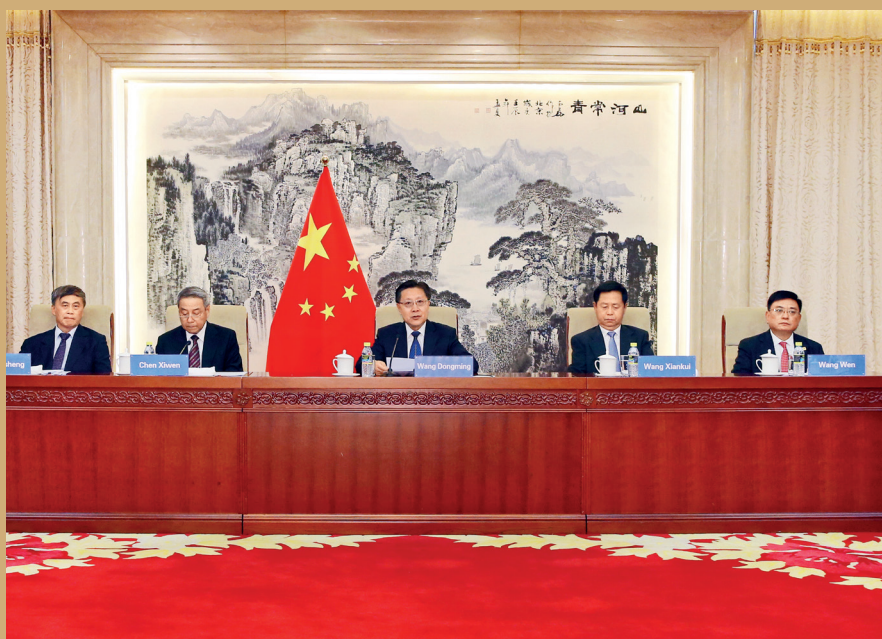
Wang Chen, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, said that China has established strategic partnerships with all five Central Asian countries. Facts have proven that China and the five countries are good neighbors, friends, and partners with sincerity and mutual trust.

"We respect each other's independence, sovereignty, and development path, firmly support each other on core interests and concerns, and work jointly to combat the 'three forces' and transnational organized crime. We are also jointly building a pilot zone for the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative," he said.

China's NPC is willing to work with the parliaments of the five Central Asian countries and maintain the forward momentum of exchanges between legislative bodies to build a community with a shared future between China and Central Asia, Wang said.

Wang Chen, member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and vice chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, speaks at an online seminar held by China's NPC and parliaments of five Central Asian countries in Beijing on September 27. *Bi Nan*





Lawmakers from China and four African countries exchange views via video on June 23. *Bi Nan*

Young members of China's top legislature and Cambodian parliament on May 24 exchanged views on various topics, including cooperation against COVID-19 and post-pandemic economic recovery, in an online exchange held via video link.

Wang Hongyan, a member of the NPC Standing Committee, called for leveraging the close ties between legislative representatives and the public to pass on the traditional friendship between China and Cambodia and promote mutually beneficial cooperation.

Hun Many, a commission chairperson of the National Assembly of Cambodia, said the youth exchange activity will further advance friendly exchanges and cooperation between the legislative bodies and deliver more benefits to the two peoples.

The activity marked the first video exchange among young members of the legislative bodies against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lawmakers from China and four African countries exchanged views via video link on June 23 and 24 to deepen understanding on how legislatures play a role in helping to lift people out of poverty and promote social development.

The webinar was organized by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), and was held between the Chinese legislators and those from Liberia, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

More than 40 lawmakers attended the webinar, sharing ideas mainly on how legislatures can provide legal protection for poverty reduction and play a supervisory role to bring relief to the poor, and what lawmakers could do to help eliminate poverty.

Regarding poverty relief and the pursuit of better lives as the same goal of many developing countries, Wang Dongming, vice-chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, called for lawmakers from China and the African nations to deepen consensus and cooperation on livelihood, agricultural affairs and poverty reduction.

He added legislatures from China and the African nations should keep in touch, increase exchanges in various aspects and foster friendly relations by innovative means amid the ongoing pandemic.

Speaker of the Namibian National Assembly Peter Katjavivi also agreed to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation, as poverty alleviation is a common interest of China and African countries and contributes to domestic economic growth in each nation.

An exchange activity between young lawmakers from China and Cambodia is held via video on May 24 to deepen mutual understanding and bring new energy to bilateral relations and cooperation between the legislative bodies.



Make every voice heard

Whole-process democracy brings tangible results

In the early 1940s, a popular saying vividly captured the enthusiasm among local voters in Yan'an of Shaanxi Province where the Communist Party of China (CPC) was based.

It stated, "Beans roll, beans vote, beans go to the right bowls."

In those years, the CPC devised a simple method to ensure that illiterate farmers exercised their right to vote. Voters cast beans representing ballots into bowls: there was one bowl for each candidate.

From revolutionary times to the founding of New China in 1949, the CPC has led the nation in exploring and developing a model of democracy that suits China's conditions, with the people as "masters of the country."

Delivering a speech at a grand gathering in Beijing on July 1 to mark the Party's centenary, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, highlighted the development of "whole-process people's democracy."

The term whole-process democracy was first put forward by Xi, who is also China's president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, during an inspection tour of Shanghai's Hongqiao subdistrict in November 2019.

Exchanging ideas with community residents who took part in a survey on legislation, Xi said, "We are marching on a political development road of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and our people's democracy is a whole-process democracy."

In 2014, at a ceremony marking the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's national political advisory body, Xi said, "Democracy is defined not only by people's right to vote in an election but also by the right to participate in political affairs on a daily basis."

According to experts, a series of institutional arrangements ensures that the mode of democracy in China guarantees people's right to take part in democratic elections, consultations, decision-making, management and oversight, which constitute whole-process democracy.

In contrast to Western-style democracy, which is often characterized by voting in elections every few years, Chinese democracy is a daily way of life for the people that leads to effective results.

Wang Chen, vice chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, said during this year's NPC session in March that whole-process democracy is "a hall-

The people's status as masters of the country is the essence of people's democracy.

mark of socialist democracy that distinguishes it from various capitalist democratic systems."

At the session, the NPC adopted amendments to two laws concerning its organization and working procedures, with whole-process democracy written into law for the first time in the country's legislative history.

People's participation

Xia Yunlong, a retired college teacher who has lived in Hongqiao in Shanghai for 30 years, was given the title of information officer when a community-level contact station was set up by the NPC Standing Committee in 2015.

Draft laws are sent to these stations so that citizens can discuss them and voice their opinions to lawmakers. The Hongqiao station was set up as part of the nation's efforts to diversify channels for people to participate and share their views on major legislative undertakings.

An information officer gathers suggestions for draft laws, which are then reviewed by the country's legislative bodies, making it easier for residents to make their voices heard at the national level.

"Being old is a disadvantage for doing many things, but it certainly helps for gathering opinions as I have come to know a lot of people in our neighborhood," Xia said. "Before a draft law is to be enacted, I ask many people neighbors, relatives, students and their parents for their feedback."

He is extremely proud of a suggestion he made that citizens should be encouraged to sing the national anthem at "proper places and events" to express their love for the nation. The suggestion was written into the National Anthem Law of the People's Republic of China, which took effect in 2017.

You Yuanchao, a civil servant for Changning district people's congress, who works at the Hongqiao contact station, said opinions have been received from the public relating to 55 laws. More than 1,000 suggestions have been made, with



Deputies to the Beijing Municipal People's Congress conduct an inspection on garbage sorting in a residential community in Beijing on May 12.

92 of them adopted.

"A working mechanism for the contact station was established from scratch, including eight steps from accepting a legislative inquiry to final suggestions being submitted," You said.

The suggestions come mainly from information officers, whose numbers have risen over the years to 310, he said.

"We have professionals from local judicial bodies and also lawyers serving as our consultants. They provide support for the information officers and help turn the colloquial language people use into the correct terminology for legislation," You explained.

When the contact station receives a draft law for public opinion, You and his colleagues work out a plan to assess who will be most affected by the law, the amount of inquiries to be handled and the number of seminars and discussions that are needed.

"We also organize study sessions on the drafts so that people learn related information and can prepare better suggestions," You said.

Wu Xinhui, partner and attorney at the K&M Law Firm, who has provided legal aid and counseling for Hongqiao sub-district since 2010, is also an information officer at the contact station.

Wu said as a lawyer focusing on civil and domestic affairs for 12 years, she identifies loopholes that need to be addressed in current legislation. She also collates related cases to provide feedback to the national legislature.

Wu said her suggestion that seniors be included in the Anti-Domestic Violence Law was adopted, adding that she raised it after handling a case where the rights of an elderly person were infringed upon by that individual's children.

"This is a good way to send grassroots views to national legislators, while also reflecting the democratic process of our



Staff members of the Standing Committee of the Xiangyang Municipal People's Congress solicit public opinions on the Yangtze River Protection Law (Draft) in Xiangyang of Hubei Province on September 9, 2020.

country's making of laws," she said.

Wu also submitted suggestions for the draft of the nation's first Civil Code and amendments to the Law on the Protection of Minors and the Law on Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency.

When Xi visited the contact station's office at the Gubei Civic Center in Shanghai in 2019, Wu updated him on public legal aid and services work.

A special zone has been set up at the civic center to display the contact station's work. "There has been a clear increase in the awareness about and participation in our work, as many people come to see the display, learn about our working system and see the results. People care about whether their suggestions can make a difference," Wu said.

Various channels

Zhu Lingjun, a professor at the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, said setting up these grassroots contact stations helps promote more-targeted legislation.

He said the Party has integrated the "mass line" into its governance activities, ensuring that it can hear the voice of the people on decision-making, policy implementation and oversight.

Zhu added that consultative democracy in China avoids

Our whole-process people's democracy integrates process-oriented democracy with results-oriented democracy, procedural democracy with substantive democracy, direct democracy with indirect democracy, and people's democracy with the will of the state.

the formalism of democracy in many countries, where people only have the right to vote but are not entitled to widespread participation.

Tang Yalin, a professor at the School of International Relations and Public Affairs of Fudan University, said China's whole-process democracy places emphasis on executing decisions, supervision and evaluation with the participation of the people, while electoral democracy in the Western world ends right after the election.

China's democracy has different manifestations, which invites the masses to participate in economic and cultural management. "Before big decisions are made, we have extensive consultations."

"Democracy has many forms, and Western style democracy is not the only type... What the Western world has not seen is how the CPC has achieved restricting power by itself," Tang said. China's rapid development in the past 40 years is obvious to all.

"No system is perfect. State governance is meant to achieve the best interest and lessen the harm to the lowest. For China, the safeguarding the interests of ordinary people is the top priority. Under the leadership of the CPC, the country has boosted development, achieved social prosperity, promoted national reunification and world peace," he said.

There are a number of channels for people to voice their opinions in China, Tang said. These include public opinion hearings and expert symposiums convened before the publication of major laws, plans, policies and projects. Opinions can also be voiced through websites.

"China has constantly explored and improved ways to involve the people in the whole process of democracy in line with development and changes in society," Tang said, adding that Internet use is a new trend.

Last year, while drafting proposals to draw up the nation's blueprint for the next five years and objectives through 2035, the central leadership called for efforts to reach out to the people and incorporate their brilliant ideas in the plan.

Heading the drafting group, Xi stressed that top-level design should be combined with public opinion and encouraged people from all walks of life to put forward their suggestions.

In August last year, netizens' suggestions and advice for the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) draft were sought online, the first time this practice had been adopted for the formulation of such an important document.

Xinhua News Agency released a video last year featuring a netizen whose opinions on an aging society were included in the document.

Li Dianbo, a village official in Dalad Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, suggested online that a mutual assistance elderly care model be established in rural areas.

In Li's village, two thirds of the 1,200 or so permanent residents are seniors whose children have left to find work in cities. He deals with the tough task of senior care in rural areas every day.

Li suggested that in densely populated rural areas the government build public canteens and dormitories for seniors willing to live together. Those who are relatively younger and more able could take care of seniors who are older and weaker, forming a mutual support and elderly care system.

His idea was later incorporated in the blueprint document by the central authorities. Li said, "The document was drafted by the central leadership in the interests of the people, and also with the participation of the people at the grassroots level."

More than 1 million suggestions on the 14th Five-Year Plan were received online, according to official data. In addition, the Party leadership listened to opinions voiced at several symposiums by non-Party members, entrepreneurs and experts in various fields.

Han Wenxiu, deputy head of the Office of the Central

Commission for Financial and Economic Affairs, who took part in drafting the document, said that the scope of opinion-seeking, the number of participants and the range of forums were unprecedented.

Effective democracy

Evandro Carvalho, a legal expert from Brazil, told Xinhua that China's socialist democracy is "not only a democracy in form, but in substance."

This democracy is not limited to the democratic decision-making process, but also focuses on its outcome, said Carvalho, a former visiting scholar in China and law professor at Brazil's Getulio Vargas Foundation, an economic think tank.

Institutional arrangements for China's democracy involve procedural aspects and public participation, with the aim of finding solutions to the problems people face, Carvalho said.

"Unlike several Western democracies that increasingly alienate the people from the political process and ignore their needs, the Chinese government wants to listen more to the population and monitor the execution of measures to meet people's needs with the use of technology," he said.

"China is building a democracy with Chinese characteristics that involves more public participation and is more connected to the reality and interests of the people than many Western democracies," Carvalho stated.

Meanwhile, Tang said electoral democracy in Western capitalist countries is a manifestation of the interests of political parties and capital, or a "populism ballot carnival" held by politicians to manipulate public opinion for their own specific interests.

Western democracy moves to "mutual veto" instead of "mutual supervision," he said. "Originally, it should have worked for people's interests, but it has become a battle between the interests of different parties and the interests of different capital groups. Such electoral democracy only cares about the here and now, not the long term, which is irresponsible."

"As a result, it deviates from public interest and has actually kidnapped public interest, which will cause potential risks to the prosperity and unity of the state," Tang said.

The operating mechanism for democracy in China does not rely on elections based on multiparty competition, in which people vote for leaders every few years but barely take part in national affairs in their daily lives afterward, he said.

Democracy in China is not a narrow voting process. Instead, it's a process in which people's opinions are heard and absorbed into national policies, Tang explained.

"The CPC doesn't pursue self-interest, and the supreme value of the Party resides in the Chinese people and Chinese national interests," he added.

Zhu said that in Western democracy, a change in the ruling party results in a change in policies. But under China's system, on the premise that the CPC has the ruling role and decides the Party's basic line, outstanding cadres are selected and appointed to ensure this line is implemented.

"Politicians in China don't need to spend a lot of money and time on election campaigns. What they need to do is to serve the people with their heart and soul, and they cannot shirk their responsibilities at any time," he added. ■



The Standing Committee of the Haidian District People's Congress holds a meeting to evaluate whether the deputies' suggestions have been handled properly in Beijing on July 18, 2018.



Officials of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress inspect the revision of the Enterprise Bankruptcy Law at an exhibition room of Shenzhen Bankruptcy Court in Guangdong Province on September 9, 2021.





Liu Shan, deputy to the Foshan Municipal People's Congress, holds a meeting with voters at a contact station in Foshan of Guangdong Province on July 21, 2020.



Deputies to the local people's congress solicit suggestions at a restaurant in Zhengding County of Hebei Province on September 9, 2020.



Deputies to the local people's congresses of various levels inspect the construction of Tongzhou Bay in Nantong, Jiangsu Province.



Li Zhaolan (center) is aided in putting her ballot in the drop box.

Ding Zheng, head of the Standing Committee of the Yiwu Municipal People's Congress, leads a team to inspect anti-food wastage at a restaurant in Yiwu of Zhejiang Province in September 2020.



Expansion in law making grassroots participation

By Cao Yin

The number of outreach offices in China collecting legislative opinions from grassroots areas has grown from four to 22 in the past six years, and they are playing a major role in implementing the “whole-process democracy” called for by President Xi Jinping.

The establishment of local outreach office was an initiative launched by the Legislative Affairs Commission of the National People’s Congress Standing Committee, in 2015 to gather suggestions on lawmaking from local residents and then resolve their problems through legislation.

The first outreach offices were in Shanghai’s Hongqiao subdistrict and the standing committees of the local legislatures in Xiangyang, Hubei province, Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, and Lintao county, Gansu province.

People from all walks of life can visit the stations and offer opinions and suggestions to the legislatures. The one in Xiangyang had provided more than 1,100 suggestions on 58 items of national-level legislation by April, and 149 of them had been accepted by the top legislature.

The success saw the Legislative Affairs Commission decide to establish more stations. Tong Weidong, an official from the commission, said they are “a bridge between legislators and residents and are also a good reflection of China’s whole-process democracy”.

In November 2019, Xi, who is also general secretary of Communist Party of China Central Committee

and chairman of the Central Military Commission, undertook an inspection tour in Hongqiao, where he first put forward the concept of whole-process democracy.

China is marching on a political development road of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and its people’s democracy is a whole-process democracy, Xi said while exchanging ideas with residents during the inspection.

He highlighted the development of the concept in his keynote speech at a grand gathering in Beijing on July 1 to mark the CPC’s centenary.

To further implement the central leadership’s requirements and diversify the sources of legislation, Tong said the commission had set up 22 stations for gathering legislative opinions at the grassroots level by July, covering two-thirds of the country’s provincial-level regions.

He said the stations not only help people from various walks of life participate in legislative affairs, but also give lawmakers more chances to better understand what people most need.

“It’s a people-centered approach, showing that legislation comes from the people and is for the people,” he added.

As of August, outreach offices had given more than 6,700 suggestions involving 115 draft laws and annual legislative plans to the top legislature, and many ideas had been accepted after review, Tong said, adding that more stations will be created and

will be set up in more organizations besides the standing committees of local legislatures, communities and universities.

The commission has also worked toward developing whole-process democracy by inviting more NPC deputies to participate in legislative research and sessions of the NPC Standing Committee.

NPC deputies have made more than 900 visits to Beijing to attend meetings of the NPC Standing Committee since March 2018 to give feedback on draft bills to committee members, said Zhai Wei, deputy director of the research office of the NPC Standing Committee’s general office.

All NPC deputies gather in Beijing once a year to attend the NPC’s full plenary session, the country’s most important political event. When the full session closes, its standing committee generally holds a session every two months, making and amending laws as well as deciding on the appointment and removal of government personnel.

“We’ve also intensified efforts to keep in touch with the deputies to ask them to reflect on problems and ideas at the grassroots level in a timely manner, as what people demand is what we should solve,” Zhai said.

For example, Li Zhanshu, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, has held 13 symposiums involving deputies since March 2018, with more than 660 face-to-face talks with them, Zhai said.

While further promoting the building of the stations and helping NPC deputies play a role in developing whole-process democracy, Zhai added that the NPC Standing Committee will also urge government agencies to get closer to the people, listen to their suggestions and ensure they can effectively participate in national and social affairs.

NPC deputies benefit from online study

By Cao Yin



Guo Zhenhua, deputy secretary-general of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, and five NPC deputies take questions from journalists via video on September 27.

New platform offers lawmakers easier access to latest policy and training
National lawmakers have been given easier access to study and training, thanks to an innovative move initiated by China's top legislature.

Considering that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has made face-to-face activities harder to organize, the National People's Congress, the country's top legislative body, opened an online academy last year as a new platform for NPC deputies to study and attend training.

Comparing the move to "studying in the cloud", Guo Zhenhua, deputy secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee, said the academy has also met the needs of many deputies who wanted to learn about the people's congress system and the latest legal policies in a convenient way.

The academy has organized five online workshops, each with a different theme, to help NPC deputies.

For example, the academy invited a team that specialized in drafting Civil Code to speak about major and innovative clauses to deputies through livestreaming after the fundamental civil law was passed last year.

"It was a popular workshop among deputies, as team members familiar with every detail of the code not only gave an in-depth interpretation of the law, but also talked about controversies in legislation and how they were finally solved," Guo said.

The academy has also made and uploaded online courses on its own or by working with other authorities, "because in this

way deputies can access the content they most want to learn at any time and any place", he added.

Guo said the 13th NPC Standing Committee has attached greater significance to the study and training of NPC deputies since 2018, as ensuring NPC deputies can fulfill their duties is key to implementing and developing the people's congress system.

The NPC Standing Committee has offered four workshops on fulfilling lawmakers' duties, which were attended by more than 1,500 deputies, he said, basically covering all newly elected local deputies.

The approximately 3,000 NPC deputies are from various areas and industries, including farmers and

workers. That composition is determined by the nature of the people's congress system and is also an advantage of the political system, according to Guo.

Therefore, helping NPC deputies who come from the people, represent the people and finally serve the people to fully understand the system as well as what rights and obligations they have is a necessity, as their improved duty performance will ensure that people are the masters, he added.

Zhu Guoping, an NPC deputy from Shanghai, participated in several online and offline workshops. She said they helped her understand how to fulfill duties through the rule of law.

"I watched some videos online, such as those introducing major revisions of laws and how NPC deputies helped local residents solve problems, which saved me time and also offered me a reference for work," she added.

To get closer to local residents, she established a contact station beside a road in Shanghai's Hongqiao subdistrict, "as in this way, people can find me and tell me their problems in life or work more easily", she said.

"I have to know issues and difficulties that people most care about and want to solve, because I come from the people and the goal of being a deputy to the NPC is to serve the people," Zhu said.

She said diversifying channels to solicit public opinions, understanding what people most need and taking the time to learn the country's latest policies and laws are also necessary for deputies to play a better role in serving the people. ■



Yuan Jie (center), director of the Office for Administrative Law of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, and his colleagues conduct a survey on Beijing's noise pollution control on September 8.

Implementing whole-process democracy for high-quality legislative work in the new era

By Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

In November 2019, President Xi Jinping visited a local legislative outreach office of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) in Hongqiao neighborhood in Shanghai. In a conversation with Chinese and foreign residents attending a consultation meeting on a draft law, President Xi said, "We are following a path of socialist political development with Chinese characteristics, and our people's democracy is a whole-process democ-

cracy." Again in his speech at the ceremony marking the centenary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in July 2021, President Xi also emphasized the need to "develop whole-process people's democracy."

China's political system of people's congresses fundamentally guarantees that the Chinese people are the masters of their country, and it is instrumental in achieving whole-process democracy. Under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee, led by President Xi, and under the guidance

of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the NPC and its Standing Committee have carefully studied and implemented President Xi's important ideas on upholding and improving the system of people's congresses and his thinking on the rule of law, thoroughly understood the substance, essence, and principle requirements of the important concept of whole-process democracy, listened extensively to and taken onboard the opinions of people in every link of the legislative process, been innovative with democratic methods and improved democratic measures; exploited the advantages of whole-process democracy, promoted high-quality legislation in the new era, and expedited improvements to the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics. Our abundant practice of rational, democratic, and lawful legislation amply proves that all major legislative decisions are made in accordance with procedures, through democratic deliberation, and using rigorous and democratic decision-making, which, in turn, demonstrates our legislative implementation of whole-process democracy.

I. Improving China's legislative system and ensuring whole-process democracy is integrated in the legal system

Under President Xi's leadership, the Central Committee has attached great importance to legislative work since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, with the third and fourth plenary sessions of the 18th CPC Central Committee both issuing reform measures on rigorous and democratic legislative systems and mechanisms. The NPC and its Standing Committee have applied the CPC Central Committee's major decisions and arrangements to legislative work and adopted important measures to boost institutional development and improve systems and mechanisms. In March 2015, the Third Session of the 12th NPC passed the revised Legislation Law, which effectively institutionalized rigorous, democratic, and law-based legislation, refined the system of public solicitation on draft laws, and added provisions on appraisals prior to passing bills. The NPC and its Standing Committee have formulated a raft of documents related to work processes, including regulations on introducing and deliberating legislative items, provisions on the drafting of important laws by special committees of the NPC and working bodies of the Standing Committee, rules governing the work of local legislative outreach offices of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, and processes for soliciting opinions on draft laws as well as reviewing and filing laws and regulations and judicial interpretations. These institutional developments are the results of gradually accumulating experience of, and achieving progress in, whole-process democracy. They embody the principal requirements and contain all the elements of whole-process democracy.

Based on these innovations in system integration, in March 2021, the Fourth Session of the 13th NPC passed the revised Organic Law of the National People's Congress, which stipulates, "The NPC and its Standing Committee shall uphold 'whole-process democracy,' maintain close ties with the people, solicit people's opinions and suggestions, fully express the will of the people, and safeguard people's rights and interests." It also requires NPC deputies to "fully exert their role in whole-process democracy." These new provisions provide a legal basis and guarantee for strengthening and

improving legislative work in the new era. Through a series of legal norms, institutional arrangements, and design measures, whole-process democracy is implemented throughout the whole chain and in every aspect of legislative work, including bill approval, drafting, deliberation, argumentation, evaluation, supervision, and dissemination, so that the legislative process becomes a model that reflects democracy in its most extensive, honest, and useful form.

II. Practicing whole-process democracy through participation in legislation by NPC deputies

NPC deputies are members of the highest organ of state power who represent the interests and will of the people. Ensuring that NPC deputies fully participate in legislation, that they play their role as a bridge to the people, and that they remain rooted among the people enables us to utilize the institutional advantages of whole-process democracy as well as to legislate based on people's views, feelings, and ideas in order to benefit them.

NPC deputies directly exercise national legislative power by deliberating and voting at congresses.

Since 2015, the NPC Standing Committee has submitted important legal bills for deliberation to the National People's Congress each year. During the current 13th National People's Congress, the First Session deliberated and adopt-

The whole-process people's democracy in China not only has a complete set of institutions and procedures, but also full participation and practices.

ed constitutional amendments and the Supervision Law; the Second Session deliberated and adopted the Foreign Investment Law; the Third Session deliberated and adopted the Civil Code and the Decision of the National People's Congress on Establishing and Improving the Legal System and Enforcement Mechanisms for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to Safeguard National Security; and the Fourth Session deliberated and adopted the Organic Law of the National People's Congress, Rules of Procedure of the National People's Congress, and Decision of the National People's Congress on Improving the Electoral System of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. These are all instances of NPC deputies directly participating in national legislative power on behalf of the people. The law stipulates that one month before a meeting is held, draft laws must be distributed to deputies so that they can collectively study and discuss them. This ensures that deputies fully understand and conduct high-quality reviews of bills put before them.

Efforts are made to coordinate the handling of proposals by NPC deputies and the preparation of legislative plans as well as to ensure items of concern to the people are on the legislative agenda.

The NPC and its Standing Committee thoroughly study proposals and suggestions submitted by deputies and strive



Staff members compiling the Civil Code conduct a survey with grassroots community workers in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in February 2019.

for the timely inclusion in legislative planning and work of important legislative items that reflect matters of greatest concern to the people and that relate to the people's vital interests. In March 2021, all 506 deputies' bills delivered by the Presidium of the Third Session of the 13th NPC were reviewed. Of these, 22 legislative items raised in 118 bills were passed or are under review, and 58 legislative items raised in 168 bills were included in legislative programs or plans. When formulating the special legislative plan, the opinions of deputies and various parties were given comprehensive consideration before amendments to the Wildlife Protection Law, the Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases, and the Emergency Response Law were included in the legislative amendments work plan to strengthen the rule of law in public health.

Close contact is maintained between the NPC Standing Committee and deputies to encourage their participation in its legislative work.

Since the 13th National People's Congress was elected in 2018, 900 deputies have been invited to observed Standing Committee meetings and participated in deliberations of legal bills. Discussions and exchanges with invited deputies during Standing Committee meetings are an innovation of the current NPC Standing Committee. It has established and

improved mechanisms for Standing Committee members to contact deputies and report deputy outreach work to Standing Committee's CPC Leadership Group meetings and its chairperson meetings. Members of the Standing Committee have directly contacted 439 deputies, of whom 92 deputies were contacted by 16 members of the chairperson meeting. Thanks to these mechanisms, deputies have closer contact with the NPC Standing Committee, channels for expressing opinions and suggestions have become smoother, and participation in legislative work is more effective.

The opinions of NPC deputies are considered and incorporated during all aspects of legal drafting, argumentation, and research.

When drafting laws, the legislative opinions of deputies are considered and incorporated, with deputies invited to participate in legislative work such as research, seminars, and assessments before draft laws are passed. For example, during the drafting of the XI Amendment to the Criminal Law, 18 proposals submitted by 533 deputies during the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress were considered, and deputies' suggestions were incorporated on issues such as the age of criminal responsibility for minors, strengthening protection of the private sector, revising provisions on securities crimes, money laundering, and obstruct-

ing the containment of infectious diseases, and formulating guidelines for punishing assaults against police officers. Opinions on draft laws are usually solicited from deputies via the Chinese National People's Congress website, and some important draft laws are sent to all deputies for their comments. Draft laws on specialist subjects may be issued to representatives of relevant professions or fields for their comments and suggestions. Following the initial review of the Yangtze River Protection Law, the Data Security Law, and the Personal Information Protection Law, leading deputies of each of the relevant proposals were asked in writing to submit their opinions. When the Standing Committee deliberates draft laws, it carefully considers the opinions and suggestions of invited deputies, which are included in the relevant legislative documents.

III. Implementing the concepts, principles, and requirements of whole-process democracy in every aspect of legislation

Implementing the concepts, principles, and requirements of whole-process democracy in every aspect of legislation is an inherent requirement for developing socialist democracy and an objective requirement to abide by the principle of the rule of law and implement relevant provisions of the Organic Law of the National People's Congress. From raising legislative items to reviewing draft laws, from drafting to evaluation and argumentation, from extensively soliciting opinions to filing and review, and from legislative announcements to publicity and education of the rule of law, the entire process of and every link in legislative work is a visible and vivid manifestation of whole-process democracy. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, it has been made easier and more convenient for the national legislature and the people to interact with each other, and people's enthusiasm to participate in legislative work in accordance with the law has increased accordingly. New steps are being taken and new progress is being made on a constant basis in developing rig-

orous, democratic, and lawful legislation in China.

Legislative programs and plans are formulated systematically.

Legislative programs and plans are the blueprints for legislative work. During their formulation, opinions are sought from relevant departments of the CPC Central Committee, departments and related agencies of the State Council, the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the standing committees of people's congresses of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, as well as group organizations, industry associations, and chambers of commerce. Views are also solicited through seminars and in writing from research institutes, enterprises, public institutions, deputies of people's congresses, members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and experts and scholars. Mutual discussions are followed by methodical assessments and argumentation. The starting point of the work is the proposal of a legislative item, which leads to democratic and empirical decisions. The aim is to ensure that legislative work constantly adapts to new conditions in economic and social development and people's changing expectations.

The effectiveness of legislative research, discussions, demonstrations, and evaluations is constantly being enhanced.

Legislative investigations and discussions are compulsory activities when drafting and deliberating laws in China. Multi-level, multi-party, and multi-channel investigations are conducted to ascertain real-life circumstances. Multiple rounds of discussions are then held involving invited agencies, groups, experts, NPC deputies, and people from all walks of life relevant to the law, so that their opinions and suggestions can be heard. Argumentations aim to address more specialist issues by soliciting the views of experts and business departments. Appraisals are a special assessment process of the feasibility of major systems in draft laws, the timing of new laws, the impact of promulgating laws, and the possible problems that may arise. According to the Legislation Law, appraisal meetings are usually required to assess new laws. The effectiveness of research, deliberation, argumentation, and assessment methods has a bearing on the effectiveness of whole-process democracy, so they must be rigorously designed and logically deployed to ensure their efficacy.

Full advantage is made of the role of legislative outreach offices in directly soliciting the views and ideas of the public.

Local legislative outreach offices are used to directly solicit the public's feelings, opinions, and ideas, and they are a tangible manifestation of our attempts to create new forms and expand modes of democracy in China. To implement the requirements set out in the Resolution of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee established four local legislative outreach offices in 2015, including one in Hongqiao neighborhood in Shanghai's Changning District. In 2020, it established a further six local legislative outreach offices, including those at the offices of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Kunshan City in Jiangsu Province, at the offices of people's congress deputies in Zhengding Town in Hebei Province, and at China University of Political Science and Law, bringing the total number to 10.



A screenshot of the National People's Congress website showing the solicitation of public opinions on draft laws concerning wetland protection, anti-telecom network fraud and anti-monopoly, among others.

As of June 2021, these legislative outreach offices have provided nearly 6,600 suggestions relating to 109 draft laws and legislative work plans, many of which have been used following careful analysis and research. In 2020, the outreach office in Hongqiao neighborhood in Shanghai held more than 180 consultation meetings about 16 draft laws, which were attended by more than 3,000 people. In 2015, a proposal from the Hongqiao outreach office regarding the Draft Anti-Domestic Violence Law, which stated that, “The entities that can apply for personal safety protection orders should include grassroots organizations,” was incorporated in the law.

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, Internet technology has been used to facilitate communication and interactions between members of the public and legislative agencies. During the review of the Draft Law on Medical Practitioners, members of the Legislative Affairs Commission used video conferencing to contact local legislative outreach offices in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Jianghai District in Jiangmen, Guangdong Province, in order to understand legislative requirements from the perspective of people on the frontline.

The work of soliciting the public’s opinions on draft laws is continuously being promoted.

Soliciting opinions from the public on draft laws is important for promoting open legislation, expanding the public’s orderly participation in legislation, and having democratic legislation. In accordance with the Legislation Law and Rules of Procedure of the National People’s Congress, for bills deliberated by the NPC Standing Committee and bills to be submitted to the NPC for deliberation, draft laws and their explanations will be released to the public for comments no less than 30 days after meetings of the Standing Committee. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, 187 draft laws have been released to the public for comments, and approximately 1.1 million people have submitted more than 3 million opinions and suggestions, with many important views having been adopted. In the process of compiling the Civil Code, the public was consulted 10 times, and more than a million opinions were received from 425,000 people. Some important draft laws that impact the vital interests of the people, such as the Amendment to the Criminal Law (11), the Draft Individual Income Tax Law, the Law on the Protection of Minors, the Veterans Support Law, and the Copyright Law, aroused widespread public concern and received tens of thousands of comments. These opinions from the public were carefully analyzed during the legislative review process, and pertinent views were incorporated into the draft laws in order to respond to social concerns in a timely manner and maximize legislative consensus. Our efforts to solicit opinions from the public and incorporate comments were also reported back to the public in a timely manner through various means, including news reports and press conferences involving a spokesperson from the Legislative Affairs Commission.

Full advantage is made of the supervisory functions of the legal and regulatory filing and review processes.

The Legislation Law and the Supervision Law stipulate that citizens and organizations may submit recommendations for the review of administrative regulations they feel are inconsistent with China’s Constitution or laws. Since the 12th NPC in 2013, the Legislative Affairs Commission has investigated 8,040 review recommendations from individual

citizens and institutions, to which it has also proposed responses. Since the public is most entitled to comment on the implementation of administrative regulations and other normative documents, our filing and review work has established a legislative participation platform for the public to express their views, thereby helping to maintain the unity of the socialist legal system and guarantee the legal rights of citizens to democratic supervision.

Information on the NPC and legislation is clearly communicated to publicize the implementation of whole-process democracy.

Implementing whole-process democracy in legislation is an important element of the work of the NPC and the legislative process, and it exhibits the strength of socialist democracy. In July 2019, the Legislative Affairs Commission appointed a spokesperson to release information and answer questions on legislation. Over the past two years, our spokesperson has held eight on-site press conferences and given 19 written interviews and speeches, which has played a positive role in strengthening publicity and education on the rule of law and promoting the implementation of laws. The legislature is constantly improving its communication efforts at the three key stages of before, during, and after draft law reviews, in order to clearly release information on legislation and whole-process democracy. The aims are to help people at home and abroad better understand the legislative practices of whole-process democracy, increase people’s enthusiasm toward participating in legislation, and continuously strengthen their belief in the importance of upholding the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics.

IV. Important principles for implementing whole-process democracy

The system of people’s congresses is a fundamental political institutional arrangement that upholds the CPC’s leadership, the people’s position as the masters of the country, and the rule of law. The National People’s Congress and its Standing Committee have important roles and responsibilities in the historic process of developing socialist democracy. To implement the important concept of whole-process democracy and promote the high-quality development of legislative work in the new era, the following principles need to be assimilated.

We must uphold the CPC’s leadership over legislative work.

The CPC’s leadership provides a fundamental political guarantee for the implementation of whole-process democracy. The history of socialist democracy and of the rule of law in China have proved that it is only under the leadership of the CPC that state affairs can be managed in accordance with law, the rule of law can be strictly enforced, the people can be masters of the country, and the rule of law can be systematically advanced in state affairs and people’s lives. We must forever uphold the Party’s leadership over legislative work, fully implement the Party’s basic theory, guideline, and policy, be guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, learn to understand and practice Xi Jinping Thought on the rule of law, strictly implement the system of seeking instructions and reporting on major legislative issues, and use legal procedures to make the Party’s views the will of the state and written into law. This

will allow us to unify the ethos of the CPC Central Committee with the rule of law and to unify political and legal outcomes.

We must uphold the people-centered philosophy.

The realization of whole-process democracy is for the people, and the implementation of whole-process democracy depends on the people. The people of this country are its broadest and deepest foundation. Socialism with Chinese characteristics is entering a new era, and people have increasing demands in the areas of democracy, rule of law, fairness, justice, security, and the environment. When the people ask, legislation should respond. It is essential to listen to the people, pool their wisdom, respond to their expectations, reflect their thoughts and wishes in the design of the legal system, and use the advantage of whole-process democracy to ensure our people lead happier, more satisfying, and more secure lives.

We must continue to seek truth from facts.

Seeking truth from facts and proceeding from China's national conditions and real-life circumstances in everything we do are practical bases for implementing whole-process democracy through legislative work. We must accurately grasp our current national conditions and development reality, comprehend the principles behind legislation and democratic development, methodically and rationally establish the systems and mechanisms for whole-process democracy, conduct in-depth legislative investigations, fully understand real-life situations, propose considered solutions, and make legislation more pertinent and practicable, take advantage of the important role of legislation in modernizing the national governance system and governance capabilities, and provide high-quality legal support to implement the "five-sphere integrated plan" and the "four-pronged comprehensive strategy."

We must uphold the principle of the rule of law.

Whole-process democracy is inseparable from the rule of law. Without the support and assurance provided by the rule of law, whole-process democracy is not viable. We must continue to promote rigorous, democratic, and lawful legislation. We must strictly abide by legal procedures, expand our forms of legislation, improve our legal system and institutional mechanisms for practicing whole-process democracy, and aspire to better unity between the leadership of the Party, the position of the people as masters of the country, and law-based governance by effectively utilizing the system of people's congresses, so as to create a comprehensive institutional guarantee for whole-process democracy.

Legislation workers have been greatly honored and motivated by mentions of legislative work and legislative outreach offices in President Xi Jinping's speeches on whole-process democracy. We are determined to study and implement Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. Focusing on the overall objectives of establishing a Chinese socialist legal system and a country built on socialist rule of law, we will strengthen legislation in key and emerging areas and those involving foreign parties. We will employ more varied democratic means and create smoother democratic channels to implement whole-process democracy throughout the legislative process, ensure high-quality legislative process in the new era, and provide legal impetus and institutional guarantees for building a modern socialist China. (Xinhua) ■

The people are central to China's vision of democracy

From the people, to the people and with the people. Qin Gang, Chinese Ambassador to the U.S., highlighted these salient features of China's whole-process democracy during an online conversation held by the Carter Center and the George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations on September 22. This is an edited excerpt of his views.

The idea of putting people first has been part of the Chinese DNA since ancient times. Confucius, an ancient Chinese thinker who lived during the same time that ancient Greece existed, raised the idea that people are the foundation of a country. Mencius, Confucius' follower, said, "To a state, the people are the most important thing. The state comes second. The ruler is the least important."

An ancient Chinese ruler believed that the people are to the monarch what water is to a boat, and he cautioned that the water can carry the boat; but it can also overturn the boat. One hundred years ago, the Communist Party of China (CPC) was established as a political party for the poor and, since then, its founding mission has been to pursue happiness for the people. With the slogans of anti-dictatorship, anti-autocracy and anti-oppression, it enabled the people to become masters of their own country and, in doing so, won the people's hearts. As the governing party, it has remained faithful to its founding mission: being people-centered and serving the people wholeheartedly.

What China has today is a whole-process democracy. China's Constitution prescribes that all power belongs to the people. The people have the right to elections, and they can be broadly involved in national governance according to law. They exercise state power through the National People's Congress and local people's congresses at different levels, equivalent to America's Congress and state legislatures. Deputies to the people's congresses at the county and township levels are directly elected. Those above the county level are indirectly elected. People elect deputies, who will politically represent them and elect leaders. Deputies maintain close contact with the people, and all major legislations and decisions are made



A collage of photos taken on July 15, 2020 shows villagers' smiles in Shenshan Village, Jinggangshan of Jiangxi Province. *Peng Zhaozhi*

through scientific and democratic processes as well as extensive consultations.

China also features a unique system of political consultation and corresponding institutions, which are important ways for the people to participate in democracy. Any matters that concern people's keen interests are discussed by people's congresses, the government, the political consultative conference, social organizations and industry associations, before major decisions are made, to make sure that what the people want is reflected in the final decisions.

In China, government officials have many meetings to attend, and they also participate in many field visits. Meetings are for discussing problems and exploring solutions; field visits are for gaining firsthand knowledge of conditions on the ground. Decisions are made through discussions and debates, which are extensive and intense, just like those on Capitol Hill.

In China, talents have been chosen based on their abilities and merits since ancient times. Another Chinese philosopher, who was a contemporary of Plato, once said, "Prime ministers must have served as local officials; great generals must have risen from the ranks." China had an imperial examination system over 1,400 years ago. Whoever passed the exams, regardless of their age and wealth, could be appointed as officials. They usually started from positions at the lowest level

of government, and were then promoted or removed based on their performance. This is the original form of the civil service system in the West today.

In this system, officials who are incompetent, dishonest or disapproved of by the people have no chance of being promoted.

The incumbent members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, China's top leadership, have all had long years of work experience from the grassroots up to higher levels in different localities. President Xi Jinping, also General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, became a farmer in a poor village in northwest China at the age of 16. He was appointed Party secretary of Shanghai, the biggest city in China, at 54. The decades in between saw him work at a variety of posts in different places, and the populations he served varied from a few hundred to a few hundred thousand, to millions and to tens of millions. As he rose through the ranks, he has come to understand the people's kitchen table concerns. He deeply loves the people, cares about the people, and has become capable of managing complexities and getting things done for the people. At the same time, he is trusted and supported by the people. This is why you often find China's senior officials elected with an overwhelming majority of votes, or even unanimously. (Beijing Review) ■

Fulfilling commitments

A grassroots NPC deputy brings community voices to policymakers

By Lu Yan



Zhu Guoping (second left), deputy to the National People's Congress, talks with members of the Foreign Affairs Office of Shanghai Municipality at a contact station in Shanghai on October 22.

Of the nearly 3,000 deputies to the National People's Congress (NPC), many represent grassroots positions, including Zhu Guoping. Dubbed the "neighborhood premier" by locals, Zhu is a retired community worker in Shanghai's Changning District, who helps solve matters ranging from parking spaces to senior care to legislation in her residential community.

Zhu not only makes her cellphone number public to residents, but also pays door-to-door visits to listen to people's views and help them with their difficulties. "Lawmakers should keep very close to the people," the veteran community worker said in an interview in September.

Elected by the people, Chinese lawmakers are guardians of the interests of the people. As a lawmaker, Zhu has paid special attention to getting local residents involved in legislation. In her office, citizens can take part in discussions about draft laws and have their opinions heard by legislators.

Zhu said that her community has participated in the revision of dozens of laws, including laws on domestic violence and protection for minors, with many putting forward of their opinions.

When she retired three years ago, Zhu and her colleagues set up a roadside contact station where anyone can come to ask for help or give suggestions on how to improve the community and people's lives. She would summarize these suggestions, opinions and constructive criticism and put them in

different categories, like improving the living environment, ecological preservation, employment and medical care. She would then take them to relevant governmental bodies during the annual NPC sessions or in between sessions.

"I have to know the issues and difficulties that people are most concerned about and want to solve, because the goal of being a deputy to the NPC is to serve the people," she said.

"Besides listening to their voices, we would often go to the sites ourselves and investigate the problems. We also follow through to check if the problems are actually solved," Zhu said. "In recent years, I have noticed that there are fewer and fewer people coming to us to complain, as their lives get better."

Nevertheless, improved livelihood can bring new troubles. Zhu could still recall that years ago, her community lacked parking lots, as more people were buying cars. So she brought together some residents, property management company staff, community workers and other relevant parties to brainstorm and figure out a better way to utilize the land in the neighborhood. As a result, they made room for nearly 200 additional cars. With better space usage, the green area of the neighborhood was also increased.

"We say 'people's affairs are discussed by the people,' and their wisdom is given full play to solve their problems. It is also a vivid case of whole-process people's democracy being practiced at the grassroots level," Zhu said.

To improve her legislative capabilities, Zhu participated in several online and offline workshops. She said they helped her understand how to fulfill her duties through the rule of law. "I watched videos online, such as those introducing major law revisions and how other NPC deputies helped local residents solve problems, which saved me time and at the same time offered me a reference for my work," she explained.

Zhu said diversifying channels to solicit public opinions, understanding what people most need and taking the time to learn the country's latest policies and laws are necessary for deputies to play a better role in serving the people.

She has organized workshops for young community workers in order to share her experiences, discuss practical problems they encounter and help them find solutions to problems.

"As long as my health allows, I will keep working for the local community," she said. "This is my way of giving back to the society." ■

Making a difference

Stories of NPC deputies working for the improvement of people's lives locally

By Lu Yan



Luo Yinghe, deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), speaks during the Second Session of the 13th NPC in Beijing in March 2019.

Relocation changes everything

NPC deputy Luo Yinghe was once a migrant worker and is currently Communist Party of China chief of a relocation community in Guizhou, a province once with the most number of poor in the country. He has devoted himself to poverty relief and helped his fellow villagers embrace a new life.

The Xinmin residential community in Huishui County was established in 2016, as part of the country's drive to relocate impoverished people from remote barren and disaster-prone areas to more habitable areas.

Villagers in Doudi village, Luo's home, faced antiquated infrastructure, inconvenient transportation and lack of sufficient drinking water. Despite these inconveniences, many people had doubts about moving when government staff

came to their homes and asked for their opinion. But at the time, Luo realized relocation was the only way out for them. So he voluntarily went door-to-door and explain to his fellow villagers the policies, helping them realize the benefits they would get from relocation.

The new community, home to approximately 6,000 residents from more than 170 villages, ensured that at least one member in every family has a job, while the average disposable income of its residents has tripled from before the relocation.

By actively engaging local authorities, enterprises and the community, Luo helped facilitate the opening of evening training schools for the relocated and secure jobs for them.

A large number of households in the community have bought a car. The number of people going to college has increased as well. "Serving as a deputy means great responsibility," said Luo, adding that he will do his best to serve the people and help them understand government policies in an efficient manner.

Going green

Today, every household in Gereltuya Gacha, a village in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, is equipped with a forage shed, a barn and other infrastructure. However, even a few years ago, it wasn't anything like today. Tsolmon, secretary of local Party branch, gets the credit this tremendous shift.

In the past, villagers in Gereltuya Gacha earned their living by raising stock and lived a relatively primitive nomadic life. To change the situation, Tsolmon and other village officials researched and formulated poverty alleviation measures. Subsidies were provided for villagers to start new businesses, renovate housing and get vocational training and education. Tourism with local characteristics, including traditional cuisine and grassland visits, also became an important source of income.

Preserving the ecology is also high on the village development agenda. "The pasture is the lifeblood of the herders. If we are to live a prosperous life, we must protect the prairie on which we depend," Tsolmon said.

Due to overgrazing and drought, the grassland has been damaged to varying degrees. The fundamental way to solve the problem of grassland protection lies in transforming from extensive to targeted management, Tsolmon said, and



Tsolmon takes questions from journalists.

from past excessive grassland use to rational use.

Technology plays a crucial part in this change. In cooperation with the science academies and universities, villagers started to cultivate a new sheep variety with a fast growth cycle and good meat quality. The new variety has a high rate of producing twin lambs, better breeding efficiency and improved protection of the grassland ecology without reducing herders' income. "Witnessing tangible results, herders are more willing to embrace modern animal husbandry," Tsolmon said.

"As an NPC deputy, I have to do more meaningful things, listen to the people's voices, observe their sentiments, relieve their worries and make more contributions to improving the grasslands and making herdsmen richer," he added.

Developing industries

As a long-time Party chief, Lan Nianying has led Xinyue village of Jiangxi Province in developing a seedling industry and ethnic tourism.

About a 15-minute drive from downtown Zixi County, to the east of Fuzhou, Xinyue is home to 420 people, 90 percent of whom are from the She ethnic group, an ancient nationality and one of the 56 ethnic groups in China. Its per capita income in 2020 was 17,000 yuan, double the figure five years ago.

Tourists come to see renovated She dwellings and the lush rural landscape. They would enjoy the area's unique culture, drink rice wine and dance with people in traditional dress. The county's national-level tourist attractions receive more than 4 million visits every year, according to Lan.

During the early 1980s, Lan, who was then in her early 20s, noticed that every time the villagers went to visit relatives in the east coastal Zhejiang Province, they brought fruit seedlings back to plant. She came up with an idea to cultivate

seedlings in the village.

After trial and error, she cultivated loquat and orange seedlings, which earned her a fortune, making her the first person in the village to make that much money. She quickly became a well-known seedling grower and villagers came to her for lessons. So when she was elected village head in 1994, she decided to help more people get into the business.

Lan said she saw an opportunity for the village to improve its income by developing a seedling industry after she read about the problem of soil erosion around the country. She called on the villagers to scour the mountains to collect seeds for reforestation.

To encourage them to grow seedlings on a large scale, Lan signed contracts with 50 households in 1999. They were responsible for cultivating seedlings and she was responsible for selling them. Thanks to this endeavor, the villagers have increased income and have seen their lives shift out of poverty.

In recent years, Lan has helped villagers upgrade the business by turning to the cultivation of rare seedling species. In addition, a new rice wine processing plant is being built, which she said will expand production and further raise income.

In 2016, Xinyue started to develop rural tourism based on the appeal of its lush environment and unique culture. Vacant spaces and idle factories were transformed to look more like traditional She buildings. Last year, the village attracted more than 200,000 tourists.

"To develop these characteristic industries, the threshold must be low so that ordinary villagers can easily participate, but the product and service quality must be high, ensuring a strong industrial vitality," Lan said. ■



Lan Nianying receives a group interview via video link and tells her stories as a National People's Congress deputy and Party chief.

Serving the people

By Lu Yan, Zhang Meijuan

When the medical team from Zhejiang Province left Wuhan in central China's Hubei Province in March 2020, after nearly a month of a high-intensity battle against COVID-19, Ge Minghua decided to stay on at the Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital intensive care unit. Ge is president of Zhejiang Provincial People's Hospital and deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC) from Zhejiang in east China. At the time, the hospital was still treating patients in critical conditions even though the epidemic situation in the city was subdued.

"Wherever we went, we would never flinch," he said.

Ge and his team were in charge of two inpatient areas at Jinyintan, and of the 73 patients they treated, none died or underwent a more critical turn. "What impressed me most were the Wuhan people's strong hearts and the medical teams' dedication," he said.

Ge was among the over 2.6 million deputies to people's congress at various levels who rose to the challenge and devoted themselves to fighting the pandemic, which gripped the entire world and caused devastation not seen in a century.

Virus fighters

Nearly 3,000 NPC members in total devoted themselves to fighting the virus.

In January 2020, Zhang Boli, deputy to the NPC and president of Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), flew to Wuhan, where the disease was first detected in the country. During his 82-day battle on the frontline, Zhang and his team treated over 500 patients.

As a TCM expert, Zhang presided over COVID-19 treatment research, combining TCM and Western medicine. He noted that the two complement each other as Western medicine offers important life-supporting measures such as respiratory and circulatory assistance, while TCM focuses on improving patients' physical condition and immunity.

Large-scale use of TCM markedly reduced the rate of illness among four vulnerable categories of people. Over 90 percent of COVID-19 patients received TCM, while its clinical efficacy was above 90 percent.

He was awarded the national honorary title of People's Hero along with military medical scientist Chen Wei and Zhang Dingyu, head of Jinyintan Hospital. They were rec-



Chen Huayuan (center), deputy to the National People's Congress and former president of the China Construction Third Engineering Bureau, visits construction workers who built Huoshenshan Hospital to fight the COVID-19 epidemic in 2020 in Wuhan of Hubei Province on February 4.

ognized for their tremendous work against the novel coronavirus disease at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on September 8, 2020.

Cheng Jing, an NPC deputy and a scientist whose team developed China's first DNA "chip" to detect Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome 17 years ago, also contributed significantly to the battle against COVID-19. As an academican of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, Cheng and his research team developed in a week a respiratory virus nucleic acid detection kit, the first in the world to detect the virus within an hour and a half.

"Without the wealth of experience that we accumulated in past years and the continuous support from the country for this sector, we could not have completed the mission so fast," Cheng said. In the thick of the crisis, Cheng's team donated the chips and detection reagents to Wuhan worth 5 million yuan.

Back on track

As China began to rebound from the epidemic, the country has aimed to resume work and production in an orderly and effective manner. NPC members have been leading the way in China's economic and social recovery, while at the same time fending off a resurgence of infections.

In March 2020, NPC deputy Cheng Ju, also secretary of the Communist Party of China Xiazhuang Village branch in Hubei, got busy with helping farmers with their spring planting. She went door-to-door recording details of their seed and fertilizer needs in advance to get personnel to place orders to facilitate timely planting. With the gradual recovery of production, workshops that made the sanitary cotton gauze needed for masks resumed production in the village.

“My job is to serve the people and help them solve their

problems,” Cheng said. In her opinion, the most important duty for NPC deputies is to make the voices of the people from the grassroots heard and their needs met.

“The epidemic was a huge test for us, and it also gave me a deeper understanding of rural work,” Cheng said. She kept a journal to record her experiences and thoughts on work during the epidemic control and prevention period. During the annual NPC session in 2020, she shared her story with other legislators and the entire country, allowing more people to pay attention to and understand the

Voices of NPC deputies



The improvement and conservation of arable land is key to promoting agricultural development; and technological innovation should be employed to overcome bottleneck issues pertaining to high-quality agricultural development and to support the national drive of rural revitalization, Dang Yongfu, an NPC deputy, says.



Market-based mechanisms should be leveraged to encourage corporate innovation and to bolster their principal role in innovation, according to Tang Yue, an NPC deputy.



NPC deputy Yu Shaorong suggests accelerating infrastructure construction, boosting industries with distinct local features and consolidating poverty alleviation achievements while advancing rural revitalization.



To fully advance rural revitalization, industries with distinct local features should be cultivated and developed with targeted efforts to ensure stable industrial chains, says Yang Changqin, an NPC deputy.



NPC deputy Huang Bingfeng calls for closer industrial cooperation between eastern and western regions of China, further coordination of internal labor migration and joint poverty relief efforts through consumption so as to realize rural revitalization across the country.



The grape industry in Turpan has expanded from grape growing to wine making, rural tourism and cultural industry, Wuernisha Kadeer, an NPC deputy, says, adding that logistics centers for dried fruits should be built to further broaden the forestry and fruit growing industrial chain, with a view to creating more income for farmers and boosting rural revitalization.

countryside.

During this year's NPC session, she proposed ideas on consolidating the results of poverty alleviation in the rural area while promoting rural revitalization.

NPC deputies from the business field contributed their share in the resumption of work and production as epidemic prevention and control is conducted on a regular basis. The operator of one of the largest online marketplaces in China, 58.com, offered fee waivers for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), such as posting recruitment

information on its website. Online training courses were open to all, helping over 100,000 employees to improve their vocational skills. Yao Jingbo, founder, chairman and CEO of 58.com, said that as an NPC deputy, he felt a special responsibility to serve the people at this particular trying time. "Relying on our brand reputation and our technology and big data strengths, we could help more SMEs to quickly overcome barriers and get back on their feet, which could further boost employment, resume production and improve people's lives," Yao said. ■



NPC deputy Wu Wei proposes pushing high-quality industrial development and building modern manufacturing cities.



NPC deputy Wu Jian supports accelerating the building of a state strategic scientific and technological force, focusing on independent and original innovation of national defense technology, and developing key and core technologies.



NPC deputy Hong Jie suggests funneling greater resources to basic science research, concentrating on key and core technologies and spurring enterprises to become original innovators.



Colleges and universities should draw on their advantages in major scientific and technological innovation to support the high-quality development as set forth in the 14th Five-Year Plan, says Li Qiang, an NPC deputy.



NPC deputy Fan Huitao advocates strengthening companies' technological innovation capacity, enhancing the in-depth integration of industries, academia and research, and enabling enterprises to play their part in innovation.



NPC Deputy Chen Baoshan urges scientific and technological innovation to propel the development of industries with distinct local features.

Photo by Zhang Qianqian, Xiong Zhengyan, Yue Yuewei, Wen Jinghua, Ding Lin, Wu Yu, Pang Xinglei.



Legislation digest

Residents scan a QR code to log into a tourist information and service platform in Guiyang of Guizhou Province on May 27. *Ou Dongqu*

NPC passes law on Hainan free trade port

The NPC Standing Committee on June 10 passed a law on the Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP), making institutional arrangements for the construction of the Hainan FTP at the national legislative level.

Analysts believe that the law will lay a solid legal foundation for the construction operations, ensuring Hainan's opening-up and development based on the rule of law.

The law clarifies that the Hainan FTP covers the whole island, and establishes policies and systems in steps or phases to realize the liberalization and facilitation of trade, investment, the cross-border flow of funds, personnel exit and entry, and transportation, and ensure the secure flow of data.

Hainan's natural environment is its greatest advantage, and its economic development must not be pursued at the expense of the environment. The law stipulates the strictest ecological and environmental protection system, implementing the one-vote veto system for environmental protection and lifelong accountability for damage to the ecological environment.

Last June, a master plan was released to build the island into a globally influential and high-level free trade port by the middle of the century.

"The law on Hainan free trade port transforms the decisions and arrangements of the Communist Party of China Central Committee into law. It is of vital importance to comprehensively deepening reform and advancing law-based governance," said Lyu Wei, a member of the 13th National

People's Congress Standing Committee.

The world is facing a new round of major changes, with economic globalization encountering greater headwinds. However, China has never slowed its pace in pushing forward opening-up and promoting economic globalization.

The enactment of the Hainan FTP law demonstrates China's unswerving determination in broadening opening-up and building an open world economy, said an official with the legislative affairs commission of the NPC Standing Committee.

Hainan will establish a legal system based on the FTP law, and build a law-based government and a world-class legal environment, said Shen Xiaoming, Party chief of Hainan.

According to the law, Hainan can formulate regulations on the FTP construction in light of specific circumstances and actual needs, which means that Hainan is granted more legislative and reform autonomy.

"We are speeding up the local legislation, especially in key areas including bankruptcy, fair competition and commercial deregistration," said Hu Guanghui, deputy director of the Standing Committee of Hainan Provincial People's Congress.

Draft law proposes banning big data-enabled price discrimination

A draft law submitted to the NPC for review has proposed to make provisions against big data-enabled price discrimination against existing customers.

The draft law on the protection of personal information

was submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for its third reading on August 17.

The draft stipulates that automated decision-making using personal information should not unfairly treat individuals in terms of transaction price and other trade conditions.

When pushing information and business marketing to individuals through automated decision-making, personal information processors should provide options that don't target personal characteristics at the same time, or offer ways of rejection, according to the draft.

Marking distinctions between large-scale internet platforms and small personal information processors, the draft stipulates that the former should formulate their own rules on personal information protection following the principles of openness, fairness and justice.

Similar rules for small personal information processors can be formulated by cyberspace authorities, according to the draft.

Targeting the excessive collection of personal data by apps, the draft clarifies that the collection of personal information should be limited to the minimum scope for the purpose of processing.

It also adds provisions prohibiting any organization or individual from illegally collecting, using, processing, and transmitting other people's personal data, or illegally trading, sharing, or disclosing other people's personal information.

Strengthening protection for minors, the draft deems personal information of minors under 14 as sensitive, asking personal information processors to formulate special processing protocols for the group.

It also proposes improving the relevant mechanism for handling complaints and reports.

New law to protect doctors passed

A law was passed on protecting the lawful rights and interests of physicians, providing a legal guarantee for the implementation of the Healthy China strategy.

The legislation was adopted at the closing meeting of a session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on August 20.

The law, consisting of seven chapters and 67 articles, stipulates that Aug. 19 is observed as China's Doctors' Day.

It also makes provisions on the qualification examination and registration, rules of practice, training and assessment, supporting measures, and legal liabilities for physicians.

The law requires strengthening the training of medical professionals in general practice, pediatrics, psychiatry, geriatrics and other disciplines that are in short supply.

It also asks measures to cultivate high-level professionals of integrated traditional Chinese and western medicine and general practitioners who are able to provide integrated traditional Chinese and western medical services.

Doctors shall be encouraged to offer medical and health-care services regularly at medical institutions below the county level, including township and village clinics and community health service centers, and the main institutions where they practice shall support them, reads the law.

It also stipulates that medical and health institutions

should improve security measures and take the initiative to resolve medical disputes in a timely manner, thus ensuring the safety of doctors.

The law will take effect on March 1, 2022.

The number of practicing physicians and practicing assistant physicians in China hit nearly 4.1 million in 2020.

New law to protect personal information

The NPC Standing Committee on August 20 voted to adopt a new law on personal information protection, which will take effect on Nov. 1.

Lawmakers approved the law at the closing meeting of a regular legislative session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), which started Tuesday.

The development of big data brings convenience to life but also breeds chaos: some platforms over-collect personal information; some businesses install image acquisition equipment without authorization and secretly record customers' faces and other biological characteristics.

China has always attached great importance to personal information security. The law on personal information protection clarifies rules on the processing and cross-border providing of personal information.

"Currently, the whole society pays close attention to new technologies such as user profiling and recommendation algorithms, and problems including big data-enabled price discrimination have arisen," said Zang Tiewei, spokesperson for the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee.

The law makes provisions prohibiting the excessive collection of personal information and big data-enabled price discrimination against existing customers.

When pushing information and business marketing to individuals through automated decision-making, personal information processors should provide options that don't target personal characteristics at the same time, or offer ways of rejection, says the law.

It asks internet giants, which possess the personal information of a large number of users, to set up an independent body mainly composed of outsiders to supervise how the information is handled.

These big internet platforms are also required to formulate their own rules on personal information protection following the principles of openness, fairness and justice, and publish social responsibility reports on personal information protection on a regular basis, according to the law.

It also requires prominent signs to be set up at public places where image acquisition and personal identification equipment is installed, stipulating that the collected images and identification information can only be used for safeguarding public security.

Strengthening protection for minors, the law deems personal information of minors under 14 as sensitive, asking personal information processors to formulate special processing protocols for the group.

China had 989 million internet users by the end of 2020, of whom 183 million were minors. (Xinhua) ■



A procurator teaches middle school students China's Constitution in Hengshui of Hebei Province on December 4, 2020. Wang Min

China quickens constitutional review pace

By Lu Yan, Zhang Meijuan

The Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) started its 25th session on January 20 to review multiple draft laws and law revisions. Shen Chunyao, Chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission (LAC) of the NPC Standing Committee, delivered the 2020 annual work report on the efforts to record and review the validity of various types of sub-statutory documents, including local regulations and judicial interpretations.

The LAC took issue with some local regulations that govern the languages used in teaching at ethnic schools which provided that ethnic schools "shall" use ethnic languages in teaching. Shen pointed out that it was unconstitutional since the Constitution requires all schools to use the national common language—standard Chinese—as the language of

instruction.

Relevant local legislatures have been asked to revise such provisions. This is the first year the annual work report singles out constitutionality and cites an unconstitutional case after the top legislature began to hear the commission's work report in 2017.

The LAC delivered its first report following President Xi Jinping's call for advancing the work of constitutional review at the 19th Communist Party of China (CPC) National Congress in October 2017. Though the concept was novel at that time, constitutional review had been an inherent part of record and review work for quite a long time. It is a process whereby various governmental bodies with lawmaking authority record the legislation they enact with the NPC Standing Committee. Then the Standing Committee, through several established

mechanisms, reviews this local legislation to identify potential violations of the Constitution and other laws.

Reviewing bodies

In March 2018, the NPC Constitution and Law Committee, formerly known as the NPC Law Committee, was established to review draft laws and conduct constitutional examinations. Consequently, the LAC set up a Constitution office dedicated to promoting constitutional review along with a department dedicated to the recording and reviewing of regulations.

The office reviews legislation prior to their enactment or for modification in the case of potential constitutional violation. Meanwhile, the department for recording and reviewing examines legislation after their enactment or modification. And the laws and regulations may be reviewed by an ex officio member or upon request, are subject to special review or can be transferred for review.

Review by an ex officio member or special review is categorized as active reviews, while the other two are passive reviews. Since reviewers will be overstretched just handling active reviews given the number of legislatures and legislation in China, passive review is also needed. The Legislation Law stipulates that the State Council, the Central Military Commission, the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Standing Committee of the Provincial People's Congress may submit written requests for review to the NPC Standing Committee, while other state organs, social groups, citizens, public enterprises and institutions may submit written suggestions for review.

Citizen's participation

The Chinese citizens have played a very active role in constitutional review. The NPC Standing Committee received 5,146 review suggestions from citizens and social groups in 2020, a record high in the last four years.

The abolishment of the custody and education system for prostitution is regarded as the NPC's first response to citizen's request for a constitutional check. The LAC commenced its study on custody and education targeting prostitution in 2018, prompted by requests from multiple scholars and lawyers. A year later, the NPC Standing Committee decided to abolish the system; the State Council then annulled the system in April 2020.

In June 2018, Fang Shimin, a farmer from central China's Anhui Province wrote a letter to the LAC regarding the application of the law on compensation for personal injury. In his letter, Fang noted that the different standards applied for urban and rural citizens for disability and death compensation were against the Constitution's spirit of equality.

He received a reply from the LAC six months later, stating that it did not affirm the unconstitutionality of the issue. However, Liang Ying, director of the LAC's normative document review office, said in public that the existing legal interpretation of the dual standards for urban and rural areas is no longer suitable for the current progressive development of urban-rural integration.

The CPC Central Committee and the State Council released a document in April 2019 proposing to revamp the personal injury compensation mechanism and to unify the



A screenshot of an online platform on the National People's Congress website where the people submit suggestions on laws and regulations.

standard for urban and rural residents. In January 2021, Shen suggested that the LAC would consult the Supreme People's Court to revise the compensation standard for personal injury in a timely manner.

It is worth noting that "unconstitutionality" was not referred to in the abovementioned cases since prior recording and review work would normally shun the words "constitution" or "unconstitutional." This is why the 2020 recording and review work report truly marks a milestone because it cites non-compliance with the Constitution for the first time, demonstrating China's judicial advancement.

Making improvements

Different sectors in the process of the recording and review work should enhance their interaction to jointly correct errors in normative documents, said Wang Kai, a law professor from Beihang University.

In 2017, several scholars stated that new family planning regulations in seven provinces contained outdated stipulations, such as the requirement that government officials be dismissed for having more than one child. It was clearly a violation of the Labor Law. The LAC responded in September 2017 by requesting modifications to the regulations, with many provinces making changes by the end of 2018.

However, there were still some controversial provisions in some local governments' normative documents, despite the measures taken by the provincial legislatures. Wang said the possible reason could be that the recording and review work is fragmented and it is necessary to strengthen the communications between various parts of the work, and once mistakes are spotted, they should be corrected in all parts.

In the past years, several documents touching upon the recording and review work have been released. For instance, Measures for the Recordation Review of Regulations and Judicial Interpretations adopted in 2019 specifies the standards for recording and review work; The Plan to Build the Rule of Law in China (2020-2025) was issued by the CPC Central Committee in January 2021, which emphasizes the importance of connection and interaction mechanisms for recording and reviewing.

Zhang Xiang, deputy dean of the Renmin University of China Law School, pointed out that the establishment of a supporting system with corresponding specifications is the key to future constitutional review development, while review methods and procedures should be developed as soon as practical. In the LAC's 2020 work report, Shen mentioned that the reviewers will explore constitutional interpretation during constitutional review in 2021. ■

More talents take root in China's countryside to boost rural vitalization

Li Xingguo, a senior geological engineer, visited a remote mountainous village in east China three times over the past two months. However, he was not there to discover mineral resources but a path to rural vitalization for the village.

Rural vitalization is in full swing throughout China after the country eradicated absolute poverty. This year, the nation is embarking on a new journey of fully building a modernized socialist country, with agriculture and rural areas being an important part of the cause.

In order to boost the development of local villages, Yuexi County of east China's Anhui Province launched a campaign this July – recruiting 100 talents with doctorate degrees to assist 100 villages for one year.

Li, 58, signed up immediately when he saw the recruitment. He was then appointed as honorary head of the village of Henan about 40 km from downtown Yuexi.

"I was born and raised in the countryside, and I've met a lot of farmers during my work over the past 30 years. Therefore, I have a deep feeling for them and want to make a contribution to rural development," said Li, a doctorate-degree holder from north China's Tianjin Municipality.

Like Li, more and more talented people have chosen to go to the countryside to make their own contributions to the country's rural vitalization.

To the countryside

The Chinese government has always regarded issues relating to agriculture, rural areas and rural people as its top priority. It has underlined efforts to pursue rural vitalization based on local specialty industries and make better use of science and technology in promoting the agricultural sector.

Shortly after his arrival in the village, Li started to help locals identify business potentials.

Surrounded by mountains, the village of Henan enjoys a great environment and abundant water resources. A well has been dug in preparation for the opening of a mineral water plant in the village.

Li took back a bottle of sample water from the well to Tianjin, where a lab test showed that the water contains the element of strontium, providing a scientific reference for further investment. Thanks to Li's promotion, a businessman from Beijing came to the village in September to assess its tourism prospects, and reached a preliminary cooperation intention with the village.

Li worked in the village for 15 days in the first month, much longer than the three-day minimum requirement per month regulated in the contract.

"I never expected someone with a doctorate degree could come to our village. We hope Dr. Li can take advantage of his profound knowledge, advanced concepts and personal connections to help the development of our village," said Jiang Changping, Party chief of Henan Village.

Talents with various backgrounds including university graduates and technical personnel and those who are interested in rural development have been called on to jump on the bandwagon of rural vitalization.

Nearly 10,000 competent personnel including entrepreneurs and veterans have been recruited to work in rural areas in east China's Shandong Province in recent years, and 3,819 of them were selected as village Party chiefs.

Northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region has decided to establish a youth talent pool to cultivate at least 1,000 "new farmers" every year who are good at entrepreneurship and familiar with the technology.

New vitality to rural economy

With professional skills and novel ideas of management, talents from urban areas are bringing new vitality to China's rural economic development.



Farmers harvest chili in Qingkangba Village in Guizhou Province on August 12, 2020. Yang Wenbin



A salesperson promotes agricultural products in Zigui County, Hubei Province through a livestream on November 10. Wu Zhizun

Rural vitalization is in full swing throughout China after the country eradicated absolute poverty.

Different from Li who was recruited by the government, former journalist and director Zhang Zhengang came to the countryside of his own accord to pursue a country life and conduct his rural vitalization trial.

Zhang from the southern Chinese city Shenzhen made a life-changing decision in 2007 – he bid farewell to urban life in the metropolis and moved to Huangshan, a mountainous area in southern Anhui, where he has been working on his dream house over the past four years.

As China's urbanization picks up pace, some villagers abandon dilapidated houses in rural areas and buy apartments in cities.

Zhang has been thinking of how to bring these villages back to life. Converting old buildings into galleries, restaurants or homestays is a way out for him.

Shiji Village of Yansi Township, located deep in mountains, is one such place. Although the village enjoys beautiful scenery and a great environment, over half of its population works elsewhere due to its remote location and lack of resources.

Over the past decade, Zhang has helped local people design and rebuild their houses and communities in an environment-friendly way.

In 2017, he rented a piece of wasteland in Shiji Village with a dilapidated house and pigsty to turn it into a new building that includes four bedrooms, a bar, a painting studio, and a garden.

The new building is expected to open to the public by the end of this year as a guesthouse, art gallery or even a performance venue, said Zhang.

"We're very grateful to Zhang because he reminded us of the beauty and value of our village. Sanitation conditions in the village are much improved, and more and more tourists are coming," said Jiang Zhengchun, a 64-year-old villager, who is rebuilding his house into a homestay.

Many people have returned to Shiji to renovate their homes. At least four households have decided to run restaurant or homestay businesses. The small mountainous village is gradually "waking up" as more people come and stay.

To realize rural vitalization, China needs talented people that can bring know-how, capital and management skills to and are willing to stay in rural areas, said Li Xiaoyun, a professor at China Agricultural University.

However, Li also pointed out that more work needs to be done to improve the infrastructure, public social services such as health and education, and supporting policies in rural areas to attract more talents to come. (Xinhua) ■

A winter wonderland of ice and snow

By Lu Yan



The Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games will kick off on February 4, 2022, which falls on the fourth day of the first lunar month during the Spring Festival holiday, the most important traditional Chinese festival of the year. They will run until February 20, followed by the Paralympic Winter Games on March 4-13.

Some 2,892 athletes from all over the world will compete in 109 medal events over 15 disciplines in seven sports in the Winter Games. Seven new events have been added since the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games, including women's monobob, short track speed skating mixed relay and mixed team ski jumping.

"The goal is to realize gender equality. These Winter Olympics will have the most female athletes in history," Tong Lixin, head of the sports department of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, said. A total of 1,314 female athletes will attend Beijing 2022, according to Tong, constituting 45.2 percent of the total, a record high in Winter Olympic history.

In line with the eco-friendly and hi-tech themes of Beijing 2022, a number of advanced technologies, like full 5G coverage, have been applied across the three competition zones in downtown Beijing, Yanqing District in Beijing's northern suburbs and Zhangjiakou in Hebei Province which neighbors Beijing. The bandwidth available in the venues will be capable of 8K ultra-high definition live broadcasting and virtual reality intelligent viewing.

Paralympic athletes will be able to use a smartphone application to navigate their way through the venues, find their rooms and control lights, air conditioners and curtains. Accessible elevators, toilets, changing rooms and wheelchair ramps will also be available across all competition venues.

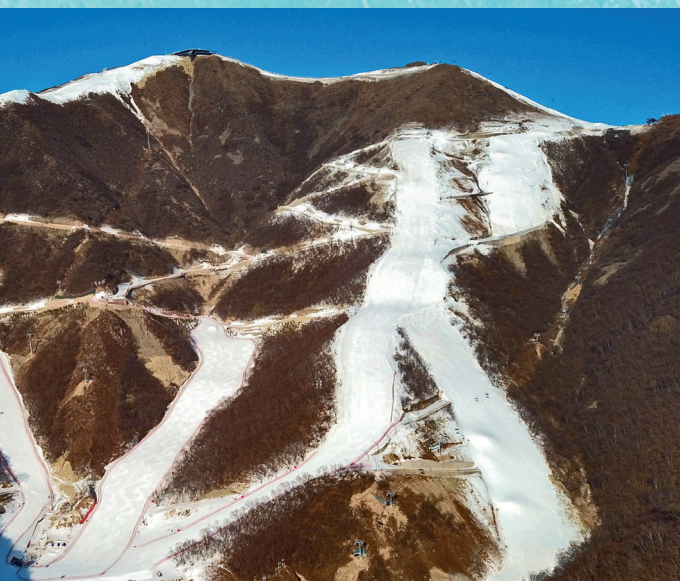
"We are ready to welcome the best athletes from around the world for a joyful gathering in Beijing, and we will once again ignite the world with the Olympic passion," Yang Yang, China's first Winter Games gold medalist and chairperson of the Athletes' Commission for Beijing 2022, vowed.

The National Alpine Skiing Center in Yanqing District, Beijing Zhang Chenlin





An aerial view of the National Speed Skating Oval Zhang Chenlin




The design for the Beijing 2022 Olympic medals is unveiled on October 26, 2021 Beijing 2022/ Xinhua

Hello, my friends! Nice to meet you! My name is Bing Dwen Dwen. I'm the mascot of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games. I'm a black and white panda. I have big eyes, a small nose and a small mouth. My arms and legs are short. What is it on my left hand? Haha, it is a heart pattern to welcome friends all over the world to come to China.

Who is that? It is my good friend, Shuey Rhon Rhon. It is the mascot of Paralympic Winter Games. It looks like a red lantern. It has two small eyes. Its arms and legs are short, too. We are very cute.

——Bing Dwen Dwen



Mascots of the Beijing 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games—Bing Dwen Dwen and Shuey Rhon Rhon Xinhua



The National Sliding Center in Yanqing District, Beijing Zhang Chenlin

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