

# NPC



VOL.56 ISSUE 1 · 2022

《中国人大》对外版

National People's Congress of China



**PEOPLE'S  
CONCERNS  
ALWAYS  
COME FIRST**

ISSN 1674-3008



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The fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) opens at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5. *Ju Peng*



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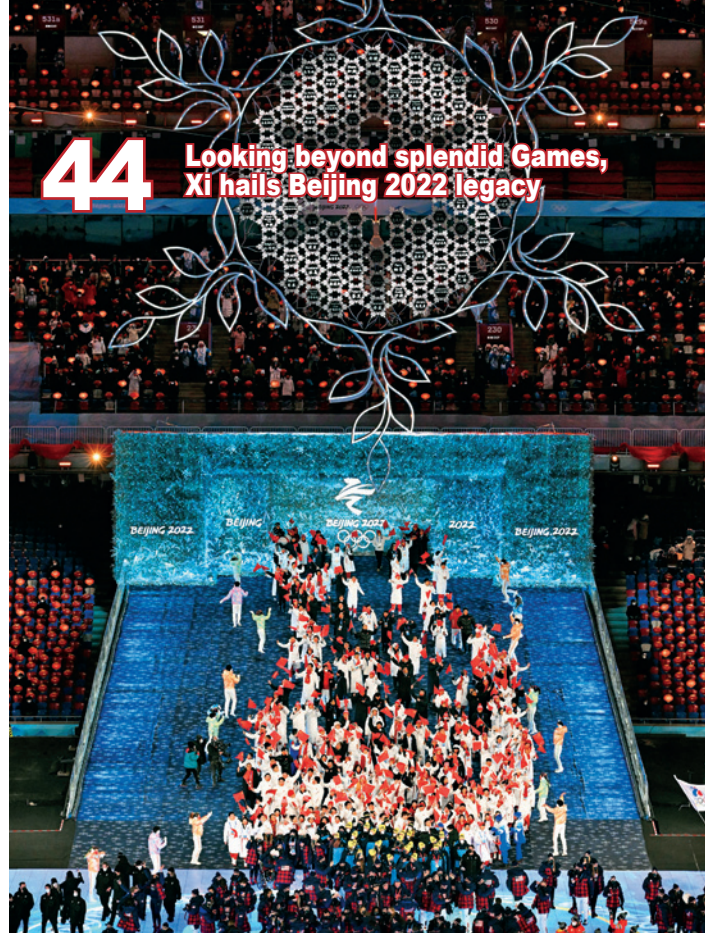
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VOL.56 ISSUE 1 March 2022

Administered by General Office of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress

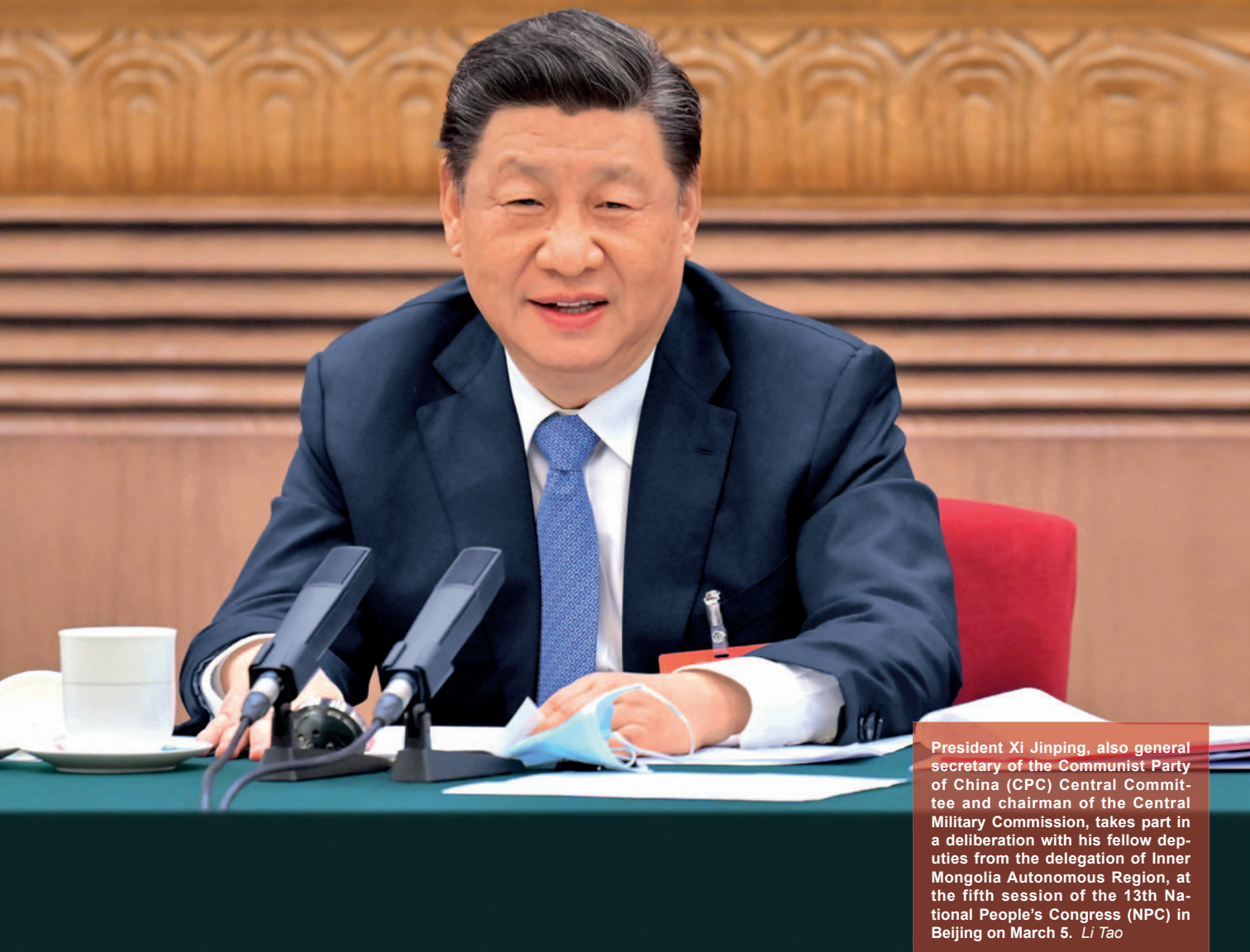
Chief Editor: Wang Yang  
General Editorial  
Office Address: 23 Xijiaominxiang,  
Xicheng District, Beijing  
100805, P.R.China  
Tel: (86-10)5560-4181  
(86-10)6309-8540  
E-mail: zgrdnpc@npc.gov.cn

ISSN 1674-3008  
CN 11-5683/D  
Price: RMB 35

Edited by The People's Congresses Journal  
Published by The People's Congresses Journal  
Printed by Beijing Zhong Ke Printing Co., Ltd. in China

# People's Concerns Always Come First

– President Xi Jinping's Major Moments  
at the 2022 Two Sessions



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, takes part in a deliberation with his fellow deputies from the delegation of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, at the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on March 5. *Li Tao*

# Xi stresses promoting ethnic unity and strengthening sense of community for the Chinese nation

**P**resident Xi Jinping stressed ethnic unity and efforts to forge a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation when he joined a deliberation during the annual session of the National People's Congress on March 5.

Joining discussions with fellow lawmakers from north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, hailed ethnic unity as the "lifeline" of Chinese people of all ethnic groups.

He called for efforts to help all ethnic groups stay closely united "like the seeds of a pomegranate that stick together" in jointly building the great motherland.

Efforts should be made to maintain a steady and healthy economic environment, a prosperous and secure social environment, and a clean and healthy political environment, Xi said, calling for concrete actions to pave the way for the 20th CPC National Congress.

Xi said China comprehensively advanced reforms, promoted development and maintained stability in 2021, achieving new and major achievements in the cause of the Party and the country. China was one of the world's best performers in terms of economic development and COVID-19 prevention and control, and got the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) off to a good start.

The country also presented to the world a streamlined, safe, and splendid Winter Olympics, in which China obtained its best-ever results in any Winter Olympics.

"These achievements bear great significance for the development of the cause of the Party and the country," Xi said.

## Five reinforced convictions

Xi said after a review of the endeavors of the Party and the people in the new era, five convictions have been reinforced.

He first stressed upholding the Party's overall leadership, which forms the people's most trustworthy backbone when braving winds and storms.

Second, socialism with Chinese characteristics is the only path toward the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, Xi said. "As long as we unswervingly follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we will constantly fulfill the Chinese people's aspirations for a better life and promote common prosperity for all."

He then emphasized the concerted efforts of the Chinese

**As long as people of all ethnic groups stay united under the leadership of the Party, all hardships and challenges on the road ahead will be overcome.**

people, saying as long as people of all ethnic groups stay united under the leadership of the Party, all hardships and challenges on the road ahead will be overcome.

Xi also underlined the imperativeness of acting on the new development philosophy for the country to grow strong and prosperous.

Fifth, full and rigorous governance must be exercised over the Party to root out any elements that would harm the Party's advanced nature and purity, he added.

## Unite for more future achievements

Noting that China is a unified multiethnic state, Xi said that when ethnic groups are united and in harmony, people will live happily in a prosperous country and a stable society.

The achievements of Inner Mongolia are made possible thanks to the concerted efforts of people of different ethnic groups, and such efforts will also be needed to secure more achievements in the future, Xi said.

Any work that can help forge a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation should be done in a thorough, meticulous and solid manner, Xi said.

Inner Mongolia is a border region with a mainly ethnic minority population, thus shouldering crucial responsibilities of safeguarding ethnic unity and maintaining border stability, Xi said.

Xi called on the region to improve its regular COVID-19 prevention and control mechanisms and response mechanisms for emergent outbreaks, highlighting COVID-19 response in border areas as a priority.

He urged both active and prudent efforts in achieving carbon peak and carbon neutrality.

While lowering carbon emissions, efforts should also be made to ensure security in sectors of energy, industrial and supply chains and food, and guarantee people's normal lives, Xi added. (Xinhua) ■

# Ensuring key agricultural products supply and building stronger social security network





President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, visits national political advisors from the sectors of agriculture and welfare and social security, who are attending the fifth session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), in Beijing on March 6. Huang Jingwen

**P**resident Xi Jinping stressed putting the improvement of comprehensive agricultural production capacity at a more prominent position, and continuing efforts on promoting the high-quality development of social security.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks when visiting members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, the top advisory body, from the sectors of agriculture and welfare and social security during the fifth session of the 13th CPPCC National Committee on March 6.

Xi participated in their joint group meeting, and listened to their comments and suggestions.

He underlined ensuring the supply of key agricultural products, especially grain, as the top priority in rural revitalization.

Wang Yang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, joined the visit and discussion.

### **China's strategic advantages**

Over the past year, various undertakings of the Party and the country have recorded new and major achievements, which are the result of the hard work of all Chinese. CPPCC members have also made their contributions, Xi said.

### **Efforts should be made to develop bio-technology and bio-industry, actively promote the agricultural supply-side structural reform and develop food varieties, according to Xi.**

The international situation is going through profound and complex changes and the world has entered a new period of turbulence, Xi said, adding that China faces arduous tasks of reform, development and stability domestically.

Still, China boasts multiple strategic advantages, including the strong leadership of the CPC, the institutional strength of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and a solid foundation accumulated in the country's sustained and rapid development, Xi said.

Thanks to China's large economic aggregate and huge domestic market, the long-term sound economic fundamentals will remain unchanged, he said, adding that the economy has strong resilience and vitality.

Xi also noted the long-term stability of the Chinese society and the confidence and resolve of the Chinese people to overcome difficulties.

### **'Chinese rice bowl'**

China has fed nearly one-fifth of the world population with 9 percent of the world's arable land and 6 percent of fresh

water resources, Xi said, hailing this hard-won accomplishment while warning against a lapse of attention on the issue of food security.

It is wrong to think that food supply is no longer a problem in an industrialized society, or to count on the global market to solve the issue, he added.

Xi underscored keeping the annual grain output at over 650 million metric tons and "filling the rice bowl of Chinese people mainly with Chinese grain."

Xi said curbing food waste is a long-term task that requires unremitting efforts.

Calling farmland the foundation of ensuring sustainable development for the Chinese nation, Xi underscored cultivating 1 billion mu (about 66.67 million hectares) of high-standard farmland and ensuring the area of farmland remains above 120 million hectares.

The ultimate solution to safeguarding food security lies in enhancing science and technology, Xi said.

Germplasm resources security is closely related to national security, Xi said, adding that China must strengthen its seed industry to achieve self-reliance in the sci-tech development of the sector and keep the country's germplasm resources independent and controllable.

He stressed ensuring the effective supply of meat, vegetables, fruits and aquatic products and other kinds of food in addition to grain.

Efforts should be made to develop bio-technology and bio-industry, actively promote the agricultural supply-side structural reform and develop food varieties, according to Xi.

### **Caring for the vulnerable**

Xi said rural revitalization involves more than economic development, urging ethical and moral education among farmers and law-based governance. He demanded continuous efforts to crack down on criminal gangs or clans in rural areas, calling for mechanisms to conduct such work on a regular basis.

Pornography, gambling and drug-related crime in rural areas, as well as illegal and criminal acts infringing upon the rights and interests of women and children should be punished, Xi said.

Noting that China has built the world's largest social security network, Xi called for efforts to develop a multi-tiered and multi-pillar old-age pension system to bring more people into the social security system.

He also called for a better social security system for workers in flexible employment, highlighting efforts to expand the coverage of unemployment insurance, work-related injury insurance and maternity insurance.

Extra attention and care should be given to vulnerable groups, Xi said, adding that the elderly and children in rural areas should be given more support.

Better work should be done in terms of the rehabilitation, education and employment of people with disabilities, Xi said, demanding efforts to ensure the personal safety and basic living necessities of the homeless, and support and care for people with mental disorders.

Illegal acts of bullying or abusing women, children, the elderly and the disabled must be rooted out, Xi said. (Xinhua) ■



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, attends a plenary meeting of the delegation of the People's Liberation Army and People's Armed Police Force at the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on March 7. Xi delivered an important speech at the meeting. *Li Gang*

## Running military in accordance with law

**P**resident Xi Jinping stressed running the military in accordance with the law and enhancing the rule of law in national defense and military building.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks while attending a plenary meeting of the delegation of the People's Liberation Army and People's Armed Police Force at the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress on March 7.

Xi lauded the major progress achieved in the practice of running the military in accordance with the law after years of unremitting efforts since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012.

Calling for a comprehensive understanding of the strate-

gy of running the military in accordance with the law, Xi said focus should be placed on fully building revolutionary, modernized and standardized armed forces, and building a Chinese system for law-based administration of military affairs.

Xi stressed upholding the Party's absolute leadership over the military, taking combat effectiveness as the criterion, governing the military with strict discipline, and upholding the principal position of officers and soldiers.

He underlined advancing military legislation, stepping up enforcement of laws and regulations, strengthening the management of troops in strict accordance with the law, and enhancing the oversight of the enforcement.

Xi said foreign-related laws and regulations in the military field should be improved to better safeguard national interests with legal means. (Xinhua) ■



The fifth session of the 13th NPC opens at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5. *Liu Bin*



The closing meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 11. Leaders of the Communist Party of China and the state Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Wang Yang, Wang Huning, Zhao Leji, Han Zheng and Wang Qishan attended the meeting, and Li Zhanshu presided over the closing meeting and delivered a speech. *Huang Jingwen*



Deputies attend the opening meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5. *Li Xin*



Journalists attend a press conference held by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi via video link in Beijing on March 7. Wang answered questions of journalists from home and abroad on China's foreign policy and foreign relations during the press conference on the sidelines of the fifth session of the 13th NPC in Beijing. *Lu Ye*



Journalists work during an interview attended by ministers via video link after the second plenary meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 8. *Yin Gang*

Deputies to the 13th NPC Liu Faying, Liu Xiya and Guo Jianren (from L to R) attend an interview via video link ahead of the second plenary meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 8. *Li Xin*



Journalists attend a press conference given by Premier Li Keqiang via video link after the closing of the fifth session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 11. Director of the Information Bureau of the General Office of the NPC Standing Committee Jin Qingzhong (L) and Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying (R) preside over this press conference. VCG



Deputies attend the opening meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5. Liu Weibing





# From food security to carbon goals, “two sessions” demonstrate China’s steady steps toward modernization

A farmer harvests wheat in Pingyi County of Linyi City, east China’s Shandong Province, on June 8, 2021. *Wu Jiquan*

**I**n 1995, a book titled “Who Will Feed China?” speculated, “In an integrated world economy, China’s rising food prices will become the world’s rising food prices. China’s land scarcity will become everyone’s land scarcity.”

A powerful answer has been delivered. “Today, China’s 1.4 billion people are eating well with a great range of choices,” Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), said during the fifth session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

“Through enormous efforts, China is capable of feeding one-fifth of the global population with 9 percent of the world’s arable land and 6 percent of the freshwater resources,” said Xi, also Chinese president and chairman of the Cen-

tral Military Commission.

That China feeds itself well is but one anecdote of what has been dubbed the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, which is first and foremost about the people.

## For the people

“Of all things, eating matters most, and food is the most basic necessity of the people,” Xi said, stressing that despite China’s industrialization, food supply should never be taken for granted.

“How many days has it been since hunger is behind the Chinese people? Probably just the kids born after the 1980s,” he added, evoking not-so-distant memories and wide agreements at the fifth sessions of the 13th National People’s Con-

gress (NPC) and the 13th CPPCC National Committee, also dubbed the “two sessions.”

Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, Xi has attended 10 annual “two sessions,” where the “people” stood out as his most frequently used word.

Yeshe Dawa, a national political advisor from southwest China’s Sichuan Province, brought two photos to Xi depicting staggering changes of a village on a cliff at an elevation of 1,700 meters in his hometown.

Xi carefully looked at the photographs -- one showing a ramshackle rattan and wooden ladder as the only access to Atulieer Village, and the other depicting a renovated steel ladder that is imposing and strong.

“Have the villagers moved down the hills to their new homes? How about children and the elderly?” Xi asked.

“Some moved down and some stay in the village, which is now a popular tourist destination. People’s lives are getting better,” Yeshe Dawa replied.

Over the last 10 years, Xi has joined national lawmakers and political advisors in group discussions on 53 occasions at such annual sessions.

The topics ranged from poverty reduction to equal access to education, epidemic control, rural revitalization, common prosperity and food security, among others.

“When it comes to the wellbeing of the people, there is no such thing as a trivial matter,” Xi said this year. “We must give extra attention and care to the people in difficulty, to help them resolve problems. We should further reform the social assistance system, and work for a comprehensive, effective, multi-tiered, and multi-category social assistance framework centered on basic living assistance, special assistance, and emergency assistance.”

## People’s democracy

Xi and other Chinese leaders joining NPC deputies and CPPCC National Committee members for extensive exchanges and discussions on important matters of national development and public interest is one of the features of socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics.

Among the issues raised by the NPC deputies and CPPCC National Committee members at the “two sessions” are “building a nationwide, unified health code,” a digital technology registration tool that has become an everyday occurrence in the lives of people in China since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Proponents say the various codes in use in different provinces create inconveniences and confusion. Raising the threshold of personal income tax and slashing the medical insurance payment by rural people above 60 years old were among other important topics at the “two sessions.”

As always, one highlight of the annual sessions was the report on the work of the government. Thousands of opinions and suggestions were solicited via multiple channels from all walks of life.

As of the end of 2020, China had 2.62

million deputies to people’s congresses at all five levels. Of the total, 94.5 percent were from the county and township levels, all directly elected on a one-person-one-vote basis. Deputies to people’s congresses at the city, provincial and national levels are elected by people’s congresses at the next lower level. China’s whole-process people’s democracy, which covers elections, consultations, decision-making, management, and oversight, ensures that it is the people who are running the country.

## Seeking stable progress

The annual sessions also speak volumes about China’s general principle of maintaining stability while pursuing progress of the economy.

For example, China has pledged to peak carbon emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060.

Southwest China’s Tibet is working to develop itself into a national clean energy base. By 2020, clean energy had contributed 89.1 percent of the total installed capacity of power generation in the autonomous region.

“We will take proactive and prudent steps to advance carbon emissions peaking and carbon neutrality initiatives,” Xi said. “When carrying out carbon reductions, we must also ensure the security of energy, food, and industrial and supply chains, as well as the normal life and work of our people. We must not distance ourselves from realities and rush for quick results.”

As the world is grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges unseen in a century, China seeks stable progress amid all headwinds.

Just as Premier Li Keqiang said at a press conference at the end of the NPC session on March 11, “I can tell you very clearly that no matter how the international environment may change, China will keep to the course of wider openness. Just as the course of the Yangtze and Yellow rivers will not be reversed.” (Xinhua) ■



Photo taken on December 8, 2021 shows wind turbines at Changma wind farm in Yumen City of Gansu Province. Fan Peishen



# China sets 2022 GDP target at around 5.5 pct, giving a shot in arm to world recovery

**C**hina has set its economic growth target at around 5.5 percent in 2022 as the country's national lawmakers and political advisors gathered in Beijing to map out development priorities for this year.

The gross domestic product (GDP) target is one of the key goals laid out in a much-anticipated government work report delivered by Premier Li Keqiang during the opening meeting of the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) on March 5.

"It represents a medium-high rate of growth given our

large economic aggregate, and demonstrates our ability to move proactively," Li said.

The Chinese economy saw a strong rebound with 8.1-percent growth in 2021 and was the only major economy to record growth in 2020.

At a time when the world economy is still facing mounting pressure due to the pandemic and other uncertainties including geopolitical tensions, a growth target of around 5.5 percent for the world's second-largest economy is expected to significantly boost the global economic recovery, analysts said.

Workers from a construction company in Chongqing watch live broadcasts of the opening meeting of the 13th National People's Congress through mobile phone on March 5. VCG



## GDP & beyond

Along with the GDP target, a slew of other development goals were unveiled in the report, including employment, investment, foreign trade and inflation. GDP is no longer the sole yardstick for development as the country is pursuing high-quality development.

This year, China aims to create over 11 million new urban jobs, keep a surveyed urban unemployment rate of no more than 5.5 percent, keep grain output over 650 million metric

tonnes and lower the ratio of its deficit to GDP at around 2.8 percent.

The targets are based mainly on the need to maintain stable employment, meet basic living needs, and guard against risks, Li said, noting that they are also in keeping with the average growth rates of the last two years and the goals of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25).

The report also outlined China's key tasks for this year, including keeping major economic indicators within an appropriate range, deepening reform, implementing the innovation-driven development strategy and promoting all-around rural revitalization.

With the 5.5-percent growth target, China will continue to drive global economic growth in 2022, Zhang Yuyan, an economist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a national political advisor, said, adding that the country is fully capable of making economic progress while maintaining stability.

Previously, major global organizations downgraded their world growth forecasts for 2022, citing pandemic shocks and rising inflation, among other factors.

In late January, the International Monetary Fund projected the global economy to grow by 4.4 percent in 2022, down by 0.5 percentage points from its October forecast, as many

**The targets are based mainly on the need to maintain stable employment, meet basic living needs, and guard against risks.**



People visit the 4th China International Import Expo (CIIE) in east China's Shanghai on November 5, 2021. Li Xiang

economies are grappling with supply chain disruptions, high inflation, record debt and persistent uncertainty.

The World Bank Group slashed its global growth forecast to 4.1 percent for this year in mid-January amid new COVID-19 outbreaks, inflationary pressures and persistent supply-chain bottlenecks.

As major global organizations are concerned with rising global inflation, China has set its whole year inflation target at around 3 percent for 2022, much lower than the 5.9-percent IMF forecast for emerging markets and developing economies.

Last year, China's inflation remained largely tame as the consumer price index climbed 0.9 percent, well below the country's annual target of approximately 3 percent.

Considering that China's long-term fundamentals remain unchanged, its goal for 2022 is feasible, and will help boost market confidence in the medium and long term, thus injecting impetus into the global economic recovery, Jiang Ying, deputy CEO of Deloitte China and a national political advisor, said.

## Hopes & challenges ahead

In the report, Li also said that pressures and challenges remain ahead due to increasing external uncertainties.

In 2022, the Chinese economy is facing the triple pressures of shrinking demand, disrupted supply chain and weakening expectations, he said. This was in line with the judgment made at the Central Economic Work Conference in December 2021.

Entering 2022, authorities have adopted a string of measures to cope with the pressures, including cutting the interest rates of medium-term lending-facility loans and reverse repos as well as reducing the market-based benchmark lend-



## 2022年部分重点工作



### 财政

赤字率拟按2.8%左右安排，中央对地方转移支付增加约1.5万亿元，规模近9.8万亿元



### 政府投资

拟安排地方政府专项债券3.65万亿元



### 减税

预计全年退税减税约2.5万亿元，其中留抵退税约1.5万亿元



### 就业

使用1000亿元失业保险基金支持稳岗和培训



### 政务服务

扩大“跨省通办”范围，基本实现电子证照互通互认



### 消费

继续支持新能源汽车消费，鼓励地方开展绿色智能家电下乡和以旧换新



### 乡村振兴

支持脱贫地区发展特色产业，启动乡村建设行动



### 环保

完善节水、废旧物资循环利用等环保产业支持政策



### 教育

继续做好义务教育阶段减负工作



### 医保

居民医保和基本公共卫生服务经费人均财政补助标准分别再提高30元和5元



### 社会保障

完善三孩生育政策配套措施，发展普惠托育服务



### 住房

探索新的发展模式，加快发展长租房市场，推进保障性住房建设



A man walks past the 5G exhibition area at the China International Digital Economy Expo 2021 in Shijiazhuang, north China's Hebei Province, on September 6, 2021. Wang Xiao

ing rate.

To meet the annual targets, the country will keep its proactive fiscal policy more effective and step up implementation of prudent monetary policy, Li said.

Efforts will be made to expand the scale of new loans, ensure that increases in money supply and aggregate financing are generally in step with nominal economic growth, and keep the macro leverage ratio generally stable.

To better cater to the liquidity demand of market entities, the report said financial institutions will be encouraged to lower real loan interest rates and cut fees.

In 2022, China will extend policies that support manufacturing, micro and small enterprises and self-employed individuals, with tax refunds and cuts expected to total 2.5 trillion yuan (\$395 billion), according to the report.

"There is no doubt that China's economy will withstand any downward pressure and continue growing steadily long into the future," Li said, citing multiple favorable conditions for sustained development, including huge potential for starting businesses, and rich experience in handling major risks and challenges. (Xinhua) ■

## Highlights from premier Li Keqiang's news conference

Premier Li Keqiang met the press after the closing of the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress on March 11. The premier took questions from Chinese and foreign reporters via video link.

Here are some highlights concerning economy:

### On macro economy

- 5.5 percent growth target reflects steady progress, high-quality growth
- Current development plans based on long-term view
- Increase government spending for stable growth

### On financial policy

- Fee and tax reduction most direct, fair and effective measure to help businesses
- 2.5 trillion yuan in tax cuts and refunds
- Give priority to small and micro enterprises in its tax rebates to help them navigate difficulties
- Central government's transfer payments to local governments will reach 9.8 trillion yuan this year

### On business environment

- Streamline administration, delegate power to improve business environment
- 150 million market entities in China, mostly privately held

### On government work

- COVID and economic impact largest challenge for the current-term government, which has responded in full force
- Government has focused on stable economic growth, meeting people's needs

### On people's livelihoods

- Increases in incomes and GDP basically in sync
- Purpose of economic growth is always to ensure and improve livelihoods
- Scale up support for compulsory education in rural, remote areas
- Governments, judiciary to do more on preventing human trafficking

### On common prosperity

- Common prosperity needs common effort, China committed to opening to world
- Chinese economy deeply integrated with world, still offers great investment potential
- China will ensure Chinese, foreign companies to compete on fair, equal footing
- China will unswervingly expand opening-up regardless of changes in international situation (China Daily)



# Legal toolkit upgrade set to help safeguard national security

By Cao Yin



The Data Security Law is adopted at the closing meeting of the 29th session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, June 10, 2021. Ma Zengke

**A**mid a complicated global situation, China will continue to upgrade its legal toolkit and develop a more complete system of laws and regulations related to foreign affairs to safeguard national security by rule of law, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee Li Zhanshu said on March 8.

In addition, a number of laws involving national security—including those on emergency response and management, public health emergency response and food security—will be formulated, while the Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases and the Frontier Health and Quarantine Law will be revised, according to the annual work report of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

Li introduced the plan to national legislators while delivering the work report at the second plenary meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC.

President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, attended the meeting with other state leaders at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

According to the work report, accelerating the establishment of a legal system supporting national security has been an important part of the legislative work of the 13th NPC Standing Committee, as laws are the institutional bedrock upon which national security is built.

The report said that last year the NPC Standing Committee formulated the Data Security Law. In addition, it drafted, reviewed and adopted the Land Border Law to regulate the demarcation, surveying, defense, management and development of land borders, and revised the Maritime Traffic Safety Law.

Moreover, the NPC Standing Committee also formulated the Law on Countering Foreign Sanctions to improve the legal system's ability to oppose interference and long-arm jurisdiction by other nations, it said.

"Under the law, China has the right to take proportional countermeasures in response to any country's actions that in-

terfere in China's internal affairs, or harm its national interests or the interests of its citizens and organizations," Li said.

Li said the law is meant to resolutely defend China's sovereignty, security and development interests and safeguard the lawful rights and interests of its citizens and organizations.

The plan to accelerate the pace of legislative work related to foreign affairs and national security has received a warm welcome from national legislators.

Li Zongsheng, an NPC deputy from Liaoning Province and a lawyer, said that he considers legislation in the sector to be an urgent and necessary task facing Chinese lawmakers, as it meets the demands of the nation, responds to public concerns and conforms with the current global situation.

He hailed the recently adopted Data Security Law, Biosecurity Law and the Law on Countering Foreign Sanctions, regarding them as a combined "sword" in safeguarding national security and opposing interference or long-arm jurisdiction from foreign countries.

"While upgrading the legal toolkit involving foreign affairs and accelerating the legislative pace in terms of protecting national security, we should also pay close attention to the quality of the legislation," he said, suggesting that the top legislature should focus on more security issues, such as those related to finance, information and transactions.

Fu Yuhang, another NPC deputy, said that she was paying close attention to this year's legislation on emergency response involving public health as well as the revision of the Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases.

"Since COVID-19 hit the world, many deputies, including myself, have held heated discussions and made suggestions on formulating or amending pandemic-related laws, so I'm glad to see that related legislative programs are high on this year's work agenda," she added.

Fu also agreed that it is a must to develop a more complete system of laws and regulations related to foreign affairs, "as it's not only to further protect national security and people's interests, but also to help our country better face international situations and solve related problems." ■

## Major tasks of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for 2022

In 2022, the Party will convene its 20th National Congress. This meeting is of great importance, as it will be held at this critical moment of our start on the new journey to build China into a modern socialist nation in all respects and achieve the Second Centenary Goal. It will be an event of enormous political significance for the Party and the country.

In the coming year, coordinating the COVID-19 response with economic and social development, balancing development and security imperatives, and responding to various risks and challenges will present the people's congresses with new tasks and requirements. The general requirements for the work of the NPC Standing Committee are as follows.

Guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, we must fully implement the guiding

principles from the Party's 19th National Congress and the plenary sessions of the 19th Central Committee and carry forward the great founding spirit of the Party.

We must acquire a deep understanding of the decisive significance of establishing Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole and of establishing the guiding role of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

We must be deeply conscious of the need to maintain political integrity, think in big-picture terms, follow the leadership core, and keep in alignment with the central Party leadership. We must stay confident in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We must uphold Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole

and uphold the Central Committee's authority and its centralized, unified leadership.

We must ensure unity between leadership by the Party, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance. We must pursue progress while prioritizing stability. In accordance with the plans set out at the Central People's Congress Work Conference, we will continue developing whole-process people's democracy and effectively carry out our work related to legislation, oversight, deputies, and international exchanges. We will work harder at improving ourselves and improving the quality of the NPC's work in order to make new contributions to realizing the Second Centenary Goal and building a modern socialist nation in all respects.

**First, we will thoroughly apply the guiding principles from the sixth plenary session of the 19th Party Central Committee and the Central People's Congress Work Conference.**

We will move forward with renewed efforts to study, disseminate, and implement the guiding principles from the sixth plenary session of the 19th Party Central Committee, we will nourish the love for our Party, our nation, and socialism that was inspired by the celebration of the Party's 100th birthday, and we will ensure that the Party's major achievements and historical experience over the past century are applied and embodied in the NPC's work and development.

We will fully implement Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law and his key ideas on upholding and improving the people's congress system. We will ensure the completion of every major task set at the Central People's Congress Work Conference and organize special training programs focused on the guiding principles from that conference. On major political principles and important issues, we must stand firm, prepare legal tools for conflicts in international relations, and be ready to use legal means to defend our country in the international arena and safeguard national security.

With a focus on the Party and the country's central work and greater initiative in taking on responsibilities, we will fully and faithfully apply the new philosophy of development, move faster to create a new development pattern, and use the NPC's achievements to drive high-quality development. Through these efforts, we can play our part in maintaining a steady and healthy economic environment, a peaceful and stable social climate, and a clean and honest political atmosphere.

Following the Party's 20th National Congress, we will diligently study and implement its guiding principles.

**Second, we will use a complete set of institutions to ensure the implementation of the Constitution.**

We will improve the laws and regulations pertaining to the Constitution. We will revise the Legislation Law, the Law on the Oversight by the Standing Committees of People's Congresses at All Levels, the Rules of Procedure of the NPC Standing Committee, the State Council Organic Law, and the Administrative Reconsideration Law.

We will see that the procedures and mechanisms for interpreting the Constitution are well implemented and that concerns about constitutional issues are attended to. We will enhance oversight and inspections of the implementation of the Constitution, expand channels for constitutional oversight, and refine the constitutionality review system. We will improve the quality of our recording and review work and preserve the uniformity of China's legal system.

We will improve the system in which the central government exercises overall jurisdiction over the special administrative regions in accordance with the Constitution and their basic laws, ensure the

implementation of the legal systems and enforcement mechanisms that safeguard national security in the special administrative regions, and refine the electoral system for the HKSAR.

We will conduct a review of the major achievements and valuable experience we have gained over the four decades since the current Constitution took effect in 1982. We will promote public awareness and education about China's Constitution and laws and do a good job of explaining Chinese constitutional theory.

**Third, we will make our legislative work more systematic, integrated, and coordinated.**

In our annual legislative plan, we have made preliminary arrangements for the deliberation of 40 pieces of legislation. To improve the legal system supporting the development of the socialist market economy, we will formulate laws on rural collective economic organizations, energy, futures and derivatives, and tariffs and other taxes, and we will revise the Company Law, the Enterprise Bankruptcy Law, the Anti-Monopoly Law, the Railway Law, the Mineral Resources Law, the Animal Husbandry Law, and the Agricultural Products Quality and Safety Law.

We will move faster to advance legislation on the people's well-being, social affairs, and environmental protection. We will formulate laws on protection of the Yellow River, ecological conservation on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, black soil protection, social assistance, pre-school education, civil enforcement, and telecom and online fraud. We will revise the Physical Culture and Sports Law, the Vocational Education Law, the Academic Degrees Regulations, the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests, the Charity Law, the Science and Technology Popularization Law, the Cultural Relics Protection Law, the Civil Procedure Law, the Public Security Administrative Penalties Law, and the Wild Animals Protection Law.

We will strengthen the legal framework for national security. We will formulate an emergency response and management law, a public health emergency response law, and a food security law, and we will revise the Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases and the Frontier Health and Quarantine Law.

We will upgrade our legal toolkit and develop a more complete system of laws and regulations relating to foreign affairs. We will do a good job of ratifying treaties and agreements with foreign countries and approving international conventions.

We will better align decision making for reforms and development with legislative decision making and effectively carry out work with regard to authorization and reform decisions. We will continue to formulate codes in mature areas of legislation. We will give full play to the leading role of the NPC in legislative work and make China's legal system better designed and more complete, unified, and authoritative.

**Fourth, we will earnestly conduct oversight of the implementation of the law and of work performance.**

In our annual oversight work plan, we have prepared 32 oversight programs. In order to promote high-quality development, we will hear and deliberate reports on the implementation of the plan for national economic and social development, on the alignment of efforts to consolidate and expand achievements in poverty alleviation with efforts to promote rural revitalization, on the development of the digital econ-



omy, and on financial work. We will also inspect the implementation of the Rural Revitalization Promotion Law, the Science and Technology Popularization Law, and the Foreign Investment Law.

We will carry out research projects on the efforts to encourage small rural households to become involved in modern agriculture, to develop high-quality farmland, and to manage and reform special local government debt.

We will conduct budget and final account reviews and oversight and state-owned asset management oversight. We will hear and deliberate the State Council's reports on central final accounts, auditing work, and budget execution, on the rectification of problems discovered through auditing, and on the allocation and use of government funds for social security. We will conduct a special inquiry based on our hearing and examination of a comprehensive report on the management of state-owned assets. We will carry out research into improving the individual income tax system to help regulate income distribution.

In an effort to ensure and improve living standards, we will hear and deliberate reports on employment, child health work, the well-rounded, healthy growth of students in compulsory education, and work related to our senior citizens. We will carry out research projects on the effort to foster a strong sense of community among the Chinese people and the implementation of the national strategy for addressing population aging.

With a focus on ecological conservation, we will hear and examine the State Council's report on the state of the environment in 2021, progress on environmental protection targets for the year, and its handling of our inspection report and relevant recommendations on the implementation of the Law on the Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Wastes.

We will carry out inspections of the implementation of the Environmental Protection Law and the Yangtze River Protection Law and conduct a special inquiry based on our deliberation of the inspection report on the former.

We will enhance oversight of law enforcement, supervisory, and judicial work. We will hear and deliberate a report on addressing illegal entry, residence, and employment of foreign nationals in China, conduct research on the efforts of supervisory bodies to make their work more procedure- and law-based and standardized, and hear and deliberate the Supreme People's Court report on foreign-related adjudication and the Supreme People's Procuratorate report on procuratorial work relating to minors.

We will improve the mechanisms and methods for conducting oversight, step up follow-up supervision to ensure genuine resolution of prominent issues, and make our oversight better conceived and more targeted, binding, and effective.

#### **Fifth, we will give full play to the role of NPC deputies.**

We will take solid steps to organize the election of deputies to the 14th NPC, maintaining strict standards for deputies and tightening oversight of the entire election process, in order to ensure that the process is fair, open, and accessible and that the results earn the approval of our people.

We will enhance our ability to carry out work related to deputies, fully implement the specific measures for strengthening and improving our deputy-related work, and closely rely on deputies to carry out the

NPC's work.

We will arrange for relevant organizations to handle deputies' proposals and suggestions effectively and efficiently, work toward the establishment of a detailed record of commitments to resolve issues raised in deputies' suggestions, and improve the mechanism for overseeing the handling of key suggestions.

We will deepen deputies' participation in the work of the Standing Committee, special committees, and working bodies and encourage the State Council, the National Commission of Supervision, the Supreme People's Court, and the Supreme People's Procuratorate to enhance and improve their engagement with NPC deputies.

We will make sure our deputies reach out to the public on a greater variety of issues and in more diversified ways, and we will develop sound mechanisms for handling and giving feedback on public opinions and suggestions as passed along by deputies.

We will provide deputies with more systematic, standardized, and professional training programs and organize four study sessions for chairpersons of county-level people's congress standing committees. We will advance the development and use of an online platform enabling NPC deputies to access study resources, perform their duties, and foster close ties with members of the general public.

We will strengthen management and oversight of deputies' performance of duties and make further progress in standardizing records on their performance.

#### **Sixth, we will effectively carry out international exchanges.**

Giving top priority to implementing the major diplomatic outcomes achieved by President Xi Jinping, we will step up exchanges with parliaments of other countries and international and regional parliamentary organizations, advance cooperation with the parliaments of key nations and major countries from various regions, and consolidate and deepen our foreign exchanges at multiple levels and through multiple channels.

We will promote greater integration of the NPC's diplomatic work with its communications with the international community and make our foreign relations work more targeted and effective. We will open up new fronts and adopt new methods in legal conflicts in international relations and make full use of NPC spokespeople.

#### **Seventh, we will strengthen our self-improvement efforts in line with the requirement to uphold the four-fold role of the Standing Committee.**

We will earnestly implement the systems of the Party's leadership and take further steps to better uphold our four-fold role. We will remain committed to exercising full and rigorous governance of Party organizations and make genuine efforts to see the NPC bodies' political integrity enhanced, their theoretical competence strengthened, their organization consolidated, their conduct improved, their discipline reinforced, and their institutions strengthened.

We will step up theoretical research on the people's congress system and improve the NPC's public communications and information work. We will do a good job of handling letters and visits from the public. We will promote the application of digital, smart, and information technologies in the NPC bodies. We will strengthen our ties with local people's congresses and enhance the overall effectiveness of the work of people's congresses.

# Continue to modernize the country's governance system and capacity

A law on local legislatures and governments was amended as part of the country's drive to modernize its governance system and capacity.

The draft amendment to the Organic Law of the Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments was submitted for the third reading and final adoption to the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC).

Adopted in 1979, the law is going through its sixth amendment, in which a people-centered philosophy of development and whole-process people's democracy are highlighted.

"As a basic law stipulating the organization and operation of local legislatures and governments, it serves as an important institutional guarantee for local state organs of power and administrative organs to exercise their powers and perform their duties," said Wang Chen, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, in an explanatory speech delivered at the session.

When elaborating on the necessity of amending the law, Wang said that it is crucial to ensure law-based and effective governance under the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

## Enhancing supervision

The draft amendment further specifies the composition of local legislatures, stipulating that committees dedicated to financial and economic affairs, legal affairs and others can be set up by local people's congresses.

"The establishment of such special committees will double the effectiveness of oversight by local legislatures over areas that require professional expertise," said Gao Jianjun, a national lawmaker from central China's Henan Province.

Another highlight of the draft is the empowerment of people's congresses at the county and township levels to supervise the budgets and final accounts of governments at their respective levels.

It also adds new provisions defining the functions and powers of urban neighborhood offices, as the sub-district agencies are assuming an increasing range of responsibilities for public administration. The current law does not prescribe what duties the offices should fulfill.

Stressing the significance of primary-level organs and organizations in China's system of governance, political advisor Lyu Hongbing said that these revisions are essential to develop whole-process people's democracy and will ensure

**"It is crucial to ensure law-based and effective governance under the leadership of the Communist Party of China," Wang Chen said.**

that it is the people who run the country.

## Improving grassroots governance

As stipulated by the current law, local legislatures and governments should perform their duties and functions in accordance with the law. The draft amendment fleshes out such provisions with details.

According to the draft amendment, local people's congresses, the standing committees of local people's congresses at and above the county level and local governments should see to it that the central authorities' decisions are implemented in a timely and faithful manner, and that the Constitution, laws and administrative regulations are enforced within their own administrative regions.

"Part of building a law-based government is ensuring the implementation of the Constitution, laws and administrative regulations," said Lyu.

The draft amendment also responds to new changes in governance at local levels. It says that the governments of different administrative regions at and above the county level can set up special joint working groups based on local realities to implement state-level strategies for regional integrated development. Local governments at and above the county level can also form cross-department response teams in times of major emergency, it says.

"These revisions will facilitate innovation in grassroots governance, enhance the capacity of local governments in delivering services to the people, and inject new vitality into the drive for modernizing the system and capacity for governance," said Cai Hua, an NPC deputy.

After the deliberation and some further modifications done to the draft amendment, the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress adopted the amendment to the Organic Law of the Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments at its closing meeting on March 11. (Xinhua) ■



A journalist asks a question during an interview attended by deputies to the 13th NPC via video link ahead of the second plenary meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 8. *Yang Kejia*

# Lawmakers put whole-process people's democracy into action

**D**uring the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC), Yang Rong, a deputy from Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, together with other lawmakers, had 10 items on the agenda, including the deliberation of several documents such as the government work report, over the course of six and a half days since March 5. Drafting suggestions and submitting motions was another important task throughout their five-year term, which will conclude in 2023. More than 2,700 of 2,951 13th NPC deputies attended this year's full session in Beijing.

Community police officer Yang's suggestions this year concerned advancing law-based primary-level governance and improving community security mechanisms. As a member of the Taiyuan Women's Federation, she primarily

**NPC deputies are the voices of the people they represent, with their suggestions usually relating to the regions they hail from, the fields in which they work, and the topics at play in society.**

focused on issues related to women's and children's rights during the session.

NPC deputies are elected nationwide. They are the voices of the people they represent, with their suggestions usually relating to the regions they hail from, the fields in which they

# 十三届全国人大五次会议 代表通道



Deputies to the 13th NPC Lu Wenjun, Yang Rong and Ge Minghua (from R to L) attend an interview via video link ahead of the second plenary meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 8. Li Xin

work, and the topics at play in society.

Motions can be raised through a provincial-level delegation, a group of at least 30 NPC deputies, or the relevant NPC departments. A motion is raised when congress is in session; it becomes legally binding when adopted. Suggestions concerning political and social issues will be passed on to government and judicial departments concerned for consideration, according to the regulations regarding their handling. The drafting party will receive a reply on the outcome for each of their suggestions.

## The people's voice

"We have achieved a lot in primary-level governance, for example, implementing new and effective management systems for communities and neighborhoods with high population densities, which allow us to more swiftly identify potential problems," Yang said.

"We have invited volunteers to participate in the management," Yang said. "Dividing communities into smaller sections allows us to better adapt to resident needs, in turn providing them with a safer and happier environment."

Yet China's current urban and rural community governance remains complex and often does not clarify the responsibilities of stakeholders. Yang said specific legal provisions are necessary to render urban and rural management

**All 8,993 suggestions submitted by deputies during the 2021 annual session were forwarded to 194 organizations for examination and handling, a process which has now been completed.**

more effective.

"I developed the proposal based on the problems people face in daily life," Yang said, adding that she had conducted extensive field research and further discussed her proposal with experts.

"My work as a deputy over the past four years has allowed me to witness firsthand the importance the NPC attaches to our advice," Yang said. "It also reflects the importance the central government attaches to people's immediate interests, which in turn inspires deputies to more actively represent the people."

Since becoming an NPC deputy in 2018, Yang has submitted proposals on the promotion of folk culture and the sup-

port of family education; all have become part of the related government policies or laws.

“By doing my duty, I can make people’s voices heard and acted upon by the NPC. This is the embodiment of whole-process people’s democracy,” Yang added.

According to the Report on the Work of the Standing Committee of the NPC released on March 8, all 8,993 suggestions submitted by deputies during the 2021 annual session were forwarded to 194 organizations for examination and handling, a process which has now been completed. The 265 suggestions that were raised when the NPC was not in session were handed over to 98 organizations for examination and handling.

## A carefree childhood

Liu Xiya, principal of Chongqing Xiejiawan Primary School, keeps her focus on the development of high-quality compulsory education.

Since she became an NPC deputy in 2013, Liu has made a series of suggestions about education, covering off-campus tutoring and the protection of minors, after she visited schools of different types and collected public opinions from social media.

Liu also pays more attention to the country’s “double reduction” policy, which was introduced in July 2021 aiming to reduce the excessive burden from homework and off-campus tutoring on primary and junior middle school students, and to ensure equal access to educational resources.

At this year’s NPC sessions, Liu had 14 suggestions ready to file this year, and many of them are related to education. She said during an interview that against the backdrop of the “double reduction” policy, education resources should be better optimized to facilitate students’ growth.

She said that during her field research in recent years, people have expressed concern about off-campus tutoring problems. Over the years, she has listened to opinions from the public and put forward a number of suggestions about regulating off-campus tutoring centers, reducing the academic burden on students, improving the quality of teaching, protecting minors and ensuring equality of education.

“I have been calling for years to regulate after-school tutoring agencies and activities that affect the fair education environment. In 2021, the central government comprehensively regulated these institutions and its determination far exceeded my expectation. It strengthened my sense of mission in performing my duties,” she said.

By the end of 2021, 91.45 percent of offline tutoring centers and 87.07 percent of online tutoring services had closed or switched to other businesses, according to official data.

## Witnessing development

Yang and Liu are among several deputies who shared real stories that happened at the primary level in interviews before the opening meeting of the NPC this year. Some others also expressed their pride and excitement in witnessing and participating in the country’s progress over the years as a lawmaker.

Chai Shanshan, a millennial deputy to the NPC, is a mail

handler of China Post in Shanghai. He said during the interview that in early 2020, when COVID-19 just broke out, numerous couriers worked like busy bees for last-mile delivery.

“I brought their voices and suggestions to the NPC last year, after which the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, together with seven other relevant departments, issued a document on protecting rights and interests of workers engaged in new labor forms under the supervision of the NPC,” he said, adding that it marked another time that people’s livelihood is the nation’s top concern.

“This year, I’m here with another motion about regulating outsourcing employment,” he said.

Another deputy named Wu Chen, an architect and planner with the Beijing Institute of Architectural Design and the Shougang Group, introduced his motion of making urban design more people oriented.

According to him, the waterfronts and hutongs, a type of narrow street or alley in northern China, near Shichahai, a historical scenic area consisting of three lakes in Beijing, were once congested due to commerce and tourism overdevelopment.

Thanks to elaborate designing and joint efforts made by all walks of life, a six-kilometer trail has been built along the lakes. Besides, Wu and his colleagues made a renovation plan for a nearby market, which has turned the lakeside attraction into an ideal resort for Beijingers and visitors.

Writer Ma Huijuan, an NPC deputy from Hongsibu District, Wuzhong in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, the largest community for ecological immigrants in the country, said she was just an ordinary rural woman before she became an NPC deputy.

She said during the interview that she was born in a small mountain village in Ningxia’s Xihaigu, one of China’s most impoverished areas, where donkeys were once the only means of transport.

“I’ve been into reading since I was a child. However, I dropped out of school when I was 16 because of poverty. Four years later, relocation policies brought me and my fellow villagers out of the mountains, and we settled in Hongsibu. In our new home that sits by the Yellow River, we have embraced a good life,” the woman said.

NPC deputy Shapu Drolma from a local water supply company in Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, introduced how her hometown has restored local ecology through grazing ban, wetland conservation and afforestation. She and her coworkers greened once-barren mountains and refilled dried watercourses with lucid water.

“My hometown is located in the Sanjiangyuan ecological preservation area, which is home to the headwaters of the Yellow, the Yangtze and the Mekong rivers. Therefore, apart from ensuring clean water supply for our village, we must make sure that the people in the middle and lower reaches can also have access to high-quality water supply,” Shapu Drolma said.

She said that her fellow villagers are making regular patrols along the rivers with drones and water quality sensors so as to make sure the water is pure. “Thanks to our efforts to maintain ecology, our prefecture was honored as a national-level demonstration area for ecological progress,” Shapu Drolma noted. ■



Deputies to the 13th NPC leave the Great Hall of the People after the closing meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 11. *Chen Zhonghao*

# Enhance role of people's congresses

## ——Annual gathering of lawmakers lays legal foundation for good governance

By Cao Yin

**C**hina should unswervingly follow its political path and strive to ensure that the future and destiny of the nation remain in the hands of the Chinese people through the people's congress system, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee Li Zhanshu said on March 11.

The role of the people's congress system—a fundamental political system in China—should be fully utilized to ensure that the people, based on the law, manage state affairs, economic and cultural undertakings and social affairs through

various channels and ways, said Li Zhanshu.

He made the remarks in a speech at the closing meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC, which was attended by 2,758 deputies.

President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, attended the meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing along with other Chinese leaders, Li Keqiang, Wang Yang, Wang Huning, Zhao Leji, Han Zheng and Wang Qishan.

Li called for firm adherence to the political path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and made it clear that the leadership of the CPC is the most essential feature of Chinese socialism and the core principle of China's Constitution, which must be upheld.

NPC deputies should fully realize the mission and task of the people's congress system, adhere to the CPC's overall leadership, fully implement the Constitution and continuously improve the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics, he said.

The Constitution stipulates that all power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people, and the organs through which the people exercise state power are the NPC and the local people's congresses at all levels.

In China, there are five levels of people's congresses: township, county, city, provincial and national, with a total number of 2.62 million deputies. Among them, 2.48 million are at the township and county levels, and they are elected directly by people in their districts, according to Zhang Yesui, spokesman for the NPC session.

Li said that an important principle and design of the people's congress system is that the power of all state organs and

## **The Constitution stipulates that all power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people, and the organs through which the people exercise state power are the NPC and the local people's congresses at all levels.**

their staff is under supervision. "Administrative, supervisory, judicial and procuratorial departments are all created by the people's congress, are responsible to it and are subject to its supervision," he said.

At the closing meeting on March 11, NPC deputies approved the Government Work Report and the work reports of the NPC Standing Committee, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate. They also approved this year's national economic and social development plan, and budgets for 2022.

The amended Organic Law of Local People's Congresses and Local Governments, which streamlines the workflows of local legislative bodies and urges them to maintain close contact with the people, was adopted. The updated law also requires local governments to advance law-based governance.

Considering that this is the last year of the five-year term of the current 13th NPC, a decision on the quota and election of deputies to the 14th NPC, the method for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) to elect its deputies to the 14th NPC, and the method for the Macao SAR were also passed at the closing meeting.

According to the decisions, the election of deputies to the next NPC shall be completed in January 2023. ■

## **92 changes made to gov't work report during "two sessions" deliberations, discussions**

The Report on the Work of the Government was released in full on March 12.

Compared to the version delivered by Premier Li Keqiang at the opening meeting of the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) on March 5, the report adopted on March 11 recorded 92 changes.

The modifications, which focused on stabilizing the economy, promoting innovation and improving people's lives, were made based on the suggestions put forward by NPC deputies and members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee over the past week, according to officials from the State Council.

For example, on stabilizing employment, the final version added that the government will improve services concerning flexible employment, and work hard to create a fair employment environment.

While summarizing the problems and challenges, the revised report added that imported inflationary pressure has increased.

It also stressed increasing the share of basic research spending in the country's total R&D expenditures, and further reforming the assessment and incentive systems for scientific research, in order to raise the capacity for scientific and technological innovation.

Nearly 30 additions were introduced to address issues concerning people's wellbeing, such as education, health care and social security.

On education, the report said that the government will ensure all children of rural migrant workers in cities have access to education.

It also highlighted plans to steadily advance trials for long-term care insurance schemes, and to explore new ways of developing senior citizen education to proactively respond to population aging. (Xinhua)



**The closing meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 11. Sheng Jiapeng**



Deputies to the local people's congress, village representatives, Party members and hostel owners have a discussion in Zhongshan Township, Tonglu County in Zhejiang Province, on February 22, 2021. Xu Yu

# Democracy in the works

By Wen Qing

“In my capacity as deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), I think my role includes serving as a bridge between people and government. Collecting the opinions from citizens in my community, I make suggestions to the Central Government on their behalf,” Zhu Guoping, a community worker who has served as an NPC deputy for 15 years, said on the sidelines of the fifth session of the 13th NPC, running from March 5 to 11.

The NPC is China's highest state organ of power. The annual gatherings of the NPC deputies and members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the highest advisory body, are among the most important political events in China, commonly known as the “two sessions.”

Some Western media and politicians believe China's two sessions are “rubber-stamp assemblies.” However, that stereotype stems from their lack of understanding of how China's whole-process people's democracy works.

## The broadest possible consensus

Take the government work report as an example. In this year's report, Premier Li Keqiang reviewed achievements in 2021 and outline priorities for 2022. It was endorsed at the closing meeting of the NPC session on March 11.

The report was drafted based on a wide range of opinions from all layers of society.

In late January, Li chaired multiple consultation meetings with representatives of the business, education, science, culture, health and sports sectors, experts in different areas and ordinary citizens, according to Xiang Dong, deputy director of State Council Research Office. The premier also exchanged views with leaders of non-Communist parties and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce as well as prominent individuals without party affiliation.

Meanwhile, the draft was sent to provincial-level governments, central government departments and selected cor-

porations for feedback. Furthermore, the Share Your Ideas With China's Premier column was launched across 22 online media platforms. Netizens' comments were compiled into 1,100 suggestions, with some incorporated into the report.

It's clear that the report was formulated in an inclusive and democratic way. During the two sessions, more than 2,700 NPC deputies and around 2,000 CPPCC National Committee members had extensive deliberations on the report in a bid to find common ground and a convergence of the people's interests. Roughly 90 revisions were made to the report based on their contributions. After the consensus is built, its work plans enter the implementation stage.

"The main function of the two sessions is to turn societal consensus into enforceable laws and policies," Song Luzheng, a research fellow at the China Institute at Fudan University, said. "It is rare to see fierce debate during the two sessions, and the reports, legislative items and motions raised by the deputies are often passed by a sweeping majority because the intense and difficult discussions were conducted long before their submission."

If consensus cannot be reached, discussions and consultations will continue, instead of forcibly passing a policy through voting. This is why the whole process of formulating the Property Law took 14 years, according to Song. Beginning in 1993, it was not until December 2002 that the draft legislation was first reviewed by the Standing Committee of the 9th NPC. The full text of the draft was only released for feedback in July 2005. After six readings by lawmakers, it was finally passed in 2007.

## Thriving grassroots democracy

The two sessions is not the only opportunity to practice whole-process people's democracy as democracy is also flourishing at the primary level.

Since 2015, the NPC Standing Committee has started to establish community-level legislation outreach offices to listen to opinions and suggestions from local residents, and involve them in the lawmaking process. Hongqiao Subdistrict in Shanghai's Changning District, where Zhu has worked for many years, became one of the first four establishments in July 2015.

Over the following years, Zhu and other local residents participated in the revision of more than 30 laws, including the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, the National Anthem Law, and the Law on the Protection of Minors, and put forward more than 600 suggestions.

For example, in 2016, the NPC solicited public opinions on the National Anthem Law. Xia Yunlong, a retired college teacher, suggested that citizens should be encouraged to sing the national anthem at the "proper places and events" to express their love for the nation. Later, the proposal was incorporated into the law, which took effect in 2017.

"Lawmaking has come to people's doorsteps, and residents voluntarily participate in the work. This is what we mean when we say the people are the masters of the country," Zhu said. "The outreach office is a microcosm of the development of whole-process democracy."

"The Chinese people's enthusiasm for participating in state affairs and their ability to take action amaze me. People are getting involved in the decision-making process, from



Xia Yunlong, an 81-year-old staff from the local legislative outreach office, introduces the community publications at the community-level legislative outreach office in Shanghai's Hongqiao Subdistrict on July 24, 2021. Geng Xinling



Photo taken on November 5, 2021 shows the World Openness Report 2021 released at a press conference during the fourth Hongqiao International Economic Forum in Shanghai, east China. Zhang Yuwei

**The two sessions is not the only opportunity to practice whole-process people's democracy as democracy is also flourishing at the primary level.**

legislation to compiling national economic and social development plans, and to managing a residential neighborhood and organizing various tasks such as sorting waste," Néstor Restivo, member of the China Research Group of the Argentine Council for International Relations, said.

The NPC now has 22 community-level outreach offices across the country, covering two thirds of the mainland's provincial-level regions; more will continue to be added. According to official statistics, as of August 2021, these offices had solicited more than 6,700 opinions and suggestions from

locals on 115 draft laws and annual legislative plans.

## The Chinese essence

Democracy is not an ornament to be used for decoration; it is to be used to solve the problems that the people want to solve, Chinese President Xi Jinping said while addressing a central conference on work related to people's congresses in 2021. During his address, Xi emphasized that whether a country is a democracy or not depends on whether its people are really the masters of the country.

"If the people are awakened only for voting but enter a dormant period soon after, if they are given a song and dance during campaigning but have no say after the election, or if they are favored during canvassing but are left out in the cold after the election, such a democracy is not a true democracy," Xi continued.

China's democracy has demonstrated its strong effectiveness after decades of practice and testing. This is in stark

contrast to growing institutional failure and incapacity in the West, Song said. In the 2020 U.S. presidential elections, the peaceful transition of power was even jeopardized during the Capitol Hill riot, attesting to the dysfunction of the U.S. democracy.

"Through electoral processes, one side or the other will be elected, which means half of society is alienated right then and there because their representatives weren't on the winning side. And elected representatives typically don't consult with the community in their decision-making," Bruce Boyes, lead writer at RealKM Magazine, said.

Just as the white paper titled China: Democracy That Works, released by the State Council Information Office last year, states, in the richly diverse world, democracy comes in many forms. China's democracy is thriving alongside those of other countries in the garden of civilizations. China stands ready to contribute its experience and strength to global political progress through cooperation and mutual learning. (Beijing Review) ■

## Understanding China's whole-process people's democracy at "two sessions"

Whole-process people's democracy, a creation of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in leading the people to pursue, develop and realize democracy, embodies the Party's innovation in advancing China's democratic theories, systems and practices.

China's "two sessions," the annual gatherings of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), offer observers a window into the idea and practice of whole-process people's democracy, which has become a buzzword in China's political arena over the past years.

During roughly a week, nearly 3,000 NPC deputies and around 2,000 members of the CPPCC National Committee perform their duties including the deliberation of various legislative items and the review and discussion of a series of work reports, in a bid to garner the common ground and convergence of interests of the Chinese people.

As a creative concept in the new era, whole-process people's democracy derives from the rich legacy of the CPC's democratic practices since its founding. One of the most illustrative examples



Photo taken on March 7 shows the main venue of a video conference held by the fifth session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), during which some political advisors deliver speeches, in Beijing. Liu Bin

is the CPC's innovative way of mobilizing rural people to exercise their voting rights by casting beans as their ballots during the revolutionary era.

The concept has two key phrases: "whole process" and "people's democracy."

"People's democracy" is the life of socialism. The essence of socialist democracy is that the people are the masters of the country. It is stipulated in China's Constitution that all power in the country belongs to the people, and Chinese people participate, in accordance with law and in various ways and forms, in the governance of state, economic, cultural, and social affairs.

"Whole process" means that the people engage in democratic elections, consultations, decision-making, management, and oversight according to the law.

During the two sessions, national legislators and political advisors bring with them people's expectations for a better life as well as issues of public concerns, so that the public will of the 1.4 billion people is incorporated into the top-level design of national development.

They engage in in-depth deliberations and heated discussions, focusing on a wide range of topics such as income distribution, education, medical care, housing, elderly care, and child care.

In 2021, the NPC adopted the amendments to relevant laws that concern its organization and working procedures, with whole-process democracy being written into law.

At this year's sessions, the draft amendment to the Organic Law of the Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments is submitted for deliberation. Adopted in 1979, the law will go through its sixth amendment, in which a people-centered philosophy of development and whole-process people's democracy are highlighted.

Democracy is not an ornament, but it is about solving problems for the people. Whether a country is democratic or not, practice speaks the loudest and the people of that country have the biggest say.

Practice has proved that the whole-process people's democracy in China is the broadest, most genuine and most effective socialist democracy. It is rooted in China's history and culture, suited to China's national conditions, and is able to solve China's problems.

While there is no one-size-fits-all democratic model and each country can blaze its own path, China's whole-process people's democracy will surely enrich the political civilization of humanity. (Xinhua)

# Motions, advice reflect people's concerns

By Li Hongyang and Zhang Yi



Staff members of the secretariat of the fifth session of the 13th NPC sort out suggestions from lawmakers in Beijing on March 9. *Li Xin*

**B**y deliberating on various work reports and making thousands of suggestions, national lawmakers and political advisers have put into practice China's form of democracy during the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC).

Nearly 3,000 deputies to the National People's Congress and around 2,000 members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference gathered in Beijing in early March to perform their duties, including deliberating on legislative items and reviewing and discussing a series of work reports, in a bid to create common ground and cater to the public interest.

They raised people's expectations for a better life, as well as issues of public concerns, so that the public will of the country's 1.4 billion people is incorporated into the top-level design of national development. In-depth deliberations and heated discussions have taken place, focusing on a wide range of topics, such as income distribution, education, medical care, housing, elder care and child care.

At the CPPCC session, national political advisers made about 6,000 proposals and suggestions, mainly on economic, political, cultural, social and ecological issues, according to the CPPCC.

NPC deputies had submitted 487 motions by March 8- the deadline for motions- with 474 related to legislation and 13

to supervision. Among the legislative motions, 19 were related to constitutional laws, 55 to civil and commercial laws, 155 to administrative laws, 105 to economic laws, 64 to social laws, 39 to criminal laws and the remainder to procedural laws, according to information released on March 10 by the secretariat of the NPC session.

Apart from motions, deputies also made about 8,000 suggestions on various sectors, such as more balanced regional growth, a stable and healthy digital economy, carbon-reduction policies and better healthcare services, according to the secretariat.

The final version of the Government Work Report, of which the draft version was delivered by Premier Li Keqiang on March 5, also had 92 changes in text before being put to a vote at the closing meeting of the NPC session on March 11.

Xiang Dong, deputy head of the Research Office of the State Council, said at a news briefing on March 11 that these changes have reflected most opinions and suggestions made by NPC deputies and CPPCC National Committee members. Most of the opinions are on how to stabilize the economy, push innovation and improve people's livelihoods, he said.

Zhang Shuhua, a national political adviser and head of the Center of Socialist Democracy Research at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the two sessions is a lively practice of China's democracy, and also serves as a window for the outside to see how China's democracy is being carried out.

Zhang Xingying, another national political adviser, said that his personal experience shows China's democracy really works.

Before this year's session, he has made 11 proposals. All of them have been carefully studied by the relevant government departments, as he has received feedback on each.

"Many were absorbed by decision-making bodies relatively quickly," said Zhang, who is also deputy head of the National Satellite Meteorological Center at the China Meteorological Administration.

For example, last year, Zhang submitted a proposal to increase investment in the construction of a carbon monitoring and evaluation system, which was later written into government policies.

In the following September, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment conducted carbon monitoring in 16 cities, and of five key industries and 11 companies. In December, the China Meteorological Administration released a list of the first 60 stations in the new national greenhouse gases observation network.

"This shows the vitality of China's democracy," he said. ■

# Scientists make farmers' voices heard via the world's largest parliamentary body

By Lu Yan

A plant protection scientist for nearly four decades, Wang Huasheng has been busy producing technological innovations to overcome farming trials and tribulations.

Wang is deputy director of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region's Plant Protection General Station. He is also a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress (NPC), to which he can submit proposals on behalf of his community. "I'm honored to have contributed to the amendment of China's Seed Law," he said while attending this year's NPC session in Beijing. The amendment went into effect on March 1, strengthening the protection of the legal rights and interests of owners of new plant varieties.

"The duties I perform as NPC deputy will always be based on my own work and in line with the law. I will continue to convey the concerns of people in the rural areas to the authorities and promote plant protection," Wang said.

## Seeds of growth

In recent years, a fruit fly pest has affected Guangxi's fruit production. "The flies prove a tough enemy. Without effective measures, farmers will have nothing to pick when harvest rolls around," Wang said.

With the support of government funding, Wang and his team launched a research and development project. After studying the fly, they developed a bait that lured and killed more than 90 percent of the orchard's pests. The bait is easy to use and does not affect produce quality.

After seeing local improvements, Wang decided to take his technique and insecticide nationwide. He brought a proposal based on his work results to this year's NPC sessions, where lawmakers discuss bills and proposals reflecting people's concerns and suggestions.

"The next step is large-scale application, during which we want to make the method more effective and affordable so fruit producers can enjoy a great harvest and increase their income; and customers can get better-quality fruit," Wang said.

The No.1 Central Document for 2022, released in February, stipulates that the country should promote eco-friendly prevention and control products and technologies for crop diseases and insect plagues.

The first policy statement released by China's central authorities every year, the document is considered an indicator of policy priorities. Work on agriculture and undertakings in

rural areas have featured high on the agenda for 19 consecutive years.

During his years as a lawmaker, Wang has presented several suggestions to relevant authorities on the topics of food security, plant disease prevention and control, crop variety approval and new fruit variety protection. The recommendations Wang has made are based on consultations with farmers during field visits, and his many years of research.

Last year, he was invited to visit villages in Hainan Province and Guangxi to survey their crop protection system, and look into potential improvements in both the system and local ecology protection.

The surveys were part of NPC efforts, supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and other authorities, to gather data before revising the Seed Law. Through multiple rounds of detailed inspection and research, public opinion polling, evaluation meetings and discussions, a draft law was formulated and subsequently deliberated by the 13th NPC Standing Committee last August.

The Standing Committee then solicited feedback to the draft amendment on several occasions. Wang took advantage of the opportunity at hand and gave his professional input. He suggested that the law should stress the improvement of seed resilience, in addition to their yield and quality.

"Variety matters greatly. Disease-resistant types can cope with problems that only occur months or years later," he said.

In December 2021, the NPC Standing Committee adopted the amendment to the Seed Law. The revised law adds provisions regarding the protection of new plant varieties, and the intensification of scientific and technological research in the seed industry to promote innovation-driven progress.

## Feet on the ground

Like Wang, Chen Baoshan is an agricultural scientist and NPC deputy from Guangxi. As director of the Guangxi-based State Key Laboratory for Conservation and Utilization of Subtropical Agro-Bioresources, his main professional objective is to improve the breeding and cultivation of sugarcane. A scientist and a lawmaker, Chen considers his job a bittersweet one.

"Sugar is one of the most important raw materials in the food industry. Of China's every three spoons of sugar, two stem from Guangxi," he said.

According to Chen, China has achieved several key breakthroughs in refining sugarcane yield, sugar content and



The 8th Ningxia Seed Expo is held in Pingluo County, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in July 2021. Wang Peng

## China is working on consolidating and extending its achievements in poverty alleviation and driving rural revitalization following the nation's 2020 victory over absolute poverty.

lifespan. Previously, a sugarcane crop could be harvested for three years before needing replacement. Chen and his team have managed to double that time to six years. "This has significantly reduced farmers' costs," he said.

By working closely with farmers, Chen and his colleagues have also identified several challenges facing producers and industry stakeholders alike. These include natural and environmental factors preventing plants from reaching their potential, a lack of targeted preferential policies to encourage growers to invest in soil improvement, as well as inefficient harvesting methods and processing techniques.

"We must keep up the work to ensure the profitability of growing sugarcane stays on the rising curve. As long as farmers are earning enough to live well, they will be able to continue on the path toward rural revitalization," Chen added.

As a deputy to the 12th and 13th NPC, Chen has been collecting suggestions from farmers, sugar refineries and scientists via letters, field investigations and surveys for almost 10 years.

"Every year, a team of deputies visits the places where

people report problems. We identify the sources of the issues, work with local authorities to come up with targeted plans, and later on we make sure the problems have been properly solved," Chen said.

For instance, in response to some community feedback last year, a group of lawmakers, including Chen, visited a county in Guangxi to supervise the upgrading of wastewater treatment facilities. Villagers had reported that the area's dysfunctional sewer pipes were severely affecting the environment and consequently the quality of local life. Through their role as NPC deputies, Chen and his colleagues were able to come up with a solution that met community needs and expectations.

"This kind of progress is then seen by neighboring villages and serves as a good example, leading them to look for ways to improve their own surroundings. It's a ripple effect," he said.

Chen's efforts are also part of a rural revitalization strategy first proposed in 2017. China is working on consolidating and extending its achievements in poverty alleviation and driving rural revitalization following the nation's 2020 victory over absolute poverty.

According to a government work report delivered by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang at the opening of the fifth session of the 13th NPC on March 5, China will refine and strengthen its policies supporting agriculture, continue to promote the development of areas lifted out of poverty, work to warrant good harvests, and stimulate rural income growth.

"Rural revitalization is entering a new stage characterized by high-efficiency agriculture and increased agricultural mechanization," Chen concluded, adding that the application of smart technology, too, will be scaled up. ■

## Deputies' Voices



Students attend a science lecture conducted by Chinese astronauts from China's space station at the China Science and Technology Museum in Beijing on March 23. Guo Zhongzheng

### Wang Yaping, a taikonaut

"I'm eager to hear suggestions on how to better use the space station," said Wang from space earlier this year, during her Shenzhou-13 spaceflight mission at the Tiangong space station.

As the first Chinese space lecturer, who is widely known for her dedication to space science education, Wang said although she had to ask for leave from attending the two sessions in person due to her space trip, she would continue to devote herself to the work, and carry out research and study in fields including space education and fulfill her duty as a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC).

The crew successfully conducted spacewalks and delivered sessions of the remote Tiangong class, as well as a space-ground connection with students from prestigious universities in Beijing, Hong Kong and Macao on the first day of 2022.

Dubbed the "space lecturer," she is always thinking about how to make courses and experiments more interesting and inspiring.

Wang called for making full use of the rich resources for science popularization via the space station class, to nurture the scientific spirit and passion for the aerospace among the general public, especially the young, and tap into the full potential of the space station in space education.

### Su Bomin, dean of Dunhuang Academy

Su has been working for three decades in the Mogao Grottoes, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Dunhuang, in northwest China's Gansu Province. Also known as the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, Mogao Grottoes is made up of some 500 Buddhist temples, carved into cliff faces and lined with one of the world's most precious collections of Buddhist art. Su described himself as a "doctor of murals."

Since being elected as an NPC deputy in 2018, Su has put forward a series of suggestions for the protection of cultural relics, such as establishing cultural relics protection as an independent major in universities.

"Spanning the past and present, Dunhuang is of enduring value from both a historical and a scientific perspective," Su said. He added that increasing numbers of Chinese young adults are becoming interested in traditional culture, and this in turn has given a boost of China's creative cultural industries.

During this year's NPC sessions, apart from working on the disciplinary construction of cultural relics protection, Su also made suggestions on facilitating the establishment of a key state research laboratory for cultural relics protection, aiming to merge the protection of cultural relics into the system of scientific and technological innovation and development.

"We regard the country's emphasis on cultural relics protection as a great opportunity for our work," said Su, "I hope cultural relics protection can be improved with the help of science and technology and the traditional Chinese culture will be better promoted."

### Liu Qingfeng, board chairman of iFlytek, a leading Chinese artificial intelligence (AI) firm

This year, Liu brought eight suggestions to the top legislature, covering applications of artificial intelligence in education, healthcare and elderly care.

For AI application in education, Liu suggested strengthening the popularity of new-type teaching and learning terminals at schools, which can play an important role in the implementation of the "double reduction" policy to reduce students' extracurricular tutoring and homework burdens.

Liu also suggested the building of a smart network that can help people with oral and hearing disabilities communicate. The quick development of 5G and AI will assist such a network.

Liu's firm, specializing in speech recognition, is currently developing devices for those groups under the support of the China Disabled Persons Federation. More than 1,000 teams are using open-source technologies created by iFlytek to develop apps for those people.

Liu added the application of partner robots should be carried out via AI, which could enhance happiness for the elderly and solve shortages of skilled nursing staff.

### Huang Xihua, an official from the city of Huizhou in Guangdong Province

Huang is inquisitive. She always keeps abreast of hot topics and takes careful notes. Now Huang has opened

accounts on almost all major social media platforms. Whether it is Weibo, Douyin, or WeChat, she updates frequently and has active interactions.

“My eyes are focused on whichever platform that grabs the most attention,” said the veteran internet surfer. “There are about a billion internet users in China. As an NPC deputy, we should listen to their voices.”

Huang’s proposals always center on the livelihood of the people, ranging from treating water and noise pollution in rural areas to free expressway use during the Spring Festival travel rush.

This year, Huang’s proposal is about introducing more child-rearing supportive measures, such as offering childcare and medical care subsidies, to build a more birth-friendly society.

“The government should give single women who are willing to have children the same rights and welfare as married women,” Huang added.

China’s birthrate dropped to the lowest in six decades last year. Some 10.6 million babies were born and the mainland’s population growth was 480,000, the lowest since 1962, according to official statistics. The country also has an aging population as 14.2 percent of citizens are aged 65 or above.

## Zhu Guoping, a community worker in Shanghai

Having worked in a community committee in Shanghai’s Changning District for nearly three decades, Zhu witnessed the neighborhood’s transformation.

“Social governance is getting more targeted and refined, and our living conditions are getting more comfortable. It used to be hard to see a doctor in major hospitals, but now the community hospital is at the doorstep. Old-age care was once a big issue, but now the number of nursing homes is increasing year by year,” Zhu said.

Zhu still stays in the community committee even after retirement. “Community work boils down to serving the people,” Zhu said. “When residents

have any difficulty or advice, I listen carefully and try my best to solve it. If it is beyond my capability, I’ll bring them to the two sessions.”

This year, she put forward suggestions on how to assess long-term care insurance for the elderly and tackle internet addiction among children.

In the district she works in, there is an outreach office set up by the top legislature. Zhu and local residents have used this office to participate in the revision of more than 30 laws, including laws on domestic violence and the protection of minors, and put forward over 600 legislative opinions.

“We are very happy to see some of our opinions were written into the law, and the feeling that we are the masters of our country has grown stronger,” Zhu said.

## Zhao Dongling, a renowned scriptwriter

Despite China’s E-commerce Law and the Administrative Measures for Online Live-Streaming Marketing (for Trial Implementation) stipulating the obligations to provide tax-related information by livestreaming marketing platforms, the regulations are too general and lack operational guidance, which makes it difficult for taxation authorities to effectively track down tax evasion of

online livestreamers as well as the ensuing punishment, Zhao said.

Thus, Zhao suggested that the State Taxation Administration (STA) issue guidelines on what specific information different platforms should send to the authorities and that these information should be varied in accordance with their business operation.

Together with other lawmakers, Zhao suggested tightening supervision and rectification of the livestreaming industry. They also suggested punishment on tax evasion and mandatory cool-off period for tipping livestreamers to ensure a sound and equitable development of the new economic model.

The livestreaming sector was jolted after the STA issued a notice last September, requiring further strengthening of taxation administration for employees in the field.

At the end of last year, China’s top livestreamer Huang Wei, nicknamed Viya, was fined 1.34 billion yuan (\$210 million) for tax evasion by the taxation authorities in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province.

It is the largest fine ever imposed on a livestreamer, and market observers said that the case is a benchmark that suggests stronger supervision ensure the healthy and sustainable development of the industry, and it proves that no one can cross the legal line, no matter what industry they are in.

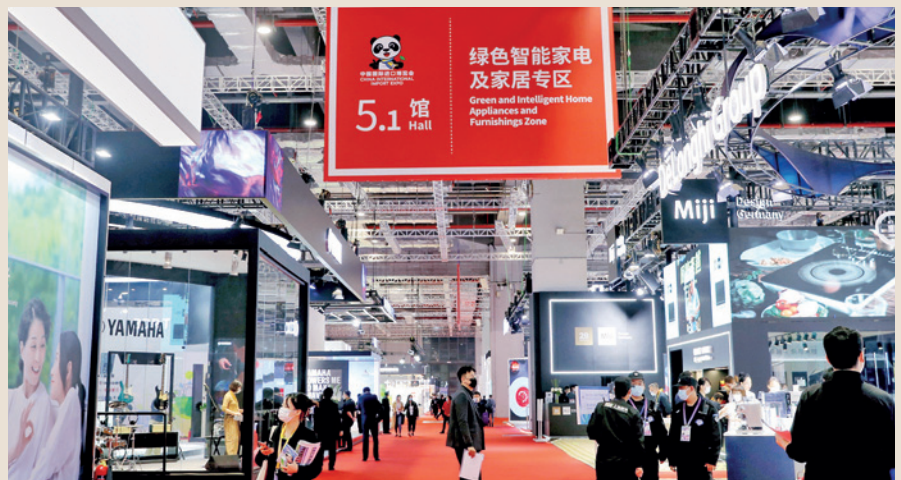


Photo taken on November 5, 2021 shows a view of the Green and Intelligent Home Appliances and Furnishings Zone of the 4th China International Import Expo (CIIE) in east China’s Shanghai. Liu Ying

## Zhang Zhaoan, deputy head of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences

Zhang said the cosmetics industry has been developing rapidly in China as people pay more and more attention to their own image.

He said China has become the world's second largest cosmetics consumer market behind only the U.S., with a compound annual growth rate of 9.7 percent from 2010 to 2020. Meanwhile, the sector is expected to maintain a compound annual growth rate of 11 percent during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period.

However, Zhang pointed out that the cosmetics industry in China still faces some underlying problems such as a lack of key technologies and high-end brands.

For example, during the past seven years, only two Chinese researchers have won the Maison G de Navarre Young Scientist Prize among the several awards sponsored by the International Federation of Societies of Cosmetic Chemists, he explained.

In addition, only three Chinese brands--Pechoin, Rejoice and Chando--were among the world's top 50 most valuable cosmetics companies in 2021.

Therefore, Zhang called for research and development of cutting-edge cosmetics technologies to be included into national science and technology R&D programs and additional support for basic research in botany, organic chemistry, dermatology, and other related fields.

With facilities and financial support from all sectors, China's cosmetics companies need to jointly establish a collaborative mechanism to integrate resources, pool wisdom and facilitate innovation, he said, adding that the Oriental Beauty Valley in Shanghai can provide a basis for such a mechanism.

## Sun Zhe, chairman of the standing committee of the municipal people's congress of Harbin, capital city of Heilongjiang Province

The development of ice and snow sports and relevant industries has become a hot topic among deputies to the 13th NPC, China's national legislature.

China will make the most of the legacy of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics to enrich people's intellectual and cultural lives. "The success

of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games has turned the cold resources into a 'hot economy' and brought new opportunities. It will boost the development of the winter sports industry," said Sun Zhe, former mayor of Harbin in Heilongjiang, which boasts ice and snow resources and is the hometown of multiple gold medalists at the Olympic Winter Games.

"In the post-Winter Olympics period, Heilongjiang will continue to attach great importance to the development of the winter sports industry," Sun said, adding the province has already rolled out a development plan for the winter sports economy from 2022 to 2030, which will focus on winter sports, culture, equipment and tourism.

"We should take advantage of the Olympic fervor to expand and strengthen the winter sports industry and the related economy, foster new driving forces and create new economic growth points for the revitalization of the country's northeast region," Sun said.

## Kaiser Abdukerim, president of Xinjiang Medical University

Making sure people at the grass-roots level enjoy high-quality medical services has long been Abdukerim's pursuit, especially since he became an NPC deputy.

A member of the Uygur ethnic group, the 51-year-old from Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region majored in pharmacology at Xinjiang Medical University and holds a doctorate in medicine. He became president of the university in 2017.

Abdukerim knows that Xinjiang, which covers one-sixth of China and is home to all 56 ethnic groups, faces more challenges than other regions in ensuring medical services for its residents, especially those living in remote, underdeveloped areas.

He believes that training enough health professionals is important to promote health services, but this takes time. Over the years, he has encouraged the university to train more medical professionals to care for rural residents



A white paper titled "China's Parasports: Progress and the Protection of Rights" is published by the State Council Information Office on March 3. Pan Xu

and has urged more students to devote themselves to local medical services after graduation.

“Having access to quality medical services is what people care about the most,” Abdukerim said. “Responding to their expectations is my responsibility. I’ve conducted inspections and surveys to learn the needs of the people and bring them high-quality medical resources.”

This year, Abdukerim proposed turning one hospital under the university into a high-level medical service demonstration center to fully leverage its medical resources and strengths. He hopes it will provide high-quality medical services to people in Xinjiang, as well as to those in neighboring countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

## **Geng Funeng,** president of the Sichuan Good Doctor Pharmaceutical Group

Geng has called for more measures to improve the service capacity of medical and health institutions at the grassroots level.

The efforts made in this regard are part of the rural revitalization strategy as well as the Healthy China initiative, Geng, also vice chairman of the Sichuan Provincial Federation of Industry and Commerce, said.

Grassroots-level medical institutions are at the lowest level of China’s three-tier healthcare system and play important roles in prevention and treatment of common and chronic diseases, epidemic response, information registration and public health education in rural areas.

Although progress has been made in grassroots healthcare development, there are still weak links, including the inadequacy of facilities and equipment in clinics in remote areas, and a shortage of medicines and qualified medical personnel, he said.

Geng urged more efforts to boost disease prevention and treatment capacity through such measures as resource input, infrastructure upgrades

and skill building.

He also suggested strengthening the training of rural doctors, encouraged the opening of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) specialist clinics and TCM treatment of chronic diseases, and called for supporting policies for institutions that provide internet-based medical services in remote areas or regions below the county-level.

Data showed that the number of medical and health institutions in China had reached 1.04 million by November 2021, among which 990,000 were operating at the grassroots level.

## **Hu Zhonghui,** chief artisan at Pinggao Group

Since joining Pinggao Group in 2005 at the age of 18, Hu has made many accomplishments that are significant to the group and the industry. The group, based in Pingdingshan in Henan Province, manufactures and sells high-voltage switchgears and equipment for power transmission and distribution.

As a deputy to the national legislature, Hu has been earnest and effective in fulfilling his duties and responsibilities. In 2021, he paid visits to more than 20 enterprises, stayed in close connection with eight vocational colleges to learn about their enrollment and employment situation, and participated in some 20 events, engaging in exchanges with students and young workers.

Embracing the spirit of craftsmanship in this work, he made suggestions to improve capacity-building, quality and efficiency of procuratorate work when dealing with cases. In his view, procuratorial organs should organize and conduct more training on various fronts, such as joint sessions with public security organs and courts. Meanwhile, efforts are needed to specify the criteria of penalties for new crimes, further clarify the criteria of penalties for common and frequent offenses, and promote the well-received procuratorial practices to improve the business environment, according to Hu.

During the NPC session this year, he made suggestions on the training of skilled workers, such as improving training mechanisms and introducing more incentives. He is confident that such efforts will empower more young people to master sophisticated skills, build their careers and serve the country.

## **Cheng Hanfei,** chief engineer of an environmental protection company affiliated with state-owned China Minmetals Corp.

Cheng has urged the government to explore more channels to use sludge from sewage disposal as a resource, because the amount of such waste is increasing each year.

The daily sewage disposal capacity in China’s urban areas has reached 220 million metric tons, with over 60 million tons of sludge with a moisture content of 80 percent generated during the disposal process each year, Cheng said.

Considering that the proportion of wastewater that is collected for disposal will continue to rise and because there is also a need to clear sludge from sewage pipe networks, Cheng said he expects China’s annual sludge amount will exceed 100 million tons by 2025.

Due to the limited capacity to dispose of such waste, a lot of the sludge is not handled in a timely manner, and the increasing amount is likely to exacerbate the problem, he said.

The sludge, especially that from toilet wastewater, is rich in nitrogen and phosphorus, which are primary nutrients in fertilizers. They can not only be used for composting, but also have potential in the restoration of mine areas and urban landscaping, Cheng said.

Cheng called for concerted efforts from different government bodies to address the factors hindering the use of sludge. “While emphasizing the importance of safe utilization, the government should hammer out preferential policies to encourage the use of sludge for more purposes,” he said. ■



A worker pollens sweet melon seedlings inside a smart greenhouse of a modern vegetable industrial park in Shule County, Kashgar, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on April 17, 2021. *Hou Zhaokang*

# Local official helps farmers gain a better life and a bigger voice

By Lu Yan

**E**ight years ago, following college graduation, Cui Jiuxiu, born in Juxian County, Shandong Province in east China, set off for Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the country's northwest to pursue her dream—to become a public servant and help locals in underprivileged areas improve their lives.

Today, Cui is deputy secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Opal Township Committee in Kashgar, Xinjiang. Over the years, she has witnessed local people climbing out of extreme poverty by setting up rural cooperatives, manufacturing workshops or clothing design studios. They use advanced technology to grow vegetables, breed crops and manage greenhouses, with fruits and vegetables grown in the area now sold across the country.

"I spent the best years of my youth in Xinjiang; it is because of this choice and because of Xinjiang that I lead a very different and meaningful life," Cui said.

## Shaking things up

At the foot of the Pamir Plateau, Opal is home to fruit cultivation, forestry and farming. However, limited arable land and a dry climate meant villagers' farming efforts previously yielded little profit. The national anti-poverty campaign brought more farming technologies and applications as well as rural tourism to the area, lifting residents' living standards.

Cui is one of the pioneers who train farmers about new

ways to increase their yield and cultivate new channels for employment. “I can see with my own eyes how life in rural Xinjiang is on the up,” she added.

Enterprise-enabled poverty alleviation is one practical measure to increase local incomes. For example, two leading local companies rented the land use rights from several farmers and established a field for seed breeding plus fruit and vegetable planting near Kashgar to develop protected agriculture, cultivating high-value vegetables and other horticultural greenhouse crops. China’s land ownership rights belong to the state or farmer collectives; individual farmers have the right to use the land.

Farmers can earn money from leasing their land and simultaneously have time to work in the cities—getting a better paycheck. But if they wish to stay put, the companies can offer them greenhouse employment. “Farmers can earn way more than before, even during the off season,” Cui, as a local official who facilitated communication between various parties and promoted the overall process, said.

Cui now considers developing tourism in Opal, a place many from across China must pass through en route to the Pamir Plateau, which lies between Central Asia, South Asia and East Asia. In the past, the area featured only a handful of restaurants for travelers to make a pit stop.

After extensive field investigation, Cui believes the township can develop a type of culture-oriented tourism which introduces regional cuisine, handicraft and other specialties with unique ethnic minority flavors to more travelers, in turn boosting local employment and livelihood.

Cui visited households and collected villagers’ concerns and suggestions on shop decorations and rental rates. She also contacted various companies, seeking opportunities for collaboration.

“Xinjiang’s produce, natural scenery and cultural heritages should become more widely known,” she said.

## Deputy on duty

Cui is also a deputy to the 13th National People’s Congress (NPC). She attended the NPC annual session that concluded in Beijing on March 11.

Deputies to the NPC collect people’s opinions and bring these to the NPC annual session so they may be incorporated into laws and policies. This process constitutes a smooth conduit for addressing the people’s needs, Cui said.

“Many people may not know what NPC deputies do. But they always talk to us about any concerns or opinions. If these are reasonable and legitimate, we will write them down, sort them out and submit them to the NPC, which will then take up the issues with the relevant government departments,” Cui said. Many of her suggestions have addressed topics like rural revitalization and tourism to boost local incomes.

During the fifth session of 13th NPC, Cui and other deputies together reviewed government work report drafts and offered advice on revisions. They also attended various meetings and conducted discussions on the issues they spotted whilst “out in the field.”

Following the conclusion of the fifth session of the 13th NPC, Cui swiftly returned to her duties as a town official, while also continuing her work as a deputy.

In Opal Township, there is a liaison station where NPC

deputies regularly work and wait for people to communicate their concerns and suggestions. After problems are collected, deputies will begin investigating through research, field visits and in-depth talks with the community, and then produce a formal document with issues and suggestions for submission to the NPC.

After the NPC receives the documents, it will transfer each suggestion to the relevant government body, which will provide feedback to the deputy who proposed it. “How long government organizations take to provide their reply varies, but all suggestions will receive a response,” Cui said.

Cui is also exploring more innovative ways to gather public opinion, for example by posting vlogs on social media so that more people will know the NPC deputies stand ready to hear from them.

One of the suggestions she made this year came to her via WeChat, one of China’s largest multi-purpose social media platforms. An acquaintance learned from her post that she was leaving for Beijing to attend the NPC annual session and he spoke to her about his confusion regarding children airfares.

According to current regulations, plane tickets for children are charged at 50 percent of the regular adult fare, but many adult fares, after discounts, are well under that half-price. “So, in reality, people might pay more for children than for adults, and that cannot be the original intention,” Cui said. She took the matter up with the Civil Aviation Administration of China and now awaits their reply.

“There are many deputies countrywide. Each connects with some households. Just like this, all households can be covered and they’ll always have a deputy to reach out to. This is what whole-process people’s democracy really means,” Cui said.

“No matter what people in other countries might think, if we implement this system properly, we are guaranteeing that the people are the masters of their country,” Cui added. ■



Tourists visit the Alar National Wetland Park in Kashgar, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on September 4, 2016. *Chen Wen*

# Looking beyond splendid Games, Xi hails Beijing 2022 legacy



Photo taken on February 20 shows the National Stadium and the Beijing Olympic Tower during the closing ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games in Beijing. Zhang Yuwei

**H**ailing the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics as a success that would “once again go down in history,” Chinese President Xi Jinping on April 8 called on the country to carry forward the spirit of the Winter Games to gather momentum for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

China has honored its solemn promise to present the world with a streamlined, safe and splendid Games, said Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, at a grand gathering to honor those who have made outstanding contributions to the Winter Games.

A total of 148 units and 148 individuals were commended at the gathering, held at the Great Hall of the People in the heart of Beijing.

The facts have proven again that Chinese people not only have the willingness and determination to make contributions to advancing the Olympic movement and promoting solidarity and friendship among peoples across the world, but also have the ability and enthusiasm to make even greater contributions, Xi said.

He also pledged to carry forward the Olympic spirit, ensure the Olympic Games play an important role in promoting peace and development, and he vowed to offer more Chinese wisdom and Chinese strength to the progress of human civilization.

## Splendid Games

In his speech, Xi recaptured the golden moments from the two Games and drew pride from the Chinese cultural elements and ideas embodied during the Games, as well as touching performances which he said had “motivated the Chinese people both at home and abroad to get united and move forward.”

Nearly 3,000 athletes from 91 countries and regions participated in the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games and nearly 600 from 46 countries and regions came for the Paralympic Winter Games.

According to Xi, the Winter Games have attracted billions of viewers around the world, making it the most watched Winter Games ever.

The splendid Winter Games have drawn positive feedback from the international community, he said, before commending the country’s best-ever results at the Winter Games.

For the first time, Team China has participated in all the disciplines at the Winter Olympics, bagging nine gold medals and 15 overall, in addition to 18 golds and 61 medals at the Winter Paralympics.

Meanwhile, Xi noted that achievements are based on hard work and victory does not come easy.

With the world still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the safety of the participants of the two Games was a top priority of the Beijing 2022 organizers.

Thanks to the targeted and effective prevention and control measures, only 0.45 percent of personnel under the closed-loop management tested positive for COVID-19, and they all received effective treatment and were well cared for.

Xi said China’s anti-COVID policy has once again withstood the test, adding that hosting the Games contributed

useful experience for the world in fighting the virus and hosting major international events.

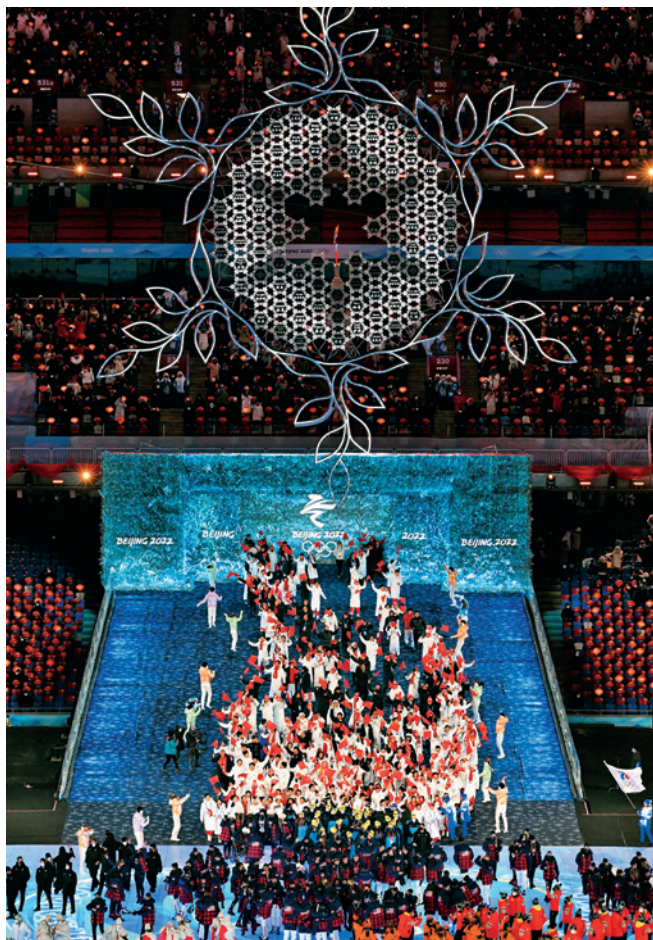
“As some foreign athletes said, if there were a gold medal for responding to the pandemic, then China would deserve it,” he said.

## Beyond the Games

The success of the Games goes far beyond the field of sports.

Noting that passion for ice and snow activities continues to grow in the world’s second largest economy, Xi said that some 346 million Chinese have participated in winter sports activities so far, and that “a new era of ice and snow sports in China and the world at large has unfolded.”

**The Winter Games have attracted billions of viewers around the world, making it the most watched Winter Games ever.**



Athletes parade during the closing ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games at the National Stadium in Beijing on February 20. Li He

According to China's development plan for winter sports, the total scale of the winter sports industry will hit 1 trillion yuan (\$157.1 billion) by 2025.

The Chinese president said the Games stimulated development in various areas and had a far-reaching positive impact on economic and social development.

Since the preparations of the Games started, China has built a large amount of high-quality venues and facilities for ice and snow sports. The preparation and hosting of the Games have also promoted the development of social undertakings in a comprehensive way, better securing the rights of the disabled and enriching the lives of the general public, Xi said.

Hundreds of thousands of facilities have been made barrier-free for the convenience of people with disabilities.

Xi went on to say that the Beijing 2022 Winter Games prompted exchanges between cultures, and played a key role in promoting solidarity, cooperation and joint efforts to overcome difficulties globally.

"It has also brought confidence and hope to a world overshadowed by instability, and sent the world a strong message of our times -- Together for a Shared Future," Xi said.

## Lasting legacy

Reviewing the extraordinary seven-year process of preparation for and hosting of the Games, Xi said China has harvested abundant intellectual wealth and valuable experience.

He highlighted upholding the Party's centralized, unified leadership, pooling all resources to accomplish major tasks, proactively preventing and addressing risks and challenges, and combining hosting the Games with serving the people and promoting development.

"All the facts have proved that the CPC is the most reliable

## The Games stimulated development in various areas and had a far-reaching positive impact on economic and social development.

backbone for China to make great achievements," said Xi.

Xi also summarized the Beijing Winter Olympic and Paralympic spirit created in the process of bidding, organizing and hosting the Games: bearing in mind the big picture, being confident and open, rising to the challenges, pursuing excellence, and creating a better future together.

Further elaborating on the four aspects, Xi said that the participants in the Games regarded the preparation and hosting of the Games as one of the country's most fundamental interests, and remained confident in the path, theory, system and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

They showed the sincerity and friendliness of the Chinese people with hospitality and promoted mutual understanding and friendship among different peoples through exchanges, said Xi.

Besides working hard with perseverance, dedication and meticulousness, they also kept themselves future-oriented with a global vision, and called on all people to jointly build a community with a shared future for mankind, according to Xi.

Pledging to make plans proactively and work hard persistently to make the most of the legacy of the Games, Xi called on all Chinese people to carry forward the spirit of the Games, and forge ahead more confidently and more determinedly toward the second centenary goal and toward the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. (Xinhua) ■



A gathering to honor those who have made outstanding contributions to the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games and the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on April 8. Zhai Jianlan



Deputies to the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) leave the Great Hall of the People after the closing meeting of the fifth session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 11, 2022. Chen Zhonghao

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