

NPC



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National People's Congress of China

FURTHER DEEPENING COOPERATION AND MOVING FORWARD TO STEP UP THE BUILDING OF A CHINA-ARAB COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED FUTURE



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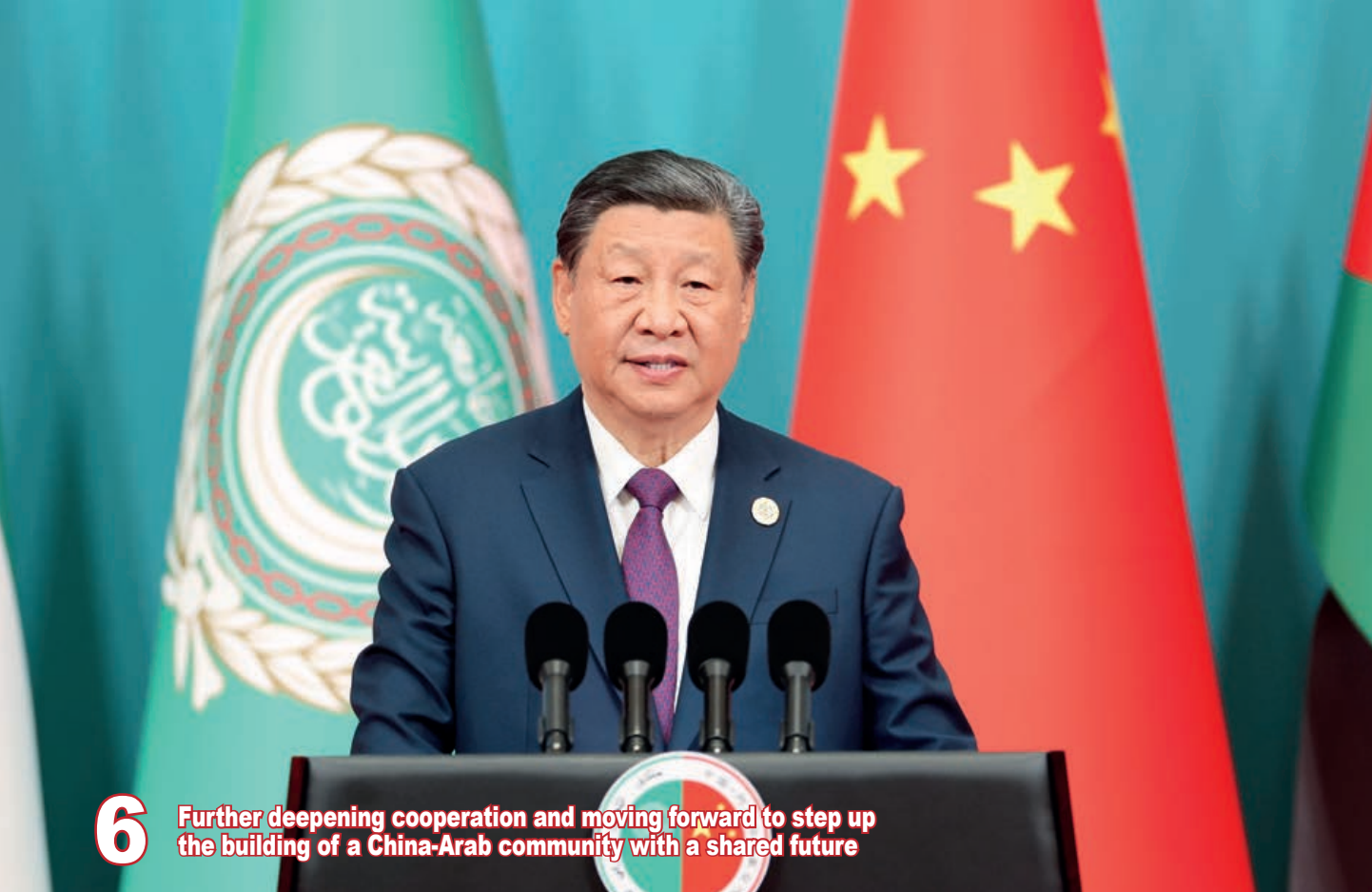


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This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the National People's Congress. This photo shows the former site of the Provisional Central Government of the Chinese Soviet Republic in Ruijin city, east China's Jiangxi Province. On January 22, 1934, the second National Congress of the Chinese Soviet was held here. VCG



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COVER: Chinese President Xi Jinping attends the opening ceremony of the 10th ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and delivers a keynote speech at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, capital of China, May 30, 2024. *Ding Haitao*



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Chief Editor: Wang Yang
General Editorial
Office Address: 23 Xijiaominxiang, Xicheng District, Beijing 100805, P.R.China
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Further deepening cooperation and moving forward to step up the building of a China-Arab community with a shared future

Keynote Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At the Opening Ceremony of the 10th Ministerial Conference
Of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum

Beijing, May 30, 2024

Your Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa,
Your Excellency President Abdul Fatah Al-Sisi,
Your Excellency President Kais Saied,
Your Highness President Mohamed Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan,
Your Excellency Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit of
the League of Arab States,
Heads of Delegations,

Distinguished Guests,
Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to attend the opening ceremony of the Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum. I always find it heart-warming to meet Arab friends. The friendship between the Chinese and Arab peoples is deeply rooted in our friendly exchanges along the ancient Silk Road, in our joint struggles for national liberation, and in our win-win cooperation in promoting national development.

China-Arab relations have kept scaling new heights since the beginning of the new century. At the first China-Arab States Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in December 2022, my Arab colleagues and I agreed unanimously to build a China-Arab community with a shared future in the new era. China is satisfied with the progress we have made in delivering on the Summit's outcomes. It will work with the Arab side to enhance the role of the Summit in providing strategic guidance for continued leapfrog growth of China-Arab relations. I am pleased to announce that we will host the second Summit in China in 2026, which will be another milestone in China-Arab relations.

Distinguished Guests,
Friends,

As changes unseen in a century unfold rapidly across the world, both China and Arab states strive to accomplish their historical missions of national rejuvenation and faster national development. Building a China-Arab community with a shared future is a strong statement of our common desire for a new era of China-Arab relations and a better future for the world.

China will work with the Arab side as good partners to make our relations a model for maintaining world peace and stability. In this turbulent world, peaceful relations come from mutual respect, and lasting security is built on fairness and justice. We will, together with the Arab side, respect the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the independent choice of every nation and the reality formed in history, and strive together for solutions to hotspot issues that uphold fairness and justice and sustain peace and security.

China will work with the Arab side in the spirit of equality and mutual benefit to make our relations a fine example of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. The Silk Road spirit is passed on from generation to generation. It keeps China-Arab relations abreast with the times to the benefit of the two peoples. In this interdependent world, we will further synergize development strategies with the Arab side. We will strengthen cooperation in key areas such as oil, gas, trade and infrastructure, step up fostering new growth areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), investment, financing and new energy, and embark together on an innovative and green path to prosperity.



Chinese President Xi Jinping attends the opening ceremony of the 10th ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and delivers a keynote speech at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, capital of China, May 30, 2024. *Ding Haitao*



Chinese President Xi Jinping poses for a group photo with Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Tunisia's President Kais Saied, the United Arab Emirates' President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Ahmed Aboul-Gheit, and heads of delegations of 22 Arab countries in Beijing, capital of China, May 30, 2024. Xi attended the opening ceremony of the 10th ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and delivered a keynote speech at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing on May 30, 2024. *Huang Jingwen*

China will work with the Arab side in the spirit of inclusiveness and mutual learning to make our relations a paradigm of harmonious coexistence between civilizations. In a world of growing diversity, more dialogue means less confrontation, and more inclusiveness means less estrangement. Peace, truth, integrity and inclusiveness are the common pursuit of Chinese and Arab peoples. We are ready to work with the Arab side to promote people-to-people exchanges, champion the common values of humanity, and create a stellar example of mutual learning among civilizations in the new era.

China will work closely with the Arab side to make our relations a model for promoting good global governance. The entire humanity shares one common future, which has become an inevitable trend. But deficits in governance, trust, peace and development are getting wider. This calls on us to improve global governance under the principle of “planning together, building together, and benefiting together.” We are ready to work with the Arab side to jointly champion an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, and set a model of South-

South cooperation on global governance.

Distinguished Guests,
Friends,

At the first China-Arab States Summit, I put forward “eight major cooperation initiatives” for our practical cooperation. Since then, the Belt and Road cooperation documents we signed have expanded to cover a full range of areas thanks to our joint efforts over the past one year and more. New progress has been made in scientific R&D and technology transfer. Trade and energy cooperation have scaled new heights. Small and beautiful livelihood projects are advancing in parallel with signature flagship projects. Cooperation in areas such as food security, green innovation and health is deepening and getting more substantial. Platforms for people-to-people exchanges and cooperation are functioning well. Early harvests have been achieved in all the “eight major cooperation initiatives.” Moving forward, China is ready to work with the Arab side on that basis to put in place the following “five cooperation frameworks” to step up the building of a China-Arab community with a shared future.



The first is a more dynamic framework for innovation. China will build with the Arab side ten joint laboratories in such areas as life and health, AI, green and low-carbon development, modern agriculture, and space and information technology. We will enhance cooperation on AI to make it empower the real economy and to promote a broad-based global governance system on AI. We also stand ready to build with the Arab side a joint space debris observation center and a Beidou application, cooperation and development center, and step up cooperation in manned space mission and passenger aircraft.

The second is an expanded framework for investment and finance cooperation. We are ready to establish with the Arab side an industry and investment cooperation forum, continue to expand the China-Arab states interbank association, and implement at a faster pace the cooperation projects that are financed by the special loans in support of industrialization in the Middle East as well as by the credit line for China-Arab financial cooperation. China supports closer cooperation between financial institutions from the two sides, welcomes Arab states to issue panda bonds in China, and welcomes

Arab banks to join the Cross-border Interbank Payment System. China is also ready to deepen exchanges and cooperation on central bank digital currency with the Arab side.

The third is a more multifaceted framework for energy cooperation. China will further enhance strategic cooperation with the Arab side on oil and gas, and integrate supply security with market security. China is ready to work with the Arab side on new energy technology R&D and equipment production. We will support Chinese energy companies and financial institutions in participating in renewable energy projects in Arab states with total installed capacity of over 3 million kilowatts.

The fourth is a more balanced framework for mutually beneficial economic and trade ties. China will continue to implement vigorously the development cooperation projects with a total worth of 3 billion yuan. It stands ready to accelerate the negotiations on bilateral and regional free trade agreements and advance the dialogue mechanism for e-commerce cooperation. It welcomes active participation of the Arab side in the China International Import Expo, and is willing to expand import of non-energy products from the Arab side, especially agricultural products.

The fifth is a broader framework for people-to-people exchanges. China is ready to establish with the Arab side the China-Arab Center of Global Civilization Initiative, expand the size and influence of the China-Arab Research Center on Reform and Development, accelerate the establishment of such platforms as the think tank alliance, the youth development forum, the university alliance, and the research center on cultural and tourism cooperation. China will invite 200 leaders of Arab political parties to visit China every year. We plan to work with the Arab side to achieve the goal of 10 million two-way visits of tourists in the next five years.

Distinguished Guests,
Friends,

The Middle East is a land bestowed with broad prospects for development, but the war is still raging on it. Since last October, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has escalated drastically, throwing the people into tremendous sufferings. War should not continue indefinitely. Justice should not be absent forever. Commitment to the two-State solution should not be wavered at will. China firmly supports the establishment of an independent State of Palestine that enjoys full sovereignty based on the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. It supports Palestine's full membership in the UN, and supports a more broad-based, authoritative and effective international peace conference. On top of the previous 100 million yuan of emergency humanitarian assistance, China will provide an additional 500 million yuan of assistance to help ease the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and support post-conflict reconstruction. We will donate 3 million U.S. dollars to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in support of its emergency humanitarian assistance to Gaza.

As an Arab saying goes, friends are the sunshine in life. We will continue to work with our Arab friends to carry forward the spirit of China-Arab friendship, build together a better future, and make the road sunny toward a China-Arab community with a shared future!

Thank you! (Xinhua) ■



Xi, Putin hold talks in Beijing, charting course for enhanced ties

Chinese President Xi Jinping shakes hands with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, May 16, 2024. Xi held talks with Putin, who was in China on a state visit in Beijing. *Ju Peng*

President Xi Jinping held talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who was on a state visit to China, in Beijing on May 16.

The two sides conducted a comprehensive review of the successful experience in developing the China-Russia relationship, and had an in-depth exchange of views on the relationship, as well as major international and regional issues of mutual interest, charting the course forward for their cooperation across the board.

Fine example of major-country relations

Xi stressed that this year marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Russia. In the past three quarters of a century, the China-Russia relationship has grown stronger amid wind and rain and stood the test of the changing international landscape. The relationship has become a fine example for major countries and neighboring countries to treat each other with respect and candor, and pursue amity and mutual benefit.

The steady development of China-Russia relations is not only in the fundamental interests of the two countries and the two peoples, but also conducive to the peace, stability and prosperity of the region and the world at large, Xi said.

The most important conclusion drawn from the 75-year history of China-Russia relations is that two neighboring major countries must always promote the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, respect each other on an equal footing, trust each other, accommodate each other's concerns and truly provide mutual assistance for the development and revitalization of both sides, Xi noted. He added that this is not only the correct way for China and Russia to get along, but also the direction that major-country relations should strive for in the 21st century.

Putin expressed his pleasure to visit China again after he was sworn in as Russian president for a new term. Noting that Xi also paid a state visit to Russia in March of last year shortly after his re-election as Chinese president, Putin said that it is a friendly tradition between the two countries, which demonstrates that both sides attach great importance to enhancing the Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for the new era.

The development of Russia-China ties is not out of expediency or targeted at any third party, Putin said, adding that it benefits international strategic stability.

Li Ziguo, director of the Department for European-Central Asian Studies under the China Institute of International Studies, said that as major countries in the world, China and Russia have been adhering to the principles of non-alliance, non-confrontation and no targeting of any third party. They have found the right way to get along, which overcomes the outdated mindset that major countries are bound to differ in interests and inevitably become competitors.

Commitment to win-win cooperation

Xi said that with concerted efforts from both sides, China-Russia relations have been moving forward steadily, with enhanced comprehensive strategic coordination and further cooperation on economy and trade, investment, energy and people-to-people exchanges at the subnational level and in

other fields. This has made positive contributions to maintaining global strategic stability and promoting greater democracy in international relations.

The two sides should take the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties as a new starting point, further synergize development strategies and continue to enrich the bilateral cooperation to bring greater benefits to the two countries and peoples, he said.

Last year, China-Russia two-way trade exceeded 240 billion U.S. dollars, close to 2.7 times that of a decade ago. This is a good indication of the all-round cooperation of mutual benefit that continues to deepen between the two countries.

"Chinese products are renowned for their good quality, extensive variety and competitive pricing. In recent years, our company has maintained good cooperation with dozens of Chinese suppliers and the trade volume has increased year by year," said Dmitry Pismenny, a Russian business person engaged in foreign trade in southwest China's Chongqing.

The two presidents have set 2024 and 2025 as China-Russia Years of Culture, proposed a series of cultural activities that are down to earth and close to people's hearts and encouraged closer interactions between various sectors and

In the past three quarters of a century, the China-Russia relationship has grown stronger amidst wind and rain, and stood the test of changing international landscape.

at subnational levels to enhance mutual understanding and affinity between the two peoples.

Putin said that the intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms between Russia and China are functioning well, and that bilateral cooperation in such areas as economy, trade, agriculture, industry, energy and connectivity has grown steadily. He noted that the signing of a series of cooperation documents demonstrates that the two sides are committed to further deepening win-win cooperation.

Russia is willing to work with China to implement the pre-2030 development plan on economic cooperation between the two sides, organize the Russia-China Years of Culture activities well and strengthen the alignment between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Belt and Road Initiative, Putin said. He added that next year, Russia and China will hold events to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War.

Safeguarding UN-centered international system

China and Russia are committed to strategic coordination as an underpinning of relations, and steering global governance in the right direction, Xi said during a joint meeting with the press with Putin.

The two countries are firmly committed to safeguarding the UN-centered international system and the international

China and Russia are committed to fairness and justice as the purpose of relations, and dedicated to the political settlement of hotspots, Xi said.

order underpinned by international law. They stay in close coordination and collaboration in multilateral platforms such as the UN, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Group of 20, and advance multipolarity and economic globalization in the spirit of true multilateralism, he said.

With Russia chairing BRICS this year and China taking over the chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) later this year, the two sides will support each other's chairmanship; build a high-quality partnership that is more comprehensive, close, practical and inclusive; and build the unity and strength of the Global South, he added.

China and Russia are committed to fairness and justice as the purpose of relations and are dedicated to the political settlement of hotspots, Xi said.

Putin stated that Russia and China have maintained close coordination on the international stage and are jointly committed to promoting the establishment of a more democratic multipolar world order. Both sides are willing to continue to strengthen cooperation within the frameworks such as BRICS and the SCO, as well as communication on major international and regional issues, so as to promote regional and world peace and development.

Li Yongquan, head of the China Society for Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies, said that faced with numerous challenges in global governance, a healthy development of China-Russia relations and their cooperation within such mechanisms as BRICS and SCO are pivotal for maintaining regional and international stability, and improving global governance.

After the talks, Xi and Putin signed and issued the Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination for the New Era in the Context of the 75th Anniversary of China-Russia Diplomatic Relations, and witnessed the signing of a number of bilateral cooperation documents.

Prior to the talks, Xi held a grand welcoming ceremony for Putin.

Xi also hosted a welcoming banquet for Putin around noon. (Xinhua) ■



Chinese President Xi Jinping holds a welcome ceremony for Russian President Vladimir Putin at the square outside the east gate of the Great Hall of the People, before their talks in Beijing, capital of China, May 16, 2024. Xi held talks with Putin, who is in China on a state visit in Beijing. Rao Aimin



Chinese President Xi Jinping attends a China-France-EU trilateral meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at Elysee Palace, in Paris, France, May 6, 2024. *Li Xueren*

Xi concludes Europe trip with clear message on fortifying cooperation

President Xi Jinping wrapped up his first trip to Europe in nearly five years on May 10 by affirming to European leaders that China remains a committed partner and is ready to enhance mutually beneficial cooperation between the two sides.

Over the course of six days, Xi traveled to France, Serbia and Hungary, where he consistently underscored the significance of the China-Europe relationship for fostering global peace and prosperity.

The message, delivered amid rising protectionism and mounting geopolitical tensions, symbolized China's latest

endeavor to promote stability and cooperation on the global stage.

In a trilateral meeting on May 6 in Paris with French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Xi said that the China-European Union (EU) cooperation is in essence complementary and mutually beneficial and China always views its relations with the EU from a strategic and long-term perspective.

This relationship does not target any third party, nor should it be dependent on or dictated by any third party, Xi said.



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic sign a joint statement on the building of a China-Serbia community with a shared future in the new era, after their talks in Belgrade, Serbia, May 8, 2024. *Huang Jingwen*

Macron, a prominent proponent of Europe's strategic autonomy, stressed that France and the EU need to strengthen cooperation with China, as this bears on the future of Europe.

France hopes to enhance dialogue and cooperation with China and strengthen mutual trust and friendship between France and China, as well as between the EU and China, he said.

France has advocated strategic autonomy for Europe for a long time, said Eric Alauzet, president of the France-China Friendship Group of the French National Assembly.

"That means not to fall back after the East-West confrontation...so this multipolarity, this multipolar, multilateral world is what China and France want in common," Alauzet said.

Later in the day, while holding talks with Macron, Xi urged both sides to uphold independence and jointly prevent a new Cold War or bloc confrontation.

On many occasions during his stay in France, Xi referred to the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and France 60 years ago a milestone event in China-Western relations.

This significant historic event, dubbed a "diplomatic nuclear explosion" by Western media then, stirred public discourse in the West and had a tremendous impact on the international landscape. It happened eight years prior to former U.S. President Richard Nixon's groundbreaking 1972 trip to China.

At that time, then French leader General Charles de Gaulle reportedly noted that France needed to listen to the voice of

Xi said that "history is our best teacher" as the world now "is far from being tranquil and is once again facing a multitude of risks."

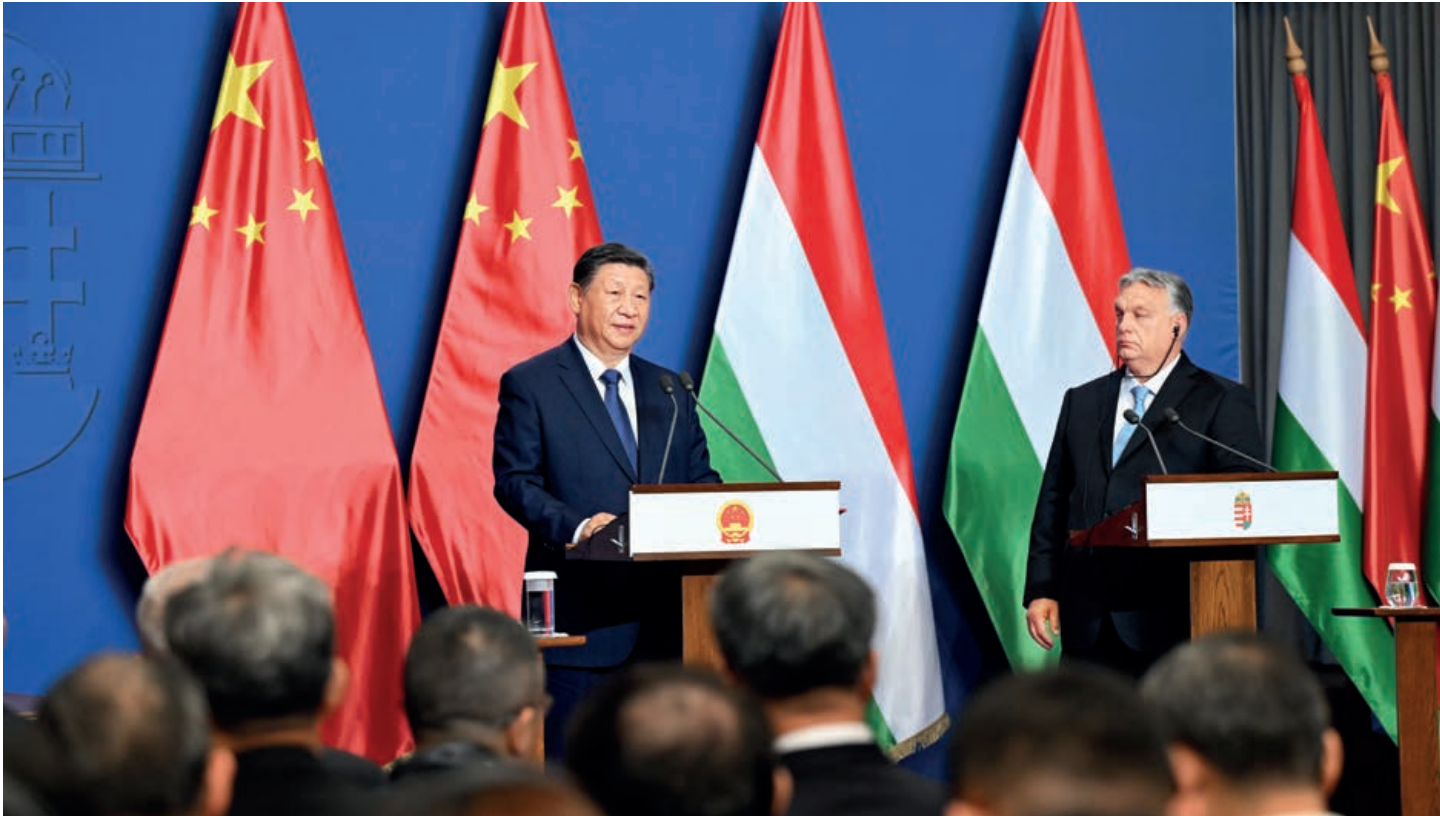
China directly and vice versa, and that those governments still holding a wait-and-see attitude would sooner or later follow in France's steps.

In a signed article published on May 5 in French media *Le Figaro*, Xi said that "history is our best teacher," as the world now "is far from being tranquil and is once again facing a multitude of risks."

"China is ready to work with France in the spirit that guided the establishment of our diplomatic ties to forge a stronger comprehensive strategic partnership between our two countries and make new contributions to stronger cooperation of the global community," Xi wrote.

"There are so many crises that great countries like China and France must work together, and the work must be done in a spirit of multilateralism," said former French Prime Minister Laurent Fabius.

Given the gravity of major global challenges such as ending conflicts, enhancing economic development, addressing climate change and significant health crises, an effective res-



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban jointly meet the press after their talks in Budapest, Hungary, May 9, 2024.
Xie Huanchi

olution necessitates cooperation among all nations, he said.

In his visits to Serbia and Hungary, Xi and leaders of the two Central and Eastern European (CEE) nations announced decisions to elevate bilateral ties.

This enhancement coincided with China's robust, intensifying investment flows in the region. From January to March 2024 alone, China's investment in CEE countries surged by 36.35 percent compared to the previous year, reaching about 450 million U.S. dollars. As of March 2024, the cumulative total of Chinese investment in the CEE region soared to 5.2 billion U.S. dollars.

For example, Hungary was able to attract a total of 13 billion euros (13.86 billion U.S. dollars) in foreign direct investment in 2023, with about 8 billion euros (8.53 billion U.S. dollars) coming from China, Hungarian Minister for National Economy, Marton Nagy, told Xinhua in an interview.

The Hungarian side is looking forward to further cooperating with China in the fields of foreign trade, capital investment, infrastructure, logistics, artificial intelligence and new energy, among others, he said.

This is also the case with Serbia. "During the past two years, China has emerged as the largest foreign direct investor in Serbia, bringing numerous benefits to the country," said Jelena Grubor Stefanovic, director of the representative office of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China.

"Now Serbia has more opportunities to systematically focus its efforts on attracting investments from China in industry sectors with high added value like life sciences, digital

economy, automotive industry, smart agriculture sector and green development," she said.

Chen Fengying, a researcher at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, said that China's enhanced cooperation with Serbia and Hungary has spurred local economic growth and uplifted living standards.

This success is a compelling example of the tangible benefits obtained from forging partnerships with China and progressing collectively, said Chen.

Such an achievement has also exerted a noteworthy inspirational and motivational influence on other CEE countries, she added.

Xi's visit to Europe came as Washington is maneuvering to rally its allies in the West to "de-risk" and "decouple" from China, and slow down the country's high-tech progress.

Speaking during the China-France-EU trilateral meeting, Macron reaffirmed that the EU refuses the logic of decoupling. Macron said the EU welcomes investment and cooperation by Chinese companies in Europe during the China-France-EU trilateral meeting, noting that the EU hopes to step up cooperation with China and jointly safeguard the security and stability of value chains and supply chains in Europe.

"I believe that the economic cooperation between Europe and China is very important. China is strong, and that is why Europe has to develop itself and also be strong," Marc-Antoine Jamet, secretary general of the LVMH group, told Xinhua on May 6 before the closing ceremony of the Sixth Meeting of the China-France Business Council. (Xinhua) ■

Upholding and improving the system of people's congresses and ensuring that the people run the country

XI JINPING



President Xi Jinping delivers a keynote speech at a central conference on work related to people's congresses, held in Beijing, October 13 and 14, 2021. Wang Ye

We must uphold the idea set forth in the Constitution that all power in the country belongs to the people. We must extensively mobilize and organize the people to exercise state power through people's congresses at all levels and manage state and social affairs and economic and cultural programs through various channels and in various ways in accordance with the Constitution and law; work together to build the country, develop the economy and achieve shared prosperity; and become the masters of the country, society and their own destiny. On the basis of the principle of democratic centralism, the system of state power and the standards of action defined in the Constitution, we should have people's congresses exercise state power in a unified way; ensure that there is both an appropriate division of labor and mutual coordination between decision-making, executive and oversight powers; ensure that state organs exercise their powers and perform their duties in accordance with statutory mandates and procedures; and ensure that they organize all their programs in a unified and effective manner.

—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting of the people from all walks of life in Beijing to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the current Constitution (December 4, 2012)

Sixty years ago, the founders of the People's Republic of China, together with more than 1,200 deputies elected to the National People's Congress (NPC), convened the First Session of the First NPC, and adopted the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, thus establishing our country's fundamental political system—the system of people's congresses. This was an epoch-making event in the political history of both China and the world, as China, a country with more than 5,000 years of history and a population numbering in the hundreds of millions, established a new type of political system in which the people run the country.

—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the National People's Congress (September 5, 2014)

China's implementation of the system of people's congresses represents a monumental innovation in the history of human political institutions, which has been made by the Chinese people. It reflects all the painful lessons drawn from China's political life since modern times began. It is the result of Chinese society's dramatic transformation and development over more than a century, and the inevitable choice made by the Chinese people who had finally

become masters of the country and taken control of their own destiny.

—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the National People's Congress (September 5, 2014)

The key to the people's congress system's strong vitality and marked advantages is that it is deeply rooted in the people. The name of our country and the names of our state organs at all levels start with "the people," which indicates the basic orientation of China's socialist government. The more than 2.6 million deputies to people's congresses at various levels must faithfully represent the interests and will of the people, and participate in the exercise of state power according to law. State organs at all levels and their employees, regardless of their function, are ultimately working in service of the people. We must ensure that this basic orientation never wavers or weakens.

—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the National People's Congress (September 5, 2014)

In the design and development of a country's political institutions, it is imperative to make sure that past and present, theory and practice, and form and content all cohere with one another. It is important to proceed according to national conditions and realities, keeping in mind our long-established heritage as well as the development path we've taken, the political experience we've gained, and the political principles we've formed, while also considering the demands and issues of the day. It is impossible to break with the past and inconceivable to expect that a political system can be just imported from somewhere else. Political systems are intended to regulate political relations, establish political order, promote national development, and maintain national stability. They cannot be judged in abstraction without regard for their specific social and political conditions, nor can they be homogenized or made to conform to a single model.

—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the National People's Congress (September 5, 2014)

The extent to which a political system may be considered democratic and effective, depends on whether leadership

transitions are lawful and orderly; whether the people administer national, social, economic, and cultural affairs in accordance with the law; whether people can freely express their demands; whether various sectors of society can participate effectively in national political affairs; whether state decision-making is rational and democratic; whether talented people from various sectors can enter the systems of national leadership and administration through fair competition; whether the governing party exercises leadership over national affairs in accordance with the Constitution and the law; and whether the exercise of power is subject to effective constraints and supervision.

—*Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the National People's Congress (September 5, 2014)*

The key to developing socialist democracy is to amplify our strengths and unique qualities, rather than diminishing them. We must uphold the core role of the CPC in exercising overall leadership and coordinating overall initiatives, enhance its capacity to govern in a sound, democratic, and law-based manner, and ensure that the Party leads the people in governing the country effectively, so as to prevent the people from ever becoming leaderless and disunited. We must uphold the principle that all state power belongs to the people, guaranteeing not only law-based democratic elections but also law-based democratic decision-making, management, and oversight, so as to avoid a situation where politicians make wild election promises they will not deliver on in office. We must uphold and improve the system of CPC-led multiparty cooperation and political consultation, and strengthen cooperation and coordination between various social forces, so as to avoid endless political wrangling and factional strife between different parties. We must uphold and improve the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and consolidate socialist ethnic relations of equality, solidarity, mutual assistance, and harmony, so as to enable people of all ethnic groups to live in peace, work for a common cause, develop in harmony, and guard against estrangement and conflict. We must uphold and improve the system of community-level self-governance, develop community-level democracy, and ensure that the people directly exercise their democratic rights in accordance with the law, so as to prevent a situation in which the people have only nominal and superficial rights. We must uphold and improve the system and principles of democratic centralism and urge all state organs to enhance their capacity and efficiency, bolster coordination and cooperation, and forge strong synergy in national governance, so that we are not getting in each other's way and wasting energy on internal rivalries.

—*Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the*

60th anniversary of the National People's Congress (September 5, 2014)

China's state system—a people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on an alliance of workers and farmers—must be manifested in the elections for CPC committees, people's congresses, and CPPCC committees and the change of government. In the above-mentioned events, we must ensure the proportion of representatives of the masses and prevent Party and government officials and business leaders from crowding out the quota that should be given to the basic masses by deceptive means. In the socialist China led by the CPC, political power is not distributed according to status, wealth, or connections; it belongs only to the people.

—*Excerpt from a speech at the Seventh Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (January 6, 2017)*

We are following the path of socialist political advancement with Chinese characteristics, and our people's democracy is a whole-process democracy, which means that all major legislative decisions are based on procedures and subject to democratic deliberation, and each decision is produced by way of a rigorous democratic decision-making process.

—*Excerpt from remarks during an inspection in Gubei Community Center, Hongqiao Sub-district, Changning District, Shanghai (November 2, 2019)*

At the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee, it was clearly stated that law-based governance and law-based exercise of state power begin with compliance with the Constitution. Our emphasis on governing the country and exercising state power on the basis of the Constitution is fundamentally different from the so-called constitutionalism of the West and a clear distinction needs to be made. Governing the country and exercising state power on the basis of the Constitution includes remaining firmly committed to the leadership of the CPC, and upholding the state system of a people's democratic dictatorship and the political system of people's congresses, all of which are written in the Constitution.

—*Excerpt from a speech at the Central Conference on Comprehensively Advancing Law-based Governance (No-*

ember 16, 2020)

Over the 60-plus years since its inception, and particularly over the 40-plus years of reform and opening up, the people's congress system has provided an important institutional guarantee that has allowed our Party to lead the people in creating miracles of rapid economic development and long-term social stability.

Practice has shown that the people's congress system is a sound system that accords with China's national conditions and realities, embodies our country's nature as a socialist nation, ensures that the people run the country, and provides safeguards for national rejuvenation. Created by the people under the CPC's leadership, it is a great invention in the history of political institutions, and it is an entirely new political system of major importance in the history of China's political development and even in that of the world.

—Excerpts from a speech at the Central Conference on People's Congress Work (October 13, 2021)

Under the CPC's leadership, the people's congress system adheres to the basic tenets of Marxist theory of the state, adapts to the state system of a people's democratic dictatorship, and effectively ensures that China advances along the path of socialism. Under this system, all power of the state belongs to the people, the people's position as masters of the country is protected to the greatest extent, and the unity between leadership by the CPC, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance is upheld, thus ensuring that China escapes the historical cycle of rise and fall of political orders. Under this system, major political relationships that influence the nation's future are properly managed, social programs operate under the effective unified organization of the state, national unity and ethnic solidarity are maintained, and vigor, stability, and order prevail in the country's political life.

—Excerpt from a speech at the Central Conference on People's Congress Work (October 13, 2021)

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the Central Committee has implemented a national rejuvenation strategy against a backdrop of global change on a scale which has not been seen in a century. Taking into account the strategic requisites of upholding and improving the Party's leadership and consolidating the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, it has continued to ad-

vance theoretical and practical innovations in the people's congress system and put forward new concepts, ideas, and requirements, which are focused on the following aspects.

First, we must uphold the CPC's leadership. We must uphold the core role of the Party in exercising overall leadership and coordinating the efforts of all sides, uphold the Central Committee's authority and its centralized, unified leadership, and ensure that our Party's theories, guidelines, principles, policies, decisions, and plans are fully and effectively implemented in the work of the state. We should provide the support and safeguards that bodies of state power need to carry out their work in accordance with the Constitution and the law and in an active, independent, and coordinated manner. We must strengthen and improve the leadership of our Party so that we become better at using statutory procedures to turn the Party's propositions into the will of the state and to ensure that candidates recommended by Party organizations assume leadership positions in bodies of state power, and so that we become better at using bodies of state power to exercise the Party's leadership over the country and society. This will allow us to safeguard the authority of the Party and country and uphold the unity of the entire Party and country.

Second, we must use a system of institutions to ensure the people run the country. We must remain committed to a people-centered approach, uphold the principle that all power of the state belongs to the people, and support and ensure the people's exercise of state power through people's congresses. We should improve democratic institutions, create more forms of democracy, and expand channels for democracy, and we should protect the people's rights to equal participation and development, so as to promote a whole-process people's democracy that is broader, fuller, and more robust.

Third, we must advance law-based governance on all fronts. We must follow a path and develop a system of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics and build a socialist nation under the rule of law. We should carry forward the spirit of socialist rule of law, advance all undertakings and initiatives of the country in accordance with the Constitution and the law, safeguard social fairness and justice, respect and protect human rights, and make sure that all of the country's initiatives are on a legal footing.

Fourth, we must uphold democratic centralism. We must ensure that the people exercise state power in a unified manner through people's congresses and that people's congresses at all levels are formed through democratic elections, are responsible to the people, and are subject to their oversight; that administrative, supervisory, adjudicatory, and procuratorial organs at all levels are created by people's congresses, accountable to them, and subject to their oversight; that there is both an appropriate division of labor and mutual coordination between decision-making, executive and oversight powers; that state organs exercise their powers and perform their duties in accordance with statutory mandates and procedures; and that local governments fully exert their initiative and enthusiasm under the

unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, so as to ensure that all undertakings are advanced under the unified and effective organization of the state.

Fifth, we must keep to the path of socialist political development with Chinese characteristics. The core of maintaining the unity between leadership by the Party, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance is upholding the CPC's leadership. The people's congress system is a foundational political system for upholding this unity; it ensures that the CPC leads the people in effectively governing the country in accordance with the law. We can learn from other countries' political achievements, but we will never blindly copy Western political systems and models.

Sixth, we must work to modernize China's system and capacity for governance. The people's congress system is an important component of the system of Chinese socialism and of China's system of governance. We must uphold and improve the system of institutions through which the people run the country, continue to improve the institutions, standards, and procedures of socialist democracy, and do better at translating our institutional strengths into effective governance.

—Excerpts from a speech at the Central Conference on People's Congress Work (October 13, 2021)

After our Party's 18th National Congress in 2012, we deepened our understanding of the laws governing the development of democracy and put forward the important concept of whole-process people's democracy. Whole-process people's democracy in China has not only a full complement of institutional procedures but full participation in practice. China's state system is a people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and farmers; its system of state power is the system of people's congresses; and its basic political systems are the system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC, the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and the system of primary-level self-governance. Through these, China has consolidated and developed the broadest possible patriotic united front, it has formed a comprehensive, extensive, and well-coordinated system of institutions that guarantee the people run the country, and it has put into place diverse, open, and orderly channels for democracy. This allows the entire people to engage in law-based democratic elections, consultations, decision making, management, and oversight and to manage state and economic, cultural, and social affairs in various ways and forms and in accordance with the law. China's whole-process people's democracy successfully integrates process-oriented and results-oriented democracy, procedural and substantive democracy, direct and indirect democracy, and democracy of the people and the will of the state. It is a democracy that covers every link and every

sector in every way possible—democracy at its most extensive, most genuine, and most effective. We will continue to promote the development of whole-process people's democracy, seeing that the principle of the people running the country is embodied explicitly and practically in the Party's national governance policies and measures, in all aspects and levels of the work of Party and state institutions, and in the efforts to realize people's aspirations for a better life.

—Excerpt from a speech at the Central Conference on People's Congress Work (October 13, 2021)

The system of people's congresses is an important institutional vehicle for realizing China's whole-process people's democracy. Under the leadership of the CPC, we must expand the people's orderly political participation and strengthen legal protection for human rights to ensure that the people enjoy extensive rights and freedoms as prescribed by law. We must ensure that the people are able to exercise their electoral rights in accordance with the law, and that people's congress deputies are elected democratically. We must see to it that the people's rights to information, participation, expression, and oversight are fulfilled in all aspects of the work of people's congresses, and that the people's voice can be heard in every stage of the work of the Party and the state from decision-making to implementation and oversight. We must improve democratic platforms and vehicles of people's congresses through which the will of the people can be expressed, refine working mechanisms for absorbing popular sentiment and drawing together the wisdom of the people, and advance consultations carried out by people's congresses, especially legislative consultations. In this way, we will see that social conditions and popular opinion are integrated as part of the fundamental interests of the majority. We should enhance our study of and public communications on Chinese socialist democracy and the people's congress system, elucidate the features and strengths of China's political system, and share our story of democracy.

—Excerpt from a speech at the Central Conference on People's Congress Work (October 13, 2021)

The election of deputies is the foundation of the system of people's congresses and an important manifestation of the people acting as masters of the country. We must closely integrate democratic elections, consultations, decision-making, management, and oversight, and continue to develop whole-process people's democracy, so as to better ensure that the people run the country. We must strengthen oversight of the entire process of election and resolutely investigate and punish misconduct, so as to ensure that

elections are conducted in a clean and upright manner and that the election results are satisfactory to the people.

—*Excerpt from a speech when voting to elect new deputies to the district people’s congress in Beijing (November 5, 2021)*

We must strengthen the institutions through which the people run the country. We must uphold and improve our country’s foundational, basic, and important political systems, expand democratic channels, and diversify the forms of democracy, so as to ensure that people participate in various ways in the management of state, economic, cultural, and social affairs in accordance with the law. We will support and ensure the people’s exercise of state power through people’s congresses, and we will ensure that people’s congresses at all levels are formed through democratic elections, responsible to the people, and subject to their oversight. We will support and ensure that people’s congresses and their standing committees lawfully exercise the powers of enacting laws, conducting oversight, making decisions, and appointing and removing officials. We will improve the system under which people’s congresses conduct oversight of administrative, supervisory, adjudicatory, and procuratorial organs, and we will uphold the unity, sanctity, and authority of the law. We will see that deputies to people’s congresses are better able to carry out their work and that they strengthen ties with the general public. We will improve working mechanisms for drawing on public opinion and pooling the wisdom of the people and ensure that local legislative outreach offices are well-run. We will intensify reform and development of trade unions, Chinese Communist Youth League organizations, women’s federations, and other people’s organizations and give full play to their role as bridges connecting our Party and the people. We will follow a Chinese path of human rights development, actively participate in global human rights governance, and promote all-around advancement of human rights.

—*Excerpt from a report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (October 16, 2022)*

We must strengthen confidence in our political system, firmly stay on the path of socialist political advancement with Chinese characteristics, and uphold and improve the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We must remain committed to the leadership by the CPC, to the state system of people’s democratic dictatorship, and to the political system of people’s congresses, all of which are mandated by the Constitution. Under no circumstance will we copy the models or practices of other countries.

—*Excerpt from an article “Writing a New Chapter in the Practice of China’s Constitution in the New Era: Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Enactment of the Current Constitution” (December 19, 2022)*

We must actively develop whole-process people’s democracy, uphold the unity between the leadership by the CPC, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance, and improve the system of institutions through which the people run the country. All these will help fulfill the will of the people, protect their rights and interests, and fully inspire their enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity.

—*Excerpt from a speech at the First Session of the 14th National People’s Congress (March 13, 2023)*

The integration of the basic tenets of Marxism with the best of China’s traditional culture has enabled us to retain both the theoretical and cultural initiative, effectively applying it to the path, theory, and system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. From this perspective, we can observe that the systems of people’s congresses and political consultation established by our Party reflect the Chinese concept of the people being the foundation of the state, the idea of universal participation in governance, the tradition of collaborative and consultative governance, and the political wisdom of being all-inclusive and seeking common ground while setting differences aside. China’s implementation of a system of regional ethnic autonomy within a unitary state, rather than a federal system, is adapting itself to the underlying development trend of the Chinese nation toward internal cohesion and unity amid diversity. It also carries on the Chinese tradition of striving for great unity in the country to see all regions sharing common customs and practices amid rich diversity and all people coming together as one family. The integration of the basic tenets of Marxism with the best of China’s traditional culture is yet another manifestation of our commitment to freeing the mind. It allows us to fully harness the precious resources of fine traditional Chinese culture to explore future-oriented theoretical and institutional innovations within a broader cultural framework.

—*Excerpt from a speech at the Meeting on Cultural Inheritance and Development (June 2, 2023)*

These are excerpts from General Secretary Xi Jinping’s statements on upholding and improving the system of people’s congresses and ensuring that the people run the country between December 2012 and June 2023.

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Zhao Leji meets DPRK top leader



Zhao Leji, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of China's National People's Congress Standing Committee, meets with Kim Jong Un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in Pyongyang, the DPRK, April 13, 2024. Zhao is heading a Chinese party and government delegation on an official goodwill visit to the DPRK. *Liu Weibing*

Zhao Leji, chairman of China's National People's Congress Standing Committee, met with Kim Jong Un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in Pyongyang on April 13.

Zhao, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC)

Central Committee, is heading a CPC and government delegation on an official goodwill visit to the DPRK.

Zhao extended to Kim the kind regards and good wishes of general secretary of the CPC Central Committee Xi Jinping.

Zhao said that appointed by Xi and the CPC Central Committee, he is leading the CPC and government delegation to pay an official goodwill visit to the DPRK and attend the opening ceremony of the China-DPRK Friendship Year. He also noted that he was warmly received by the WPK and the DPRK government.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the DPRK, and the journey of the past 75 years epitomized good neighborliness and friendship, as the two countries stood side by side, fighting together, sharing a common destiny and pursuing common development, he said.

Under the new situation, China is ready to work with the DPRK, in accordance with the lofty will of the top leaders of both parties and both countries, and the common aspirations of the two peoples, to push the China-DPRK relationship for greater development, Zhao said.

Zhao pointed out that the China-DPRK friendship, established and cultivated meticulously by the elder generations of revolutionists of both parties and both countries, has withstood various tests of the changing international situation and is an invaluable asset of the two countries.

Zhao said that the CPC and the Chinese government have always treated the China-DPRK relations from a strategic height and long-term perspective, and it is China's unwavering policy to maintain, consolidate and develop China-DPRK traditional friendly and cooperative relations.

China is willing to work with the DPRK, under the strategic guidance of the top leaders of both parties and both countries, to promote bilateral, practical and mutually beneficial cooperation to attain new achievements, continue to strongly support each other and safeguard the shared interests of the two countries, he said.

China stands ready for close coordination with the DPRK to ensure the success of all activities of the China-DPRK Friendship Year, he added.

China, in accordance with the strategic plan laid out at the 20th CPC National Congress, is comprehensively advancing the building of a strong country and the great cause of national rejuvenation through Chinese modernization, Zhao stressed.

It is willing to advance coordination in development and deepen bilateral cooperation with the DPRK, and continu-

ously enrich China-DPRK relations, he said.

Kim asked Zhao to convey his sincere greetings and best wishes to General Secretary Xi.

Kim said that appointed by Xi and the CPC Central Committee, the CPC and government delegation's visit to the DPRK and attendance at the opening ceremony of the DPRK-China Friendship Year fully demonstrate Xi's friendliness toward DPRK-China relations and strongly demonstrate the profound and unbreakable foundation of bilateral ties.

Kim extended his warm congratulations on the development achievements that China has made in the pursuit of its socialist cause under the strong leadership of Xi and the CPC.

He stressed that DPRK-China relations have boasted a profound historical tradition, having withstood various tests and been passed on from generation to generation.

Kim said that it is the unwavering policy of the WPK and the DPRK government to consolidate and develop the tra-

ditional friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries. The DPRK-China relationship is continuously developing to new and higher stages in line with the demands of the new era, he added.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic ties and the DPRK-China Friendship Year, and the DPRK stands ready to work with China to strengthen cooperation in various fields, increase exchanges of experience in state governance, deepen traditional friendship and write a new chapter in bilateral ties, he said.

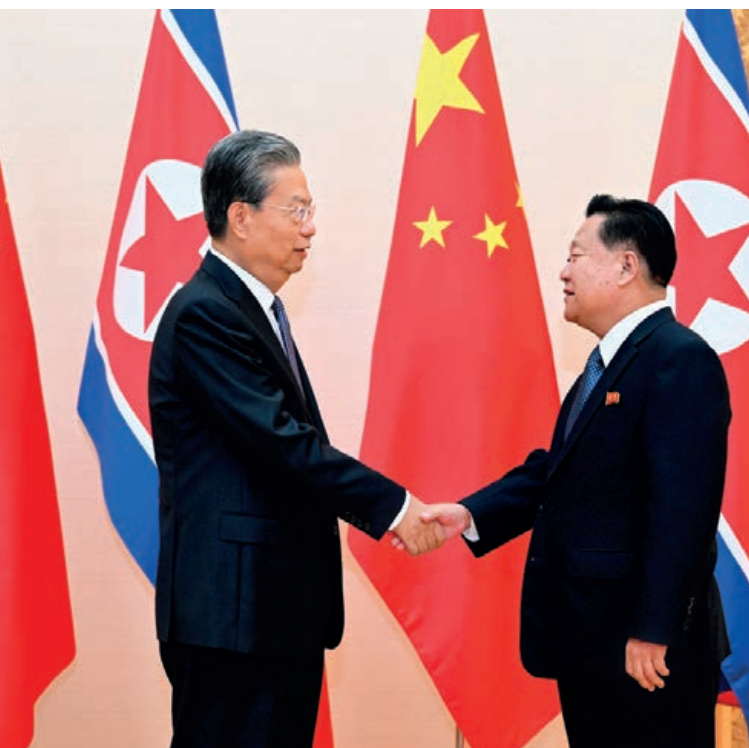
Upon leaving Pyongyang, the CPC and government delegation was seen off at the airport by officials, including Choe Ryong Hae, a member of the Presidium of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the WPK and chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK.

In the afternoon, Zhao visited and extended his regards to staff members of the Chinese Embassy and representatives of overseas Chinese in the DPRK. (Xinhua) ■



This photo taken on June 17, 2023 shows the Yalu River Border Railway Bridge in Ji'an city, northeast China's Jilin Province, which is at the border between China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Zhou Wanpeng

Zhao Leji holds talks with his DPRK counterpart



Zhao Leji, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of China's National People's Congress Standing Committee, holds talks with Choe Ryong Hae, a member of the Presidium of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), in Pyongyang, the DPRK, April 11, 2024. *Zhang Ling*

Zhao Leji, chairman of China's National People's Congress Standing Committee, held talks with Choe Ryong Hae, chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), in Pyongyang on April 11.

Zhao, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, told Choe, a member of the Presidium of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), that the China-DPRK traditional friendship was established and cultivated meticulously by the elder generations of leaders of both parties and both countries.

General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee Xi Jinping has repeatedly said that the CPC and the Chinese govern-

ment place great importance in the traditional friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries, and that it is China's unwavering strategy to maintain, consolidate and develop bilateral relations, Zhao said.

Noting that this year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the DPRK, Zhao said that Xi and WPK General Secretary Kim Jong Un have exchanged New Year's congratulatory messages, and jointly designated 2024 as the China-DPRK Friendship Year, launching a series of activities.

China is ready to work with the DPRK to implement the important consensus reached by the top leaders of both parties and both countries, and take the China-DPRK Friendship Year as an opportunity to intensify high-level exchanges, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, promote people-to-people exchanges and strengthen strategic coordination, so as to promote China-DPRK relations to continue to move forward, Zhao said.

Exchanges between legislative bodies have been an important part of China-DPRK relations and have long played a positive role in deepening bilateral relations, Zhao noted.

China is ready to intensify exchanges and cooperation with the DPRK's legislative bodies to help lift China-DPRK traditional friendly and cooperative relations to a higher level, he said.

Choe said the blood-cemented friendship between the two countries has a long history and profound foundation, and is the common precious heritage and wealth of the two countries.

Under the strategic guidance of Kim and Xi, DPRK-China friendly relations have entered a new era, which strongly demonstrates the vitality and unbreakable nature of bilateral relations, Choe said.

The DPRK is willing to join hands with China to follow the guidance of the top leaders of the two parties and two countries, and take the opportunity of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties and the DPRK-China Friendship Year to carry on and develop the traditional DPRK-China friendship, deepen exchanges and cooperation in various fields and push for continuous development of DPRK-China friendly and cooperative relations, he said.

The two sides exchanged views on international and regional situations and the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

After the talks, Zhao and Choe witnessed the signing of cooperation documents in such fields as reciprocal exemption of diplomatic and service visas, mutual translation and publication of classical literature, customs quarantine, radio and television, and postal delivery. They also jointly attended a welcoming banquet held by the DPRK for the CPC and government delegation. (Xinhua) ■

Top legislators of China, DPRK launch Friendship Year

Zhao Leji, chairman of China's National People's Congress Standing Committee, and Choe Ryong Hae, chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), jointly attended the opening ceremony of the China-DPRK Friendship Year on April 12.

Zhao, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, and Choe, a member of the Presidium of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), attended the event at the East Pyongyang Grand Theater.

China and the DPRK are socialist and friendly neighbors linked by mountains and rivers, and as close as lips and teeth, Zhao said. Calling General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee Xi Jinping and WPK General Secretary Kim Jong Un helmsmen steering the boat, drawing the blueprint and charting the course for the development of China-DPRK relations, Zhao said the top leaders set the fundamental guidance and inject inexhaustible impetus into bilateral ties.

China is ready to work with the DPRK to implement the im-

portant consensus reached by the top leaders of the two parties and the two countries, promote traditional friendship, deepen strategic mutual trust and enhance exchanges and cooperation, so as to jointly write a new chapter in the China-DPRK friendship, Zhao said.

Choe said that as the top leaders of both parties and both countries have put the DPRK-China relations in the new era at a new strategic height, the friendship bonds between the two countries have remained unshakable and become even firmer.

By taking the opportunity of the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties and the DPRK-China Friendship Year, the DPRK is willing to join hands with China to strengthen and develop the DPRK-China friendly cooperation, thus embarking on a new journey of vigorous development of the friendship between the two countries, he said.

After the event, Zhao and Choe watched a performance by art troupes from the two countries.

On April 12, Zhao presented a floral basket to the China-DPRK Friendship Tower in tribute to the tremendous feats of the martyrs of the Chinese People's Volunteers. He also paid a visit to the Kangdong General Greenhouse Farm. (Xinhua) ■



Zhao Leji, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of China's National People's Congress Standing Committee, addresses the opening ceremony of the China-DPRK Friendship Year at the East Pyongyang Grand Theater in Pyongyang, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), April 12, 2024. Liu Weibing



This panoramic photo taken on September 3, 2023 shows a rice field display in Beilin district of Suihua city, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. *Wei Hai*

Li Hongzhong emphasizes full implementation of Food Security Law

Li Hongzhong, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), has called for the full implementation of the nation's Food Security Law to safeguard national food security and uphold law-based governance.

Li made the statement while addressing a symposium in Beijing on the implementation of the Food Security Law on May 17. The law was promulgated on December 29, 2023, and came into effect on June 1, 2024.

Li stressed the necessity to enhance strategic determination, confidence and capabilities in safeguarding national food security, and called for a strong sense of responsibility to effectively implement the law and blaze a trail of food security with Chinese characteristics.

It is crucial to accurately understand the legislative purposes and principles of the Food Security Law, uphold the Communist Party of China's leadership in the nation's food security work, adhere to the strategies of sustainable farmland use and agricultural technology innovation to increase farmland productivity, and coordinate development and security, he said.

Efforts should be made to implement the law in an

Efforts should be made to implement the law in an overall, systematic and coordinated manner.

overall, systematic and coordinated manner; strengthen coordination; accelerate the establishment of a comprehensive legal system of food security; enhance supervision, management, law enforcement and judicial work; and conduct public legal education on food security to ensure the effective implementation of the law, Li added.

Wu Weihua, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, attended the meeting, which was presided over by Shohrat Zakir, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee.

Relevant officials and NPC deputies also shared their views at the meeting. (NPC) ■

Twenty-three legislative bills submitted for their first review

By Lu Yan

The National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee recently released its 2024 legislative work plan, which shows that this year the NPC Standing Committee plans to conduct the first review of 23 legislative items, including the environmental code, the law on the publicity and education of the law-based governance, the public health emergency response law and the private economy promotion law.

The plan states that solid progress will be made in compiling the environmental code, soliciting public opinion and wisdom, integrating and revising the existing laws and regulations on ecological environment, with the aim of forming a high-quality draft of the environmental code and submitting it for review within the year.

Legislation will be advanced in accelerating the development of new quality productive forces, formulating the law on financial stability, and revising the law on mineral resources, among others.

The plan calls for improving the system that guarantees that the people are the masters of the country. Lawmakers will review bills on draft revisions to the Law on Supervision by the Standing Committees of the People's Congresses at All Levels.

The plan further emphasizes improving the anti-corruption legal system by revising the Supervision Law in keeping up with the times.

To promote the strategy for invigorating China through science and education, and build up China's cultural strength, the plan involves formulating the law on the publicity and education of the law-based governance, and revising the law on the protection of cultural relics.

To ensure people's wellbeing, the plan includes formulating the preschool education law, and revising the Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases.

To strengthen national security capabilities, the plan involves formulating the law on emergency response and management, and revising the Cybersecurity Law.

The plan calls for strengthening the development of the legal system related to foreign affairs. This includes revising the Frontier Health and Quarantine Law, as well as paying close attention to improving the foreign-related provisions within relevant laws.

The plan also includes formulating new laws such as the national development planning law, the procuratorial public interest litigation law, and the law on protecting the reputation and honoring of heroes and martyrs, as well as revising existing laws including the Law on Commercial Banks, the State Compensation Law and the law on road-traffic safety.

The plan also involves researching and developing comprehensive financial legislation, including regulations related to the financial supervisory system, as well as legislative initiatives pertaining to the fiscal and tax system, cyber governance and the healthy development of artificial intelligence. Relevant authorities will promptly undertake research and drafting work on these projects, with the intention of arranging for their review and deliberation as appropriate.

With regard to strengthening and improving legislative work in the new era, the plan calls for expanding participation in the legislative process. This includes inviting legislators, especially those with expertise or backgrounds relevant to the specific legislative areas, to participate in legislative research and deliberations.

It also requires establishing and developing grass-roots-level legislative outreach offices, increasing the number and types of these offices in a measured and orderly manner.

The plan also stresses enriching and expanding the channels for orderly public participation in legislation, which involves thoroughly soliciting public opinions on draft laws and improving the targeted and timely study, incorporation and feedback of public input. ■



This photo taken on March 5, 2024 shows swans at the Guanting Reservoir National Wetland Park in Huailai county, north China's Hebei Province. Sun Huijun

Practice of China's state compensation system highlights human rights, law-based governance



VCG

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the promulgation of China's State Compensation Law, a significant milestone in the country's commitment to human rights protection and the law-based governance.

The law was adopted by China's national legislature in May 1994, and as stated in its first article, was formulated to safeguard the relevant rights of citizens, legal persons and other organizations, and promote state organs' law-based exercise of their functions and powers.

Since the law took effect on January 1, 1995, Chinese courts nationwide have dealt with 318,000 state compensation cases.

Notable examples include the cases of Huugjilt and Nie Shubin, both executed based on wrongful convictions in the 1990s and acquitted in the mid-2010s.

"These cases are like an alarm bell, calling on state agencies and their staff to respect and protect human rights and exercise their power prudently to avoid similar tragedies," said Liu Fei, a professor at the China University of Political Science and Law.

In addition to citizens' right to life and personal liberty, the state compensation system also covers the protection of property rights.

By compensating the infringed persons in accordance with

the law, the State Compensation Law has exerted remarkable effects on the country's political, social and legal sectors, and has garnered widespread recognition from society, according to Ma Huaide, president of the China University of Political Science and Law.

According to Xue Gangling, a professor at South China Normal University, the state compensation system, an important symbol of the modernization of the rule of law, provides a unique orientation toward human rights values in society.

In addition, Ma pointed out that by defining the boundaries of infringement and attributing responsibility, as well as establishing an accountability system, the law serves as a reminder of the importance of law-based governance.

Over the decades, China has been continuously making improvements to the law and its enforcement. The law has undergone two amendments in 2010 and 2012.

The compensatory payment for infringement of personal liberty has increased from 17.76 yuan (2.5 U.S. dollars) per day at the beginning to 436.89 yuan (61.47 U.S. dollars) last year.

The country's top court and top procuratorate have issued judicial interpretations, as well as replies in individual cases, to ensure the effectiveness and implementation of the law.

These efforts have further expanded the protection of rights, granting victims a higher level and wider range of compensation, such as mental suffering, according to Du Yifang, a law professor at Fudan University.

Zhang Hong, a professor at Beijing Normal University, said the improved procedural rules have helped make the victims' claims for remedies easier.

However, experts also pointed out that despite the considerable progress made, there is still a need for further improvements.

Xue said that the scope of state compensation can be further expanded, procedures can be made more streamlined and fair, and standards can continue to be raised. Zhang said the principles and standards of state compensation should be adjusted to align with the changing times.

The amendment of the State Compensation Law is currently listed in the legislative plan of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress.

The evolution of China's state compensation system over the past three decades has shown that government agencies that demonstrate a willingness to acknowledge errors and take accountability can foster greater public trust and credibility, Liu said. (Xinhua) ■

Strengthening emergency response capacity building

—Law on emergency response and management to be formulated

By Lu Yan

As frequent occurrence of emergencies has had serious impacts on economic and social development, China is formulating the law on emergency response and management.

The “emergencies” referred to in this law include natural disasters, accidents, public health incidents and social security incidents, according to Zang Tiewei, a spokesperson for the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC).

The current law on emergency response in China has been in effect since it was promulgated in 2007, providing important legal safeguards for addressing emergencies such as earthquakes, floods and epidemics.

However, in recent years, some new situations have presented new challenges. The formulating of the law on emergency response and management is a crucial step taken to adapt to these changing circumstances.

In December 2021, the 32nd Session of the 13th NPC Standing Committee conducted the first review of the draft law on emergency response and management.

In December 2023, the draft of this law was submitted for a second review at the Seventh Session of the 14th NPC Standing Committee.

The draft submitted for deliberation stressed strengthening the building of emergency response capabilities, and improving the reserve, transportation and safeguard systems for emergency rescue supplies. It also proposed to bring into play the positive role of social forces in participating in emergency response.

The second draft of the bill for review has improved the systems for emergency incident reporting, information release, news reporting, early warning and emergency response.

Some NPC Standing Committee members believed that emergency incidents typically draw widespread attention from all sectors of society, and the best way to guide public opinion is to promptly and accurately release information.

After an emergency incident occurs, both information and disinformation often flood social media platforms. To address this, the second review draft stipulates that relevant governments and departments, upon discovering false or incomplete information that affects or may affect social stability and disrupt social and economic order, shall promptly release accurate information to clarify the situation.

Moreover, emergency response and management work should adhere to the principle of prioritizing prevention, with



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prevention and emergency response working in tandem. As such, pre-incident emergency education is indispensable. Some lawmakers suggested expanding the target audience and responsible departments for emergency education, and both teachers and students should receive more emergency knowledge training. Besides, education authorities should provide guidance and oversight for schools’ emergency and safety education efforts.

Some also stressed that in addition to pre-incident emergency education, post-incident root cause analysis and summarization are also imperative to improve emergency preparedness and response going forward.

After the Seventh Session of the 14th NPC Standing Committee, during the period when public opinions were solicited on the NPC’s official website, a total of 337 comments on the draft were received from 192 individuals, and an additional two letters were received.

“The public has provided their views and suggestions on further enhancing emergency response capabilities, strengthening the protection of the rights of organizations and individuals in the emergency response process, and improving the legal liability accountability mechanism,” said Yang Heqing, a spokesperson for the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee.

Currently, the commission is making revisions and improvements to the draft law based on the opinions and suggestions from the NPC Standing Committee’s deliberations as well as feedback from various other parties. Work is underway to prepare the draft for continued review and deliberation. ■



Duan Jianjun (C) introduces his paper-cutting work to students at Horinger No.2 Primary School in Horinger county, north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, on March 14, 2024. Li Zhipeng

Top legislature launches enforcement inspection of Intangible Cultural Heritage Law

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, launched an inspection of the enforcement of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Law on May 7.

The NPC Standing Committee will dispatch task forces to localities or entrust provincial-level legislatures to conduct the inspection work that is scheduled to run through August.

The inspection will focus on five aspects, including the implementation of responsibilities for the protection of intangible cultural heritage, as well as the survey, inheritance, publicity and proper utilization of intangible cultural heritage.

In late September, the enforcement inspection team will convene a plenary meeting to summarize the inspection work and discuss a draft report. The NPC Standing Committee will deliberate on the report in late October. (Xinhua) ■

China adopts law on customs duties

Chinese lawmakers on April 26 voted to adopt a law on customs duties to promote high-level opening up. The law, which was passed at the Ninth session of the Standing Committee of the NPC, will take effect on December 1, 2024.

The responsible person from the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee recently answered journalists' questions on relevant issues of the law. The following is an excerpt of the Q&A.

What is the background and logic behind the formulation of the law?

Customs duties are a type of tax levied by customs on imported and exported goods and items entering a country. The collection of customs duties is related to national sovereignty and interests. It is an important source of fiscal revenue, as well as an important means of implementing macroeconomic regulation and trade and industrial policies, and plays an important role in promoting national development.

Since the reform and opening up, the construction of China's customs law and regulatory system has been continuously strengthened and improved. In recent years, new situations and changes have emerged in the field of customs duties, and it is necessary to formulate the law on the basis of summarizing the experience of implementing the regulations on import and export duties.

First, the Legislation Law requires that the establishment of tax items, the determination of tax rates and the management of tax collection and administration be formulated by law. Second, in order to actively and effectively respond to changes in the domestic and international situation, it is necessary to not only improve the customs duty system, but also strengthen the role of customs duties as a regulator of the domestic and international dual circulation, and enrich the legal response measures. Third, in accordance with the requirements of actively accommodating international high-standard economic and trade rules, it is necessary to promptly elevate the mature experience and practices related to the administration of customs duty collection to the level of legal systems.

The introduction of the law on customs duties is of great significance for the development of foreign trade, the expansion of institutional opening up, and the promotion of high-quality development. It is also an important measure to implement the tax legislation reform.

What are the main contents of the law?

The law has seven chapters and 72 articles, mainly including:

First, upholding the Party's leadership over customs work

and establishing a sound management system. It clarifies the adjustment authority of the NPC Standing Committee, the State Council and the State Council Customs Tariff Commission over tariff items and rates, as well as the basic system of customs duty collection and management.

Second, clarifying the scope of application of customs duties. It stipulates that goods permitted to be imported and exported by China and items entering the country shall be subject to customs duties collected by customs in accordance with this law and relevant laws and administrative regulations. The consignee of imported goods, the consignor of exported goods and the carrier or consignee of items entering the country are the taxpayers of customs duties. Adapting to the development of cross-border e-commerce, it has made clear provisions on the withholding obligors in relevant fields.

Third, standardizing the establishment, adjustment and implementation of customs tariff items and rates. It stipulates that the import and export tariff, which includes the tariff schedule, is an integral part of this law. It clarifies the types of customs duty rates, including the most-favored-nation rate, agreement rate, preferential rate, and general rate in the import link, and the export rate in the export link, as well as the applicable rules and adjustment mechanisms for various customs duty rates.

Fourth, improving the systems of dutiable amount, tax incentives and customs duty collection in special circumstances. It stipulates that customs duties shall be calculated by ad valorem, quantity-based or compound methods, and maintains the current rules for determining the dutiable value of customs duties. It clarifies the items exempt from or subject to reduced customs duties, and authorizes the State Council to formulate special customs duty incentive policies based on the needs of safeguarding national interests, promoting foreign exchanges, economic and social development, and scientific and technological innovation, or due to emergencies, which shall be filed with the NPC Standing Committee. It maintains the current relevant policy arrangements and makes provisions for the collection of customs duties on goods and items subject to exemption or reduction, bonded goods, and temporarily imported or exported goods and items.

Fifth, accommodating international high-standard economic and trade rules and improving the customs duty collection and administration system. It clarifies that the customs duty collection and administration may implement the mode of separating goods release and tax amount determination. It stipulates that taxpayers and withholding obligors can choose to file and pay taxes with customs according to regulations. It elevates the practice of allowing taxpayers and withholding obligors to make lump-sum tax payments to a legal provision. It extends the time limit for taxpayers to apply for a refund of overpaid taxes from one year to three years. It clarifies that customs shall promptly refund overpaid taxes to taxpayers.

Sixth, coordinating development and security, and enriching customs duty response measures. In addition to maintaining the current anti-dumping, countervailing and safeguard measures, as well as the collection of retaliatory customs duties, it adds provisions that for countries and regions that fail to fulfill the most-favored-nation treatment clause or customs duty preference clause in international treaties or agreements concluded with or jointly participated by China, corresponding measures may be taken on a reciprocal basis. The relevant



A cargo ship slowly docks at a container terminal in Lianyungang port, east China's Jiangsu Province, on May 9, 2024. Geng Yuhe

measures will be implemented in a manner consistent with China's obligations under relevant international treaties. At the same time, to ensure the implementation effect of the relevant measures, it clarifies that the state may take measures to adjust customs duties or take other anti-avoidance measures against acts that reduce the amount of tax payable in violation of the provisions of Chapters Two and Three of this law and without a reasonable business purpose.

What considerations were there regarding the release of the import and export tariff schedule of China?

The schedule primarily sets out the tariff codes, rates and application rules for customs duties. As an annex to the law on customs duties, the schedule is an integral part of the law. The law specifies that the schedule is issued by the State Council Customs Tariff Commission and authorizes the commission to publish any legally required adjustments to the schedule. According to these provisions, after the law is voted into effect, the main text will be promulgated by presidential order and published in the official gazette of the NPC Standing Committee and on the NPC official website. The schedule will then be released separately by the commission.

This arrangement has a few key considerations:

According to China's Legislation Law, establishing tax categories and rates are core tax system matters that fall under the exclusive legislative authority of the NPC and its Standing Committee. Since the schedule contains the specific tariff codes, rates and application rules, it must be stipulated within the law on customs duties. Designating the schedule as an annex to the law, and having it reviewed and passed together, upholds the integrity of the law.

Given the large volume, technical nature and frequent updates of the schedule, it is currently released through relevant government websites. The law on customs duties therefore assigns the responsibility of periodically compiling and publishing the schedule to the Tariff Commission, and authorizes the commission to release the version that has been reviewed and approved by the Standing Committee of the NPC. (NPC) ■



A child receives hearing training at a speech and hearing rehabilitation center in northeast China's Jilin Province, on May 17, 2023. *Xu Chang*

Liu Lingli dedicated to bringing sound to life for the hearing-impaired

Liu Lingli has been a teacher for hearing-impaired children for 33 years, and thanks to her help and dedication, more than 20 of the over 80 students she has taught have gone on to higher education.

Liu was born in Hengyang of Hunan Province in 1973. Her first interaction with people with disabilities was as a child

with one of her neighbors, surnamed Wang.

One day in the winter, when Liu was playing in her house, Wang used sign language to communicate with her. But Liu could not understand what she was trying to say. It was Wang's husband who told Liu that she wanted to make her a scarf.

“I was moved by her kind gesture and thought it would be great if she could speak,” Liu said. The incident left an indelible mark on Liu. At the age of 14, she decided to major in teaching hearing-impaired students and enrolled in Nanjing Normal University of Special Education. After four years, she graduated with a secondary vocational degree and became a teacher at Hengyang Normal School of Special Education, where she taught standard Chinese to first graders.

She remembers clearly that there were 14 students in her class, from 6 to 12 years old, and several of them were intellectually challenged. “Some of the students had snot on their face; some even wet their pants. I was at a loss and thought about quitting,” she said. She then thought about her neighbor Mrs. Wang and the pain on her face when she could not make people understand what she was trying to say. That gave her the determination to continue special education.

Although she was only 18 at the time, she treated the students as her children and practiced sign language in front of the mirror for one to two hours every day until she mastered it. With great care and patience, she also taught the students how to wash their faces and clothes, and clip their nails, gradually becoming the students’ “mother.”

In 2005, at the age of 32, Liu gave birth to her own child. But the boy was diagnosed with congenital hearing impairment when he was seven months old. Concerned that she would need time to overcome the shock, Liu’s colleagues requested she take a break from teaching and take her son to Changsha, the capital of Hunan, for treatment. But she refused, partly because these treatments were a long drawn-out process.

Instead, she began teaching a new class because she didn’t want to leave the students alone and decided to provide therapy for her son herself after work.

After becoming the mother of a child with a hearing impairment, Liu said she could better understand the difficulty families with a special child face. “I felt that I was not doing enough for the children I teach. I should put more effort into helping them better integrate into society,” she said.

“If the children receive early training and therapy, they could probably speak and thus have a better future.” So she started auditory and aural rehabilitation training for her son. She taught herself the methods of imparting such training. And to help her students speak, she put her lips against their hand to let them feel the movement of the lips and the flow of the air, while allowing the students to put their hand around her neck and on her nose so they could feel the vibration of the vocal cords.

Along with teaching her class, she also did one-on-one sessions with each student for 20 minutes every day. As a result, she usually had a sore throat at the end of the day and her voice was hoarse.

Thanks to Liu’s tireless efforts, her son could make some sound after several months of training and her students showed great improvement as well. “Whenever they managed to say ‘mom’ or ‘dad’ for the first time, I felt it was the sweetest sound in the world,” she said.

Studies show that children with hearing difficulties can learn to speak, even though the process is very painstaking. But for that, treatment should start early, she said.

Deng Liang, 43, was one of Liu’s first students. He was 10 years old when he went to the school but had not learned how

to speak yet. With the help of Liu and a hearing aid, he can now understand basic conversation and speak using simple words. He studied hard to get into a higher learning institution with the help of his teachers.

After graduating from Tianjin University of Technology in 2007, Deng started working for a state-owned enterprise in Changsha. “Mrs. Liu taught me to be kind, optimistic and work hard to build a better life, which has motivated me all these years,” he said.

Deng’s wife, Jiang Yan, is also one of Liu’s former students. After Jiang was admitted to the special education school, she held on tightly to her mother’s clothes and did not want her to go. Liu held her up gently to calm her down, just like a mother, which Jiang remembers vividly.

In school, Jiang played with other students and learned how to speak. She said Liu would demonstrate more than 100 times how to speak just one syllable. After graduating from the school, she enrolled in a high school and was later admitted to Beijing Union University. After graduating from college, she became a teacher of special education.

“Whenever they managed to say ‘mom’ or ‘dad’ for the first time, I felt it was the sweetest sound in the world,” Liu Lingli said.

Liu Hanxiang came to Liu Lingli’s school when she was eight years old. Since she rarely tried to speak before joining the school, her vocal cords had become very stiff. Liu Lingli helped her practice speaking every day and after several years, Liu Hanxiang could communicate normally with others.

The teacher also encouraged her to learn dancing and she eventually enrolled in the China Disabled People’s Performing Art Troupe. After performing during the celebrations to mark the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Panama in 2017, Liu Hanxiang sent a text message to her teacher and mentor thanking her for her efforts.

“Mrs. Liu, my performance today was a great success. I want to thank you. Without you, I would not have become who I am today,” the message read. Liu Lingli burst into tears when she read it.

For her contributions to society, especially her work with the hearing-impaired, Liu Lingli was elected as a deputy to the National People’s Congress last year, and fulfilled her responsibility of speaking for people with disabilities.

There is still a lot to do to ensure people with disabilities can find suitable jobs or start their own business. For example, the government could issue more diversified and flexible policies, Liu Lingli said. The media also needs to more prominently tell the stories of people with disabilities, who have built a successful career, so as to motivate children with disabilities to improve their lives through learning. (China Daily) ■

Tang Weijian advocates law-based governance to safeguard people's wellbeing



Tang Weijian gives a lecture on the guiding principles of the second session of the 14th National People's Congress. *Courtesy Photo*

Tang Weijian, a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), advocates for upholding the rule of law to protect people's wellbeing. As a professor from the School of Law at Renmin University of China, he has transitioned from a dedicated educator to a lawmaker, always staying true to the original aspiration of safeguarding people's wellbeing through the rule of law.

He remains committed to the principles of law-based governance, integrating his faith in the rule of law into both his professional work and his duties as an NPC deputy.

Soon after this year's NPC session closed in March, Tang immediately conveyed the policies of the Communist Party of China and the guiding principles of the session to as many people as possible, including his colleagues and students.

By sharing his valuable experiences from doing grassroots research to formulating high-quality legislative proposals, Tang has presented teachers and students alike with a tangible roadmap of law-based governance in China and a vivid picture of whole-process people's democracy.

Prior to serving as an NPC deputy, Tang held three consecutive terms as a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, with his attention focused on judicial reform, procuratorial su-

The enhancement of juvenile justice protection requires extensive legal education and awareness, coupled with strengthened efforts in law-based governance, Tang said.

pervision, juvenile protection and public interest litigation systems.

As an NPC deputy, he now continues to pool wisdom and strength into the country's law-based governance by offering his suggestions. To craft high-quality legislative proposals, he delves into procuratorates and courts, as well as enterprises, engaging with a wide range of the public to gather opinions.

He pays great attention to legal protection for minors in China, emphasizing the need to address emerging challenges that may harm the legitimate rights and interests of minors in new business forms, like on-demand cinemas, e-sports hotels, blind box sales and escape room scenarios, which present varying degrees of regulatory challenges.

Tang said that judicial authorities should preemptively intervene in new business forms that may jeopardize the legitimate rights and interests of minors.

The enhancement of juvenile justice protection requires extensive legal education and awareness, Tang said. Thus, he advocates for judicial protection to complement the collaborative efforts of government, schools, society and families to effectively safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of minors, and provide a sound legal environment for their healthy growth.

During this year's NPC session, Tang submitted motions and proposals on improving the rule of law via people's supervisors, judicial interpretation and judicial suggestions, strengthening the sense of community for the Chinese nation and promoting regional collaborative legislation.

Looking ahead, Tang said he will make a continued commitment to strengthening the rule of law in China, fully leveraging his role as an NPC deputy to resolve the concerns of the people. (NPC) ■

Yue Qiaoyun helps villagers with e-commerce for rural vitalization

Yue Qiaoyun, a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), has been busy training farmers on e-commerce skills since returning home after the second session of the 14th NPC in March. Yue is from Pinggu district of Beijing, which is known for its abundant harvest of peaches.

As the chairwoman of the Beijing Lyunongxingyun Fruit Production and Sale Professional Cooperative Society, Yue put forward suggestions regarding the healthy and high-quality development of the e-commerce industry at this year's NPC session.

Looking back on the early days of her entrepreneurship, Yue said that by leveraging the Internet Plus initiative promoted by the Pinggu district government, she started the e-commerce operation model of "Internet Plus Peaches," upgrading the traditional cooperative business and expanding the market for Pinggu's produce.

"In the morning, the fresh peaches are on the trees, at noon they are on the road and by evening they are on customers' dining tables," she said.

Returning from the NPC session, Yue immediately conveyed the policies of the Communist Party of China and the country in the agricultural and rural sector to local villagers, including those related to rural revitalization, modern agriculture and e-commerce development.

At the same time, her e-commerce training programs have been thriving. In the ensuing months, she has cultivated a number of farmers who are savvy in both business and e-commerce. The Pinggu peach brand is increasingly popular, which has resulted in villagers' pockets getting fuller. As a result, she has been honored as an "outstanding team leader in rural entrepreneurship and innovation".

"I am well aware of the enormous potential of e-commerce for rural revitalization and the growth of farmers' income, so I hope to nurture more locally distinctive e-commerce brands and promote the establishment of an e-commerce livestreaming base and training school," Yue said.

"In addition, I also suggest providing financial rewards to professional teams engaged in agricultural product e-commerce,



Yue Qiaoyun (R) sells peaches with a farmer via live streaming at a peach orchard in Xinggong village of Pinggu district, Beijing. Ren Chao

In the morning, the fresh peaches are on the trees, at noon they are on the road, and by evening they are on customers' dining tables.

merce, including tax cuts and subsidies, to stimulate their innovative vitality. Furthermore, establishing a certification system for agricultural product livestreaming personnel to enhance their professionalism and sense of responsibility is crucial for ensuring the healthy and sustainable development of the e-commerce industry," she added.

Technology is key to industrial revitalization. In recent years, Yue has been aware of the role of technology in promoting rural vitalization. In her next steps, she said, the innovation and application of modern agricultural technology will be a major focus.

"I plan to introduce more technological innovation projects, such as smart agricultural parks and demonstration bases for new and better peach varieties to improve the quality and yield of peaches," she said. (NPC) ■

Huang Guisong underlines innovation for high-quality development of manufacturing industry



Huang Guisong, a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), presents the guiding principles of the second session of the 14th NPC to the employees of his company—Shantou Ultrasonic Electronics (Group) Co. Ltd., in Shantou city, south China's Guangdong province. Courtesy Photo

Huang Guisong, a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), still remembers heated discussions between lawmakers on developing new quality productive forces, a phrase on the lips of NPC deputies during the second session of the 14th NPC in March.

As chairman of the labor union and a senior engineer at Shantou Ultrasonic Electronics (Group) Co. Ltd. in Shantou city of south China's Guangdong Province, Huang said that during the annual session this year, NPC deputies talked more about developing new quality productive forces and technological innovation.

As the NPC session closed, Huang wasted no time. He organized his notes and conveyed the guiding principles of the Communist Party of China and the country to his colleagues in order to boost momentum for developing new quality productive forces.

In his notes, phrases like "new quality productive forces," "technological innovation," and "industrial development" featured prominently. Huang said that developing new quality productive forces is crucial for Shantou to acceler-

In his notes, phrases like "new quality productive forces," "technological innovation," and "industrial development" feature prominently.

ate the development of new energy, new materials, the next generation of the electronic information industry, as well as the traditional and characteristic industries of textiles, creative toys and the health industry.

Huang's company is a leading electronic component manufacturer in China. Staying abreast of industry trends, it engages in the research and development (R&D) of new technologies and products and has set a unique example of high-quality development in the manufacturing industry.

Huang, a pioneer in the industry, personally participated in and holds 20 patented technologies. His efforts have significantly boosted the rapid advancement and industrialization of the company's touch device manufacturing technology.

This year's Government Work Report explicitly outlined tasks to harness innovation as the leading force in driving industrial innovation through technological advancements and pressing ahead with new industrialization, so as to raise total factor productivity, foster new growth drivers and strengths, and promote a new leap forward in productive forces.

During a presentation to his colleagues, Huang highlighted technology as the primary productive force and innovation as the primary driving force, with technological innovation at the core of new quality productive forces.

Developing new quality productive forces is essential for propelling high-quality development, necessitating a continued emphasis on innovation, he said.

Huang's company remains committed to innovation-driven development, particularly by advancing the integration of industry, academia, research and application to enhance the efficiency of technology transfer.

"With increased investment in R&D and the enhanced application of technological achievements in industry, the company will drive the development of new quality productive forces through technological innovation, thereby promoting the high-quality development of the enterprise," he said. (NPC) ■

Legislation advances whole-process people's democracy

Thanks to the enactment and modification of several laws last year, China's system of people's congresses has been further improved, contributing to ensuring that the people are the masters of the country, experts said.

While enabling the people to participate more in state governance, the experts said that the improved system has also helped to promote whole-process people's democracy, the mode of democracy in China that guarantees people's right to take part in elections, consultation, decision-making, management and oversight.

This key concept was first put forward by President Xi Jinping in Shanghai in November 2019 during an inspection tour of the city's Hongqiao subdistrict.

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

In a recent article by Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, the upholding and improvement of the people's congress system was reiterated, as it is an important institutional vehicle for realizing the concept. The article was published on February 16 in *Qiushi Journal*, a flagship magazine of the CPC Central Committee.

In China, the people exercise state power through the National People's Congress (NPC), the top legislature, and local people's congresses at different levels, guaranteeing that their interests are reflected in the decision-making process.

The people's congress system is a foundational political system for upholding the unity among CPC leadership, the running of the country by the people and law-based governance, the article said, adding that since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPC Central Committee has continued to advance theoretical and practical innovations to the people's congress system.

Mo Jihong, head of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Law, said the legislative items completed over the past year contributed to improving the system.

Last year, China passed the amendment to the Legislation Law, which allows the greater participation of deputies to people's congresses in legislative activities, including law-making and the inspection of law enforcement.

The country also updated rules for members of the NPC



Li Chaolan (second from right) votes in the election of deputies to the county and township people's congresses. Wu Guangyu

Standing Committee, requiring them to increase their connection with deputies, especially those from grassroots areas, by various means in order to learn people's opinions in depth and respond to the public's concerns in a timely manner.

In addition, the supervisory power of people's congresses is being strengthened, as China began amending the Law on Supervision by the Standing Committee of the People's Congresses at All Levels, with the adoption of a decision that streamlines the process of reviewing normative documents for the first time.

The decision, which aims to strengthen the supervisory role of the NPC Standing Committee, clarifies that all normative documents, such as administrative regulations and judicial interpretations, should be examined to ensure they are consistent with the Constitution.

Mo hailed the legislative actions, saying that they are conducive to optimizing the workflow of the people's congresses at each level, upgrading their functions and thus improving the people's congress system.

"The updates and revisions to the laws also help people's congress deputies better perform their duties, so that the voice of the people from all walks of life can be heard loud and clear," he said.

Zhang Yuzhen, a deputy to the NPC from Fujian Province, said, "The people's congress system is a crucial channel for conveying public suggestions in state governance."

Zhang, who is also head of the Fujian Academy of Environmental Science, submitted a proposal on amending the Maritime Environment Protection Law to the NPC, after seeking opinions and ideas from colleagues and coastal residents.

"Some officials from the NPC Standing Committee visited my hometown to conduct surveys to understand more about my proposal," she told China Daily.

"I was also invited to Beijing to attend seminars with environmental departments and organizations to jointly study how to ramp up ocean pollution prevention when the law was being revised."

In October 2023, the amended law was passed by the NPC Standing Committee, and it took effect on January 1, 2024.

"What makes me very happy is that my proposal was heard by and received the attention of the top legislative body, indicating that the people's congress system works," she said.

"I was elected as a deputy by the people. My duty is to serve the people and speak for their interests. Only when channels for collecting the public's opinions are open and smooth can people's difficulties in their work and life be truly resolved," she added.

With new ideas and suggestions collected in her hometown, Zhang added that she is ready to go to Beijing to attend the second session of the 14th NPC, which is scheduled to open on March 5.

Calling for continuous efforts to improve the people's congress system on the basis of law-based governance, Mo said, "The optimized institutional vehicle will be a stronger support for developing whole-process people's democracy to make the voice of the people louder and clearer."

"The greater participation of the people in social governance is the best embodiment of running the country by the people," he added.

Taking a people-centered approach to legislation and to promoting whole-process people's democracy, the NPC Standing Committee also formulated and reviewed several other laws concerning people's livelihoods last year, including those on charity, construction of barrier-free facilities, preschool education and the prevention of infectious diseases.

In addition, a number of reports, including those on combating domestic violence and mental health, were submitted for review to the NPC Standing Committee. (China Daily) ■



Feeling the vitality of China's thriving development

By Lu Yan



The delegation of the Bahamian parliament visit a courtyard meeting hall at Caochang Sitiao Hutong in Beijing's Dongcheng district, on April 12, 2024. *Courtesy Photo*

At the invitation of Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, speaker of the House of Assembly Patricia Deveaux and president of the Senate Julie LaShell Adderley of the Bahamian parliament jointly led a delegation to visit China from April 7 to 12.

The delegation visited Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, learned about the history of the Communist Party of China (CPC), experienced Chinese culture and had face-to-face discussions with NPC deputies.

Learning history

On April 9, the delegation visited the Museum of the Communist Party of China located in Beijing and toured the exhibition *Staying True to the Original Aspiration and Founding Mission: Exhibition on the History of the Communist Party of China (1921-2021)*, exploring the Party's century-long struggle.



The delegation of the Bahamian parliament visit the Museum of the Communist Party of China located in Beijing and tour the exhibition *Staying True to the Original Aspiration and Founding Mission: Exhibition on the History of the Communist Party of China (1921-2021)*, and president of the Senate Julie LaShell Adderley leaves a message in the guestbook, on April 9, 2024. *Courtesy Photo*

With a panoramic XR animation scene, the exhibition gave the delegation a vivid experience of the Long March, receiving high praise from the international friends.

The museum, inaugurated in 2021, is a site devoted to permanent and comprehensive exhibitions of the Party's history. The delegation paused in front of the model of the Red Boat while listening to its stories. It is a replica of a historical boat in Jiaxing, honoring the conclusion of the first National Congress of the CPC in 1921.

The delegation learned in detail about the Long March of the Red Army at the exhibition. From October 1934 to October 1936, the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army soldiers left their bases and marched along the 12,500-km-long journey through raging rivers, frigid mountains and arid grassland to break the siege of the Kuomintang forces while fighting the Japanese aggressors.

With a panoramic XR animation scene, the exhibition gave the delegation a vivid experience of the Long March, and received high praise from the international friends.

With the Chinese national flag rising slowly, salute guns firing in unison, the mighty steps of the People's Liberation Army marching past, and fighter jets and bombers soaring over Tiananmen Square, the delegation watched the footage of the People's Republic of China (PRC) founding ceremony review, the parade celebrating the 35th anniversary of the founding of the PRC and the parade celebrating the 70th anniversary.

At the exhibition, the delegation also learned about China's rapid economic development and long-term social stability over the 75 years since its founding as well as the harmonious coexistence of humanity and nature.

Technological achievements were also on display, such as Jiaolong, China's first independently developed manned submersible, as well as various advanced space technology.

From a poor and backward country to the world's second-largest economy, from the complete victory in the poverty alleviation campaign to the realization of the Chinese people's dreams of thousands of years, the four-part exhibition, with over 2,500 pictures, 4,500 cultural relics and 420 national first-class cultural relics, presented an epic, all-encompassing and panoramic view of the century-long journey of the CPC, all of which deeply impressed the delegation.

Before leaving, Adderley wrote in the guestbook that China's achievements are truly astounding and that the in-depth content of the museum is an excellent platform for the world to understand China's history. "Congratulations on your remarkable achievements!" she wrote.

Discussion on democracy

On April 12, the delegation visited a courtyard meeting hall at Caochang Sitiao Hutong in Beijing's Dongsheng district and learned about how democracy is practiced at the grassroots level in China.

The courtyard meetings are a mechanism that empowers community members to discuss and decide their own affairs. At the meeting hall, the delegation saw dozens of photos on the wall documenting discussion meetings among residents. From small issues like setting up clothes drying spaces in the courtyard, to larger matters such as toilet renovations for the entire residential community, as long as it concerned the livelihoods of the neighbors, everyone came to the hall for discussion. There, they would pool their wisdom, resolve conflicts and build consensus, ultimately making decisions which concern the everyday lives of local people.

"The most important thing is to speak for the people," said Wang Rui, a deputy to the NPC from Dongsheng. Since being elected to the NPC, she has maintained close

contact with the people through research, seminars and the local legislative outreach office. She solicits public opinion, responds to people's needs and submits them to the relevant authorities. In this process, she has helped resolve issues such as the low utilization of some courtyard spaces and the aging of water supply pipelines.

Listening to the stories of the NPC deputies serving the people, Deveaux and Adderley both recognized the "commitment to people-centered development" and hoped that the two countries would advance together along this path centered on the people.

Better future

The delegation also learned about traditional culture, traditional Chinese medicine and local customs during their visit to Tianjin, a city that combines both tradition and modernity.

This is the first visit of the delegation from the Bahamian parliament to China. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the Bahamas 27 years ago, bilateral relations have made great progress, with the continuous expansion of practical cooperation, increasingly

The visit to China was rich and enjoyable, and the history, democracy, culture and cities of China are unforgettable.

close people-to-people exchanges, and mutual understanding and support on issues related to the two countries' core interests and major concerns.

"Although the Bahamas and China are far apart, the hearts of the people of the two countries are connected," the delegation said, "Every foreigner should come to China and see it with their own eyes, so that they will know how inadequate their previous understanding of China was, and how ridiculous some reports are. The visit to China was rich and enjoyable, and the history, democracy, culture and cities of China are unforgettable. After returning home, we will share our experiences in China widely and hope to make greater efforts to promote the China-Bahamas relationship."

Deveaux and Adderley also thanked China for the selfless assistance it has provided for the Bahamas' economic and social development, stating that the Bahamian parliament's House of Assembly and Senate are willing to strengthen exchanges with China's NPC and contribute to promoting bilateral cooperation in fields such as the economy, trade, culture and legislation.

China is willing to work with the Bahamas to deepen cooperation in various fields and accelerate the development of bilateral relations to bring increased benefits to the two countries and peoples, Zhao concluded. ■



Foreign diplomats and envoys visit the Nanmofang township legislative liaison station, which is under the local legislative outreach office of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress located in the Chaoyang district in Beijing, on April 26, 2024. *Courtesy Photo*

Foreign diplomats and envoys get a firsthand look at China's whole-process people's democracy in action

By Lu Yan

On April 26, a group of special guests arrived at an ancient and picturesque Beijing courtyard. Diplomats from 36 countries, including Mozambique, El Salvador and Seychelles, were invited to visit the Nanmofang township legislative liaison station, which is under the local legislative outreach office of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) of China located in the Chaoyang district in Beijing.

They participated in a consultation and discussion meeting on legislation, had face-to-face discussions with deputies to the people's congresses and learned about China's whole-process people's democracy.

The guests had a slew of questions. How are the quotas for deputies at various levels of the people's congresses determined? How are the deputies elected? Who can propose suggestions for legal drafts? Can foreign nationals participate in China's legislative work? How do deputies to the people's

congresses allocate their time to fulfill their duties as lawmakers while balancing their own work commitments?

The people's congress deputies provided detailed answers to the guests' inquiries, with the foreign diplomats and envoys listening attentively to the explanations, watching introductory videos and engaging in interactive exchanges. This visit offered the international attendees a firsthand look at the practice of China's whole-process people's democracy.

A system that works

China has a multilayered system of people's congresses at the township, county, city, provincial and national levels. According to the Constitution and the Election Law, the deputies to the township and county-level people's congresses are directly elected by their constituents, while the deputies to the higher-level people's congresses are elected by the congresses at the next level below.

The NPC is composed of deputies elected from the provinces, autonomous regions, cities under direct central government administration, special administrative regions and the armed forces. These deputies have both decision-making responsibilities and the duty to convey suggestions from their communities.

In 2015, the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee established its first batch of local legislative outreach offices, starting in the city of Shanghai and

No country has the right to tell another country what kind of democratic model is valuable. What each country should do is reflect on how to make democracy more effective.



Counselor of Iranian Embassy in China raises a question to deputies to the National People's Congress during a visit to the Nanmofang township legislative liaison station, which is under the local legislative outreach office of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress located in the Chaoyang district in Beijing, on April 26, 2024. *Courtesy Photo*

the provinces of Hubei, Jiangxi and Gansu. The goal was to better engage with the people the NPC represents and improve their everyday lives.

Over the past nine years, this initiative has expanded significantly, with now close to 6,500 local outreach offices across China at the provincial, city and district levels. This has created multiple channels for the public to voice their opinions on legislation and policy, including through universities, businesses and the financial sector.

Public input has been reflected in various national laws, such as those addressing environmental protection and the rights of the disabled and elderly. This exemplifies China's model of whole-process people's democracy, with the local legislative outreach offices serving as a direct conduit and bridge between the people and their deputies.

Jiao Chengzhi, director of the Nanmofang people's congress, introduced the four-tiered work system at the station, which includes one deputy from the NPC, four deputies from the Beijing Municipal people's congress, 12 deputies from the Chaoyang district people's congress, elected from Nanmofang, and 56 deputies from the Nanmofang people's congress.

"The Nanmofang Township station serves as an important platform for deputies to the people's congresses to gather public opinions and hear the voices of the people," Jiao told visiting foreign diplomats and envoys.

Since the establishment of the Nanmofang station two years ago, it has facilitated residents, deputies to the people's congresses and professionals from various sectors to participate in legislative consultations for more than 10 laws and regulations. Staff members have collected public opinions and compiled 131 suggestions for submission.

The Chaoyang district legislative outreach office, which set up the Nanmofang station, has provided over 2,300 opinions and suggestions on 22 legislative drafts and the legislative plan of the 14th NPC Standing Committee since its establishment in July 2021. Among them, 1,013 suggestions were made for the 12 laws and the legislative plans of the NPC Standing Committee, with 107 of them adopted.

Questions answered

During the visit, Aldo Alvarez, El Salvador's Ambassador to China, asked a question concerning whether the practice of whole-process people's democracy has made the majority of the people feel that their needs have been met through legislation.

In response, Chen Hongzhi, director of the standing committee of Chaoyang district people's congress, shared his experiences from participating in soliciting opinions for revising various laws through the local legislative outreach office. He explained that through the establishment of channels and mechanisms involving or relating to the process of making and passing laws, there are now more expansive avenues for the public to express their will. This allows people's rights to be effectively exercised through expressing opinions, and through consultation, consensus is reached on legislative outcomes that the public then abides by.

Michael Campbell, Nicaraguan Ambassador to China, asked how the NPC deputies, who have their own professional jobs, are able to balance their work and deputy duties.

Chen explained the deputy election system and proce-



Foreign diplomats and envoys visit the center for the people's congress deputies at Nanmofang township, which is under the local legislative outreach office of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress located in the Chaoyang district in Beijing, on April 26, 2024. Courtesy Photo

dures, including how deputies are elected through a process involving deciding on elections, voter registration, delineating districts, verifying qualifications and conducting voting. He also detailed the composition, structure and proportions of NPC deputies to ensure representation of groups such as people with disabilities and women, among others.

Chang Yi is a deputy from the medical and healthcare sector, and she felt deeply about this issue. As an NPC deputy for over a decade, Chang has combined her duties as a deputy with her professional work. She has conducted research, submitted proposals and followed up on them.

"In 2013, due to a shortage of medical resources in the Chaoyang district, 300 voters collectively voiced their concerns to me, expressing the desire for a new top-tier hospital to be built," Chang told the foreign diplomats and envoys.

After a meticulous preparation process, a new branch of Beijing Chaoyang Hospital was established in Chaoyang in 2023, meeting the medical needs of nearly 500,000 local residents.

This example illustrates how NPC deputies like Chang are able to closely connect their legislative work with the real needs of the people in their constituents. By leveraging their professional expertise and using the channels of the people's congress, they are able to effectively address the concerns raised by constituents and deliver tangible improvements in public services. This embodies the principle of whole-process people's democracy in action.

While answering a question on how deputies use online platforms to gather more voices and opinions from the people, Meng Fangshen, an NPC deputy, described the various channels available, such as the NPC official website, accounts on Weixin, a ubiquitous Chinese super app, and other mobile

apps. On these platforms draft laws are published for public comments and deputies engage with the public through online workrooms.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the NPC. The invitation extended to diplomatic envoys stationed in China to visit a local legislative outreach office and closely observe the practice of whole-process people's democracy at the local level is profoundly significant.

In his summary speech during the discussion, Alvarez said that democracy takes different forms in every country and the core of democracy is "addressing the needs of the majority of the people."

"We can see that through China's whole-process people's democracy, the people have the opportunity to have their voices heard and ensure political participation. The people's demands are reflected in the legislative process. The Chinese people also highly value and emphasize this. There is no doubt that China's democracy is effective and successful," Alvarez said. "No country has the right to tell another country what kind of democratic model is valuable. What each country should do is to reflect on how to make democracy more effective."

"I saw how the Chinese people's congress deputies closely connect with the masses," said Mozambique's Ambassador to China, Maria Gustava, adding that whole-process people's democracy is aimed at heeding the voices of the people, especially by responding to the people's expectations through laws and policies.

"The legislative body solicits opinions from scholars, people's congress deputies, government departments and multiple stakeholders, all of this is done for the benefit of the people," Gustava concluded. ■



A staff member works at the production workshop of a flange company in Mengcun Hui autonomous county, north China's Hebei Province, on April 18, 2024. Yang Shiyao

Understanding high-quality development

By Yu Jiantuo

The concept of high-quality development was first introduced in the report delivered by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, at the 19th National Congress of the CPC in 2017. The report emphasized that “China’s economy has been transitioning from a phase of rapid growth to a stage of high-quality development.”

Since then, China has enriched and enhanced its policies focusing on this development. Through persistent practice and reform, significant achievements have been made. High-quality development has now evolved into the underlying logic guiding China’s development in the new era.

Despite such a profound shift in China’s development logic, the concept of high-quality development has yet to receive sufficient attention from the wider international community. Many have noted changes in China’s macroeconomic policies, its advancements in green technology and environmen-

tal protection, and the monumental achievement of eradicating absolute poverty. However, there remains a dearth of systematic comprehension regarding the underlying causes of these transformations.

New development philosophy

High-quality development is defined as innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development. The formation of the new philosophy is a profound and systematic change, based on policy practices that began in the early 2000s. It aims to provide a conceptual framework for adapting to new trends and overcoming critical challenges facing China’s economy.

“Innovative development” refers to adapting and accelerating the driving forces of development. It is recognized that for a long time, China’s growth has benefited from a large

and relatively low-cost labor force and significant resource extraction. This is unsustainable. According to a study by Peking University's Guanghua School of Management, China's annual growth rate of total factor productivity, a measure of output in relation to input, fell from an average of 4 percent in the first three decades of reform and opening up, that began in 1978, to less than 2 percent in the decade after 2008. This indicates that China needs to rely more on technological advancement, innovation and structural reform.

"Coordinated development" is aimed at addressing the various structural imbalances that arise in the course of development. That is to say, China's greatest challenge for middle- and long-term development stems from an urban-rural imbalance with significant regional disparities. For example, the income ratio of urban and rural residents in 2009 reached 3.3:1, while the ratio of per-capita GDP in Shanghai to that of Guizhou Province reached 8.2:1. In the same year, the country's household income Gini coefficient, which measures the level of income inequality, reached 0.495, ranking China among the highest in the world's major economies. This uneven development has naturally resulted in sluggish consumption growth and imbalances within the consumption-investment structure.

"Green development" refers to addressing the problems of pollution and ecological degradation, and striving for a more harmonious relationship between humanity and nature. China's rapid economic growth has been accompanied by significant resource consumption and intensive emission of pollutants. In 2013, the Ministry of Environmental Protection monitored the air quality of 74 major cities and found that only three had met the designated standards. As a responsible country, China has taken measures to improve energy efficiency. From 1990 to 2007, China's carbon emissions per unit of output fell by 49.2 percent, beating the global average (15.4 percent) and that of other major economies such as the United States (27 percent). As a fast-growing developing country and global manufacturing center, China recognizes the need to strive for better methods of energy conservation and emissions reduction.

"Open development" refers to optimizing the relationship between China and the world economy. China's impressive economic growth over the past 40 years is due largely to its commitment to openness and its integration into the world economy. However, following the 2008 global financial crisis, a trend of anti-globalization and economic nationalism emerged in many countries. Likewise, while China's economy has maintained healthy growth, global economic recovery remains fragile. Thus, to ensure sustained growth in a changing environment, China must forge a new model of economic, trade and investment collaboration, one based on boosting domestic demand while bolstering connections with the global economy.

"Shared development" aims to enhance the inclusiveness of development, both within and outside of China. Sharing the fruits of development with all is a touchstone for testing the inclusiveness of development. In China, for example, between 2012 and 2021, 98.99 million people were lifted out of absolute poverty, equivalent to the combined populations of Germany and Chile. Building on this momentum, China now aims to increase the size of its middle-income group. According to one study by renowned economist Li Shi and

others, only 13.8 percent of people in China had reached the middle-income level in 2013.

China is not only pursuing inclusive development at the national level. Indeed, with acute imbalances in development between different countries and regions, it aims to share the fruits of its development with the international community.

China's new development philosophy is not an abstract or ambiguous theory. Rather, it is a clear set of policies to address specific challenges. Likewise, the five elements of development are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Together they form a cohesive framework rooted in the pursuit of high-quality development.

Successes and challenges

Embarking on the path of high-quality development is a strategic choice for China. As a comprehensive transformation of the entire development model, it represents nothing short of a revolution without smoke. Naturally, this degree of systemic and nationwide change, particularly for a developing country with a population of more than 1.4 billion and a landmass close to the entire European continent, is challenging. In particular, as part of incremental reform, whereby the fruits within reach are picked first, the marginal costs of the remaining reforms tend to increase incrementally.

To evaluate the progress of this new philosophy, it is important to assess the costs and benefits in a long-term,

China's impressive economic growth over the past 40 years is due largely to its commitment to openness and its integration into the world economy.

comprehensive and dynamic manner. Some people may hold romantic views of reform and tend to overlook its potential costs, while some others may feel pessimistic due to temporary frustrations and failures. However, both views have their flaws. Consider, for example, China's entry into the World Trade Organization. As one of the critical preparation measures for entry, China underwent corporate restructuring, which led to the layoffs of 36 million urban workers. However, in the decades following its entry in 2001, many more job opportunities were created in urban areas and China managed to revive its economy.

In the process of transitioning toward high-quality development, China has made significant advances in various sectors of the economy. Chiefly, it has risen as a global leader in 5G technology, artificial intelligence and advanced manufacturing, and its digital economy ranks second in the world in terms of overall scale. Moreover, China has made rapid progress in cutting-edge scientific research and high-quality patents. In 2019, China overtook the United States to become the top source of applications through the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) of the World Intellectual Property Organization, with 58,990 filings, and it has since remained the

global leader in PCT application volume. This achievement represents a collective asset for humanity, promising to yield great benefits far beyond the country's borders.

China's progress has also been notable when it comes to the green economy. Indeed, during the past decade, China has led the world in improving air quality. This progress surpassed the timeline of over 30 years it took the United States to attain a similar level of change following the enactment of the Clean Air Act. Meanwhile, between 2005 and 2020, China's carbon dioxide emissions intensity fell by 48.4 percent, exceeding official targets. China's installed wind and solar capacity also account for one third of the world's total, while its share in the manufacturing of photovoltaic modules, wind turbines and other key components has reached 70 percent.

In other areas of high-quality development, China has also made remarkable progress. For example, in 2020, China eliminated absolute poverty and achieved the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the field of poverty reduction ahead of schedule. Meanwhile, China's urban-rural income ratio has shrunk to 2.39:1, back to the level of 1995. And the number of middle-income individuals in China has surpassed 400 mil-

lion, eclipsing the population of the United States and reaching that of the European Union.

At the international level, China has further opened up to the world and engaged in overseas investment through a variety of bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms. Since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has implemented over 2,000 aid projects in over 120 BRI partner countries, mobilizing nearly 1 trillion U.S. dollars in investment and helping nearly 40 million people escape poverty, Luo Zhaohui, Chairman of the China International Development Cooperation Agency, said at a press conference on November 1, 2023. China proposed the BRI in 2013 to boost connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes.

Listing these facts does not mean China's transition to high-quality development has been and will be smooth or without friction. To be sure, the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical factors, climate change and many other variables have added significant constraints and uncertainties to this transformation. Consider also that many of the changes are brought about by a process of trial and error, and "learning by doing."

Global significance

In September 2015, leaders of UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda provides favorable conditions and opportunities for China's high-quality development by strengthening economic ties, stabilizing global value chains and reducing risks related to climate change and other natural disasters as well.

However, the prospects for global sustainable development are not optimistic. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition, published by the UN and reflecting progress toward reaching the 140 targets, shows that nearly half of the signatories are moderately or severely off track, while over 30 percent have either seen no progress or regressed below the 2015 baseline. Significantly, should current trends continue, 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty and only one third of countries will have halved their national poverty levels by 2030. There are also apparent lags in bridging gender gaps, eradicating hunger and advancing children's education.

With a view to speeding up the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by the international community, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Development Initiative at the General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly in 2021.

China's achievements in high-quality development, including poverty alleviation, decarbonization, clean energy and digitalization, along with progress in other areas, have significantly contributed to the global sustainable development agenda, both directly and indirectly.

As China continues to pursue high-quality development, its economic growth will become increasingly strengthened, the middle-income group will expand, the market size will grow, production will become more environmentally sustainable and international cooperation will deepen. These developments will significantly impact and enhance the UN sustainable development agenda, both in breadth and depth. (Beijing Review) ■



In the exhibition hall of Ehang Intelligent Equipment (Guangzhou) Co. Ltd., a staff member introduces the EH216-S passenger-carrying unmanned aerial vehicle to media reporters, on May 14, 2024. *Li Renzi*



A staff member works at the Weijing Energy Storage's "Super G Factory" in Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong Province, on May 19, 2024. This project serves as an intelligent manufacturing hub for advanced flow batteries and systems. *Li Renzi*

This photo taken on May 14, 2024 shows the Baihetan Hydropower Station in southwest China. A major source of power for China's west-to-east power transmission project, the station is also expected to make a great contribution to the country's efforts to see carbon dioxide emissions peak before 2030 and go carbon neutral before 2060. *Chen Xinbo*



A city full of historical and cultural significance

YUYAO

