

# NPC



VOL.62 ISSUE 3 · 2023

《中国人大》对外版

National People's Congress of China

## XI SAYS BRICS IMPORTANT FORCE IN SHAPING INTERNATIONAL LANDSCAPE

### XV BRICS SUMMIT



ISSN 1674-3008



9 771674 300239



Party and state leaders Xi Jinping, Cai Qi and Ding Xuexiang attend the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, capital city of east China's Zhejiang Province, on September 23. *Xie Huanchi*





## 6 Xi says BRICS important force in shaping international landscape

# Contents

### BRICS Summit

6

Xi says BRICS important force in shaping international landscape

### Special Report

12

President calls for stronger Sino-Russian cooperation

14

China, Russia agree to enhance parliamentary cooperation, coordination

15

NPC head calls for enhanced ties with Inter-Parliamentary Union

16

NPC becomes permanent observer at Central American Parliament



### Supervision

18

Top legislature holds inquiry meeting on food security

### Legislation

22

China adopts foreign state immunity law

25

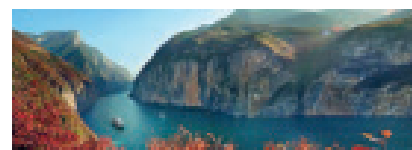
Procedures optimized for foreign-related cases

26

New law on Qinghai-Xizang Plateau ecosystem protection takes effect

28

Legislative progress helps safeguard environment





14

China, Russia agree to enhance parliamentary cooperation, coordination



18

Top legislature holds inquiry meeting on food security



43

Ten years on, the BRI remains an important contributor to global development

ISSUE 3 · 2023

#### Focus

30

Seminar offers opportunities for inter-parliamentary exchanges

33

Malaysia looks to learn from China's development

34

International guests learn about how China's democracy works

#### Xinjiang

39

Xinjiang is worth recommending to the world: foreign diplomats

42

Xinjiang teenager shifts from sheep grazing to robot racing

#### Belt and Road

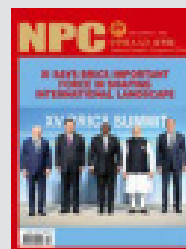
43

Ten years on, the BRI remains an important contributor to global development

#### Whole-Process People's Democracy

36

Life made easier for those facing difficulties



VOL.62 ISSUE3 September 2023

Administrated 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

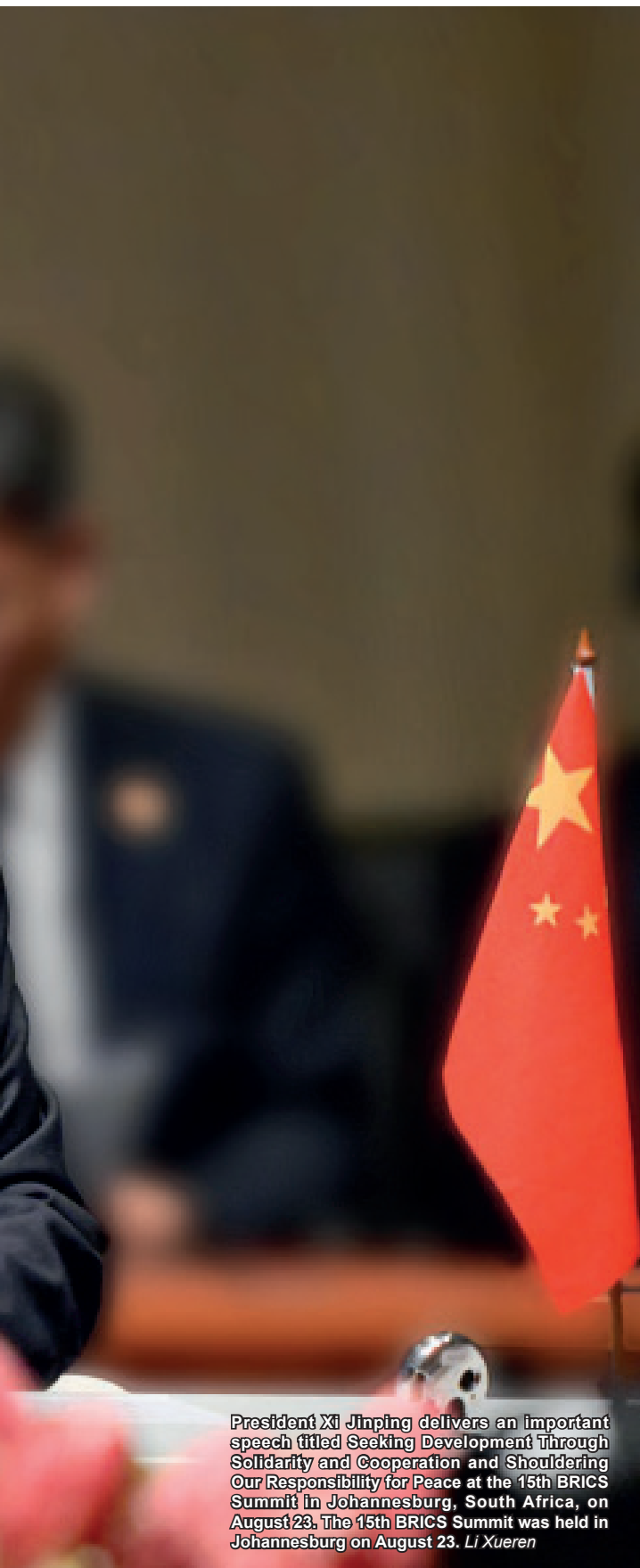
Price: RMB 35

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

**COVER:** President Xi Jinping (2nd L), South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (C), Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (1st L), Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2nd R) and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (1st R) pose for a group photo during the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, on August 23. *Li Xueren*

# Xi says BRICS important force in shaping international landscape





President Xi Jinping delivers an important speech titled *Seeking Development Through Solidarity and Cooperation and Shouldering Our Responsibility for Peace* at the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, on August 23. The 15th BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg on August 23. Li Xueren

Chinese President Xi Jinping said that BRICS is an important force in shaping the international landscape on August 23.

“We choose our development paths independently, jointly defend our right to development and march in tandem toward modernization,” he said in his address to the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa.

This represents the direction of the advancement of human society, and will profoundly impact the world’s development process, Xi said.

## Deepen BRICS cooperation

British economist Jim O’Neill coined the term “BRIC” as an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India and China 22 years ago. With South Africa officially joining in 2011, the group was enlarged to BRICS, and now represents about a quarter of the global gross domestic product and about 40 percent of the world’s population.

BRICS’ track record shows that the members have consistently acted in the spirit of openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation, while taking BRICS collaboration to new heights in support of the five countries’ development, Xi noted.

## Development is an inalienable right of all countries, not a privilege reserved for a few, Chinese President Xi Jinping said.

Through joint efforts, BRICS has grown into the most influential South-South cooperation platform and a crucial driver for global growth defined by three main pillars: political and security cooperation, economic and financial cooperation, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

No matter how the international situation changes, BRICS’ commitment to cooperation and its common aspiration since the very beginning will not change, he added.

Xi also noted that BRICS countries gather at a crucial time to build on their past achievements and open a new future for cooperation.

The global economic recovery remains shaky, while challenges for developing countries are even more formidable, hampering their efforts to realize the Sustainable Development Goals, he said.

“Development is an inalienable right of all countries, not a privilege reserved for a few,” the president stressed.

BRICS countries should focus on practical cooperation, particularly in such fields as the digital economy, green development and supply chains, while bolstering economic, trade and financial exchanges, Xi added.

Noting that artificial intelligence (AI) is a new area of development, bringing substantial development dividends but also risks and challenges, Xi said the BRICS countries have agreed to launch the AI Study Group at an early date.

“President Xi’s speech shows that China has always adhered to the BRICS spirit of openness, inclusiveness and win-



President Xi Jinping delivers an important speech at a press conference during the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, on August 24. BRICS leaders agreed to invite six countries, namely Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, to join the group on August 24. *Xie Huanchi*

win cooperation, and has made firm efforts to achieve common development,” said Amadou Diop, a Senegalese expert on China.

### **Improve global governance**

Xi urged BRICS countries to uphold fairness and justice and improve global governance. He said strengthening global governance is the right choice if the international community intends to share development opportunities and tackle global challenges.

International rules must be written and upheld jointly by

**Strengthening global governance is the right choice if the international community intends to share development opportunities and tackle global challenges.**



all countries based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter rather than dictated by those with the strongest muscles or the loudest voice, he said.

Xi's remarks were echoed by other BRICS leaders, who also support improving global governance and upholding multilateralism.

Addressing the summit, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said new realities call for a fundamental reform of global governance institutions to be more representative and responsive to challenges.

"We are all unanimously in favor of the formation of a multipolar world order that is truly just and based on inter-

## Quotable quotes from Xi's remarks at the BRICS-Africa Outreach and BRICS Plus Dialogue

The international community must pursue the larger interests of all countries, respond to people's concerns and restore development to the center of the international agenda.

China has been and will always remain a member of developing countries.

Let us stay committed and united to build a community of shared development and make sure that in the process of global modernization, no country is left behind.

national law," Russian President Vladimir Putin said at the summit in a virtual address.

BRICS' future-oriented strategic course meets the aspirations of the global majority, Putin said, adding that the BRICS group is tackling some of the most pressing global and regional issues.

"Many countries in the Global South have sought to come together in order to work toward a more just and inclusive world order. BRICS inspires many countries to come together again to advance this vision," Kenneth Creamer, a senior lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, said.

Meanwhile, Ana Elisa Saggiorno Garcia, general coordinator and researcher at the BRICS Policy Center, said the group has a global role in balancing international relations and building consensus.

To reform the multilateral institutions that exist today BRICS countries need to achieve "more of a voice," she said.

## Share China's opportunities

In a speech read by Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao at the BRICS Business Forum 2023 on August 22, Xi said China will remain an important opportunity for the world's development, stressing China's firm resolve to advance high-standard opening up, foster a world-class, market-oriented business environment governed by a sound legal framework and build a globally-oriented network of high-standard free trade areas.

On the summit's sidelines, Xi met with several leaders of participating countries, reaffirming China's commitment to



President Xi Jinping (2nd L), South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (C), Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (1st L), Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2nd R) and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (1st R) pose for a group photo during the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, on August 23. *Li Xueren*

sharing its development opportunities with others, and supporting their economic and social development.

Meeting with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on August 23, Xi said that China is advancing Chinese modernization with its high-quality development, which will bring new opportunities for cooperation between China and Ethiopia.

China is encouraging more Chinese enterprises to invest and start their businesses in Ethiopia, welcoming the use by Ethiopia of the “green channel” for the entry of African agricultural products to China to expand bilateral economic and trade cooperation, Xi said.

In a meeting on August 23 with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, Xi said China will try its best to support Cuba’s economic and social development.

China is willing to work with Cuba and other members of the Group of 77 to better safeguard the common interests and development rights of developing countries, Xi said, adding that as the current chair of the Group of 77 and China, Cuba has positively contributed to strengthening the unity of developing countries.

For his part, Diaz-Canel said Cuba is ready to work with China to deepen Belt and Road cooperation, build a Cu-

ba-China community with a shared future and advance on paths of socialism based on their respective characteristics.

Xi also called for stronger personnel exchanges as well as deeper cultural and people-to-people bonds with Bangladesh when he met with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 23.

Hasina congratulated Xi on the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative, noting Belt and Road cooperation has opened a new door of development for Bangladesh.

Meeting with Senegalese President Macky Sall on August 23, Xi said China supports the African Union in joining the Group of 20 and is ready to share its development experience and opportunities with African nations.

“China’s share of the global economy is crucial. By pursuing internal reforms and speeding up the opening up of its domestic market to foreign companies, China is offering opportunities to the rest of the world,” Lyazid Benhami, vice president of the Paris Association of French-Chinese Friendship, stated.

“By investing in emerging countries, it is increasing the attractiveness and economic stability of countries that want to develop sustainably,” Benhami added. (Xinhua) ■

## Historic BRICS expansion offers it new starting point to promote fair and just global governance

Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were invited to join the BRICS cooperation mechanism on August 24. The addition of the six new members will give the group broader representation and undoubtedly further raise the group's profile on the world stage.

Despite the great lengths the West has gone to hype up internal tensions within the bloc over the introduction of new members, the remarkable expansion of the bloc, the first since South Africa joined the BRIC countries in 2010, indicates that not only was a consensus formed among Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa on the issue, but also the unity of the organization.

All of the six new members, from three continents, are important regional players. Their inclusion in the group markedly broadens the scope of the BRICS mechanism, and will inject fresh vitality into it. The newly enlarged group will be better able to promote the interests of not only the 11 countries but those of the Global South as a whole.

Although the group is not intent on playing a zero-sum game between the Global South and North, something certain Western countries seem to want to kick off, its appeal to developing countries should prompt the developed countries to heed the calls for reform of the global governance system.

The existing system was largely formed in an era when

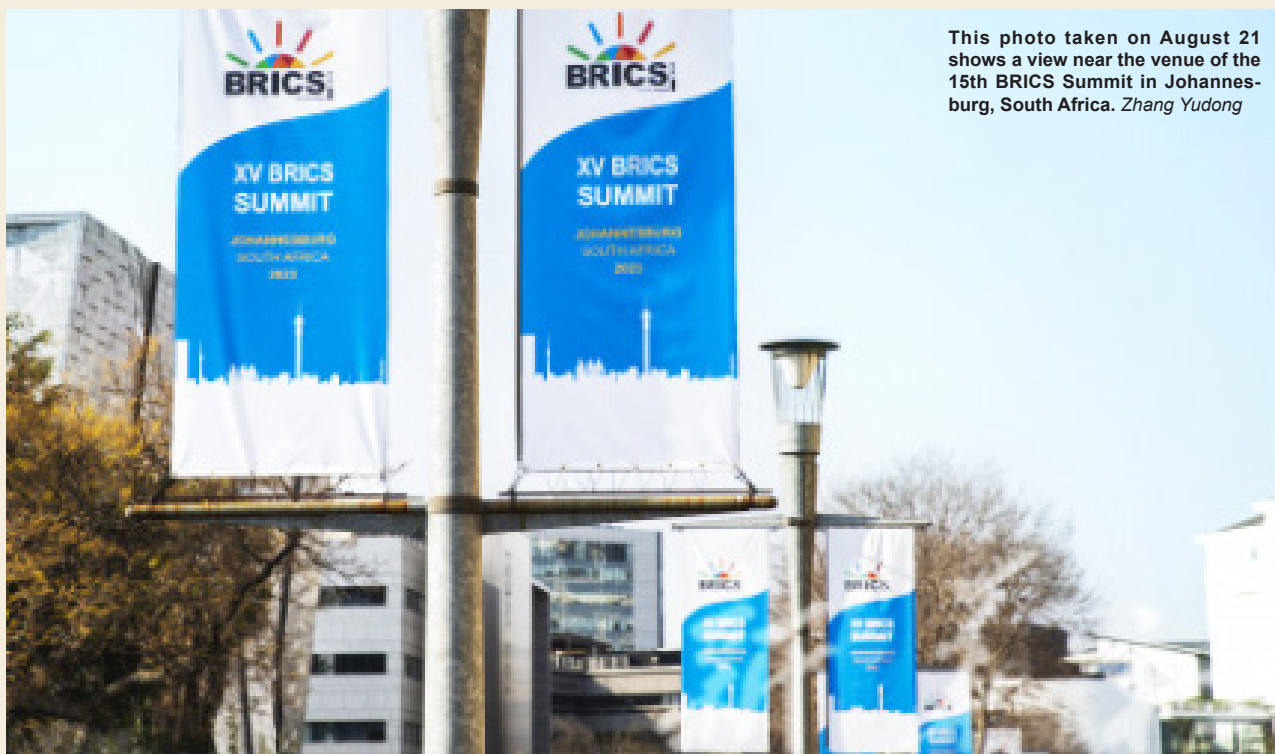
the developed countries had the major share of the world economy and global growth. But now the emerging market economies have not only taken a large share of the world economy, about 40 percent, they also serve as the major engine of global growth. That entails an overhaul of the global system so as to reflect the less-developed countries' growing significance.

The expansion of BRICS is a new starting point for the group. It also promises a new start for the world, as what the countries of the Global South want is not a small exclusive clique, but an inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys enduring peace, universal security and common prosperity.

With its members now coming from almost all the major cradles of ancient civilizations, the expanded group will be able to promote mutual learning among civilizations for the exploration of a more inclusive and civilized growth model for human society compared with the law-of-the-jungle model imposed on the world by the West.

The agreement of the BRICS countries on the expansion of the group shows that no matter how the international situation changes, the BRICS countries remain committed to cooperation and consensus.

As said, the group will not barter away its principles, succumb to external pressure or act as vassals of others. The addition of the six new members reinforces that. (China Daily)



This photo taken on August 21 shows a view near the venue of the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. Zhang Yudong

# President calls for stronger Sino-Russian cooperation

By Cao Desheng

President Xi Jinping has called for further strengthening cooperation between China and Russia, saying that developing Sino-Russian relations is a strategic choice made by the two countries based on their fundamental interests.

Xi made the remarks on July 10 during a meeting in Beijing with visiting Russian Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko.

Xi said that China-Russia relations have maintained a healthy and stable development momentum with joint efforts from both sides. Cooperation in various fields has steadily progressed, and public support for the two countries' long-standing friendship has become even stronger, he added.

China is willing to continue working with Russia to develop the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era featuring mutual assistance, deep integration, pioneering innovation, and mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation, in order to contribute to the development and rejuvenation of both countries and promote the building of a prosperous, stable, fair and just world, Xi said.

Noting that legislative cooperation is an important part of Sino-Russian relations, Xi expressed hope that the two sides will work together to implement the consensus reached between him and Russian President Vladimir Putin, and promote the sustained and healthy development of cooperation in various fields.

Both countries should strengthen exchanges of legislative and governance experiences, and elevate legislative cooperation to a new level, he said.

The president also underlined the need for the two countries to enhance communication and coordination within multilateral mechanisms, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, guide the reform of global governance in the right direction, and jointly safeguard the common interests of emerging markets and developing countries.

Matviyenko said the Russia-China comprehensive strate-



**Both countries should strengthen exchanges of legislative and governance experiences, and elevate legislative cooperation to a new level, President Xi said.**



President Xi Jinping meets with visiting Russian Federation Council speaker Valentina Matviyenko at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on July 10. *Huang Jingwen*

gic partnership of coordination is in line with the interests and aspirations of both countries and has reached the highest level in history.

The Russian legislature widely supports deepening Russian-Chinese cooperation, and is willing to further strengthen exchanges and dialogue with the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, providing legal safeguards for the implementation of the consensus reached by the two heads of

state, she said.

Matviyenko led a Russian delegation on a visit to China, which ran from July 9 to 12. The visit was at the invitation of Zhao Leji, chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC.

Zhao and Matviyenko held talks in Beijing on July 10, and jointly chaired the 8th meeting of the China-Russia committee for parliamentary cooperation, vowing to strengthen legislative cooperation between the two countries. (China Daily) ■



Zhao Leji, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, and Russian Federation Council speaker Valentina Matviyenko hold talks and jointly host the 8th meeting of the China-Russia committee for parliamentary cooperation at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on July 10. Yao Dawei

## China, Russia agree to enhance parliamentary cooperation, coordination

**Z**hao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, and Russian Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko held talks and jointly hosted the 8th meeting of the China-Russia committee for parliamentary cooperation in Beijing on July 10.

Chairman Zhao said that under the strategic guidance of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the relationship between the two countries has withstood the test of international changes and has always maintained a correct direction.

Commending the mutual political trust, practical cooperation and international coordination between the two coun-

tries, Zhao said that the relations show strong endogenous motivation and broad development prospects, which benefit the two peoples and inject stability into the international situation.

Zhao said that China and Russia regard each other as priority partners, always respect and treat each other as equals and firmly support each other on issues concerning each other's core interests and major concerns.

Despite the weak global economic recovery and other adverse factors, the China-Russia practical cooperation has maintained steady development, Zhao added, calling on the two sides to implement current projects, steadily advance cooperation in key areas, further optimize the business envi-

ronment and give full play to the role of cooperation mechanisms.

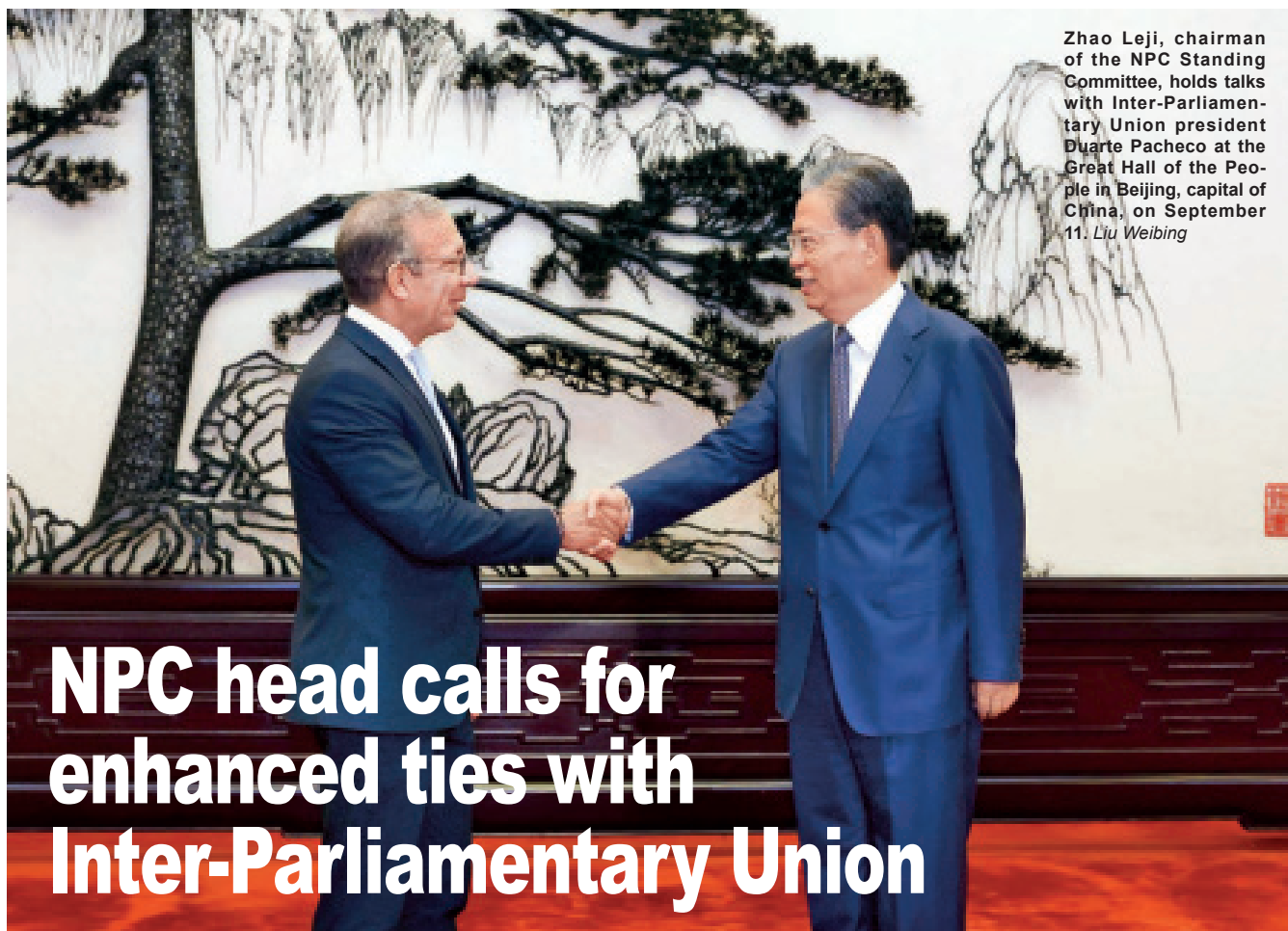
Zhao said China's NPC stands ready to work with the Russian Federation Council to implement the consensus of the two heads of state, enhancing communication and cooperation to develop bilateral relations.

He called on the two sides to give full play to the China-Russia parliamentary cooperation committee to advance friendly exchanges at all levels and in various fields.

Zhao also called on the two sides to strengthen the exchange and mutual learning of legislation, supervision and governing experience; consolidate and expand cooperation among local legislative bodies; strengthen legislative cooperation in foreign-related fields; and promote the formation of foreign-related laws and regulations in real terms that suit their respective national conditions.

Regarding multilateral cooperation, Zhao called on the two sides to enhance coordination under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS, the G20 and the Meeting of Speakers of Eurasian Countries' Parliaments; champion genuine multilateralism; and promote the development of international order in a more just and rational direction.

For her part, Matviyenko said that the Russian Federation Council is willing to work with the NPC to jointly implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state; promote cooperation in the economy and trade, investment, local development, the youth and the law-based governance to enhance coordination on multilateral parliamentary occasions; and create an excellent legal environment for the development of bilateral relations. (Xinhua) ■



Zhao Leji, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, holds talks with Inter-Parliamentary Union president Duarte Pacheco at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on September 11. Liu Weibing

## NPC head calls for enhanced ties with Inter-Parliamentary Union

**Z**hao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, held talks with Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) president Duarte Pacheco in Beijing on September 11, calling for enhanced relations.

Zhao said that since its establishment over 130 years ago, the IPU has promoted exchanges and cooperation among

**China stands ready to strengthen exchanges with the IPU to exert the functions and roles of legislative bodies in an improved manner.**

parliaments of various countries, enhanced mutual understanding and trust, and provided an important platform for countries to work together to meet challenges. China welcomes the IPU to play a greater role in international affairs.

He said the NPC supports the IPU in exerting its influence further; upholding and practicing true multilateralism; adhering to the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits; and urging parliaments to strengthen dialogue, build broad consensus and achieve more practical results.

China also supports the IPU in its efforts to promote sustainable development and stands ready to strengthen cooperation with parliaments of other countries to narrow the North-South development gap and promote common prosperity, Zhao said.

“The NPC is ready to work with the IPU and parliaments of other countries to promote the common values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom for all; mutual understanding and amity among people of all countries; and the building of a community with a shared future for all,” he said.

Zhao said that China appreciates the IPU’s longstanding impartial position on issues concerning China’s core interests

and major concerns, and hopes to enhance friendly relations with the IPU.

He noted that the NPC and the IPU have held five seminars for parliamentarians from developing countries, adding that China is willing to continue making this platform a success, and share experience and seek cooperation with parliamentarians of other countries.

He said that the people’s congress system in China adheres to the unity of the Communist Party of China’s leadership, the people as the masters of the state and the law-based governance. The country stands ready to strengthen exchanges with the IPU to exert and improve the functions and roles of legislative bodies.

Noting that next year is the 40th anniversary of the NPC’s joining the IPU, Pacheco said China has been actively supporting the work of the IPU, while bilateral cooperation has yielded fruitful results in many areas, including poverty reduction, the promotion of inclusiveness in the world and the advancement of sustainable development goals in Africa.

Pacheco added that the hope is that the two sides will strengthen exchanges further and push cooperation to a new level. (Xinhua) ■

## NPC becomes permanent observer at Central American Parliament

**Z**hao Leji, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, held talks with Amado Cerrud, president of the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), on September 22, when they signed an agreement granting the National People’s Congress (NPC) permanent observer status at PARLACEN.

Cerrud’s visit came after the PARLACEN voted overwhelmingly to revoke the permanent observer status of the so-called “Legislative Yuan” of the Taiwan region and accept the NPC of China as a permanent observer in August 2023.

“This historic decision has drawn a lot of attention from the international community, which once again shows that the one-China principle is a universally recognized norm, and supporting and abiding by this principle is an irresistible trend of the times,” Zhao said, commending the PARLACEN for firmly supporting China’s position on issues relating to China’s core interests.

Zhao said China’s relations with Central American countries are developing with a sound momentum, while all the

**The one-China principle is the fundamental political premise for the development of relations between the NPC and the Central American Parliament, NPC Standing Committee chairman Zhao Leji said.**

countries with which China has diplomatic relations in the region have joined in efforts to build the Belt and Road.

China is ready to work with relevant Central American countries to strengthen cooperation in such areas as agricultural infrastructure, investment and people’s livelihoods; expand strategic consensus, solidarity and coordination; and oppose hegemonism, power politics, unilateralism and trade



**Zhao Leji, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, holds talks with president of the Central American Parliament Amado Cerrud at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on September 22. Liu Weibing**

barriers, while jointly promoting the building of a community with a shared future for humanity, according to the NPC chair.

Zhao said the NPC is willing to enhance cooperation with the PARLACEN and increase coordination with it in the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Latin American Parliament to jointly safeguard the rights and interests of developing countries.

The Taiwan question is the core of China's core interests, and the one-China principle is the fundamental political premise for the development of relations between the NPC and the PARLACEN, Zhao said.

He called on the PARLACEN to follow the correct direc-

tion, consolidate the consensus on the one-China principle and remain highly vigilant against attempts by some forces to use the Taiwan question to disrupt bilateral cooperation.

Cerrud said the PARLACEN has taken a historic, correct decision and it hopes to strengthen exchanges with the NPC and contribute to promoting cooperation between Central American countries and China on politics, economy, trade, culture and in other fields.

The PARLACEN is a six-nation parliament consisting of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and Panama, serving as the political institution and parliamentary body of the Central American Integration System. (Xinhua) ■

# Top legislature holds inquiry meeting on food security





Farmers harvest rice in a paddy field in Luoping County of Qujing City, southwest China's Yunnan Province, on September 23. *Mao Hong*

China's top legislature held a meeting on August 30 to deliberate and inquire about a report on the work for ensuring national food security.

Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, presided over the meeting and delivered a speech.

During the inquiry, lawmakers asked questions on topics such as improving policies to reinforce the foundations for food security, ensuring grain quality and safety, accelerating efforts to invigorate the seed industry and refining the mechanisms for compensating major grain-producing areas.

Vice premier Liu Guozhong and officials from various ministries and central government agencies attended the meeting.

Zhao said that since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, China has blazed a path of ensuring food security with Chinese characteristics.

He stressed the importance of implementing the national food security strategy and reinforcing the foundations for food security on all fronts to ensure that China's food supply remains firmly in its own hands.

Efforts must be made to implement the strictest possible system for farmland protection and bolster China's self-reliance and strength in agricultural science and technology, Zhao said.

He also called on the NPC and its standing committee to advance the deliberation and revision of the draft law on food security. (Xinhua) ■

**Efforts must be made to implement the strictest possible system for farmland protection and bolster China's self-reliance and strength in agricultural science and technology, NPC Standing Committee chairman Zhao Leji said.**



A villager dries crops on a drying yard at Yangchan Village in Huangshan City, east China's Anhui Province, on September 18. "Shaiqiu," or drying crops in autumn, is a rural tradition in China. Crops of different colors are placed to form various patterns which become attractions for tourists. *Shi Yalei*

## Zhao Leji urges NPC deputies to contribute to food security

Zhao Leji, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, urged NPC deputies to give full play to their roles and actively contribute to the country's food security on August 31.

Zhao made the remarks at a symposium with lawmakers to discuss a State Council report on the work for ensuring food security. He also listened to the suggestions put forward by lawmakers on the topic during the discussions.

While hailing the massive accomplishments and historic transformation China has achieved in ensuring food security, Zhao noted that China's foundation for food security is not yet solid, thus the country must not slacken its efforts.

Zhao urged lawmakers, especially those from the agriculture and agricultural sci-tech research sectors, to step

up their efforts in policy communication to raise farmers' awareness of farmland protection and motivate them to grow crops.

Lawmakers, who are large-scale grain growers or managers of farmers' cooperatives or leading agricultural enterprises, should mobilize farmers to produce more quality grain, Zhao said, adding that lawmakers who are agriculture researchers should strive for breakthroughs in core technologies in key fields, while those who are agriculture technicians should step up agricultural skill promotion at the grassroots level.

Zhao called on lawmakers to conduct in-depth research on food security and put forward more suggestions to help solve problems and refine policies.

He also urged relevant departments to conscientiously handle the suggestions put forward by lawmakers at this year's NPC session in March. (Xinhua)



Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, presides over a joint meeting to deliberate and inquire about a report on the work for ensuring national food security and delivers a speech in Beijing, capital of China, on August 30. Zhang Ling

# Legislature mulls measures to shore up nation's food security

By Li Lei

The top legislature is mulling a range of measures proposed by the central government to tackle “risk points” in the country’s food supply system, including growing food in once-arid places, raising farm animals in highland and creating seafood farms in deep oceans.

The proposals came as the world’s largest food consumer is working to insulate itself from food shortages likely caused by regional conflicts, rising protectionism and more frequent extreme weather patterns.

“Cementing food security is an eternal task that must not be relaxed at any time,” Zheng Shanjie, director of the National Development and Reform Commission, told a panel of lawmakers on August 28.

He made the remarks while delivering a report during an ongoing session of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on behalf of the State Council, China’s Cabinet.

Zheng said the country’s food production sector is generally stable and more resilient to outside risks than a decade ago.

Grain output has stayed above 650 million metric tons for eight consecutive years, which is about 486 kilograms for each Chinese annually. That is above the 400-kg threshold used by the international community to assess food security, he said.

However, Zheng noted that the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which has been ongoing for more than a year, has exposed vulnerabilities in the global, and China’s, agricultural industry. The increase in extreme weather events, crop diseases and pest infestations in recent years has also sounded alarm in the food sector.

The problems are complicated by the fact that the rural regions, where crops are planted, are rapidly aging, and the thin profits of food cultivation have dampened farmers’ desire to expand their operations, he said.

To secure crop yields, Zheng said, the central government is considering building large and medium-sized irrigation zones in places with adequate water and soil resources, improving pest control work with more technological input, and working out long-term solutions to ward off agricultural disasters in a nation with 1.4 billion people.

It will also implement flood and drought-control projects and promote efficient irrigation techniques, he said.

Zheng said that the country’s demand for quality food will keep rising due to progress in people’s living standards, and that the food supply will face pressure for an extended period of time.

He called for efforts to crack down on activities that occupy farmland for nonagricultural purposes, and prevent farmland from being left idle.

To make up for the country’s relatively limited farmland area, authorities need to broaden the source of food to include forests, lakes and oceans, and work out technologies to plant food even in arid areas, Zheng said.

Farmers will be encouraged to produce food on nonagricultural land, raise cows and goats in highland and fish in deep oceans, he said.

Zheng said that China still lags behind the world’s agricultural powerhouses in terms of breeding technologies and farming machinery production.

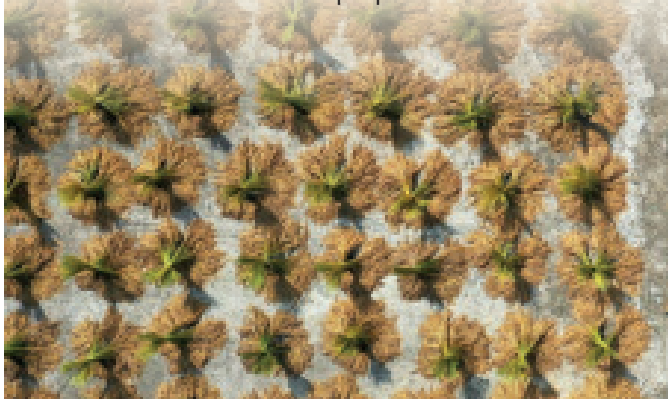
He said the central government plans to commercialize biological breeding technologies with the aim of producing a number of homegrown food species with “breakthrough importance.”

To shore up farmers’ incomes, the central government will help grain-producing regions foster food processing industries to increase profit margins. The policy of a minimum food purchasing price will be improved for the same purpose.

Other efforts include curbing food loss and waste, and promoting a healthier diet, which could help ensure sufficient food supply to some degree, he said.

Since early August, downpours caused by typhoons Doksuri and Khanun damaged crops in rice-producing Heilongjiang and Liaoning provinces in northeast China. Large areas of grain fields were also inundated by floods in Zhuozhou, north China’s Hebei Province, as well as in Mentougou District in Beijing.

The torrential rains hit about a month before harvest season, with grassroots authorities racing to salvage crops by pumping water from fields and bringing in agricultural specialists to address the challenges. (China Daily)



This aerial photo taken on September 23 shows a farmer drying grains in Congjiang County of Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, southwest China’s Guizhou Province. Luo Jinglai



It will also plug legal loopholes and accelerate the refinement of China's foreign affairs-related legal system, the official said.

The law establishes the general principles of state immunity. "Unless otherwise provided for by this law, foreign states and their property shall be immune from the jurisdiction of the courts of the People's Republic of China," the law reads.

It stipulates the circumstances under which Chinese courts will be permitted to exercise jurisdiction over foreign states and their property. Related provisions are in line with international treaties and norms, the official said.

China's foreign state immunity policy upholds the principle of sovereign equality of states and is distinct from the long-arm jurisdiction practiced by certain countries, the official noted.

The law stipulates a principle of reciprocity in state immunity. "Where the immunity granted by a foreign state to the People's Republic of China and its property is inferior to that provided for by this law, the People's Republic of China may apply the principle of reciprocity," per the law.

Once a foreign state abolishes, restricts or downgrades the immunity it has granted to China, China will have the right to take necessary countermeasures in accordance with the principle of reciprocity, the official said.

After the law is enacted, the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions should follow the central government in adopting the state immunity rules and policies set out in the law, the official said. (Xinhua) ■



## Immunity law aligns with world practices

By Zhang Yunbi

China's first law on granting immunity to foreign states fully adheres to international law and is consistent with the general practices of various countries, Beijing said on September 5.

At a session on September 1, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress — China's top legislative body — reviewed and passed the Law of the People's Republic of China on Foreign State Immunity. The law stipulates the rules for Chinese courts to handle civil cases involving a foreign state and its property.

According to some foreign media reports, the law marks an adjustment to China's previous stance of granting foreign states "absolute state immunity" — the protection that a state is given from being sued in the courts of other nations.

In response, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs underscored that the law "affirms the fundamental principle that a foreign state and its property enjoy immunity in China," but at the same time, it stipulates exceptions.

"The exceptions are relating to non-sovereign act of a foreign state, under which Chinese courts can exercise jurisdiction, such as cases involving disputes arising out of a commercial activity, relevant personal injury and property damage," the spokesperson said.

The law also states that Chinese courts can take compulsory judicial measures against a foreign state's commercial property "under strictly limited circumstances," the spokesperson added.

Ma Xinmin, director-general of the Department of Treaty and Law of the Foreign Ministry, made similar observations in a recent signed article, noting that many countries had indeed enshrined the absolute state immunity of foreign states in their history.

Yet, since the end of World War II, the disputes involving one country's citizens or its enterprises with another country have been on the rise due to thriving global trade. Therefore, many countries — both developed and developing countries — have gradually turned to putting limits on absolute state immunity, he wrote.

Speaking on the law's purposes, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson said it stipulates provisions "in line with international practices and aims to improve China's foreign state immunity system".

It aims at "protecting the lawful rights and interests of the parties concerned, safeguarding the sovereign equality of states and promoting friendly exchanges with other countries," which in turn boost China's higher-level opening-up, the spokesperson said.

Enacting the law "is a normal legislative activity conducted by the NPC Standing Committee," the spokesperson emphasized.

"As a responsible major country, China firmly upholds the principle of sovereign equality and will faithfully implement this law to protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese nationals and legal persons, and respect the immunities enjoyed by foreign states under international law," the spokesperson added. (China Daily)



VCG

# Procedures optimized for foreign-related cases

By Cao Yin



VCG

China will see more efficient procedures for handling foreign-related civil cases from the beginning of next year, thanks to a newly amended law. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, adopted the amendment to the Civil Procedure Law when it wrapped up a session on September 1. The law will take effect from January 1.

"A major revision this time is improving the efficiency of dealing with civil disputes involving external affairs, taking into consideration new problems in such case handling," said Huang Wei, an official from the NPC Standing Committee's Legislative Affairs Commission.

With fast economic development and high-level opening-up, Chinese courts have witnessed a rapid growth of foreign-related civil cases over the past few years, covering more than 100 countries and regions, according to her.

"More foreign litigants have preferred to choose our courts to solve their disputes, and our civil and commercial verdicts have also been recognized and implemented in more nations," she said.

While noting that China's judicial credibility and influence are rising around the world, she pointed out that some foreign-related civil litigation procedures in the current law are

being challenged by the growth of cases and the increasingly complicated global conflicts.

In other words, "our rules are difficult to fully meet the need of settling foreign-related lawsuits in a fair, efficient and convenient manner, nor to strongly help safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests," she said.

After learning that sending legal documents to litigants in such case handling is a big difficulty, she noted that legislators adjusted and added a few provisions this time to improve the efficiency of delivery.

For example, the newly amended law adds a provision that allows Chinese courts to deliver documents to litigants' sole proprietorship enterprises set up in China.

It also states that if a foreign company or organization has a legal representative or responsible person in China, documents can also be sent to such people.

In addition, lawmakers also added content about extraterritorial investigation and evidence collection while revising the law, in a bid to optimize the international judicial assistance system for foreign-related civil cases, Huang said.

"The amended law will contribute to building a market-oriented, law-based and internationalized first-class business environment, and to helping modernize our national governance system and capability," she added. (China Daily) ■



# New law on Qinghai-Xizang Plateau ecosystem protection takes effect

This aerial photo taken on June 18 shows a view of the Sanjiangyuan area in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, northwest China's Qinghai Province. Zhang Long

**A** law on the ecological protection of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, or “the roof of the world,” took effect on September 1.

The law, with 63 articles in seven chapters, was passed at a standing committee session of the country's top legislature in April. It outlines the overall layout of the plateau's ecology security and stipulates protection and restoration measures, risk prevention and control, and safeguards and supervision.

The law focuses on specific problems and prominent features of the ecological protection of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, upholding the conservation and systematic governance of mountains, waters, forests, farmlands, grasslands, deserts and glaciers in the region.

**The law on ecological conservation on the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau is a new addition to China's laws for special regions.**

The Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, with an area of about 2.58 million square km, spans six provincial-level regions in western China, including Qinghai and Tibet.

Located in the hinterland of the plateau, the Sanjiangyuan area in Qinghai is known as Asia's “water tower,” since it contains the headwaters of the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang rivers. China started piloting the Sanjiangyuan National Park in

2016. In 2021, it established the first batch of national parks, including the Sanjiangyuan.

Sun Lijun, deputy director of the Sanjiangyuan National Park administration, said that after the construction of the national park, the total amount of water resources in Qinghai has risen, the wetland area has jumped to number one in the country, and the vegetation coverage and biodiversity have increased.

Xu Qingmin with the Qinghai Province Ecological and Environmental Monitoring Center, said that the law provides a vital legal guarantee for the plateau's ecological security layout, ecological protection and restoration, and ecological risk prevention and control.

Over the past 10 years, China has made remarkable progress in ecological and environmental protection legislation.

A comprehensive, pragmatic, and rigorous legal system for ecological and environmental protection has been formed.

The law on ecological conservation on the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau is a new addition to China's laws for special regions, following the enactment of the Yangtze River Protection Law, the Yellow River Protection Law and the Black Soil Protection Law.

"We will strictly implement the law, promote the construction of a monitoring network for the plateau's ecological environment and biodiversity, and cooperate with relevant departments in aspects such as monitoring climate change and its impacts," said Yin Yaqi, an official with the Qinghai provincial department of ecology and environment. (Xinhua) ■

## Qinghai-Xizang Plateau better protected by law

The fragile environment of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau will receive better legal protection, with the regional legislative body announcing the implementation of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau Ecological Protection Law starting on September 1.

The Law on the Ecological Protection of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau was adopted at the second session of the 14th Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on April 26.

"The implementation of the law for Qinghai-Xizang Plateau ecological protection covers the ecological protection of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau and national ecological security, as well as the long-term development of the Chinese nation and the well-being of future generations," Liu Guangxu, secretary-general of the standing committee of the regional people's congress, was quoted as saying by Xizang Daily.

"As the main body of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, Xizang occupies an important position, plays a significant role, and undertakes a significant mission in implementing the law," said Liu.

In order to keep up with the pace of national legislation and ensure the implementation of laws, the standing committee of the 12th People's Congress of the

Xizang Autonomous Region announced that it would implement the decision on September 1.

According to the regional arrangement, it has made strict provisions for the implementation of the new law from the perspectives of system governance, legislative integration, strict law enforcement, legal supervision and judicial protection.

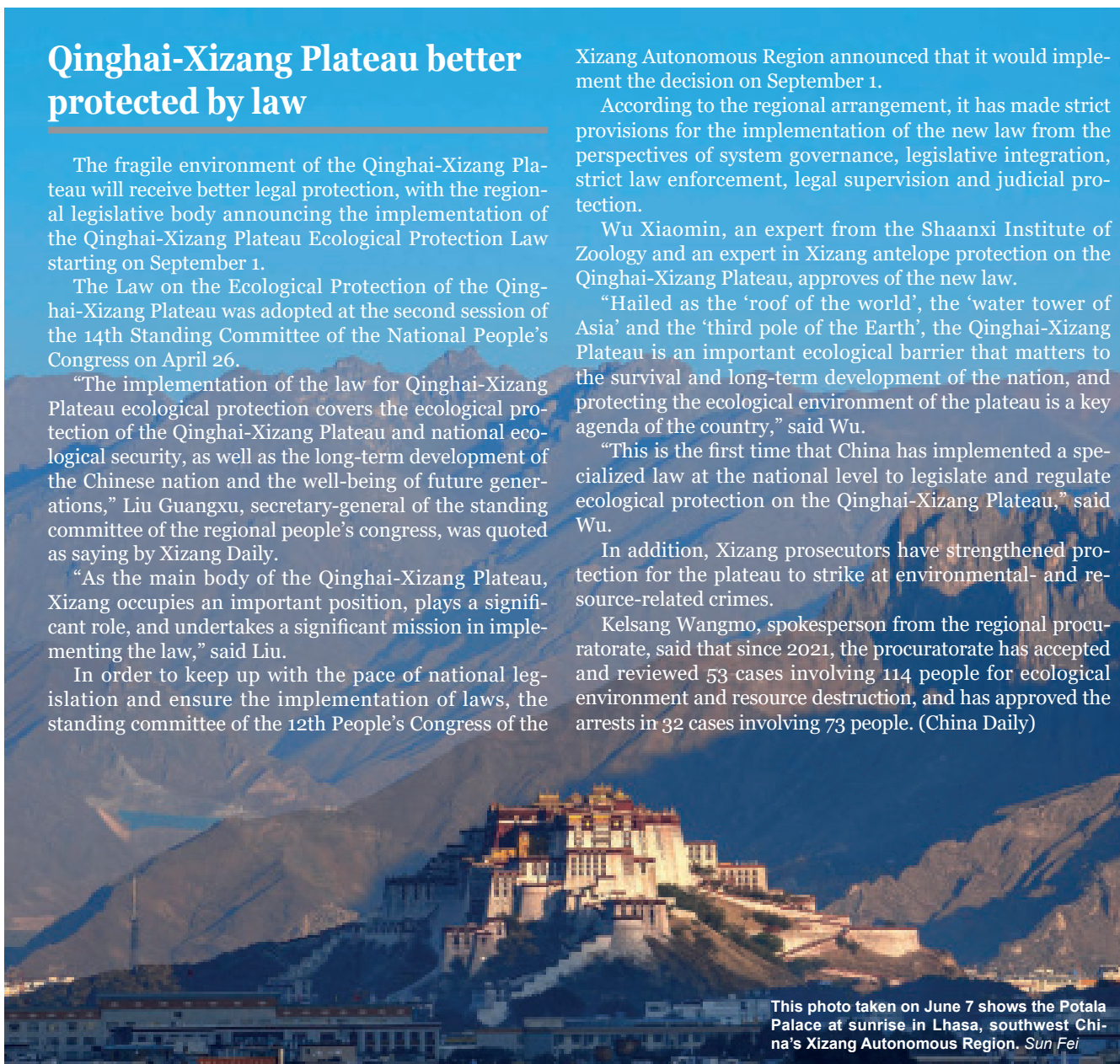
Wu Xiaomin, an expert from the Shaanxi Institute of Zoology and an expert in Xizang antelope protection on the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, approves of the new law.

"Hailed as the 'roof of the world', the 'water tower of Asia' and the 'third pole of the Earth', the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau is an important ecological barrier that matters to the survival and long-term development of the nation, and protecting the ecological environment of the plateau is a key agenda of the country," said Wu.

"This is the first time that China has implemented a specialized law at the national level to legislate and regulate ecological protection on the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau," said Wu.

In addition, Xizang prosecutors have strengthened protection for the plateau to strike at environmental- and resource-related crimes.

Kelsang Wangmo, spokesperson from the regional procuratorate, said that since 2021, the procuratorate has accepted and reviewed 53 cases involving 114 people for ecological environment and resource destruction, and has approved the arrests in 32 cases involving 73 people. (China Daily)



This photo taken on June 7 shows the Potala Palace at sunrise in Lhasa, southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region. Sun Fei



# Legislative progress helps safeguard environment

**O**ver the past decade, China has sought to expedite legislation aimed at protecting the ecological environment, the country's top legislature said.

August 15 marked China's first National Ecology Day, which was established at a session of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress, the top legislature, in late June.

China has in place more than 30 laws, over 100 sets of administrative regulations and many local regulations focused on eco-environmental protection. These efforts contribute to building sound ecological conservation systems, according to the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee.

The legislation has increased penalties for violations of relevant laws and regulations, the top legislature said.

What makes August 15 special is that on that day in 2005, President Xi Jinping, then Party chief of Zhejiang Province, first put forward the concept of "green is gold," meaning lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, while visiting Anji County in the province, according to Xu Anbiao, deputy head of the NPC Standing Committee's Legislative Affairs Commission.

The assertion was a core idea of Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization.

Ecological civilization is a concept promoted by President Xi for balanced and sustainable development that features harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.



The Three Gorges of the Yangtze River. VCG

## The establishment of National Ecology Day would enhance ecological understanding among the public and help the nation better participate in global environment and climate governance.

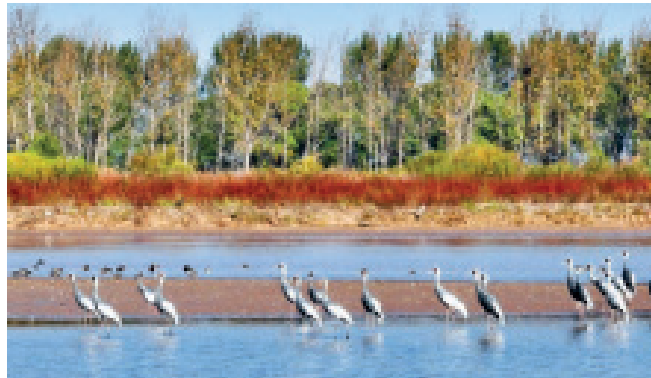
Xu said that the establishment of National Ecology Day would enhance ecological understanding among the public and help the nation better participate in global environment and climate governance.

This in turn would promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, he added.

The top legislature has strengthened environmental protection and ecological conservation by formulating and amending laws.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, the NPC Standing Committee has formulated and revised 19 laws concerning the environment and ecology, with one piece of legislation being reviewed, Xu said.

In April, the committee adopted a law on ecological con-



This photo taken on October 18, 2022 shows white-naped cranes at the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve in east China's Shandong Province. Yang Bin

servation for the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, known as “the roof of the world,” to protect its fragile ecosystem. It is a new addition to China’s laws for special regions, following the enactment of the Yangtze River Protection Law in 2020, and the Yellow River Protection Law and the Black Soil Protection Law last year.

To curb pollution in various areas, the committee adopted the Soil Pollution Prevention and Control Law in 2018, and passed the Noise Pollution Prevention and Control Law in 2021.

More importantly, ecological civilization was upheld as a basic principle when the NPC amended the Constitution in March 2018.

While constantly filling the gaps in legislation, it also amended laws on wildlife protection and the prevention of pollution in water sources and forests to meet new demands in those regards.

“We fully eliminated content inconsistent with the construction of an ecological civilization in existing laws, in order to ensure the uniformity and effectiveness of legal documents in the fight against pollution,” Xu said.

The country’s laws and administrative regulations involving the environment and ecology “have laid a solid legislative foundation for the ecological civilization”, he added.

During the formulation and amendment of the laws, many residents, especially those engaged in environmental protection, have shared their ideas and offered their suggestions.

“For instance, when we formulated the Yellow River Protection Law, we contacted villagers living in the upper, middle and lower reaches of the basin in Lintao County, Gansu Province, to collect legislative opinions via video link,” said Sun Zhenping, head of the commission’s office.

“During the online communication, we learned what environmental difficulties those villagers were eager to solve and knew what ecological measures should be taken urgently from their opinions,” he said, adding that five pieces of advice were accepted and written into the final version of the law.

The increasingly improved legislative items have given a clear direction for judicial authorities in ecological resource utilization, environmental remediation and fighting polluters.

Data released in early August by the Supreme People’s Court, the country’s top court, showed that Chinese courts heard 110,000 environmental and ecological cases from January to June, down 7.9 percent year-on-year. (China Daily) ■

# Seminar offers opportunities for inter-parliamentary exchanges

By Lu Yan

**T**he Kubuqi Desert in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was once known as the Sea of Death due to desertification caused by indiscriminate and uncontrolled slashing and grazing. The situation also threatened the lives of the local community as well as business activities.

Now it has over 6,000 square km covered in green and the number of its flora and fauna species have grown from 100 to more than 530. The income of the people in the desert area has also increased, and their quality of life has greatly improved.

The changes took place thanks to China's strict legal sys-

tem to protect the ecological environment. There are over 30 laws, 100 regulations and over 1,000 local rules on ecological and environmental protection in China.

"An ecological and environmental protection legal system has been established, targeting various pollution factors, as well as covering various natural ecosystems such as mountains, rivers, forests, fields, lakes, grasses and sands. This provides legal support for strengthening ecological and environmental protection," Zhu Yongguan, a member of the National People's Congress (NPC) Environment Protection and Resources Conservation Committee, said while introducing



The 2023 Interregional Seminar on the Achievement of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries is held in Beijing, capital of China, on July 6.  
Wang Ruoxin

legislation and supervision in the field of environmental protection to senior parliamentary officials attending the 2023 Interregional Seminar on the Achievement of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries held by the NPC and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on July 6-15.

Also known as the Fifth Seminar for Parliaments of Developing Countries, the theme was, “Stronger Inter-Parliamentary Exchanges for Better Achievement of the SDGs.” Twenty-nine senior parliamentarians and officials from nine countries, including Cambodia, Guyana, Honduras, Kiribati, Laos, the Maldives, South Africa, Suriname and Thailand, gathered in China to enhance exchanges and learn from each other’s development.

“We conserve the ecosystem not only for the sake of the environment but also to promote sustainable development. Our goal is to drive economic prosperity from ecosystem conservation, embodying the concept of Green is Gold. By effectively preserving the ecosystem, we can translate this into wealth and improved wellbeing,” Zhu, also a professor at the Institute of Urban Environment of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, added.

“Having learned about China’s laws, regulations and policy measures in protecting the environment and reducing carbon emissions, I am very inspired and hope that both sides can further enhance cooperation in this field in the future,” Linda Frances Donaire Portilho, Honduran Congresswoman, Pro Secretary II, said.

Protecting the environment is only one of the countless experiences that China can share with the rest of the world. With over 1.4 billion people moving toward modernization in a peaceful and developmental way, China will surely bring stronger driving forces and broader opportunities to world economic growth, Shohrat Zakir, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, said at the opening ceremony of the seminar, adding that China is ready to work with other developing countries to build consensus on development, promote world economic recovery and sustainable development, and enhance exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations via cooperation between legislative bodies.

IPU general secretary Martin Chungong said sustainable development transcends political boundaries, while China’s achievements serve as an inspiring model for global collaboration.

### People-centered philosophy

After the three-day activity in Beijing, the delegation visited Kunming in Yunnan Province, Nanjing and Suzhou in Jiangsu Province, and Shanghai to develop an in-depth understanding of whole-process people’s democracy and the practical experience of Chinese modernization.

In Kunshan of Suzhou, delegations visited the Kunshan Legislative Outreach Office of the Legislative Affairs Commission. These offices are directly associated with the standing committees of the people’s congresses at all levels. People can express their expectations for future laws and offer relevant suggestions there. Over the past two years, the Kunshan Legislative Outreach Office has participated in the solicitation of opinions for 43 legislative drafts and plans, submitting 2,057 suggestions, with 198 suggestions being recognized and adopted.



The delegation of the 5th Seminar for Parliaments of Developing Countries visit the Kunshan Legislative Outreach Office of Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee in Kunshan City, east China’s Jiangsu Province, on July 15.



Delegators from the 5th Seminar for Parliaments of Developing Countries are greeted by a traditional folk dance and enjoy themselves in southwest China’s Yunnan Province. Zhang Andi

**The sustainable development transcends political boundaries, while China’s achievements serve as an inspiring model for global collaboration, IPU general secretary Martin Chungong said.**

After learning about the system, Doris Eunice Dlakude, deputy chief whip of the Majority Party in South Africa’s Parliament, said she was greatly impressed by the people-centered approach, a philosophy she believes South Africa can adopt. “We must consult the people. They must be involved in improving their own lives and voice what changes they want to see,” she said. Drawing parallels between China’s grassroots engagement and South Africa’s governing party’s strategy, she expressed admiration for the cascade of policy discussions in China, from the grassroots level to national conferences.

Echoing Dlakude, Oneidge Walrond, Minister of Tourism,

Industry and Commerce of Guyana, said that “China’s unique approach to governance” stood out for her. “The government reaches down to the grassroots, and likewise, the grassroots can reach the central government,” she stated, adding that a people-centered philosophy is a catalyst for poverty reduction and inclusivity. “This approach encourages everyone to benefit from the nation’s prosperity,” she noted.

## Fruitful trips

Seeing is better than hearing, thus international guests went to grassroots legislative outreach offices to have face-to-face exchanges with local NPC deputies, observe the practice of Chinese democracy at the grassroots level, see for themselves what exactly is China’s democracy and rule of law, and listen to the voices of the Chinese people.

For example, in Taicang of Jiangsu, Chu Feng, a deputy to the 14th NPC and a portal crane driver at Taicang Wanfang International Terminal Co. Ltd., shared his experience of actively engaging in in-depth exchanges with the people, participating in various NPC work and providing suggestions to solve the difficulties faced by frontline industrial workers like himself, as well as other urgent and difficult problems faced by the people around him.

In Beijing, Chen Hongzhi, director of the standing committee of the Chaoyang district people’s congress, shared the story of how Fan Qiufeng, a centenarian, participated in the election of NPC deputies. Chen also introduced that women deputies account for 40.7 percent of the total number of deputies to the district people’s congress, while deputies from

ethnic minority groups account for 8.2 percent. A total of 32 opinions and suggestions were collected for the draft of the law on the prevention and control of noise pollution, which took effect in June 2022, and 25 of them were submitted to the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee.

“The basic criteria of democracy lie in whether the people are the masters of the country. We must consider not only whether the people have the right to vote, but also whether they have the right to broad participation,” Chen said.

## Potential for cooperation

During the trips and discussions, parliamentarians from different countries expressed their vision for future collaborations with China.

Wang Chuanrui, a member of the National Assembly of Suriname, discussed the potential of agricultural cooperation with China, emphasizing collaboration under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative as a pathway to win-win growth.

“History has indeed validated the positive role of the Belt and Road. In the present context, the multilateral development advocated by the Belt and Road Initiative is exactly what developing countries need,” he said.

Moosa Siraj, a member of the People’s Majlis of Maldives, stressed the promising potential of investments in the tourism sector, which he said would yield significant economic benefits and enhance the wellbeing of the Maldivian people. ■



Parliamentarians from nine countries attend the opening ceremony of the 2023 Interregional Seminar on the Achievement of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on July 6.

# Malaysia looks to learn from China's development

By Wang Qingyun

Malaysia, which is enjoying new opportunities for growth by participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, looks forward to learning more from the success of China's development over the past decades, said Johari bin Abdul, speaker of Malaysia's Dewan Rakyat, the lower house of parliament.

For Malaysia, a country abounding with rivers, the BRI serves as "another river" to promote the country's transportation and boost local economy, Johari said.

He cited the construction of the East Coast Rail Link, or ECRL, which is undertaken by China Communications Construction Company, to make his case.

Stretching along the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, the more than 600-kilometer railway is a flagship project of BRI cooperation.

The railway is expected to run through the states of Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang and connect Port Klang on the west coast.

"The east coast of the peninsula has been comparatively not as advanced as the west coast because of the absence of good roads ... With the introduction of the ECRL, we believe there will be more commercial and tourism activities," Johari said.

The project is now 50 percent completed, and its full completion "is going to be on time", the Dewan Rakyat speaker said in an interview with China Daily during his weeklong visit to China that concluded on September 28.

Johari attended the opening ceremony of the Asian Games in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, and held talks with Zhao Leji, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, in Beijing.

Malaysia is among the first countries to have supported and joined the BRI. The country's prime minister attended both the first and second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in Beijing in 2017 and 2019.

Speaking of Malaysia's relations with China, Johari said he is confident that bilateral ties will continue to develop with a strong momentum.

## Ties celebrated

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Malaysia, and the two countries will witness the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations next year.

"We believe in each other. We trust each other," Johari emphasized. "That trust grows stronger every day. And we're not turning back," Johari said.

He said his country hopes to strengthen cooperation



People visit the booth of Malaysia during the 20th China-ASEAN Expo at Nanning International Convention and Exhibition Center in Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on September 19. Zhang Ailin

## Malaysia is among the first countries to have supported and joined the BRI.

with China in the renewable energy sector to tackle climate change.

Another area of bilateral cooperation that "could be put high on the agenda" is food security, Johari said, adding that Malaysia expects to work more closely with China over the development of artificial intelligence.

Malaysia looks forward to nurturing more future leaders and entrepreneurs in these three sectors by sending more of its students to study in China, he said.

Johari also spoke highly of China's drive to eradicate absolute poverty. The fact that nearly 800 million people in China were lifted out of poverty within five decades "is something that is unthinkable."

Poverty reduction in China was pressed ahead with "a lot of courage," Johari said, adding that China's efforts to pursue balanced growth among different regions are an experience worth learning from. (China Daily) ■



Inter-Parliamentary Union president Duarte Pacheco leads a group to visit a room for courtyard discussions, a popular and pragmatic grassroots practice of democratic consultation in China, in Caochang Sitiao Hutong in Qianmen Subdistrict, Dongcheng District, Beijing, capital of China, on September 11. (Courtesy of the Working Commission of Qianmen Subdistrict in Dongcheng District People's Congress Standing Committee)

# International guests learn about how China's democracy works

By Lu Yan

**I**n a courtyard in Caochang Sitiao Hutong, Dongcheng District in Beijing, residents in the community meet regularly in a roughly 20-square-meter room in a courtyard, discussing what's going on in the community and what should be done to improve people's livelihoods. As trivial as the topics seem to be, for example, installing streetlamps along the path to the public toilets, such issues concern people's everyday lives. In the courtyard meetings, they reach a consensus through discussions and solve problems step by step.

Such neighborhood decision-making bodies symbolize China's whole-process people's democracy at the most local level. There are more than 3,100 courtyard meeting rooms in Beijing and similar models operate in other parts of the country, collecting public wisdom and empowering ordinary

people to engage in consultations, decision-making, management and oversight.

On September 11, 2023, the courtyard meeting room in Caochang Sitiao Hutong welcomed several special guests: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) president Duarte Pacheco, president of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians Cynthia López Castro, president of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace Ahmed Al Jarwan and secretary general Zoran Ilievski. They gathered to have discussions and exchanges on the practice of the system of people's congresses in China and the philosophy of whole-process people's democracy at the grassroots level.

Li Caixian, a resident who has lived in the community for almost three decades, introduced in detail to the international guests how the courtyard meeting system works. "Usually,



Groups go to Sanlihe River and the surrounding area on September 11 to learn about the situation on channel dredging and obstacles clearing, river management, reconstruction of the old city, etc. (Courtesy of the Working Commission of Qianmen Subdistrict in Dongcheng District People's Congress Standing Committee)

we neighbors sit together and listen to everyone's thoughts. If anyone encounters any difficulties or issues, they can come to our small meeting room to discuss it," Li said.

For example, some residents had previously parked their scooters in a disorderly manner, affecting pedestrians and causing safety hazards. To solve the issue, the community-level Communist Party of China organization that serves the community and administers community issues planned to build parking spaces for people's scooters. To fully take into consideration the opinions and suggestions of the neighbors, multiple rounds of discussions and consultations were conducted in the courtyard meeting room. The decisions on the location, building methods and maintenance of the parking lots were made according to the public consensus reached during these meetings.

Due to China's huge population and vast territory, there is great diversity in community-level governance. China applies a system of community-level self-governance represented by villagers' autonomy, urban residents' autonomy and employee congresses.

Villagers and urban residents exercise self-governance. Under the leadership of community-level Party organizations, residents in China's rural villages and urban communities establish villagers' committees and residents' committees, and directly exercise their right to handle public affairs and services in the residential areas to which they belong. For example, they hold elections, where they elect villagers' and

residents' committees; discuss and decide on their own governance rules, codes of conduct and self-regulation, running their affairs accordingly.

While commending China's whole-process people's democracy, Pacheco stated that the slogan of the IPU is "For democracy. For everyone." Established in 1889, the IPU facilitates parliamentary diplomacy and empowers parliaments and parliamentarians to promote peace, democracy and sustainable development around the world.

After learning about China's democratic system, Pacheco asked, "How do deputies to the people's congresses at various levels represent the interests of the people in China?"

Fully representative of the people, deputies to people's congresses come from all regions, ethnic groups, sectors and social groups, and function at the national, provincial, city, county and township levels.

"The most important thing is to be a voice for the people," Wang Rui, a deputy to the people's congress of Dongcheng District in Beijing, answered. Working in the entertainment industry, she has maintained close contact with people through research and talks. When the Beijing municipal government was soliciting opinions on its urban renewal regulations and water conservation regulations, she submitted suggestions reflecting issues of public concern such as outworn water pipes. Her suggestions were eventually adopted at the municipal level. ■



A resident with impaired hearing communicates with a government employee at the Civic Center in Honggutan District in Nanchang City, southeast China's Jiangxi Province, on December 2, 2022. *Peng Zhaozhi*

# Life made easier for those facing difficulties

Barrier-free law brings significant benefits for the blind, visually impaired, among others

By Cao Yin

**M**ore large-font textbooks are to be published and offered to visually impaired students, thanks to efforts made by national lawmaker Wang Yongcheng, who is blind.

Wang, a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, traveled to Beijing from Fujian Province in March to attend the first session of the 14th NPC, where he suggested the nation strengthen the publication and supply of such textbooks to meet students' needs.

He offered this advice after finding that many students

with visual impairments were still studying from the same textbooks in schools as those with good eyesight.

On June 28, a law on a barrier-free living environment was adopted by the NPC Standing Committee, which included Wang's advice.

Taking effect on September 1, the law makes it clear that China encourages the compilation and publication of textbooks in Braille or in versions for those with poor vision to provide better reading conditions for blind or visually challenged students.

Recalling the suggestion he made in March, Wang, who is vice-chairman of the China Association of the Blind, said, “The font size, colors and artwork in the textbooks currently in use can easily cause visual fatigue, meaning that the sight of visually impaired young people will worsen.”

“To help resolve the problem and provide these people with a better platform for their voices to be heard, I submitted the suggestion to the top legislature.”

The NPC paid great attention to the suggestion. It asked members of its Standing Committee’s Legislative Affairs Commission to visit Wang in May to learn more about his ideas to optimize measures for the visually impaired. They also collected opinions on drawing up a law for a barrier-free living environment.

While providing special rules for children with visionary disabilities, the 72-article law also requires product manufacturers, especially those making food and drugs, to provide instructions in Braille or large fonts to better serve visually impaired and senior citizens.

Official data show that by the end of 2021, there were 85 million people in China with disabilities, and 267 million residents who were 60 or older.

Shi Hong, an official from the NPC Standing Committee’s Legislative Affairs Commission, said, “We initially formulated the law mainly to provide more convenience for the elderly and the disabled by giving them easier access to daily life.”

“But during the formulation process, we took everyone into consideration to ensure they could benefit from the legislation, as we will all grow old, or face situations such as becoming pregnant or breaking a limb, in which we need accessible services.”

As a result, while many of the articles in the law highlight protection for the elderly and the disabled, everyone is covered by the legislation.

For example, the law requires industrial and information departments to urge enterprises to design and offer internet products and phone apps that are easier to use, as well as voice and offline services for those in need.

The legislation states that housing and urban-rural development agencies should further optimize the design of houses to prevent residents, especially the elderly and the disabled, from slipping in bathrooms and kitchens.

Shi said he hopes that China’s first law to focus on building a barrier-free living environment will benefit all groups of people.

## Broad participation

The law is aimed at responding to public concerns over constructing accessible facilities, Shi stressed, adding that drafting the legislation received widespread attention from various walks of life.

In addition to the suggestion made by Wang, the NPC deputy, more than 50,000 disabled and elderly residents gave their opinions during formulation of the law, Shi said.

Some people submitted suggestions to the NPC Standing Committee in person, or through its website or postal service, while others shared their ideas through local legislative outreach offices for collecting opinions, Shi added.

In 2015, the commission launched an initiative to help the public submit opinions on legislation directly to the top

## China’s first law to focus on building a barrier-free living environment will benefit all groups of people.

legislature. These legislative outreach offices, some of which located in communities and colleges, have since played a significant role in encouraging more people to take part in drawing up legislation for a barrier-free environment, Shi said.

Xie Renci, a 26-year-old amputee, was one of those who gave their opinions. She provided suggestions about the law through such an outreach office in Jianghai District, Jiangmen City, Guangdong Province.



A visually impaired person walks with her guide dog on the Qianmen street in Beijing, capital of China, on May 20. Li Xin

Losing a leg when she was 4 due to a traffic accident, Xie received a bachelor's degree in law at Southwest University of Political Science and Law in Chongqing in 2019. She is now a doctoral candidate studying disability law at Syracuse University in the United States.

She said she fully understands that some disabled people are reluctant to go out because of a lack of accessible facilities. Some injuries and deaths have resulted from a poor barrier-free environment, Xie added.

"I didn't want to go out when I studied in the hilly city of Chongqing, as it's inconvenient. I spent a lot of time going from my dormitory to a classroom, and there was no elevator in the six-floor teaching building," she said.

"Walking to the classroom took nearly all my strength. If I dragged along a suitcase or carried something, I became even more exhausted. I felt as though I didn't belong at that school and in Chongqing at such times, as those who built the facilities didn't seem to take people like me into consideration."

**The suggestions from various walks of life will not only contribute to law implementation, but also to improving the quality of life for all residents.**



A staff member (R) communicates with a customer using sign language in a coffee store which is run by seven hearing-impaired persons in Shanghai, east China, on August 10. Li Xinyi

Xie said such experiences prompted her to start researching the construction of accessible facilities and to continue studying disability law in the US.

When the draft law on building a barrier-free living environment was made public online in November, she received a WeChat message from a former student, saying that Xie had been invited by the Jianghai legislative outreach office to provide advice on legislation after it learned of her experience.

"I was so surprised. Legislators actually cared about and wanted to listen to my ideas and personal experience, which encouraged me and made me feel valued," Xie said.

After carefully reading the draft, she submitted her ideas to the Jianghai legislative outreach office online, saying that some place definitions, such as "residential building," "residential area," "public buildings," "urban roads" and "rural roads," were not clear enough, which would be confusing for law enforcement departments.

Xie also suggested that the top legislature specify who should pay for renovation work to be carried out at such locations.

Her opinions and suggestions were included in the final version of the law. Expressing her excitement, Xie said she would continue to provide advice on legislation concerning the disabled.

In addition to people in Jianghai, a number of residents offered advice on the law through legislative outreach offices in Tianjin, Shanghai and Shandong Province, or contacted the commission via video link.

Shi, from the Legislative Affairs Commission, said, "This broad participation — in person and online — shows that whole-process people's democracy has been implemented in legislation."

He added that the suggestions from various walks of life will not only contribute to law implementation, but also to improving the quality of life for all residents.

### Best example

In Beijing, Liao Juan, an associate professor at Capital Normal University's School of Management, said the law closely addresses the demands and expectations of the elderly and the disabled in terms of system design, establishing standards, and construction requirements.

She said the process of formulating the law is the best example of how the nation's top legislature responds to public needs.

To implement the law and make it work effectively, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said it will give stronger support to technological innovation in constructing accessible services.

The use of new technologies to guide the blind, along with voice control and speech recognition, will be encouraged, the ministry said, adding that it will also require enterprises to "bridge the digital gap" to ensure the elderly and disabled enjoy technological convenience.

The China Disabled Persons' Federation has promised to organize visits to inspect functions of accessible facilities and provide feedback to relevant departments.

The federation also said it will compile and publish more books in Braille and provide versions for those with poor vision. ■



A group of foreign diplomats visit the ancient city of Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on August 17. *Gao Han*

# Xinjiang is worth recommending to the world: foreign diplomats

A group of diplomats from nine countries, including Fiji, Mongolia and Seychelles, visited northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region from August 14 to 19 to discover the beauty of this stunning part of China.

In six days, they visited several iconic sites in Xinjiang, including the International Grand Bazaar in Urumqi, the World Heritage Site of Tianchi Lake, the Grape Valley in Turpan and the ancient city of Kashgar.

Xinjiang is a wonderful place with majestic scenery,

**Ben Yacoub Adel said he could feel the optimism and friendliness of the people of Xinjiang, both in their homes and in the streets.**

friendly residents and fully protected traditional culture, and it is worth recommending to the whole world, the diplomats concluded.

## Majestic scenery

Crystal Gale P. Dampil, a diplomat from the Philippines, said this was her first trip to Xinjiang, as she grew excited looking out the plane window at the beautiful scenery below.

Anne Lafortune, Ambassador of Seychelles to China, said Tianchi Lake is one of the most beautiful places she has ever seen, and she will happily act as an “ambassador” for Xinjiang, recommending it to her friends.

Lafortune said she looks forward to more exchanges between the two countries in the future so that more tourists from Seychelles can visit Xinjiang.

She was also deeply impressed by the sweetness of the fruit grown in Xinjiang, adding that it will surely be one of the enduring memories of her life, she said.

While visiting the ancient city of Kashgar, Tuvshin Badral, Mongolia’s Ambassador to China, watched the making of nang, a flatbread typical of the region. He said that Xinjiang’s food is varied and tastes great, adding that he hopes the two countries will have more food and cultur-



A foreign diplomat (L) and a staff member present locally grown fruits while visiting the Grape Valley in Turpan, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on August 15. Gao Han



A foreign diplomat (R) plays a traditional music instrument with a local resident while visiting a Buddhist grottoes site in Turpan, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on August 15. Gao Han



al exchanges in the future.

## Friendly people

While visiting Turpan, Ben Yacoub Adel, a counselor with the Tunisian Embassy in China, said he could feel the optimism and friendliness of the people of Xinjiang, both in their homes and in the streets.

In the ancient city of Kashgar, Luis Lopez, an Ecuadorian diplomat in China, was invited to dance with a young boy by the roadside. Their dancing attracted many tourists, who gathered around and took photos.

Lopez said that the people in Kashgar are full of energy and their dancing is very distinctive. He said he could see many fine qualities of Chinese culture in the peaceful and happy lives of the local people of all ethnic groups.

Wherever the group went in Xinjiang, they were warmly welcomed by local residents, said Jong Hyon U, a minister from the Embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in China.

## Fully protected culture

The delegation also visited the Xinjiang Museum, which boasts a collection of precious artifacts unearthed in the region. The artifacts capture the precious moments of history and the museum has preserved them well, commented Manasa R. Tagicakibau, Fiji's Ambassador to China.

During a visit to a Buddhist grottoes site in Turpan, the group hailed China's efforts on protecting cultural heritage. Tuvshin Badral of Mongolia said the grottoes, built 1,000 years ago, are milestones of history, incorporating

religions and cultures, and China's experience in the preservation of cultural relics is worth learning from.

The delegation also visited a village known for making ethnic musical instruments for over 150 years. Keri Abrams, a diplomat of Guyana in China, said she truly felt the charm of intangible cultural heritage as she watched the traditional cultural program performed with unique Chinese instruments. China's efforts to protect and develop cultures deserve praise, she said.

Thanks to the Chinese government's inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage, the traditional music and the exquisite instruments have been well preserved, said Manasa R. Tagicakibau of Fiji, adding that he hopes this valuable experience will be used as a point of reference around the world. (Xinhua) ■



# Xinjiang teenager shifts from sheep grazing to robot racing

**R**ozimemet Turghun has made an incredible journey in just two years, transforming from a sheepherder to a robotics enthusiast competing on the national vocational skills stage.

Representing his hometown team from Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, the 18-year-old stood among more than 4,000 contestants at the second Vocational Skills Competition, which closed September 19 in north China's Tianjin municipality.

Although he didn't secure a medal in the mobile robotics category, his enthusiasm did not waver.

"While there's still some ground to cover compared to the top-notch participants, I pushed through and successfully completed the entire event, which was thrilling," Rozimemet Turghun said.

Born in Aktokay Village in Xinjiang's Aksu prefecture, Rozimemet Turghun had never left his rural upbringing until he entered Aksu Technical College two years ago.

"My parents made a living from herding and I used to accompany them to the mountains to tend to the sheep," he said, adding that he couldn't have imagined leaving this remote village and leading a different life from his parents back then.

During his leisure hours, he developed a penchant for tinkering with household electronics. Even without formal instruction, he could methodically troubleshoot and repair electronic devices like lamps and radios. After completing middle school, he enrolled in Aksu Technical College.

The turnaround came in March 2022 when Zhao Pengfei, vice dean of the electrical and mechanical engineering department, started assembling a team for a skills competition.

Rozimemet Turghun's remarkable hands-on skills caught Zhao's eye during the selection process. He was handpicked to join the team, focusing on technologies related to industrial robot applications.

"I initially thought that a middle school graduate might have trouble understanding the knowledge needed for the competition. However, Rozimemet Turghun quickly followed teachers' instructions and could put them into practice," Zhao said.

"His most valuable trait is his tenacity," Zhao added.

The competition involved programming industrial robots, a formidable challenge for someone with little computer experience. Undaunted, Rozimemet Turghun acquired the essential skills, memorized the position of each component and practiced each assembly step day and night.

In April, Rozimemet Turghun and his teammate Peng Ruixue took their inaugural steps onto the competition field.

They clinched first place in the mobile robotics category at a prefectural vocational skills competition.

A month later, they secured a bronze medal during the Xinjiang tryout for the second Vocational Skills Competition. He astonished everyone by completing the disassembly and assembly of a mobile robot in just 2 hours and 12 minutes, an achievement beyond his wildest dreams just two months before.

China has long put vocational education high on its policy agenda. According to the education ministry, secondary and higher vocational schools in China produce approximately 10 million graduates annually. This consistent supply of skilled workforce has helped staff up production lines nationwide.

"With the advancement of technology and upgrades in manufacturing equipment, the complexity of electrical devices is increasing, while the precision required for installation and debugging is also higher," Zhao said. "Skilled talents are in greater demand than ever."

Zhao aspires to introduce cutting-edge technologies from the competition to remote classrooms to benefit more students in Xinjiang.

As the countdown reached zero on the day of the competition in Tianjin, Rozimemet Turghun couldn't tear his eyes away from the robots on the field. He lingered, reluctant to leave the grounds.

For him, each competition has not only honed his skills but has also shaped his future. "When I herded sheep as a child, I never thought about the future. Now I hope to refine my skills and step onto even broader stages." (Xinhua) ■



This photo taken on September 16 shows contestants taking part in the mobile robotics event at the second Vocational Skills Competition held in north China's Tianjin Municipality. Li Ran



# Ten years on, the BRI remains an important contributor to global development

By Ma Miaomiao

The BRI has achieved fruitful outcomes in promoting policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds between China and its partners

A worker oversees container operations at Khorgas Railway Station in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, northwest China, on September 6. Zhao Ge

**S**mooth and comfortable—that’s Indonesian President Joko Widodo’s description of his train-taking experience on a super-sleek, silver-bodied high-speed train decorated with a flash of red, after arriving at Padalarang Station in West Java Province, Indonesia, on September 13.

The train, which had departed from Halim Station in Jakarta, ran at full speed on the 142-km Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway—which connects Indonesia’s capital and the country’s fourth largest city Bandung, with a design speed of 350 km per hour. Thanks to these high-speed trains, travel time between the two cities will be cut from more than three hours to around 40 minutes.

It is the first overseas high-speed railway project to fully use Chinese railway systems, technology and industrial components, and will be the first high-speed railway in Indonesia and Southeast Asia at large.

The railway, which Widodo said would officially start commercial operation in early October, stands as a flagship project and a shining example of the infrastructure connectivity achieved through the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

In September 2013, during a speech at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan, Chinese President Xi Jinping took the audience back in time 2,100 years when Zhang Qian, a diplomat of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), was dispatched to Central Asia with a mission of peace and friendship and opened a Silk Road that then took Chinese silk, tea and porcelain to other parts of the world and brought back spices, glassware, furs, fruits and precious stones.

“Today, as I stand here and look back at that era in history, I can almost hear the camel bells echoing in the mountains and see the wisps of smoke rising from the desert,” Xi said.

But it was never a speech about nostalgia. Instead, Xi drew inspiration from the successful trade routes of the ancient Silk Road and proposed the idea of building a Silk Road Economic Belt. This, along with the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road proposed by him in Indonesia later that same year, went on to form the BRI which aims to boost connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes.

In the past decade, the initiative has achieved fruitful outcomes in promoting policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds between China and its partners.

## Greater connectivity

Traditional camel caravans along the Silk Road now have been replaced by modern freight trains.

Thirty-five-year-old Dong Yan is one of the drivers in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in northwest China. When he landed the job in 2013, he and his colleagues were responsible for driving westbound international freight trains from Urumqi to the region’s inland port of Alataw Pass.

Following the proposal of the BRI that same year, the number of trains from China to Central Asia, Europe and other countries has greatly increased. “I have seen higher speeds, more quantity and more abundance—in terms of goods,” Dong said. He has, in the past decade, driven more than 850 freight trains and traveled some 250,000 km from Urumqi to



Chinese instructor Jiang Liping (R) and apprentice Horace Owiti walk past a train carriage on the Mombasa-Nairobi railway in Nairobi, Kenya, on May 23. Wang Guansen

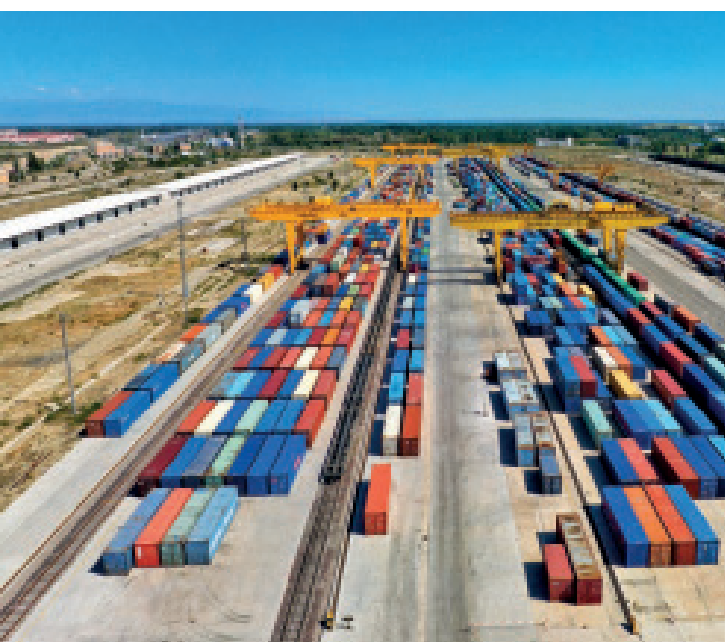
**Traditional camel caravans along the Silk Road now have been replaced by modern freight trains.**

Alataw Pass and Khorgas, another border port in Xinjiang, equivalent to more than six times around the Earth.

Since 2013, some 77,000 China-Europe freight train trips have been made, providing services for 217 cities in 25 European countries, Cong Liang, deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), China’s national economic planner, said on September 15 at the China-Europe Railway Express Cooperation Forum in Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province, adding that those freight trains have transported 7.31 million twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) containers of goods worth a total of \$340 billion. TEU is an



This aerial photo taken on September 6 shows a view of the Horgos Railway Port in Horgos, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Zhao Ge



inexact unit of cargo capacity, often used for container ships and container ports.

“With the BRI, China promotes infrastructure development and connectivity across continents, offering a chance for countries to enhance their trade networks and expand their economic potential,” Seun Sam, a policy analyst at the Royal Academy of Cambodia, told Xinhua News Agency.

The import and export of goods between China and BRI partners in the 10-year period increased by an average of 8.6 percent annually, Zheng Shanjie, head of the NDRC, said in August, adding that their cumulative two-way investment has exceeded \$270 billion.

The logic behind the initiative is to turn many of the seemingly marginal areas around the world into pivots through connectivity, to form a global network where every participating country can enjoy shared benefits, Chen Wenling, chief economist at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said.

In other directions, the 1,035-km China-Laos Railway, which links the Lao capital of Vientiane with Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province in southwest China, has generated enormous advantages since its launch in December 2021.

It has delivered 19 million passenger trips and 24 million tons of freight, with its cross-border cargo transport covering over 10 countries and regions. The railway has already dovetailed the BRI with Laos’ strategy to convert itself from a landlocked country to a land-linked hub on the Indochina Peninsula.

## Combined construction

As of June, 2023, China had signed more than 200 Belt and Road cooperation documents with 152 countries and 32 international organizations, covering 83 percent of the countries with which China has established diplomatic relations.

According to a 2019 World Bank report, with moderate assumptions on BRI investment, the simulation results indicate a 1.3-percent in global GDP by 2030, accompanied by a 5-percent boost to global trade.

GDP is the total market value of goods and services produced by a country’s economy during a specific time frame and measures the health of national and global economies. GDP growth signals a positive economic outlook, whereas a decline may forebode a recession.

With wind turbines spinning, highways stretching forward and seaports operating around the clock, BRI projects from the Mediterranean to the Baltic have displayed vim and vigor.

Take the example of Greece’s Piraeus Port. After China COSCO Shipping took over management of the decaying chief sea port of Athens, which in 2010 found itself on the verge of bankruptcy, it has been transformed into a hub of maritime transportation between Asia, Europe and Africa.

Container throughput has grown from 880,000 TEUs in 2010 to over 5 million TEUs today, making it a leading port in the Mediterranean. This has, in turn, directly created over 3,000 job opportunities for the local community and indirectly generated more than 10,000 additional jobs, Xiao Junzheng, Chinese ambassador to Greece, told English-language Chinese newspaper Global Times.

The New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor is another flagship project under the initiative. Launched in 2017, it’s



Indonesian President Joko Widodo sits in the cabin of a high-speed electric multiple unit train for the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway, a landmark project under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, in Indonesia, on September 13. Xu Qin

## The initiative has become a public good, contributing not only to China's development but also to the modernization of the world at large, Julio Rios said.

a trade and logistics passage that was jointly built by provincial-level regions in west China and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In the first half of this year, the number of cross-border rail-sea intermodal trains reached 4,510, up 9 percent year on year. International railroad trains totaled 4,091, an increase of 18.51 percent, according to Xinhua.

The corridor also allows for Southeast Asian specialties such as Lao sticky rice, Thai durian, Vietnamese balsa fish and Cambodian bananas to enter the Chinese market more quickly.

The BRI is widely popular among developing countries, Julio Rios, a Spanish China expert, told Xinhua. The initiative has become a public good, contributing not only to China's development but also to the modernization of the world at large, he added.

A recent report by the Chinese Embassy in Bangladesh shows that the initiative will help the South Asian country's real GDP grow by at least 2.1 percent, generate an additional 2.5 percent to 5.1 percent of employment and decrease extreme poverty by 1.3 percent.

"As we have seen over the past few years, the BRI has changed the landscape of Bangladesh," Bangladeshi Minister of Commerce Tipu Munshi said in his message to the report, adding that Chinese investment in the country's power sector has enabled Bangladesh to achieve 100 percent electricity coverage.

According to the report, depending on the specific scenarios considered, the BRI projects are anticipated to create an additional 1.8 to 3.6 million employment opportunities in the country.

M.A. Mannan, Bangladeshi Minister of Planning, with his ministry overseeing the financial policies of the Bangladeshi government, said in his message that his country, as a member of the BRI global cooperation alliance of China, has already started benefiting from the initiative, including China's financial investment and contractual construction obligations.

### Common expansion

The 2019 World Bank report further estimated that the full implementation of BRI transportation projects could increase global income by 0.7 percent to 2.9 percent by 2030, lifting 7.6 million people out of extreme poverty and 32 million out of moderate poverty worldwide.

Take the example of Angola on the African continent. The country has long suffered inadequate access to safe drinking water, increasing the risk of spreading infectious diseases like cholera and dysentery. In June 2022, the China Railway 20th Bureau Group Angola International Co. finished the construction of a water supply project in the northwestern province of Cabinda.

"It used to be a long walk to the well to fetch water, and this was a grueling task," a local resident called Adriano told Xinhua, adding that more than 400 households in his community had been impacted by the water scarcity for decades.

"Now, the water pipe is connected to our doorstep, and we have clean and hygienic tap water at our disposal every day," he added.

The project comprises 74 centralized water supply points, covering 24,000 households or 92 percent of the province's residential communities, Zhu Qihui, head of the company, said.

"Angola is not short of water, but the water resources are not used efficiently. Thanks to the Chinese companies, the situation is improving," Angolan Minister of Economy and Planning Mário Augusto Caetano João said, adding that Chinese companies have brought in technology and knowhow to improve local livelihoods and spur sustainable development.

In addition to promoting infrastructure construction, the BRI should give equal importance to developing industries with comparative advantages in participating countries, and then transform these into the countries' competitive advantages, Justin Yifu Lin, a former World Bank chief economist and a professor at Peking University, said. Advantageous industries, through their development, can generate more job opportunities and benefit locals, he added.

The initiative promoted intraregional and interregional connectivity and cooperation among all participating countries in all areas, such as infrastructure, connectivity, economy, investment, finance and cultural exchange, Kin Phea, director general of the International Relations Institute of Cambodia, a think-tank under the Royal Academy of Cambodia, said.

"It is a new global force of peace, security, stability, development, prosperity and harmony," Phea added. (Beijing Review) ■

The third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation is held from October 17 to 18 in Beijing, capital of China. *Chen Bin*



# Liangping District *Chongqing*

*Hometown of Longevity Bamboo in China*

