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National People's Congress of China



**BUILDING A
JUST WORLD
OF COMMON
DEVELOPMENT**

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GLOBAL ALLIANCE AGAIN
RIO DE JANEIRO



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RIEIRO - 2024

Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders attending the 19th G20 Summit pose for a group photo for the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty initiated by Brazil in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Nov. 18, 2024. Xi attended the G20 Summit here. The Rio Summit this year has chosen the theme "Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet" and decides to establish a Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty. *Li Xueren*

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COVER: Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers an important speech entitled "Building a Just World of Common Development" at Session I of the 19th G20 Summit on Fight Against Hunger and Poverty in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Nov. 18, 2024. *Li Xueren*

Shouldering responsibility to our times and jointly promoting Asia-Pacific development

Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At the 31st APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting
Lima, Peru, November 16, 2024





Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders and representatives from APEC member economies pose for a group photo in Lima, Peru, Nov. 16, 2024. Huang Jingwen

Your Excellency President Dina Boluarte,
Colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to visit the beautiful garden city of Lima again after eight years and join you in discussing Asia-Pacific cooperation. I wish to thank President Boluarte and the Peruvian government for the excellent organization of this meeting.

Over the decades, APEC has been instrumental in leading Asia and the Pacific to great success in development, prosperity and connectivity, making the region the most dynamic economy and primary engine of global economic growth. The world today is gripped by accelerating transformation unseen in a century as well as anemic growth. The World Openness Index has been on the decline. Asia-Pacific cooperation is confronted with challenges, such as rising tendencies of geopolitics, unilateralism and protectionism. At this historic crossroads, we Asia-Pacific countries carry greater responsibilities on our shoulders. We must act in solidarity and cooperation to meet the challenges, fully deliver on the Putrajaya Vision 2040, build an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future and start a new era in Asia-Pacific development. To this end, I wish to propose the following.

At this historic crossroads, we Asia-Pacific countries carry greater responsibilities on our shoulders.

First, we need to build an open and interconnected paradigm for Asia-Pacific cooperation. We should stay committed to multilateralism and an open economy, firmly uphold the multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core, fully reactivate APEC's role as an incubator of global economic and trade rules and advance regional economic integration and connectivity. We should tear down the walls impeding the flow of trade, investment, technology and services; uphold stable and smooth industrial and supply chains; and promote economic circulation in the region and the world. A Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) is an ambitious vision for regional economic integration and is critical for long-term development and prosperity of our region. Ten years ago, a historic decision to kick off the FTAAP process was taken at the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Beijing. Today, we will adopt a new document to guide this process. I believe that this will give new impetus to our efforts toward an open Asia-Pacific economy.

Opening up is a distinct hallmark of Chinese modernization. China always promotes reform through opening up. We voluntarily subscribe to high-standard international economic and trade rules, adopt proactive measures for further opening up and take systematic steps to further open the telecom, Internet, education, culture, medical service and other sectors. We continue to implement the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership against high standards. We are also working actively to join the

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement. We have just signed a protocol to upgrade the free trade agreement with Peru, and have substantially concluded negotiations with ASEAN to upgrade to free trade area 3.0. Together with the relevant parties, we will seek to discuss trade agreements in digital and green areas, and steadily expand the globally-oriented network of high-standard free trade areas.

Second, we need to make green innovation a catalyst for Asia-Pacific. We need to firmly seize the opportunities presented by the new round of sci-tech revolution and industrial transformation, and strengthen exchanges and cooperation in artificial intelligence (AI), quantum information, life and health, and other frontier areas. We need to foster an open, fair, just and nondiscriminatory ecosystem for innovation and promote a leapfrog development of productive forces across our region. To build a clean and beautiful Asia-Pacific, we should prioritize ecological protection; promote resources conservation and their efficient use, as well as green and low-carbon development; and engineer an all-round green transition in economic and social development. We need to push forward coordinated digital and green transformation and development to create new momentum and new drivers for Asia-Pacific development.

Reform and opening up is a historic process in which China and the world achieve development and progress together.



The photo shows the logo of APEC 2024 in Lima, Peru. *Li Muzi*

China is developing new quality productive forces in light of actual conditions and deepening cooperation with interested parties on green innovation. China will launch a Global Cross-Border Data Flow Cooperation Initiative and seek deeper cooperation with other parties to promote efficient, convenient and secure cross-border data flows. China has put forward initiatives in the APEC framework regarding the application of a digital bill of lading, capacity building on green supply chains, exchanges and dialogue on approaches to AI, and the digitalization of food supply chains, among others, with a view to contributing to high-quality development of Asia-Pacific.

Third, we need to uphold a universally beneficial and inclusive vision for Asia-Pacific development. We should make good use of the APEC platform to strengthen economic and technical cooperation. We should increase support for developing economies and disadvantaged groups, and work together to grow the pie and distribute it equitably to allow more economies and people to benefit from development. This year, Peru has been actively promoting cooperation on the transition from the informal economy to the formal and global economy. China welcomes this effort, which dovetails with our development philosophy of putting people first, promoting social fairness and justice, and improving the people's wellbeing. China will advance initiatives through the APEC platform on increasing residents' income and promoting the industrial cluster development of small and medium-sized enterprises for the purpose of bringing about universally beneficial and inclusive development of Asia-Pacific economies.

China will host APEC 2026. We look forward to working with all parties to deepen Asia-Pacific cooperation to the benefit of the peoples in the region.

Colleagues,

Reform and opening up is a historic process in which China and the world achieve development and progress together. A few months ago, the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China laid out systematic plans for further deepening reform across the board to advance Chinese modernization at its third plenum. More than 300 consequential reform measures were unveiled pertaining to building a high-standard socialist market economy, advancing high-quality economic development, promoting high-standard opening up, improving the people's quality of life and building a beautiful country. China's further development will provide new opportunities for the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large.

An ancient Chinese sage observed, "A man of virtue, while establishing himself and pursuing success, also works to help others establish themselves and succeed." There is a similar saying in Latin America which goes, "The only way to be profitably national is to be generously universal". China welcomes all parties to continue riding the "express train" of its development and grow together with the Chinese economy so that we can all contribute to the modernization of all countries featuring peaceful development, mutually beneficial cooperation and common prosperity.

Thank you.
(Xinhua) ■

Building a just world of common development

Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
On Fight Against Hunger and Poverty
At Session I of the 19th G20 Summit
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, November 18, 2024



Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers an important speech entitled “Building a Just World of Common Development” at Session I of the 19th G20 Summit on Fight Against Hunger and Poverty in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Nov. 18, 2024. *Li Xueren*

Your Excellency President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva,
Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to attend the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro. I thank President Lula and the Brazilian government for the warm hospitality extended to the Chinese delegation.

Today, transformation of a scale not seen in a century is accelerating across the world. Humanity faces unprecedented opportunities and challenges. As leaders of major countries, we should not let our vision be blocked by fleeting clouds. Rather, we must see the world as one community with a shared future, and shoulder our responsibility for history, take historical initiative and move history forward.

I pointed out at this forum that prosperity and stability would not be possible in a world where the rich become richer while the poor are made poorer; and countries should make global development more inclusive, beneficial to all and more resilient. At the Hangzhou Summit, China placed development at the center of the G20's macroeconomic policy coordination for the first time, and the summit adopted the G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the G20 Initiative on Supporting Industrialization in Africa and Least Developed Countries. The Rio Summit this year has chosen the theme, "Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet." It places fighting hunger and poverty at the top of the agenda and has decided to establish a Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty. From Hangzhou to Rio, we have been working for one and the same goal, that is, to build a just world of common development.

To build such a world, we need to channel more resources to such fields as trade, investment and development cooperation, and strengthen development institutions. There should be more bridges of cooperation and less "small yard, high fences", so that more and more developing countries will be better off and achieve modernization.

To build such a world, we need to support developing countries in adopting sustainable production and lifestyle; properly responding to challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution; enhancing ecological conservation; and achieving harmony between man and nature.

To build such a world, we need an open, inclusive and non-discriminatory environment for international economic cooperation. We should promote a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization; energize sustainable development with new technologies, new industries and new business forms; and support developing countries in better integrating in digital, smart and green development to bridge the North-South gap.

To build such a world, we need to stay committed to multi-lateralism. We should uphold the UN-centered international system, the international order underpinned by international law and the basic norms of international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

Colleagues,

China's development is an important part of the common development of the world. We have lifted 800 million people out of poverty, and met the poverty reduction target of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ahead of schedule.

This achievement did not just fall into our laps. It is the fruit of the strenuous, unified efforts of the Chinese government and people. Everything China does, it always places the people front and center, and it solemnly declares that "not a single poor region or person should be left behind." To tackle poverty, we make targeted policies tailored to each village, each household and each person; we facilitate growth by vigorously channeling talent, funds and technologies to underdeveloped regions; we help localities generate growth by fostering industries with distinctive features and upgrading infrastructure, all in light of their own conditions; and we promote common prosperity by pairing up well-off regions with less developed ones. I have worked from the village to county, city, provincial and central levels. Poverty alleviation has always been a priority and a major task I am determined to deliver.

China's story is proof that developing countries can eliminate poverty and that a weaker bird can start early and fly high when there is the endurance, perseverance and striving spirit that enables water drops to penetrate rocks over time and turns blueprints into reality. If China can make it, other developing countries can make it too. This is what China's battle against poverty says to the world.

Colleagues,

China will always be a member of the Global South, a reliable long-term partner of fellow developing countries, and a doer and go-getter working for the cause of global development. A single flower does not make spring. China wants to see a hundred flowers in full blossom and will go hand in hand with fellow developing countries toward modernization. Today, I wish to outline China's eight actions for global development.

First, pursuing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. On top of 700 billion yuan added financing windows and an additional 80 billion yuan injection into the Silk Road Fund, China is moving ahead with the development of the multi-dimensional Belt and Road connectivity network, one that is led by the building of a green Silk Road and will empower a digital Silk Road.

Second, implementing the Global Development Initiative. On the basis of over 1,100 development projects already in operation, we will make sure the Global South research center that is being built is fit for purpose and the 20 billion U.S. dollars of development funds will continue to be put to good use to support developing countries and deepen practical cooperation in areas such as poverty reduction, food security and the digital economy.

Third, supporting development in Africa. At the Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in September this year, I unveiled 10 partnership actions on joining hands with Africa to advance modernization over the next three years and, in this connection, a commitment of 360 billion yuan in financial support.

Fourth, supporting international cooperation on poverty reduction and food security. China has decided to join the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty. We support the G20 in continuing to convene the Development Ministerial Meeting and will stay a committed host of the International Conference on Food Loss and Waste.

Fifth, China, along with Brazil, South Africa and the African Union, is proposing an Initiative on International Cooperation in Open Science to help the Global South gain better access to

global advances in science, technology and innovation.

Sixth, supporting the G20 in carrying out practical cooperation for the benefit of the Global South and using these outcomes as the Roadmap to Increase Investment in Clean Energy in Developing Countries and the High-Level Principles on Bioeconomy to good effect. China supports the work of the Entrepreneurship Research Center on G20 Economies based in Beijing and cooperation on digital education and the digitization of museums and ancient archives.

Seventh, implementing the G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan. We are strengthening cooperation with fellow developing countries in fugitive repatriation and asset recovery, denial of safe haven and anti-corruption capacity building.

Eighth, China is pursuing high-standard opening up and

unilaterally opening our doors wider to the least developed countries (LDCs). We have announced the decision to give all LDCs having diplomatic relations with China zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines. From now to 2030, China's imports from other developing countries are likely to top 8 trillion U.S. dollars.

Colleagues,

The Chinese often say, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step". China is ready to take steps together with all parties to build a just world of common development, leave poverty in the past and turn our vision into reality.

Thank you.

(Xinhua) ■



The photo shows the G20 International Media Center in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Nov. 17, 2024. *Claudia Martini*

Working together for a fair and equitable global governance system

Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
On Reform of the Institutions of Global Governance
At Session II of the 19th G20 Summit
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, November 18, 2024

Your Excellency President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva,
Colleagues,

It has been 16 years since the G20 Summit was launched. Over the years, we have worked in solidarity to tackle the global financial crisis; promoted cooperation on

global economy, finance and trade; and steered the world economy onto the track of recovery. We have worked in concert to face global challenges head-on—be it climate change or the COVID-19 pandemic; spearheaded technological transformation; and kept renewing the G20's responsibilities and missions. We have worked in unison to

improve global governance, strengthened macroeconomic policy coordination, pressed ahead with reforming the international financial institutions and championed international cooperation in the spirit of equal consultation and mutual benefit.

Proceeding from a new starting point, the G20 needs to build on its past achievements and continue to act as a force to improve global governance and move history forward. We should keep in mind that mankind lives in a community with a shared future, see each other's development as opportunities rather than challenges and view each other as partners rather than rivals. We should observe the basic norms of international relations, underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and defend the international order based on international law. In light of the G20's mandate, we could build greater international consensus in the economic, financial, trade, digital and eco-environmental fields, among others, to improve global governance and promote an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization.

First, we need to improve global economic governance and build a world economy characterized by cooperation. We have developed the G20 comprehensive growth strategies and established a framework for strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth. We should stay committed to strengthening global economic partnerships, reinforcing macro policy coordination in fiscal, financial, monetary and structural reform policies, cultivating new quality productive forces and raising total factor productivity in a bid to open up more possibilities for the global economy. It is important to make good use of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meetings, let them serve as a ballast for macro policy coordination and foster an open, inclusive, and nondiscriminatory environment for international economic cooperation. As main creditors, international financial institutions and commercial creditors need to take part in debt reduction and suspension for developing countries. It is also important to create a clean business environment by upholding a zero-tolerance stance against corruption, stepping up international cooperation on fugitive repatriation and asset recovery, and denying safe haven to corrupt officials and their assets.

Second, we need to improve global financial governance and build a world economy characterized by stability. To increase the voice and representation of developing countries, the World Bank should carry out shareholding review and the International Monetary Fund should carry out quota share realignment in line with the agreed timeframe and roadmap. Joint efforts are needed to keep the international financial market stable and prevent negative spillover of domestic monetary policy adjustments. Developed countries should fulfill their responsibilities in this regard. It is important to enhance the systems for financial risks monitoring, early warning and handling; reinforce cooperation in such areas as digital currency and taxation; and strengthen the global financial safety net. The G20 Sustainable Finance Roadmap should be implemented at a faster pace to better meet the green financing needs of developing countries.

Third, we need to improve global trade governance and



The photo shows posters for the 19th G20 Summit at Santos Dumont Airport in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Wang Tiancong

build a world economy characterized by openness. We should place development at the center of the international economic and trade agenda, and steadily advance trade and investment liberalization and facilitation. We should press ahead with reforming the World Trade Organization (WTO), oppose unilateralism and protectionism, restore the normal functioning of the dispute settlement mechanism as soon as possible, include the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement into the WTO legal framework and reach early consensus on the e-commerce agreement. We should work actively to keep the WTO rules relevant, both addressing long-pending issues and exploring the formulation of new, future-oriented rules, to enhance the authority, efficacy and relevance of the multilateral trading system. It is important to avoid politicizing



economic issues, fragmenting the global market and taking protectionist moves in the name of green and low-carbon development. Two years ago, China and Indonesia, along with some other countries, launched the Initiative of International Cooperation on Resilient and Stable Industrial and Supply Chains, calling for industrial and supply chain partnerships that are more equal, inclusive and constructive. We stand ready for closer cooperation with all sides on this initiative.

Fourth, we need to improve global digital governance and build a world economy characterized by innovation. We should strengthen the function of the G20 Digital Economy Ministers' Meeting and let it play a leading role in digital transition, the deep integration of the digital economy and the real economy, and rules-making in

emerging areas. We should step up international governance and cooperation on artificial intelligence (AI), to make sure that AI is for good and for all, not a game of the rich countries and the wealthy. China hosted the 2024 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, and issued the Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance. Together with other parties, China promoted the adoption of a UN General Assembly resolution on enhancing international cooperation on AI capacity-building. China will hold another world AI conference in 2025 and welcomes the participation of fellow G20 members.

Fifth, we need to improve global ecological governance and build a world economy characterized by eco-friendliness. We should honor the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and fully and effectively implement the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework for the sake of humanity's harmonious coexistence with nature. Developed countries should provide developing countries with the necessary funding, technology and capacity-building support. The recently concluded UN Biodiversity Conference produced important consensus. We should jointly support the ongoing and upcoming UN conferences on climate change and desertification in achieving positive outcomes. Energy transition and energy security is a major issue. We should follow the approach of "establishing the new before abolishing the old", and replace traditional energy with clean energy in a stable and well-ordered manner, as we expedite the green and low-carbon transition of the world economy. China stands ready to continue to deepen international cooperation with all sides on green infrastructure, green energy, green mining and green transport, and will provide support to developing countries to the best of its ability.

Global security governance is part and parcel of global governance. The G20 should support the UN and its Security Council in playing a greater role and all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of crises. To deescalate the Ukraine crisis and seek a political settlement, we should follow the principles of no expansion of the battlefields, no escalation of hostilities and no fanning flames. China and Brazil, along with some other Global South countries, launched the group of "Friends for Peace" on the Ukraine crisis, with the goal of bringing together more voices for peace. The fighting in Gaza has inflicted deep suffering on the people. It is urgent for all sides to stop fighting, end the war and provide support for easing the humanitarian crisis in the region and for postwar reconstruction. The fundamental way out of the cycle of Palestinian-Israeli conflict lies in the implementation of the two-state solution, the restoration of Palestine's legitimate national rights and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine.

Colleagues,

Let us renew our commitment to the founding mission of the G20, and make a fresh start from Rio de Janeiro. Let us carry forward partnership, practice true multilateralism and usher in a better future of common development and prosperity.

Thank you.
(Xinhua) ■



Leaders of BRICS countries pose for a group photo during the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, Oct. 23, 2024. The summit was hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin, and attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (via video conference), Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. *Li Xueren*

Embracing a broader view and cutting through the fog of challenges to advance high-quality development of greater BRICS cooperation

Statement by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At the XVI BRICS Summit
Kazan, Russia, October 23, 2024

Your Excellency President Vladimir Putin,
Colleagues,

First of all, I wish to extend my warm congratulations on the successful opening of this summit. I also wish to thank President Putin and our host Russia for the thoughtful arrangements and warm hospitality.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again welcome new members to our BRICS family. The enlargement of BRICS is a major milestone in its history and a landmark event in the evolution of the international situation. At this summit, we have decided to invite many countries to become partner countries, which is another major progress in the development of BRICS. As we Chinese often say, "A man of virtue regards righteousness as the greatest interest." It is for our shared pursuit and for the overarching

trend of peace and development that we BRICS countries have come together. We must make full use of this summit, maintain the momentum of BRICS and consider and devise our strategy to address issues that have a global impact, determine our future direction and possess strategic significance. We must build on this milestone summit to set off anew and forge ahead with one heart and one mind.

As the world enters a new period, defined by turbulence and transformation, we are confronted with pivotal choices that will shape our future. Should we allow the world to descend into the abyss of disorder and chaos, or should we strive to steer it back on the path of peace and development? This reminds me of a novel by Nikolay Chernyshevsky titled, *What Is to Be Done?* The protagonist's unwavering determination and passionate drive are exactly the kind of willpower we need today. The more tumultu-

ous our times become, the more we must stand firm at the forefront, exhibiting tenacity, demonstrating the audacity to pioneer and displaying the wisdom to adapt. We must work together to build BRICS into a primary channel for strengthening solidarity and cooperation among Global South nations and a vanguard for advancing global governance reform.

We should build a BRICS committed to peace and we must all act as defenders of common security. We humans are an indivisible community of security. Only by embracing the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security can we pave the way for universal security. The Ukraine crisis still persists. China and Brazil, in collaboration with other countries from the Global South, initiated a group of “Friends for Peace” to address the crisis. The aim is to gather more voices advocating peace. We must uphold the three key principles: no expansion of the battlefields, no escalation of hostilities and no fanning flames, and strive for swift de-escalation of the situation. While the humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate, the flames of war have once again been rekindled in Lebanon and conflicts are escalating among the parties. We must promote an immediate ceasefire and an end to the killing. We must make unremitting efforts toward a comprehensive, just and lasting resolution of the Palestinian question.

We should build a BRICS committed to innovation and we must all act as pioneers of high-quality development. As the latest round of technological revolution and industrial transformation is advancing at an accelerated speed, we must keep pace with the times and foster new quality productive forces. China has recently launched a China-BRICS Artificial Intelligence Development and Cooperation Center. We are ready to deepen cooperation on innovation with all BRICS countries to unleash the dividends of AI development. China will establish a BRICS Deep-Sea Resources International Research Center, a China Center for Cooperation on Development of Special Economic Zones in BRICS Countries, a China Center for BRICS Industrial Competencies and a BRICS Digital Ecosystem Cooperation Network. We welcome active participation from all interested parties to promote the high-quality upgrading of BRICS cooperation.

We should build a BRICS committed to green development and we must all act as promoters of sustainable development. Green is the defining color of our times. It is important that all BRICS countries proactively embrace the global trend of green and low-carbon transformation. China’s high-quality production capacity, as exemplified by its manufacturing of electric vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic products, provides a significant boost to global green development. China is willing to leverage its strengths to expand cooperation with BRICS countries in green industries, clean energy and green mining, and promote green development through the entire industrial chain, so as to increase the “green quotient” of our cooperation and upgrade the quality of our development.

We should build a BRICS committed to justice and we must all act as forerunners in reforming global governance. International power dynamics are undergoing profound changes, but global governance reform has lagged behind

Only by embracing the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security can we pave the way for universal security.

for a long time. We should champion true multilateralism and adhere to the vision of global governance characterized by extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. We must ensure that global governance reform is guided by the principles of fairness, justice, openness and inclusiveness. In light of the rise of the Global South, we should respond favorably to the calls from various countries to join BRICS. We should advance the process of expanding BRICS membership and establishing a partner country mechanism and enhance the representation and voice of developing nations in global governance.

The current developments make the reform of the international financial architecture all the more pressing. BRICS countries should play a leading role in the reform. We should deepen fiscal and financial cooperation, promote the connectivity of our financial infrastructure and apply high standards of financial security. The New Development Bank should be expanded and strengthened. We must ensure that the international financial system more effectively reflects the changes in the global economic landscape.

We should build a BRICS committed to closer people-to-people exchanges and we must all act as advocates for harmonious coexistence among all civilizations. BRICS countries boast a profound and illustrious historical and cultural heritage. It is important that we promote the spirit of inclusiveness and harmonious coexistence among civilizations. We should enhance the exchange of governance experiences among BRICS countries and fully harness the untapped potential for cooperation in areas such as education, sports and the arts, so that our diverse cultures can inspire one another and illuminate the path forward for BRICS. Last year, I proposed an initiative for BRICS digital education cooperation and I am delighted to see that it has become a reality. China will implement a capacity-building program for BRICS digital education. We will open 10 learning centers in BRICS countries in the next five years and provide training opportunities for 1,000 local education administrators, teachers and students. This will be a tangible step to deepen and strengthen people-to-people exchanges among BRICS countries.

Colleagues,

China is willing to work with all BRICS countries to open a new horizon in the high-quality development of greater BRICS cooperation and join hands with Global South countries in building a community with a shared future for humanity.

Thank you.
(Xinhua) ■

Zhao Leji pays official goodwill visits to Portugal, Spain and Greece

Top legislator Zhao Leji paid official goodwill visits to Portugal, Spain and Greece from November 21 to 30.

In Portugal

Top legislator Zhao Leji paid an official goodwill visit from November 21 to 23 to Portugal, during which he expressed the readiness to expand bilateral cooperation while voicing the hope that Portugal will work together with China to inject more positive energy into the development of China-EU ties.

Zhao, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, met with Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa and Portuguese Prime Minister Luis Montenegro, and held talks with Portuguese parliament speaker Jose Pedro Aguiar-Branco during the three-day visit.

When meeting with Rebelo de Sousa, Zhao conveyed to him the cordial greetings and best wishes from Chinese President Xi Jinping. Zhao said that in recent years, under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, the China-Portugal comprehensive strategic partnership has been deepening and making solid progress, featuring steady progress in Belt and Road cooperation, as well as rich cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

China appreciates Portugal's long adherence to the one-China principle and is willing to engage with Portugal based on mutual respect and equality, strengthening their bonds as good friends who respect and trust each other, reliable partners for common development, and close companions in mutual learning between civilizations, Zhao said.

It is hoped that Portugal will continue to play an active role within the European Union (EU) and inject more positive energy into the development of China-EU relations, said Zhao.

For his part, Rebelo de Sousa asked Zhao to convey his heartfelt greetings to Xi, noting that Portugal and China are good friends with mutual understanding and affection.

Highlighting that this year marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the 25th anniversary of Macao's return

China is willing to further consolidate cooperation with Portugal on the platform of Macao and score more cooperation results, said Zhao.

to the motherland of China, the Portuguese president said Portugal is willing to enhance high-level exchanges with China, deepen friendly exchanges and strengthen cooperation in such areas as trade, new energy, marine economy and digital economy.

Portugal firmly adheres to multilateralism and safeguards the role of the United Nations (UN) and the authority of international law. It is very important for Europe and China to strengthen dialogue, and Portugal is willing to play an active role in this regard, said Rebelo de Sousa.

When meeting with Montenegro, Zhao said that China has always viewed and developed ties with Portugal from a strategic and long-term perspective, and stands ready to work with Portugal to firmly support each other's core interests and major concerns, and to cement political mutual trust.

Zhao eyed closer cooperation in areas such as artificial intelligence, clean energy, technology innovation, personnel training, and culture and people-to-people exchanges, encouraging companies from the two countries to expand investment and cooperation.

Zhao said China will continue to advance collaboration with Portugal within the UN and other multilateral frameworks, strengthen communication on international issues such as free trade, global security and climate change, and promote closer multilateral coordination and healthy and stable development of China-Europe relations.

Montenegro noted that Portugal always adheres to the one-China principle and speaks highly of the practice of "one country, two systems" in the Macao Special Administrative Region.

Underscoring that China is an important economic partner for Portugal and his country attaches importance to at-

tracting Chinese investments, the Portuguese prime minister expected more exchanges and cooperation with China in science and technology, marine economy, culture and sports.

Portugal supports the steady development of EU-China relations and is willing to strengthen cooperation with China on climate change within bilateral and multilateral frameworks, said Montenegro.

In his talks with Aguiar-Branco, Zhao said the National People's Congress of China stands ready to work with the Portuguese parliament to deepen friendly exchanges between the two high-level legislative bodies, special committees, legislators, and local legislative bodies and enhance exchanges of experience in legislation and supervision to provide legal guarantees for promoting bilateral cooperation across various areas and create a fair, just and non-discriminatory business environment.

Zhao also voiced his hope that the Portuguese lawmakers in the European Parliament will continue to support China-EU friendly cooperation.

In addition, Zhao said that in the past 25 years since Macao's return to China, the practice of "one country, two systems" has made remarkable achievements.

He added that the Chinese central government will continue to fully, faithfully and unswervingly implement the principle of "one country, two systems" under which the people of Macao administer Macao with a high degree of autonomy, and support Macao in better integrating into the national development.

China is willing to further consolidate cooperation with Portugal on the platform of Macao and score more cooperation results, said Zhao.

Aguiar-Branco said that the two countries adhere to mutual respect, openness and win-win cooperation, and have achieved positive results in cooperation in various fields. In the face of the complex international situation, Portugal hopes to strengthen communication and cooperation with China and jointly safeguard the UN Charter and multilateralism, he added.

The Portuguese parliament is willing to work with the National People's Congress of China to promote closer exchanges at various levels and make contributions as legislative bodies to cementing practical cooperation and friendship of the two peoples, said Aguiar-Branco.

In Spain

Zhao Leji expressed China's commitment to advancing China-Spain relations and fostering a relationship that supports the steady, long-term growth of China-Europe ties, during his official goodwill visit to Spain from November 23 to 27.

Zhao, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, met in Madrid with Spanish King



Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, meets with Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa in Lisbon, Portugal, Nov. 21, 2024. Zhao paid an official goodwill visit to Portugal from Nov. 21 to 23 at the invitation of Jose Pedro Aguiar-Branco, speaker of the Portuguese Parliament. Liu Weibing

Rollan said that Spain cherishes its enduring friendship with China and is committed to being a trustworthy friend.

Felipe VI and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, held talks with Pedro Rollan, president of the Spanish Senate, and Francina Armengol, speaker of the Spanish Congress of Deputies, during the five-day visit.

When meeting with Spanish King Felipe VI, Zhao conveyed to him the cordial greetings and best wishes from Chinese President Xi Jinping, underscoring that in 2018, President Xi paid a successful state visit to Spain, ushering in a new stage of high-level development of bilateral relations.

Zhao praised the strong bilateral ties and emphasized that China is committed to collaborating with Spain to deepen their traditional friendship, uphold mutual understanding and respect for each other's core interests and major concerns, achieve new cooperation achievements, and tackle global challenges like climate change together, ultimately striving for shared development and prosperity.

Highlighting the close exchanges between the two heads of state and steady growth of the state-to-state ties, the Spanish King asked Zhao to convey his sincere greetings to President Xi.

The King said as next year will mark the 20th anniversary



Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, meets with Spanish King Felipe VI in Madrid, Spain, Nov. 25, 2024. At the invitation of Francina Armengol, speaker of the Spanish Congress of Deputies, Zhao paid an official goodwill visit to Spain from Nov. 23 to 27. *Liu Weibing*

sary of the establishment of Spain-China comprehensive strategic partnership, Spain will deepen its cooperation with China in areas such as trade and investment, new energy, climate change, culture, education, and the promotion of each other's languages, bringing fresh momentum to the growth of their relationship.

When meeting with Sanchez, Zhao said Spain is an important strategic partner of China in Europe. China appreciates Spain's adherence to the one-China principle and is committed to strengthening their friendship, deepening mutual trust, and enhancing cooperation, while steadfastly upholding its policy of opening up.

The top Chinese legislator pledged to enhance cooperation in economy, trade, investment, culture, and tourism, while highlighting the potential for further progress in areas such as electric vehicles, clean energy, advanced materials, and the green and digital economy. He stressed the need to establish a fair, safe, non-discriminatory, and predictable business environment for enterprises.

China has always regarded Europe as a key priority in its diplomacy and an important partner in achieving Chinese-style modernization. China is willing to promote the high-level development of China-Spain relations to contribute to the steady and long-term growth of China-Europe relations, said Zhao.

Sanchez said Spain abides by the one-China policy. Extending welcome for China's investment, the prime minister called for more cooperation in such fields as trade, electric vehicles, agricultural products, culture and sports.

Spain is willing to play an active role in the EU and push for better development of EU-China relations, said Sanchez, adding the Spanish side will strengthen coordination

with China on international and multilateral affairs, uphold the authority of international law, and work together to safeguard global peace and stability.

When holding talks respectively with Rollan and Armengol, Zhao said that exchanges between legislative bodies constitute an important part of the state-to-state ties. The National People's Congress of China is willing to strengthen exchanges with the Spanish Senate and the Congress of Deputies at all levels, promote mutual learning on legislation and supervision, and timely formulate, revise and approve legal documents conducive to bilateral cooperation.

Zhao underscored the readiness to advance the exchanges between the two countries' legislators, and cement bilateral collaboration within multilateral frameworks such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union. He also explained the people's congress system, China's fundamental political system.

Rollan said that Spain cherishes its enduring friendship with China and is committed to being a trustworthy friend. Praising the exemplary role of Spain-China investment cooperation on the global stage, he expressed hope for further cultural exchanges to enhance mutual understanding and reinforce

the friendship between the two nations.

Armengol said that the Spanish Congress of Deputies is willing to deepen exchanges and cooperation with the National People's Congress of China, and the Spanish deputies hope to actively participate in friendly exchanges between Spain and China.

Zhao also visited Barcelona, where he met with Salvador Illa, president of the regional government of Catalonia, and visited there a joint venture founded by Chinese carmaker Chery and its Spanish partner Ebro, voicing his hope for deepening cooperation between the two countries at the local level and jointly promoting green development.

In Greece

Top legislator Zhao Leji expressed China's commitment to carrying forward the traditional friendship with Greece and strengthening mutual support during his official goodwill visit to Greece from November 27 to 30.

Zhao, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, met in Athens with Greek President Katerina Sakellariopoulou and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis respectively, and held talks with Constantine Tassoulas, president of the Greek parliament.

When meeting with Sakellariopoulou, Zhao conveyed to her the cordial greetings and best wishes from Chinese President Xi Jinping, noting that since the establishment of diplomatic ties more than half a century ago, bilateral ties have been developing in a sound and steady manner.

Zhao also noted that Xi and Sakellariopoulou jointly sent congratulatory letters to the inaugural World Conference of Classics, advocating the inheritance, development,

exchange and mutual learning of civilizations, showcasing the sense of responsibility of two ancient civilizations.

Guided by the implementation of the important consensus reached by the two countries' leaders, China is willing to work with Greece to carry forward traditional friendship, firmly support each other, and be good partners that trust each other, seek common development and enjoy cultural affinity, jointly implementing the Global Civilizations Initiative and contributing to building a community with a shared future for mankind, said Zhao.

For her part, Sakellaropoulou asked Zhao to convey her heartfelt greetings to Xi. The Greek president said the two countries have always respected and supported each other's major concerns and adhered to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, which have laid a solid foundation for developing bilateral relations and deepening mutually beneficial cooperation.

As countries with ancient civilizations, Greece and China's cultural exchanges and dialogues are based on a deep foundation and have yielded fruitful results, setting an example for the international community of exchanges and mutual learning between different civilizations, said Sakellaropoulou.

She expressed her hope to strengthen cooperation with China in areas such as trade, investment, culture and tourism to achieve mutual development and prosperity.

When meeting with Mitsotakis, Zhao said Xi's success-

ful state visit to Greece in 2019 opened a new chapter in bilateral relations. China appreciates Greece's firm adherence to the one-China principle and is willing to work with Greece to consolidate political mutual trust, strengthen strategic communication, promote exchanges and collaboration, advance high-quality cooperation on the Port of Piraeus, drive cooperation in areas such as trade, finance and shipping and continue to deepen people-to-people exchanges.

China will maintain communication and coordination with Greece within multilateral frameworks to promote world peace and stability and drive the healthy and stable development of China-Europe relations, said Zhao.

Mitsotakis said that Greece abides by the one-China policy. The Greek government continues to optimize its trade and investment policies, hopes to strengthen cooperation with China in areas such as trade, investment, shipping, artificial intelligence and culture, and welcomes Chinese companies to deepen their presence in the Greek market, he said.

He noted that Greece speaks highly of the mutually beneficial cooperation on projects including the Port of Piraeus, and supports strengthening dialogue between Europe and China to jointly address global challenges such as climate change.

In talks with Tassoulas, Zhao said that, in conjunction with the implementation of the major strategic and development goals of both countries, the National People's Congress of China is willing to work with the Greek parliament to strengthen friendly exchanges at all levels of the legislatures, learn from each other's experience in legislation and supervision in social governance, ecological protection and opening up, and timely approve or formulate legal documents conducive to bilateral cooperation.

Zhao called for close communication and coordination on multilateral platforms such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union. He also introduced the progress in advancing Chinese modernization, expressing readiness to move forward together with Greece on the path of development and revitalization, injecting new vitality into the two ancient civilizations in the new era.

Tassoulas said the legislatures of the two countries can make greater efforts in legislation to facilitate bilateral cooperation in economy and trade and shipping to promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

Before the talks, Zhao received a golden medal of the Greek parliament awarded by Tassoulas.

During his visit, Zhao also attended the launching ceremony of the Chinese School of Classical Studies in Athens and visited the Port of Piraeus. He also toured the Region of Crete where he visited agricultural projects. (Xinhua) ■

As countries with ancient civilizations, Greece and China's cultural exchanges and dialogues are based on a deep foundation.



Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, meets with Greek President Katerina Sakellaropoulou in Athens, Greece, Nov. 28, 2024. Zhao paid an official goodwill visit to Greece at the invitation of Constantine Tassoulas, president of the Greek parliament, from Nov. 27 to 30. Yin Bogu



Lasting engagement and global partnership

By Lu Yan

On April 2, 1984, the serene beauty of Lake Geneva, Switzerland, set the stage for a momentous occasion--the 134th meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Council, which took place at the International Conference Center.

As delegates from around the world gathered, an air of anticipation filled the room. Then came the pivotal announcement: With unanimous approval, the application of the National People's Congress (NPC) of the People's Republic of China is formally accepted, making it a member of the IPU.

This declaration marked a significant milestone in China's journey of international engagement. The NPC's entry into the IPU not only symbolized a new chapter for China but also opened the door to deeper participation in multilateral legislative exchanges. For the first time, China was poised to engage more fully in global discussions, shaping its role on the international stage and fostering collaboration with other nations.

As the meeting concluded, it was clear that this historic moment would have lasting implications for both China and the IPU, setting the foundation for future legislative dialogue and cooperation.

Fast forward to August 20, 2024, when the Great Hall of the People in Beijing hosted the Commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the NPC's Affiliation to the IPU & 2024 Interregional Seminar on the Achievement of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries. Under the theme of "Stronger Inter-parliamentary Exchanges for Better Achievement of the SDGs," the event brought together IPU President Tulia Ackson, IPU

Secretary General Martin Chungong, as well as 19 parliamentary leaders and over 140 parliamentary representatives from 32 developing countries. Together, they envisioned a collaborative path forward to advance sustainable development.

Joining hands

This year marks not only the 40th anniversary of the NPC joining the IPU but also the sixth consecutive year that the NPC has co-hosted a seminar for parliamentarians from developing countries with the IPU. This year's seminar is unprecedented in its high standards, large scale, and fruitful outcomes. Over the course of ten days, international delegates participated in meetings, discussions and field visits. They experienced Chinese culture, observed the country's development firsthand, and fostered friendships and cooperation, building bridges of unity and gathering strength for development.

In his keynote speech at the opening ceremony, Zhao Leji, Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, underscored the importance of fostering deeper cooperation among legislative bodies. He stressed the need to uphold mutual respect, promote shared development, enhance exchanges and mutual learning, and strengthen multilateral collaboration.

Ackson warmly congratulated the NPC on its 40 years of effective collaboration with the IPU. "The IPU is committed to deepening its cooperation with the NPC and will continue to uphold the one-China principle, welcoming China's greater role within the IPU," she said.

Tulia Ackson, president of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), addresses the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of China's National People's Congress's affiliation to the IPU and the opening of the 2024 Interregional Seminar on the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for Parliaments of Developing Countries. Xu Lin

Chungong expressed his gratitude, noting, “I have witnessed China’s active participation in IPU affairs and its efforts to promote dialogue and cooperation. I appreciate China’s contributions to enhancing democracy, sustainable development and the capacity of parliaments in developing countries.”

International parliamentary leaders and representatives emphasized that the NPC’s membership in the IPU is significant for enhancing dialogue among parliaments and improving global governance. They recognized China as a champion of multilateral cooperation, advocating for a shared future and expanding collaboration with other nations. They believed effective parliamentary diplomacy is crucial for increasing the voice of the Global South on multilateral platforms.

Parliamentarians noted that over the past 70 years, the NPC has upheld its mission to represent and serve the people, contributing to China’s progress and development. They expressed heartfelt wishes for the NPC to achieve even greater success, bringing more happiness to the Chinese people.

They also highlighted the seminar as an excellent opportunity to understand China’s advancements. China’s early achievement of the UN’s 2030 Agenda poverty reduction target serves as a model for developing countries. They hope to bring home valuable insights from this experience and envision a collaborative future in sustainable development.

A discussion in time

In the face of global changes, how can legislative bodies enhance global governance, achieve national development, and address humanity’s challenges? This is a major concern shared by countries around the world, particularly developing nations.

On August 21, the sixth seminar for parliamentarians from developing countries featured a focused discussion on development, security, civilization, and democracy. Participants engaged deeply with the “Chinese Solution,” reaching consensus. This dialogue generated renewed momentum for developing countries to collaboratively address challenges and create a brighter future.

Currently, the global economic recovery is sluggish, and developing countries face significant challenges in achieving the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In her keynote report, Cai Ling, a member of the NPC Financial and Economic Affairs Committee, highlighted China’s successful practices in aligning development strategies with other countries through the Belt and Road Initiative.

Zhou Mi, a researcher from the Chinese Academy of International trade and Economic Cooperation, focused on China’s efforts to accelerate trade growth, emphasizing the promotion of cross-border e-commerce and the introduction of favorable policies to boost mutual investment.

International participants expressed strong agreement with China’s contributions. Catherine Gotani Hara, Speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi, suggested that national parliaments should enact laws and policies to promote inclusive economic globalization, ensuring that impoverished populations benefit from development.

Poonsak Chanchampee, Chairman of the Committee on Land, Natural Resources and Environment of the House of Representatives of Thailand, emphasized the need for developing countries to invest more in science, technology and innovation to improve development quality.

There was a unanimous commitment among parliamentarians to strengthen friendly and pragmatic cooperation with the international community, particularly with China, to advance inclusive economic globalization.

Civilization flourishes through exchange. Wang Chunfa, a member of the NPC Education, Science, Culture and Public Health Committee, highlighted that China has developed a comprehensive cultural heritage protection system, and shared specific examples of legislative efforts in the cultural sector.

Wu Weishan, Director of the National Art Museum of China, emphasized the vital role of cultural and artistic exchanges in fostering dialogue among nations, ethnicities and peoples.

The response from international participants was enthusiastic, with many stating that cultural exchange is a crucial channel for enhancing mutual understanding and fostering beneficial cooperation among countries. They acknowledged China’s positive role as a model in promoting international cultural exchange and emphasized the responsibility of legislatures to enact laws that protect and promote cultural diversity.

Peace is the central theme of global development. In his keynote report, Wang Chao, Vice Chair of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee, emphasized China’s commitment to a path of peaceful development and an independent, peaceful foreign policy.

Xin Xiangyang, a member of the NPC Social Development Affairs Committee, discussed the distinctive characteristics of Chinese modernization, highlighting its peaceful attributes and the inclusiveness of Chinese civilization.

Participants unanimously agreed that the world urgently needs the Global South to strengthen cooperation, amplify a common voice, and work together to resolve international differences and achieve peace.

“Only by ensuring peace can we foster economic development and create a better future for generations to come,” they stated. “Developing countries must fully leverage the role of their parliaments to drive national reforms and ensure that their benefits reach the people.”

Democracy is a shared value of humanity. In his keynote report, Song Rui, Deputy Secretary General of the NPC Standing Committee, shared China’s experience in advancing modernization and democratic governance. He emphasized the importance of independence and self-confidence, rooted in China’s unique history, culture and national conditions, which has led to a development path and political model distinct from the West.

Chen Hongzhi, Director of the Standing Committee of Chaoyang District People’s Congress in Beijing, presented practical examples of grassroots elections, legislative services and the building of democratic channels for public opinion.

The concept and practice of whole-process people’s democracy in China received high praise from international parliamentarians. They noted that China has chosen a democratic model that aligns with its fundamental national conditions and development stage. They emphasized the need for parliaments to leverage digital technology and artificial intelligence to create more open, inclusive democratic processes that truly reflect public opinion and gather collective wisdom.

Representatives from Bahrain, Ethiopia, Suriname and other countries shared their own experiences in promoting democratic development, expressing a willingness to work together to advance democratic processes and foster mutual growth. ■



Tulia Ackson, president of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, along with parliamentary leaders and representatives from developing countries, visits the Museum of the Communist Party of China in Beijing. Xu Lin

Collaboration and growth

Editor's Note: During the Commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the National People's Congress' Affiliation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the 2024 Interregional Seminar on the Achievement of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries, which took place in Beijing in August, *The People's Congress of China* magazine interviewed Tulia Ackson, the 31st President of the IPU and speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania. She shared her insights on China's democracy, the role of the NPC of China and the China-Tanzania relationship.

The People's Congress of China: This visit marks your first trip to China. During your time in Beijing and Shanxi, you had the opportunity to observe the latest developments in various fields. What impressions did your trip to China leave on you?

Tulia Ackson: During my visit to Beijing and Shanxi

We must ensure that this diversity does not fade away over time but continues to illuminate the landscape of human civilization.

Province, I had the privilege of exploring many captivating places and witnessing China's remarkable achievements. What impressed me the most was that China's development is not only reflected in its rapid economic growth but also in its commitment to preserving and valuing its rich cultural heritage. At sites like the National Museum of China, the Palace Museum, the Great Wall and the ancient city of Datong, I encountered many precious cultural relics that deeply moved me. Balancing the pursuit of development with the protection of one's culture is no easy task, yet China has managed to do so, offering a valuable lesson to the

world. I sincerely hope that countries can learn from China on how to safeguard their own cultural identities. Culture is not only the soul of a nation but also a vital part of global diversity. We must ensure that this diversity does not fade away over time but continues to illuminate the landscape of human civilization.

At the Museum of the Communist Party of China (CPC), I gained a profound understanding of how China has grown and developed under the exceptional leadership of the CPC throughout its tumultuous history. Observing how the Party has stepped up during critical moments, facing challenges and making choices, I came to appreciate the resilience of the Chinese people. This resilience is a valuable asset of the Chinese nation and an admirable quality that we can all learn from.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the concept of whole-process people's democracy has gained traction. The local legislative outreach offices and deputy liaison stations you visited are new platforms that have emerged in the development of this concept. Could you share your thoughts on China's whole-process people's democracy?

You can only know if a pair of shoes fits by wearing them. Similarly, a country's democracy develops from its people and China's people-centered approach is very important. When it comes to democracy as a pair of "shoes," we don't need every country to wear the exact same style and size; rather, each nation should choose what fits its unique circumstances and realities.

China has developed its own understanding of democracy and carved out its own path. But is China's democracy effective? We can assess this by looking at the happiness of its people and their access to social services. During my visit, I observed that China's infrastructure is highly advanced and the living standards of the people are continuously improving. Countries in the Global South can witness China's achievements and explore its experiences through the century-long struggle of the CPC and the 70-year development of the NPC. China's development serves as a model for these nations, highlighting the importance of aligning democracy with local realities and the will of the people. A commendable democratic model should also contribute to bettering infrastructure, promoting people's development and advance national progress.

In a vast country like China, which is home to 56 ethnic groups, each group elects its own deputies to the people's congresses. This means that the voices of every ethnicity are heard and valued. Additionally, each provincial administrative region can elect deputies to the NPC, ensuring that voices from all corners of the country come together. I believe this system plays a vital role in promoting collaborative development among China's diverse ethnic groups and regions. Being a parliament member myself, I am gratified to witness such a wide array of voices being heard. This is a vivid practice of democracy. I believe that China's mechanism will serve as a model that can be adopted elsewhere.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the NPC's affiliation to the IPU. How do you evaluate the close cooperation between the NPC and the IPU over the years? Looking

ahead, in what areas do you think the NPC and the IPU can further strengthen their collaboration to better support the IPU's role and enhance parliamentary capacity building in developing countries?

First, I would like to congratulate the NPC on its significant contributions to the IPU over the past 40 years. We're proud of the NPC being a member of the IPU because this is one of the largest representative bodies in the world. Over these four decades, the cooperation between the NPC and the IPU has remained vibrant, leading to remarkable achievements in various areas. On behalf of the IPU, I extend my highest respect and sincere gratitude to the NPC.

For instance, China has actively participated in the General Debates at IPU Assemblies, providing solid support for the IPU's goals and objectives with its unique insights and practical actions. Recently, Zhao Leji, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, agreed to serve as a member of the Preparatory Committee for the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, demonstrating strong support for the IPU's work. To date, the NPC and the IPU have co-hosted six seminars for parliamentarians from developing countries, which is significant for strengthening parliamentary capacity building in these nations. Through these activities, the NPC has deepened its strategic cooperation with the IPU, promoting the dissemination and practice of sustainable development concepts, while providing a platform for mutual learning and collaboration among parliaments in developing countries.

China's exceptional wisdom in addressing global issues and its deep friendships with many countries have been highly praised by the IPU. As the largest developing country in the world, China maintains a position of fairness and justice on international affairs, treating every nation equally and contributing to global peace, stability and common development. Recently, China held the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, revealing an ambitious reform blueprint that outlines over 300 major reform initiatives. China's development experience is effective domestically and is likely to offer valuable lessons for other countries.

Through this seminar, parliamentarians from 32 countries have the opportunity to visit China in person and explore the secrets of its development firsthand, rather than relying solely on written materials. This approach is more conducive to learning from China's development experiences. I sincerely hope that the delegates will gain valuable insights from this visit and take effective development practices back to their home countries.

This year marks the 70th founding anniversary of the NPC. How do you see the performance of the NPC over these years? In your opinion, how can legislative bodies better play their role in contributing to global sustainable development?

Tanzania and China have differences in legislative methods and in how public opinion is gathered. During my visit to several local legislative outreach offices and deputy liaison stations, I learned that there are effective channels for expressing public opinion from the grassroots level to the central Government. Local communities have the opportunity to voice their concerns about immediate issues,

allowing everyone to participate in the legislative process. I believe this is an excellent consultative approach that facilitates decision-making, aligned with national development and the concerns of the people.

China, being a populous country, faces the challenge of ensuring that everyone feels represented and included. These grassroots platforms play a significant role in addressing this need. The practices of the NPC are commendable and serve as a valuable example. As we celebrate the 70th founding anniversary of the NPC, I extend my heartfelt wishes and hope to gain further insights into China's history, the history of the NPC and how China has achieved such remarkable development.

Tanzania is a good friend and partner of China, with bilateral ties forged and nurtured by both countries' older generations of leaders. Chinese President Xi Jinping and leaders of Tanzania are guiding the relationship into a new era, promoting the high-level development of the China-Tanzania comprehensive strategic partnership. What suggestions do you have for further deepening practical cooperation and enhancing the friendship between the peoples of the two countries?

The friendship between Tanzania and China has deep roots. Sixty years ago, the founding leaders of both countries were close friends who worked together to promote human development. Under the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the two countries have built a relationship based on mutual respect, trust, assistance and shared interests, achieving remarkable results through cooperation.

Take the Tanzania-Zambia Railway as an example of why these two countries have established such a long-lasting and solid bilateral relationship. Built in the 1970s with China's support, the railway project saw 51 Chinese experts

A commendable democratic model should also contribute to bettering infrastructure, promoting people's development and advancing national progress.

and technicians lose their lives during its construction. At that time, China was facing its own challenges, yet it never wavered in its commitment to support Tanzania. Why did China make such a choice? It is because the Chinese people have a noble mission to seek the welfare of all humanity. They were eager to complete the railway to benefit the people of Tanzania, Zambia and the entire African continent. Thus, the friendship between Tanzania and China is built on hard work and sacrifice, making it unbreakable. Recently, Tanzania has proposed further cooperation with China to standardize and upgrade the railway, demonstrating that both countries are dedicated to sincere collaboration and that their friendly history will continue to evolve.

As we mark the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations, I look forward to the arrival of the first centenary of our friendship. The mutual cooperation and respect between our countries can be best exemplified by the extensive trade ties that have developed over the years. Currently, China is one of Tanzania's main investors, covering various sectors. The future of our cooperation holds vast potential. Tanzania is focused on advancing agricultural reforms and China has transformed from a food-aid recipient to a donor in just a few decades, providing valuable lessons for Tanzania to learn from. Additionally, there are great expectations for collaboration in education, healthcare and national defense. (NPC) ■



Tulia Ackson, president of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, visits the Jinzhong National Agriculture High-tech Zone Smart Farm Demonstration Base in north China's Shanxi province and delivers a closing speech at a symposium. Zhang Weiqi



Parliamentary leaders and representatives of parliamentarians from developing countries visit the Jinzhong National Agriculture High-tech Zone Smart Farm Demonstration Base in north China's Shanxi province. *Zhang Weiqi*

The key to grasping Chinese modernization

By Lu Yan

During the Commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the National People's Congress' (NPC) Affiliation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the 2024 Interregional Seminar on the Achievement of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries, a delegation of parliamentarians from developing countries visited Beijing, Shanxi Province and Tianjin. They explored rural scenery, smart farms, ancient cities and ecological restoration projects, immersing themselves in traditional Chinese culture, while observing the practice of whole-process people's democracy and experiencing the achievements of Chinese modernization.

The splendor of traditional culture

In early autumn, the sky was clear in Beijing. Standing at the Badaling section of the Great Wall, the delegation took in the majestic beauty of this bulwark built over centuries by China's emperors to protect their territory.

"As ancient Chinese people built this formidable barrier with their hard work, it was intended for defense, not aggression, symbolizing the nation's longstanding desire for peace," a guide explained to the international guests.

Standing at the summit of the Great Wall, one feels a profound sense of national pride and the spirit of de-

fense, remarked Manzoor Nadir, speaker of the National Assembly of Guyana, adding that the achievements of the Communist Party of China are significant in the context of global history and the protection of the Chinese people and the nation.

In the heart of Beijing, the magnificent Forbidden City (now the Palace Museum) stands proudly. Beneath the afternoon clouds, its golden roofs, red walls and intricately carved structures create a stunning visual tapestry.

Segepoh Solomon Thomas, speaker of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, who has visited the Palace Museum three times, said the Palace Museum left him in awe and walking through it felt like traveling through time.

Meanwhile, Chaminda Kularatne, deputy secretary general of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, expressed admiration for the beauty of ancient Chinese architecture.

In Shanxi, another Chinese cultural high ground, parliamentarians visited the Yungang Grottoes, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The grottoes, with their unique blend of Indian, Central Asian and Greco-Roman artistic elements, stand out among many cave temples.

From the perspectives of Buddhist culture, Chinese tradition and global heritage, the Yungang Grottoes are a treasure among treasures, said Chanthavong Saenamathomty, vice president of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of Laos.

In the ancient city of Datong, colorful lanterns adorned the city walls and dancers performed traditional pieces, showcasing the captivating beauty of Chinese culture. Along the city walls, stalls featured traditional handicrafts, including vibrant peacocks woven from silk threads, charming animal figures made from sugar and exquisite lamps carved from eggshells. The intricate techniques of papercutting, dough modeling and egg carving left everyone marveling and exclaiming, “Amazing!”

At the Jinyang Lake Theater in Taiyuan, an immersive performance titled, Dreamlike Jinyang, blended ancient legends and modern technology. The show featured traditional costumes alongside contemporary dance and dazzling light displays. The audience was deeply engaged, reflecting on the coexistence of traditional and modern culture.

Throughout their visits, parliamentarians experienced the rich cultural foundation of China’s modernization and the country’s outstanding efforts in cultural preservation.

Modernization—Chinese style

Chinese modernization is exemplified by agricultural reforms and modernization, which plays a crucial role in the transformation.

In the heart of Shanxi, a smart farm demonstration base of the Shanxi national agricultural hi-tech zone showcases vast, lush rice fields and neatly arranged greenhouses. Inside these greenhouses, an intelligent water and fertilizer integration system allows one person to manage up to 10,000 square meters.

The effective combination of labor, mechanization and intelligent technology can significantly drive agricultural development, said Tlohang Sekhamane, speaker of the National Assembly of Lesotho.

Chinese modernization is exemplified by agricultural modernization, which plays a crucial role in this transformation.

Meanwhile, speaker of the Namibian National Assembly, Peter Katjavivi, said that he had been looking for seeds suitable for arid environments and that he finally found them here.

Agricultural modernization is a key concern for many developing countries. During the tour, a seminar was held at the smart farm demonstration base, featuring agricultural experts from Chinese state-owned enterprises and universities. Delegates engaged in active discussions, eager to learn from China’s experiences in advancing agricultural modernization and facilitate collaboration between their institutions and Chinese counterparts.

At the Jinyang Bridge along the Fenhe River in Taiyuan, the view is breathtaking. There is lush grass underfoot and verdant mountains in the distance, with the bridge gracefully arching across the river.

“Seven years ago, this area suffered from pollution due to population growth, excessive mining and increased water extraction. In 2017 and 2020, President Xi Jinping visited Shanxi and gave instructions for the restoration of the Fenhe River and ecological protection. Thanks to relentless efforts, the beautiful scenery of the ancient Fenhe River has been restored,” a guide explained.

What the parliamentarians see today is a testament to President Xi Jinping’s thought on ecological civilization, which has tangibly improved local environments and enabled people to enjoy beautiful landscapes.

Understanding Chinese democracy

Entering the Great Hall of the People in Beijing—symbolic of the NPC, China’s highest state authority—marks the first step in understanding Chinese democracy.

Every year, some 3,000 NPC deputies gather here to discuss national development plans and pressing issues affecting people’s livelihoods. Party and state leaders listen to their opinions and suggestions, ensuring that the aspirations of the people are integrated into the country’s overall strategy.

In the grand auditorium, IPU president Tulia Ackson listened attentively as visiting parliamentary leaders and representatives took their seats, engaged with the voting devices and experienced the solemn atmosphere of Chinese democracy.

At the community-level legislative outreach office established by the NPC Standing Committee in the Xinghualing area of Taiyuan, a consultation meeting is taking place. Twelve deputies to the people’s congresses from various sectors sat around a table, providing feedback on the draft regulation on sports development of Shanxi Province.

The guests expressed that witnessing this live interaction gave them a deeper understanding of whole-process



Parliamentary leaders and representatives of parliamentarians from developing countries experience intangible cultural heritage in Taiyuan, north China's Shanxi province. Xu Lin

people's democracy and the gathering of grassroots opinions.

The concept of whole-process people's democracy, which prioritizes a people-centered approach, resonated deeply with the delegates.

A Sierra Leonean legislator observed that China's governance is centered around the people and this commitment is aimed at development and building more partnerships, which is totally different from some Western countries that prioritize individualism.

A Seychellois representative noted that China has chosen a democratic system that suits its national conditions, which cannot be replaced by any other system.

Any system a country adopts must benefit the people, stated Puso Gaborone, former chairperson of Botswana's House of Chiefs, adding that a key feature of China's whole-process people's democracy is its focus on including the public, allowing them to be part of the process and benefit from it, thereby driving national progress.

Marinus Bee, speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname, echoed Gaborone's sentiment, and said that while the people's congress system differs from Suriname's democratic model, it serves the people starting from the grassroots level, and that national decision-makers listen to and incorporates the opinions of the public. This is very important, he added.

Kafilat Adetola Ogbara, chairwoman of the Committee

on Woman Affairs and Social Development of Nigeria's House of Representatives noted that the proportion of women deputies at the district level exceeds 47 percent in China, which is significantly higher than that in Nigeria. She added China's grassroots governance experience is worth learning from.

A journey of learning and reflection

Jordan's Senate president Faisal Fayez, who visited China in the 1990s and again in 2007, said that remarkable changes had taken place in China and China's experience serves as a valuable reference for other developing countries seeking progress.

Adrien Charles Duval, speaker of the Mauritius National Assembly, visiting China for the first time, stated that China has made impressive strides in innovation and development while significant efforts have been made to achieve today's accomplishments and follow the path of Chinese modernization.

Parliamentarians expressed a strong desire to learn from China's advanced experiences in agriculture, economic development, artificial intelligence and culture to promote their own national development. They hope to strengthen dialogue and exchanges with the NPC, sharing practical experiences and outcomes to collaboratively address challenges. ■



The drone photo taken on July 19, 2024 shows a photovoltaic power station in Tongliao, north China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region. *Lian Zhen*

Top legislature approves first energy law

China's first energy law was approved on November 8 at the 12th session of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress, China's top legislature, and will come into effect on January 1, 2025.

It includes nine sections, covering stipulations on energy planning, development and utilization, energy market systems, energy reserves and emergency measures, energy technology innovation, supervision and management, legal responsibilities and supplementary provisions, among others.

Experts noted that as the world's largest energy producer and consumer, China has long lacked a fundamental and overarching energy law. The introduction of the law on November 8 will fill this legislative gap, significantly strengthening the legal foundation in the energy sector, ensuring national energy security and promoting green and low-carbon transformation.

Wang Peng, a professor at the North China Electric Power University, said the energy law will enhance the internal drive for green consumption.

"It sets clear goals for green energy development and specifies responsibilities of entities involved. It also makes clearer the requirements on various types of renewable energy de-

The energy law sets clear goals for green energy development and specifies responsibilities of entities involved.

velopment including hydropower, wind energy, solar energy, etc.," Wang said.

"For instance, in the development and utilization of wind and solar energy, the law requires a combination of centralized and distributed systems, and lays a legal foundation for distributed power trading, microgrids and other business models," he added.

Wang said the new energy law also strengthens the institutional support for green energy consumption, since Article 34 calls for the establishment of mechanisms using ways such as green electricity certificates to promote green energy consumption. (China Daily) ■

Country set to advance sci-tech popularization

China is expected to promote science education and increase the cultivation of relevant talent in an effort to strengthen science popularization and stimulate innovation-driven development, according to a draft law revision.

The draft revision to the Science and Technology Popularization Law was submitted for first review on November 4 to an ongoing session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the top legislature. This is the first revision of the law since it was enacted in 2002.

The draft, which contains 60 articles in eight chapters, addresses prominent issues in science popularization and specifies refining the system for innovation. It includes provisions on general requirements, the direction of science popularization and relevant activities, among other things.

According to the draft, universities and colleges are required to provide courses and majors related to science, while primary and middle schools are expected to offer classes that ignite students' interest in science and stimulate their innovative capabilities.

Preschools are also required to increase content on science

Preschools are also required to increase content on scientific knowledge and keep children curious about science, it said.



Visitors watch a demonstration of Tesla coil discharge at a science popularization show in east China's Shanghai, on Sept. 14, 2024. Fang Zhe

tific knowledge and keep children curious about science.

The draft calls for establishing a professional team for science popularization, encouraging senior experts to join the team and improving the volunteer system in the sector. It urges timely measures against pseudoscience and anti-scientific information.

Yin Hejun, Minister of Science and Technology, said the popularization of science and technology is a fundamental work in realizing innovative development.

“It is necessary to revise the existing law, as there are still some issues that need to be addressed, such as inadequate recognition of the importance and lack of initiative in science popularization,” he said.

Other issues that need to be addressed include an insufficient supply of high-quality science popularization products and services, inadequate development of such teams and relatively weak infrastructure, he added.

In recent years, Chinese authorities have paid more attention to the popularization of science and technology, and have tried to promote wider and higher-quality access to sci-tech knowledge.

In September, more than 20,000 special exhibitions and open activities were held nationwide to mark the 21st National Science Popularization Day.

Yin said the current version of the Science and Technology Popularization Law has played an important role in pro-

In recent years, Chinese authorities have tried to promote wider and higher-quality access to sci-tech knowledge.

moting sci-tech popularization, enhancing scientific literacy among citizens and driving innovative development.

The proportion of Chinese citizens with scientific literacy increased from 1.98 percent in 2003 to 14.14 percent last year, according to a survey released in April by the China Association for Science and Technology.

For the first time, the gap in scientific literacy levels of citizens in the eastern, central and western regions has narrowed, while gender disparities have also been further reduced, the data showed.

Meanwhile, China’s rank in the global innovation index has climbed from 34 in 2012 to 11 this year, making it the only middle-income economy among the top 30, according to the Global Innovation Index 2024, which was published in September by the World Intellectual Property Organization. (China Daily) ■



Visitors watch a demonstration of magnetic fluid and electromagnetic force science experiments presented by teachers and students from Shanghai Jiao Tong University at a science popularization show in east China’s Shanghai, on Sept. 14, 2024. Fang Zhe



VCG

Anti-Money Laundering Law updated

China will strengthen the monitoring of emerging money laundering risks and improve its financial regulatory system to further safeguard financial security, according to a newly amended law.

The revised Anti-Money Laundering Law was adopted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, on November 8 as it wrapped up its latest session.

"With the rapid development of our financial sector and the constant changes in the anti-money laundering situation, we've seen some new problems and challenges in this field," the NPC Standing Committee's Legislative Affairs Commission said in a statement.

"For example, our anti-money laundering supervision and coordination are not smooth; the ability to monitor and prevent new risks is not strong; and the prevention and fight against illegal and criminal activities, such as 'underground banking,' are not sufficient," the commission said, adding that this was why the law was revised.

While supporting technological innovation in anti-money laundering work, the newly amended law also urges government departments tasked with anti-money laundering affairs to take prompt measures to monitor new types of money laundering risks related to emerging sectors and businesses.

The law allows government agencies to tighten anti-money laundering supervision, but it also emphasizes that the measures should guarantee normal financial services and capital flows.

China has stepped up efforts to safeguard financial security over the past few years.

In addition, the law updates the definition of anti-money laundering in the new era, clarifying that it refers to actions taken to prevent and curb activities that disguise or conceal the origins and nature of criminal proceeds and their unlawful gains, as well as related criminal activities, including measures against terror funding.

Moreover, institutions offering anti-money laundering services and their staff are required to properly handle data and content, so as to ensure data security and privacy protection, according to the law that will take effect on January 1, 2025.

The commission said that the amended law will not only be conducive to maintaining order and preventing risks in the financial sector, but also help curb upstream crimes and enhance international cooperation against money laundering.

China has stepped up efforts to safeguard financial security over the past few years. Strengthening oversight in this sector and focusing more on preventing financial risks have been highlighted in the guiding principles of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. (China Daily) ■



The gate of Tsinghua University VCG

Notable strides made in higher education

In recent years, China has made remarkable strides in the development of its higher education system, particularly through the initiative of building world-class universities and disciplines with Chinese characteristics, Education Minister Huai Jinpeng said.

The “Double First Class Initiative,” which was launched to develop a set of world-class institutions and disciplines in China, has undergone two rounds of changes, Huai said while delivering a report submitted to an ongoing session of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, China’s top legislature, for review on November 5.

The first round identified 140 universities and 465 disciplines to be part of the initiative and the second round has added seven more universities and 41 disciplines, with an emphasis on foundational and cutting-edge fields that are critical to the country’s development, according to the report.

China has implemented programs for basic disciplines, establishing 288 elite student training bases, 14 national cen-

There is an urgent need to refine the criteria for evaluating disciplines, particularly for interdisciplinary studies and social sciences.

ters for talent development in mathematics and physics, and 16 interdisciplinary research centers, aiming to contribute to significant advances in disciplines such as quantum science, materials engineering and space exploration, it said.

Universities are evaluated based on their overall development and growth potential. Some top-tier institutions like Peking University and Tsinghua University are allowed to autonomously determine their own disciplines, creating a model for personalized growth, Huai said.



The Peking University Library VCG

Since 2016, China has invested over 166.7 billion yuan (\$23.4 billion) in “Double First Class” universities to support the development of these institutions and their high-level research programs, the report said.

Universities involved in the initiative have trained more than half of China’s master’s degree students and 80 percent of its doctoral students.

Focusing on national strategic needs, 84 new undergraduate majors have been added, including interdisciplinary engineering, intelligent sensing engineering and carbon storage science, it added.

However, the traditional academic structure in Chinese universities, which was based on departments and disciplines, limits the flexibility required to foster innovative, interdisciplinary talent, Huai noted.

“The model for talent development needs to evolve, with greater emphasis on integrating STEM or science, technology, engineering and mathematics, with the humanities and on strengthening collaboration between education and industry,” he said.

Moreover, China still faces challenges in producing leading-edge and disruptive innovations, particularly in fundamental research. The potential for universities to contribute more effectively to economic and social development has not been fully realized, the report said, and the commercialization of scientific discoveries remains insufficient.

“There is still a gap when compared to top universities in

developed countries,” Huai said. The ability to attract and retain global talent is a key challenge, as is China’s participation in global educational governance, especially in cutting-edge fields like artificial intelligence, he said.

There is an urgent need to refine the criteria for evaluating disciplines, particularly for interdisciplinary studies and social sciences. The lack of a clear, characteristic development model for “Double First Class” universities further complicates the process of building distinct, world-class institutions, according to the report.

In response to these challenges, a more tailored evaluation system should be developed, focusing on contributions to society, especially in areas such as ideological leadership, national security and social stability, Huai said.

To cultivate top talent, China should strengthen early identification of potential innovators and foster a more integrated talent development model that combines research with education, the report added.

Special emphasis should be placed on developing engineers, professionals in emerging fields and interdisciplinary researchers. Improving core curriculum and integrating research breakthroughs into teaching will help nurture a new generation of world-class talent, it stated.

The ability to attract top international talent will be crucial to building globally competitive institutions, according to the report. (China Daily) ■

China leads in combating desertification



Workers lay grid-shaped grass sand barriers in the Tengger Desert in Zhongwei city, northwest China's Ningxia Hui autonomous region, on June 16, 2024. Feng Kaihua

With more than half of its reclaimable desertified land treated, China has taken the lead globally in halting land degradation and become the largest contributor to global afforestation, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

Since 2012, China has seen its desertified land decrease by 4.3 million hectares, said Guan Zhiou, head of the administration, reporting to an ongoing session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the top legislature, on November 5.

"This demonstrates a positive trend of overall improvement and accelerated enhancement," he said.

He credited the achievement to a series of concerted efforts by the country to promote initiatives aimed at controlling desertification, underpinned by the establishment of a robust and effective legal framework.

Currently, the legal framework includes six national laws, such as laws for sand prevention and control, as well as forest and wetland conservation, he noted, adding the 13 key provincial regions for desertification control have all enacted regional regulations on the issue.

He highlighted the significant role of a series of projects in tackling desertification, including the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, which was launched in 1978.

Thanks to these projects, 35.9 million hectares of desertified land have been brought under protection and 7.9 million hectares of this land have been effectively treated,

he explained.

Guan elaborated that within the expansive scope of the Three-North program, spanning from northwestern to northeastern China, the forest coverage rate has risen significantly from approximately 12.4 percent to 13.8 percent. Moreover, effective measures have successfully controlled soil erosion on 61 percent of the affected land.

He continued by noting that within the Yellow River Basin, the boundary delineating regions with and without vegetation cover has shifted approximately 300 kilometers westward. Due to these efforts, northern China has seen a remarkable decrease in the number of days with severe sand and dust, he added.

He also noted, however, that China is still confronted with an arduous task to forge ahead with desertification control, considering the size of its desertified land and its severity.

"Currently, there are 47.2 million hectares of desertified land that can be reclaimed across the country," he said. "Of them, 22.2 million hectares remain untreated, mainly concentrated in the Three-North region and are all hard nuts to crack."

The official vows a series of measures to advance the work, including incentivizing the public and enterprises to participate in desertification control.

China will tap into different modes to encourage farmers and herdsmen to participate in desertification control, he added. (China Daily) ■



Ma Bing operates machines in the workshop.
Courtesy Photo

Ma Bing spearheads efforts in high-quality development of manufacturing industry

Ma Bing, head of the Ma Hengchang Team at the precision workshop of a subsidiary of Genertec Qiqihar No.2 Machine Tool Co., Ltd. in Qiqihar city, northeast China's Heilongjiang province, has spent decades pursuing excellence and craftsmanship. As a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), he is dedicated to the mission of serving the people and leads the way in industrial innovation in the new era.

Ma started as a lathe operator and joined the Ma Hengchang Team in 2004 after undergoing rigorous technical assessments. The team was established in 1949 and named after Ma Hengchang, a national model worker, whose craftsmanship and commitment to precision has been upheld till this day.

In 2005, when the factory acquired its first computer numerical control (CNC) machine tool, Ma became the first one in the team to master the technology, dedicating himself to learning CNC machine tool theory and techniques. Subsequently, he became a pioneer in CNC programming and machining techniques in the factory.

Ma became the head of the team in 2012, which has evolved into an exemplary precision workshop with the primary objective of addressing core technological challenges in key fields.

Over the years, Ma and his fellow workers have focused on enhancing productivity and quality in production of critical components, serving as a vanguard in manufacturing and revitalizing the machine tool industry.

"Upholding the spirit of craftsmanship, being down-to-earth and striving for perfection are crucial paths for improving our skills and technical proficiency," Ma said. "Through the digital transformation and upgrading of equipment manufacturing, high-end CNC machine tool products will be more sophisticated, intelligent and sustainable, accelerating the development of new quality productive forces and driving Chinese

modernization."

In 2023, Ma was elected as a deputy to the 14th NPC. As a frontline industrial worker in the new era, he leveraged his expertise and professional strengths and put forward high-quality suggestions in support of industrial workers.

At the NPC session in 2023, Ma submitted suggestions on promoting craftsmanship to cultivate high-skilled professionals and on the national support for establishing a key laboratory for equipment manufacturing based on Heilongjiang's existing basic research.

At this year's session, Ma called for more endeavors to enhance vocational education, optimizing the allocation of educational resources and establishing a comprehensive framework for vocational education, in order to nurture a greater number of versatile high-skilled talents in the manufacturing sector.

Committed to carrying forward the core values of the Ma Hengchang Team, Ma said he will nurture new generations of knowledgeable, skilled, and innovative blue-collar workers, and contribute to the development of new quality productive forces and the country's high-end equipment manufacturing industry. (NPC) ■



Ma Bing (center) briefs his colleagues on the guiding principles of the second session of the 14th National People's Congress. Courtesy Photo



Lu Lihua (center) carries out the campaign of promoting intangible cultural heritages on campus. Courtesy Photo

Deputy from ethnic village dances to rural vitalization

Lu Lihua, a member of the Yi ethnic group from Nanjian Yi autonomous county in Dali Bai autonomous prefecture, southwest China's Yunnan province, has spent over 13 years in the preservation and development of ethnic culture, as her hometown is a trove of Yi songs and dances.

Hailing from a rural background, Lu, 36, learned from her elders folk songs and dances which are listed as a national-level intangible cultural heritage, including dage, a traditional form of folk song, and tiaocai, a ceremonial dance form based on serving food.

In order to improve community livelihoods, she made up her mind to bring Yi ethnic songs and dances to rural households and draw a bigger audience to this folk art.

"I have always aspired to sing and dance well and dance, so more people can witness the pure and ancient folk customs of our hometown," Lu said. Influenced by the elders, Lu has dedicated herself to mastering dage and tiaocai. Through innovative choreography and program design, she revitalized the once declining traditional tiaocai at banquets into stage performances.

"We are quite popular for village celebrations, commercial events, and performances at scenic spots. Our performance schedule for the next three months has been booked up already," she said.

The fervor of villagers participating in dance performances has brought more vigor to their lives as employment opportunities arise, and the fusion of ethnic charm and local resources in performances like tiaocai is gradually evolving into a distinctive industry.

In recent years, with the growth of the tourism industry and heightened interest in local cultural heritage, an increasing number of restaurants and rural homestays have embraced tiaocai performances.

Currently, Nanjian boasts over 300 folk dance troupes and more than 2,000 performers. Through the integration with industries such as catering, wedding services, and tourism, tiaocai performances have directly or indirectly facilitated employment for tens of thousands of locals.

Meanwhile, challenges emerge as the tiaocai performance industry expands, including short performance seasons, unstable income and a scarcity of young performers.

In 2023, Lu was elected as a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress (NPC). Since then, she has felt a more profound sense of responsibility and commitment. In or-

der to fulfill her duty, she has tirelessly carried out research and exploration, traveling to numerous villages, gaining new insights into the preservation and inheritance of Yi ethnic dance.

"The key to the growth of local cultural industry lies in retaining young people through stable markets and well-established mechanisms," she noted.

Lu said that tapping into the charm of traditional culture from the perspective of young people and continuously integrating and innovating traditional and modern cultures, outstanding traditional culture can be better preserved and developed. And it can eventually become a thriving industry that contributes to local employment and income increase.

During the first session of the 14th NPC, Lu submitted suggestions on enhancing support for the development of ethnic culture and strengthening related infrastructure construction. As an NPC deputy, she aims to rally more support for the preservation and promotion of ethnic culture to foster their prosperity and development.

Deeply aware of the vital role of intangible cultural heritages in rural vitalization, Lu plans to continue initiatives such as introducing them to schools and communities, conducting traditional dance and song performances in villages, and passing on traditions to grassroots artists and enthusiasts. Looking ahead, she envisions expanding the performance market and developing cultural products to help locals achieve prosperity. (NPC) ■



Lu Lihua, a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), promotes the guiding principles of the second session of the 14th NPC to her fellow villagers. Courtesy Photo



Chen Baochao brings tomatoes from his village to the first session of the 14th National People's Congress in March 2023. *Courtesy Photo*

'Tomato Party chief' dedicated to transforming village into prosperous community

Baiyunshan village is a remarkable example of rural vitalization in Lankao county, Kaifeng city in central China's Henan province, where Chen Baochao, Party chief of the village committee, has been playing a pivotal role.

For years, the dream of all-round rural revitalization has been a beacon of hope for every farmer, and Chen has made it his mission to turn this dream into reality.

Faced with the task of finding industries that could lift the village out of poverty, Chen set his sights on cultivating tomatoes in greenhouse facilities.

Introducing high-quality alkali-resistant strawberry tomatoes, Chen spearheaded the intelligent transformation and automated management of tomato greenhouses in the village. His approach not only increased tomato yields but also reduced instances of pests and diseases.

The thin-skinned and juicy tomatoes cultivated by Chen and his fellow villagers attracted clients from across the country, boosting their income and local development.

Nicknamed "tomato Party chief" by his peers, Chen, who was elected as a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) last year, brought tomatoes from the village to the first session of the 14th NPC to seek advice from agricultural experts and entrepreneurs on how to further develop the agro-business in his hometown.

Thanks to his dedication, tomato sales in Baiyunshan village have steadily risen, with a third more farmers now engaged in tomato cultivation.

With fuller pockets and heightened aspirations for a better life, Chen's fellow villagers embarked on a comprehensive beautification project, installing more than 200 streetlights for easier nighttime travel, paving all village roads and upgrading toilets while laying sewage pipelines.

Thanks to their collective efforts, the village has seen its living environment greatly improved.

As an NPC deputy, Chen has al-

ways connected his role with the vast expanse of rural land. To better understand the thoughts and needs of his fellow villagers, Chen has traversed almost every corner of Lankao county.

During his fieldwork and visits, Chen identified disparities in urban and rural elderly care facilities, noting the lack of rural facilities and the economic pressures faced by elderly individuals in need of care should be addressed.

He also highlighted "meal difficulties" among elderly rural residents, citing the example of Baiyunshan village, where a significant portion of the population struggles with cooking due to age-related limitations and the absence of family members.

To address these issues, Chen submitted the suggestion to this year's NPC session regarding the comprehensive development of rural elderly care services.

His recommendations include enhancing policy support for rural elderly care, encouraging innovative models and boosting market vitality in rural elderly care services to ensure that every elderly individual in rural areas has access to quality care and support. (NPC) ■



Chen Baochao submits the suggestion regarding the comprehensive development of rural elderly care services to the second session of the 14th National People's Congress in March 2024. *Courtesy Photo*



Wang Xiaofei shares her experiences in serving the people on March 8, 2022. Feng Tian

Textile worker weaves her path to National People's Congress

From an ordinary textile worker to a national skills competition champion, then a two-term deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), Wang Xiaofei, senior technician of the Dezhou Hengfeng Group in Dezhou city, has gone through a journey of perseverance and dedication that has shaped her extraordinary path in life.

Born to a modest rural family in Dezhou, east China's Shandong province, Wang started her career as a textile worker after graduating from a technical school in 2003. Thanks to relentless efforts in honing her skills, Wang stood out in the company's selection event in 2008, and eventually shined in the national competition, winning the top prize.

Over her two decades in the textile industry, Wang, together with her colleagues, has devised several upgrades to textile production techniques, resulting in a reduction of six workers per shift in a workshop with 43 machines and an increase of over one ton in daily output.

In 2018, Wang was elected as a deputy to the 13th NPC. Recognizing the responsibility, she has maintained close connections with frontline workers and explored various industries to listen to their voices and understand their concerns.

Wang said that only by getting close to the people at grassroots level can she more effectively propose suggestions, and help address their concerns.

To fulfill her duties, Wang actively participates in training sessions, surveys and inspections, gathering feedback directly from the frontline workers.

Based on her surveys, Wang made suggestions to the NPC to improve enterprises' independent identification system for vocational skills, which were well-received by relevant departments.

Her efforts have yielded positive results, with over 1,000 employees in her company benefiting from the system, leading to an increase of skill subsidies, improved benefits, and enhanced sense of fulfillment among workers.

During her terms as an NPC deputy, Wang has visited numerous enterprises and communities, gaining insights into people's concerns and aspirations. Her research on issues facing private enterprises in Binzhou city of Shandong led to the submission of a suggestion to support the better development of private enterprises, which was highly valued by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the National Development and Reform Commission.

In her seven years as an NPC deputy, Wang has submitted a total of 58 suggestions to the top legislature.

"In the past, I mainly focused on my own industry. After becoming an NPC deputy, I began to broaden my horizons, gaining deeper insights into other industries, and striving to enhance my knowledge in legal and political aspects," she said. (NPC) ■



In 2019, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security approved the establishment of a national skills master studio named after Wang Xiaofei, a senior technician of the Dezhou Hengfeng Group in Dezhou city of east China's Shandong province and a deputy to the National People's Congress. The picture shows Wang (second left) with colleagues. Courtesy Photo

Huang Xiufen introduces agricultural products to broader market



Huang Xiufen attends the second session of the 14th National People's Congress in March 2024. Courtesy Photo

Huang Xiufen, chairwoman of Guangdong Yabei Agricultural and Sideline Products Co., based in Shaoguan in south China's Guangdong province, has been dedicated to promoting the development of the agricultural industry chain in the city, expanding the market reach of local agricultural products and making the wallets of farmers fuller.

Shaoguan, situated at the intersection of Guangdong, Hunan and Jiangxi provinces, is recognized as a key agricultural hub of Guangdong. It is celebrated as the “rice bag,” “vegetable basket,” “fruit tray” and “tea canister” of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Despite its abundant agricultural resources, the city has long faced challenges due to the lack of a comprehensive foreign trade service platform, which has hindered the export of high-quality local produce to overseas markets.

With 14 years of experience in the agricultural sector, Huang has remained steadfast in her endeavors to facilitate the expansion of agricultural products into broader markets, narrowing the economic disparities between the northern region of Guangdong and other areas of the Pearl River Delta and improving the livelihoods of local residents.

Having long been engaged in the logistics industry, she is acutely aware of the issues locally, including the information asymmetry between producers and markets, inadequate logistics and sales channels, a fragmented industrial chain and limited marketing capabilities among farmers. These issues have impeded efficient production and distribution, ultimately affecting market competitiveness.

As a rural deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), Huang recognizes the importance of voicing for farmers' interests.

Through field visits, research and direct community interactions, she made a number of suggestions on building Shaoguan's comprehensive foreign trade service platform, enhancing the city's agricultural export capabilities and improving the national system of agricultural product distribution services to promote high-quality agricultural development, which were adopted by several competent departments.

During the second session of the 14th NPC, Huang's suggestions for establishing a market platform in Guangdong, Hunan and Jiangxi and enhancing logistics infrastructure in the northern region of Guangdong to fortify the “vegeta-

ble basket” project in the GBA garnered significant attention from both domestic and international media outlets.

As she continues to advocate for balanced regional development and the integration of primary, secondary and tertiary industries, Huang remains committed to driving agricultural growth in Shaoguan towards a more prosperous future.

In recent years, she has taken the initiative in building an intelligent supply chain management platform, utilizing big data and artificial intelligence technologies to achieve end-to-end monitoring and optimization of agricultural products from cultivation and processing to sales.

Her efforts in establishing the intelligent supply chain management platform and forging strategic partnerships with logistics enterprises have led to notable achievements in expanding the export capacity of Shaoguan's agricultural products.

In 2023, a local enterprise achieved an export value of nearly 100 million yuan (\$14.29 million) of edible mushrooms through this platform. Also in last year, Huang's company successfully made its first independent export of Shatian Pomelo to Europe.

Huang envisions a prosperous future for Shaoguan, with its agricultural exports attracting increased investment and fostering sustainable development. By advocating for collaboration between buyers and producers and promoting seamless market integration, she aims to establish a self-sustaining export ecosystem that benefits both local farmers and businesses. (NPC) ■



Huang Xiufen surveys a local vegetable cultivation base. Courtesy Photo



Gong Xuefeng conducts a routine check-up for the tanker truck he operates. Courtesy Photo

Ex-serviceman turned driver steers his way toward public service

Gong Xuefeng, a driver transporting natural gas at Hohhot Shijie Gas Co., Ltd. in Hohhot, north China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, has been working in the sector for 12 years with a record of zero accidents.

Gong has shown a keen interest in automobiles since early age. After graduating from high school, he enlisted in the military, where, alongside rigorous training, he diligently studied vehicle structures and honed his driving skills, becoming a standout performer eventually.

In 2012, Gong transitioned from military service to civilian employment. Working together with more than 30 colleagues, he is responsible for natural gas transport in the cities of Hohhot, Ulanqab, and Bayannur of Inner Mongolia.

With over 20,000 completed trips and total mileage exceeding one million kilometers, he has truly exemplified craftsmanship in his ordinary yet crucial role.

Gong is fully aware of the critical nature of hazardous goods transport, where even the smallest oversight could lead to unforeseeable consequences. He said that compared to regular cargo transportation, transporting hazardous goods demands higher levels of driving skill, patience, and attention to detail, with each transport mission serving as

a rigorous test for drivers, especially during long-haul journeys.

The work is not just a profession but also bears significant social responsibility, as "my tanker truck directly impacts public supply," he said.

In a winter when continuous snowfall led to icy roads in Inner Mongolia, Gong volunteered to undertake transportation to ensure heating and gas supply for Ulanqab, braving severe cold and risks. He traversed over 150 kilometers through treacherous conditions for over 10 hours, ensuring the safe delivering of natural gas to local households.

In 2022, he was awarded the honorary title of National Model Worker.

In 2023, Gong was elected as a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress (NPC). Drawing from his years of experience in natural gas transport, he focuses particularly on national energy development and utilization.

Through grassroots surveys and exchanges with industry professionals, he learned that amid China's rapid socio-economic development, over 40 percent of natural gas is sourced internationally, which poses grave challenges for the development of the industry.

At this year's NPC session in March, Gong submitted a series of suggestions, including deepening reforms in the oil and gas exploration and extraction system, piloting a new energy transmission pipeline network system, and establishing demonstration zones for comprehensive utilization of natural gas and clean energy, all aimed at supporting the high-quality development of the energy sector.

Carrying a notebook wherever he goes, Gong fills it with suggestions and opinions from the grassroots level. Understanding public concerns is essential for proposing truly effective suggestions, he said.

Once at a service area on the highway, a driver told him that the facilities of the "drivers' home" in the service areas were inadequate. With the driver's opinion in mind, he conducted in-depth research on the problem.

At the first session of the NPC in 2023, Gong submitted a suggestion on improving the construction of "drivers' home," which received a positive response from the Ministry of Transport.

"It is my duty and mission to bring the voices of the grassroots to the Great Hall of the People in Beijing and help them live a better life," he said, following through with purposeful actions. (NPC) ■



Gong Xuefeng (center), a deputy to the National People's Congress, joins a delegation to inspect a court in southwest China's Sichuan province. Courtesy Photo



Lu Man delivers a speech at the symposium on upholding and improving the system of people's congresses in Beijing, on Sept. 14, 2024. Ma Zengke

Lu Man dedicated to rural vitalization

Lu Man, chairperson of Tianhe Eco-Agriculture Cooperative and Party chief of Chenjia village in Yancheng, east China's Jiangsu province, was a white-collar worker before she returned to her hometown in 2011 to start a turkey raising business.

From turkey farming to rural e-commerce live streaming, Lu's journey of getting into the agro-business was fraught with challenges.

Starting from a few renovated school buildings, she gradually developed a complex that integrated breeding, online sales, processing, research and development, and leisure tourism, boasting a 1,000-mu (67.67-hectare) farming base with an annual output value of nearly 100 million yuan (\$14.05 million).

"Being rich alone does not count as true wealth; common prosperity for all the villagers matters most," said Lu, who later initiated the establishment of a specialized cooperative for ecological agriculture.

Through short videos and live streaming, she shared turkey farming techniques with her fellow villagers and launched an internet-based platform for production and sales of agricultural products. Riding the wave of the e-commerce boom, Lu shifted her focus to online sales, leading to increased income for many farmers.

Abundant e-commerce sales experience has helped Lu realize that agricultural product sales cannot solely rely on traditional means, and the future development of rural areas hinges on the improvement of supply chains of both talent and agricultural products.

Consequently, she focused on strengthening e-commerce related training for farmers and turned her attention to groups such as university graduates, returnees to rural areas and women.

In 2015, Lu established the Xianggala Innovation Space, gathering young people aspiring to start businesses in rural areas. The space provides free entrepreneurial guidance and has attracted many university graduates to rural entrepreneurship.

In 2020, she founded the Junman Vocational Training School, offering training courses, lectures and career development planning to enhance young farmers' marketing capabilities and live streaming promotional skills, and transforming them into "new rural entrepreneurs". Since its establishment, the school has held more than 335 sessions, training more than 20,000 individuals.

She has also worked with higher education institutions,

using their technological expertise to guide young returnees in product innovation.

"The changes in the village over the years have enabled more and more young people to see opportunities for development," Lu said.

Leveraging the e-commerce platform "Xianggala" established by Lu, Chenjia village has evolved into a demonstration village for rural e-commerce and common prosperity, creating a new rural livelihood through the model of "production base plus farmers" in modern smart agriculture that integrates online and offline activities, with over 80 percent of villagers proficient in selling agricultural products online.

Since being elected as a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC) in 2018, Lu has been earnestly fulfilling her duties by listening to villagers and submitting suggestions on rural entrepreneurship, talent cultivation and rural vitalization to the NPC sessions.

In 2021, her cooperative was designated as a deputy liaison office with eight deputies to people's congresses of five different levels maintaining regular contact with villagers to learn about their difficulties and solicit valuable suggestions.

In response to the concerns raised by her fellow villagers, a crab trading and distribution center and a community canteen for the elderly have been established to enhance their income and improve livelihoods.

Thanks to Lu's efforts, a regulation on equipping public places with automatic external defibrillators came into effect in Yancheng in September last year, marking the city's first targeted and result-driven regulation with a streamlined legislative process.

Keeping the responsibilities of an NPC deputy in her heart, Lu said she will remain grounded in rural areas and work towards integrating the aspirations of farmers into the country's development drive. (NPC) ■



Lu Man (center in front row) talks with workers in a salted duck egg production workshop. Courtesy Photo



Zhong Tuanyu practices She boxing. Zheng Zhen

Zhong Tuanyu vitalizes her village through kungfu

The picturesque village of Jindouyang in Kangcuo She ethnic township of Fuan city in east China's Fujian province is hailed as hometown of She ethnic martial arts.

From young children to elderly, most residents in the village practice the shezuquan, or She boxing, a deeply ingrained martial art among the She ethnic group.

Zhong Tuanyu, Party chief of the village and a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), is proud of this tradition and has been a beacon for preserving the rich heritage of She martial arts.

A standout female inheritor of She boxing, Zhong learned the art from her uncle when she was a child. Since then, she has collected numerous accolades in provincial, national and international martial arts competitions.

Committed to preserving and promoting this intangible cultural heritage, Zhong envisions expanding the reach of She boxing beyond the village, intertwining martial arts with rural revitalization efforts.

Originating in the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911), She boxing has a 300-year history and is listed in the

fourth batch of intangible cultural heritage of Fujian province.

"She boxing is the treasure of our village. I feel the responsibility to pass it on and promote its future development," Zhong said.

Beyond martial arts, Zhong actively engages in initiatives to enhance the influence of She ethnic culture. By fostering partnership between Jindouyang village and local schools, she has established She martial arts classes and led the compilation of textbooks on traditional She martial arts routines. These efforts blend martial arts practice with elements of sports and dance, enriching the martial arts experience.

She also spearheads projects that integrate intangible cultural heritage experiences with parent-child activities to create a martial arts-themed retreat village that harmonizes leisure, wellness and rural tourism. This innovative model intertwines the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, translating rural revitalization into tangible results.

As an NPC deputy, Zhong remains dedicated to addressing pressing issues in her community. From improving

elderly care facilities to pushing forward infrastructure development in tea-growing areas, she tirelessly advocates for the well-being of her fellow villagers.

As a female NPC deputy from the She ethnic group, Zhong emphasizes the importance of amplifying the voices of minority groups and safeguarding the rights of women and children.

During the second session of the 14th NPC in this March, Zhong submitted suggestions on the development of contiguous areas inhabited by people of She ethnic group, the healthy growth of minors and child medication safety.

Zhong said she will continue to dedicate herself to preserving the She culture and promoting the prosperity of her village. (NPC) ■



Zhong Tuanyu (center) works with her fellow villagers. Zhang Jian



Guo Jingjing conducts PTA product sampling. Courtesy Photo

Guo Jingjing promotes green development

For Guo Jingjing, head of the Human Resources Department at Fujian Fuhua Gulei Petrochemical Co., in Zhangzhou, east China's Fujian province, what matters to her has always been the Gulei Peninsula and the people there.

Growing up amid the coastal winds in her hometown of Zhangpu, where the Gulei Peninsula is located, she was proud of the transformations she witnessed. What was once a region reliant on fishing and aquaculture has now transitioned towards a focus on the petrochemical industry, offering residents new jobs right on their doorsteps.

Located in the heart of China's southeastern city cluster and between the special economic zones of Xiamen in Fujian and Shantou in south China's Guangdong province, the Gulei Peninsula holds a strategic position, serving as a crucial link for the country's petrochemical industry development.

In 2006, the Fujian provincial government approved the establishment of the Gulei Port Economic Development Zone. In September of the same year, it was designated as a provincial-level development zone by the National Development and Reform Commission.

After graduating from university in 2007, Guo returned to her hometown and joined the Fujian Gulei Port Economic Development Co. For years, she committed herself to the development of the petrochemical base and the welfare of the residents on the peninsula.

In 2018, she was elected as a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress (NPC).

"As an NPC deputy, I'll do everything possible to address the concerns of the people," Guo said.

During the NPC session in 2018, Guo submitted suggestions on promoting rural employment and ensuring job security.

In response to her suggestions, the Gulei development zone soon established a special fund to boost local employment.

Over the past seven years, she has diligently fulfilled her duty as an

NPC deputy, submitting more than 50 suggestions, most of which are closely tied to local development and initiatives that would benefit the local community.

During this year's NPC session in March, Guo proposed the establishment of a long-term mechanism for green development and advocated for sustainable practices in the petrochemical industry.

"By implementing green petrochemical standards, promoting a range of eco-friendly products, establishing green factories and industrial parks, and setting benchmarks for sustainable development within the industry, we can effectively drive the green and sustainable growth of the petrochemical sector," Guo said.

Apart from her vocational endeavors, Guo is dedicated to improving public welfare.

Engaging in various charitable activities over the years, she has provided one-on-one support to orphans, regularly visited nursing homes and spent time with children with disabilities at special education schools.

"These experiences have given me a deeper understanding of what it means for NPC deputies to serve the people," she said. (NPC) ■



Guo Jingjing (second right) talks with her colleagues. Courtesy Photo

Legislative outreach offices highlight China's whole-process people's democracy



This photo shows the legislative outreach office of the Bijie City People's Congress Standing Committee at Dexi community in Bijie, southwest China's Guizhou province. *Xiang Dingjie*

Li Yanhua vividly recalls a heated debate between farmers and village officials over whether members of the rural community living away should be entitled to collective economic dividends.

The discussion was intense because the outcome would be forwarded to the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature.

"Through the local legislative outreach office mechanism, grassroots voices can be conveyed directly to the top legislative authority," said Li, who works at a legislative outreach office in the city of Jiangmen, Guangdong province, south China.

Network

The establishment of local legislative outreach offices across the country was first proposed at the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 2014.

A decade later, the NPC Standing Committee has set up 45 local legislative outreach offices, in addition to a network of over 7,300 such offices nationwide for the provincial and city-level legislatures.

The mechanism has ensured the direct representation of public opinions in lawmaking, a highlight of China's whole-process people's democracy.

Sun Zhenping, vice chairperson of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, noted that this expansion has "facilitated people's orderly participation in the national legislative process and enriched the practice of whole-process people's democracy."

The Hongqiao sub-district office in Shanghai was one of the first four local legislative outreach offices set up in 2015. Its first task was to gather public feedback on the draft Anti-Domestic Violence Law.

Wu Xinhui, director of Shanghai KM Law Firm, participated in the process. At the time, she was handling a case involving a paralyzed elderly man abused by his daughter. Wu

suggested that the Anti-Domestic Violence Law should include provisions to protect the elderly.

"Seeing my recommendation incorporated into the final law was an exciting moment," Wu said.

From 2015 to July 2024, more than 30,500 suggestions on 185 draft laws, legislative work plans and review work were submitted through local legislative outreach offices, of which over 3,300 had been taken.

People's voice

"Legislation has always seemed like something grand and out of reach, something we weren't qualified to participate in, let alone see our suggestions be included in legal texts," said Hu Feiyang, a management official with an industrial park in Heping county, Guangdong province.

As a veteran of the industrial park, Hu made suggestions for a regulation aimed at promoting the high-quality development of Guangdong's manufacturing sector.

When the regulation came into effect in March this year, Hu found that his suggestion for differentiated evaluation of industrial parks based on actual development situations had been incorporated into the regulation.

"I felt a strong sense of pride seeing the whole-process people's democracy in action," Hu said.

Liang Yingyan, an official with the Hongqiao sub-district office in Shanghai, said it was important to hear the voices of ordinary people as the top legislature already has lots of expert resources.

Tan Huosheng, a professor at Tsinghua University, noted that any comprehensive democratic process requires the participation of people from diverse backgrounds.

This inclusiveness extends to foreigners living in China. Simon Lichtenberg, the Danish CEO of Trayton Group, once attended a meeting held by the Hongqiao legislative outreach office soliciting suggestions for the revised Company Law.

Lichtenberg said he found it fascinating that a foreigner could make suggestions on a Chinese law, adding that he later learned that his suggestion on employee participation in board meetings had been adopted.

"Of course, this may not be the view of just one person, but the key point is that this wasn't just for show. Genuine feedback was sought," said Lichtenberg, who has lived in Shanghai for over 30 years.

Lichtenberg was impressed by the process, during which staff from the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee found people relevant to different laws in communities across the country and gathered their opinions through the efficient and effective system.

Before adoption, each law requires several rounds of deliberation and public feedback from ordinary citizens as well as legal experts, Lichtenberg said, adding that this is true democracy. (Xinhua) ■



A training session on taxation for individual business owners is held at a legislators' liaison station in Xingning district in Nanning, south China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on May 21, 2024. *Huang Jing*

Deciphered: whole-process people's democracy

In the West, skepticism often arises when China describes its political system as a democracy, specifically a “whole-process people’s democracy.” However, this skepticism is frequently rooted in a lack of understanding about what China means by the term, how it differs from liberal democracy, and why the Chinese government considers it an effective system for the country.

A recent article in *Qiushi*, the official theoretical journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), written by Lin Shangli, president of Renmin University of China in Beijing, sheds light on this concept. His analysis aims to explain the Chinese perspective on “whole-process people’s democracy” to a Western audience.

Reframing the role of the CPC

To understand the Chinese system, it is necessary to move beyond the Western tendency to equate the CPC with political parties like the Democrats or Republicans in the United States. This comparison often leads to misunderstandings and incorrect assumptions.

In China, the CPC is not just another political party but rather the foundation of the country’s constitutional order. It serves as the fundamental guarantor of the entire political system and the people’s interests. As outlined in the *Qiushi* article, “whole-process people’s democracy ensures unity between the leadership of the CPC, the running of the country by the people and law-based governance.”

This integration positions the CPC not as a competing entity within the system but as the overarching framework that ensures the system’s coherence and functionality. The CPC plays a role akin to that of an entire democratic system in liberal democracies, acting as a direct link between governance and public sentiment. The Party is charged with accurately gauging public opinion and reflecting the people’s will, a role that liberal democracies would ascribe to the entire apparatus of governance, not to a single political party.

So, instead of viewing China as a “one-party state,” a more accurate description might be closer to a “zero-party state” in the Western understanding of what a party is. The CPC embodies the state itself: It is not a contender for power but the permanent custodian of the people’s mandate.

What is the ‘whole process’?

The term “whole process” is key to understanding China’s model. Unlike Western liberal democracies, which focus on periodic voting, China argues that true democracy should be a constant, pervasive element of governance and daily life to truly represent the public’s will.

This concept envisions democracy as an ongoing process of engagement between government and citizens, aimed at developing policies that are responsive to people’s needs and can be adjusted in real time, rather than only at election time.

This approach is manifested through different institutions and mechanisms, which include the following:

- The people's congress system, the central institution in China's political system. People's congresses at township, county, city, provincial and national levels all consist of elected deputies representing all sectors of society;

- Committees of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference at different levels, where representatives from different social groups offer input during the policy-making process;

- Urban residents committees and villagers committees, which serve as vehicles for people to participate in decisions affecting their daily lives;

- Multiple channels for citizens to supervise government actions, report corruption and provide feedback and suggestions;

- The presence of roughly 100 million Party members throughout the country, tasked with understanding and relaying the needs and desires of the population.

In essence, China's "whole-process" democracy nurtures a culture of continuous dialogue, consultation and collaborative problem-solving between government and people, rather than the spectacle of election campaigns and the (often hollow) promises of competing parties.

It also means that China's view of democracy is outcome-oriented—as opposed to procedural. What matters is the practical results of governance (as per the article: "delivering sustained, stable and sound national development"), rather than viewing mere electoral processes as the basis of democratic legitimacy.

The meaning of 'people's democracy'

The concept of "people's democracy" has its roots in communist terminology, originally contrasted with "bourgeois democracy." While its meaning has somewhat evolved, it still emphasizes prioritizing the welfare and will of the masses over the interests of elites or special interest groups. As the Qiushi article states, China's policies must "truly reflect the people's concerns, embody their aspirations, promote their wellbeing, and meet their desire for a better life."

This idea also has roots in traditional Chinese culture, which has always emphasized collective harmony and social cohesion over individualism. In contrast to former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's famous assertion that "there's no such thing as society"—a view widely held in the West—the Chinese worldview sees society not as a mere aggregation of individuals, but as an organic entity with its own existence and importance. This perspective is reflected in the article's emphasis on "fostering social harmony" as one of the key goals of the Chinese system.

A "people's democracy" holds that citizens are not just considered voters, but are essentially seen as the force driving national development. This perspective is clearly reflected in the article, which emphasizes that "the people are the true driving force behind history." It further reads that Chinese modernization "must firmly rely on the people, respect their creativity, and harness their collective wisdom and strength."

This view stands in contrast to the views of liberal democracies, where citizens' primary political role is often reduced to choosing between competing parties. In the Chinese system, the CPC's role is also that of an organization that mobilizes and channels the people's energy and can effectively harness their collective power for national development.

Accountability and leadership selection

Many of you will be asking yourself, "Yes that's all good and well, but is it really a democracy if people can't choose their leaders?"

The Chinese system approaches accountability and leadership selection differently from Western liberal democracies. The Chinese view holds that it is more democratic to select leaders based on objective meritocratic criteria. These standards include their proven track record of serving the people and their performance in examinations, rather than their ability to campaign or appeal to narrow interest groups.

As the article underlines, accountability is built into ongoing processes and institutions, as opposed to being limited to elections: "Leading Party and state bodies and their personnel are required to exercise their powers in strict accordance with statutory mandates and procedures, and wholeheartedly serve the people." Officials at all levels are subject to strict scrutiny and face disciplinary action or legal consequences for misconduct. The system encourages direct public oversight, empowering citizens to report corruption or misconduct by officials.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the Chinese system provides multiple avenues for people to influence policy and governance beyond just choosing leaders. So the concept of "an official" somewhat differs from Western notions. In China's whole-process people's democracy, officials are seen more as executors of the people's needs and will, rather than disconnected decision-makers. Their legitimacy is not derived from elections, but from how effectively they implement policies that reflect and serve the people's interests. The focus is on creating a system where political legitimacy is continuously earned through tangible results, rather than being periodically granted through ballots.

China's concept of democracy presents a stark contrast to familiar Western models. It invites us to question many assumptions about representation and political legitimacy.

This alternative perspective offers an opportunity for genuine intellectual diversity, not just in appearances but in core philosophical, societal, and governance concepts. Instead of dismissing or fearing this different approach, engaging with and seeking to understand it can serve as a worthwhile reflection on Western systems and assumptions. (Beijing Review) ■



A public consultation meeting is held in Xinzhu community of Qingxiu district in Nanning, south China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on May 28, 2024. *Li Shurong*

Welcome to Jiangsu



How do National People's Congress and its Standing Committee work with legislation

By Wan Qigang

Law is the cornerstone of national governance; good laws are a prerequisite for good governance and legislation forms the foundation for the comprehensive law-based governance of a country.

Legislation is a vital political activity that formalizes and institutionalizes the Party's propositions and the people's will into laws and systems in accordance with statutory procedures. In China, the National People's Congress (NPC) and its Standing Committee exercise the legislative power of the State on behalf of the people. They formulate, revise and repeal laws to ensure that the legislative power firmly remains in the hands of the people, making the law serve the people.

Specifically, the power to amend the Constitution is the supreme legislative power, which can only be exercised by the NPC. It also formulates and revises basic laws governing criminal offenses, civil matters, State institutions and other matters. The NPC Standing Committee formulates and revises laws other than those that are formulated by the NPC, and when the NPC is not in session, it supplements and revises laws formulated by the NPC, on the premise that the supplement and revision are not in contradiction to the basic principles of the original. Article 11 of the Legislation Law explicitly stipulates the exclusive legislative power of the NPC and its Standing Committee, which involves matters such as national sovereignty, fundamental political systems, basic economic systems, the political rights of citizens and personal freedom.

The procedure for the NPC and its Standing Committee to formulate laws involves four stages: the introduction and deliberation of legislative bills, voting on draft laws and the promulgation of laws.

Sponsoring legislative bills is the first step in the legislative procedure. There are two categories of entities entitled to sponsor legislative bills to the NPC. Firstly, institutions, including the Presidium of the NPC, the NPC Standing Committee, the State Council, the Central Military Commission, the National Supervisory Commission, the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate and special committees of the NPC. Secondly, a delegation or a group of over 30 deputies making a joint proposal. Similarly, there are also two categories of entities entitled to sponsor legislative bills to the NPC Standing Committee. One is institutions, including the Council of Chairpersons of the NPC Standing Committee, the State Council, the Central Military Commission, the National Supervisory Commission, the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate and special committees of the NPC. The other is a group of over 10 members of the NPC Standing Committee making a joint proposal.

The process of deliberating legislative bills by the NPC and its Standing Committee is a process that fully embodies democracy, collective wisdom and consensus building. The procedure for the NPC to deliberate legislative bills includes sending the draft laws to deputies one month before the session, hearing explanations on the bills by the sponsors at a plenary meeting, conducting deliberations in plenary or group meetings of delegations and conducting unified deliberations by the Constitution and Law Committee of the NPC based on the opinions of delegations and relevant special committees.

The basic procedure for the NPC Standing Committee to deliberate legislative bills is as follows. First, sending the legislative bills to the members of the NPC Standing Committee seven days before the session of the NPC Standing Committee; second, hearing expla-

nations made by the sponsors of the legislative bills at the plenary session of the NPC Standing Committee; third, conducting deliberations in groups, and if necessary, convening joint meetings for deliberation; fourth, relevant special committees review the legislative bills and provide their opinions, followed by unified deliberations by the members of the Constitution and Law Committee of the NPC. During the process, the NPC Standing Committee actively promotes orderly public participation in the legislative procedure by incorporating public opinions and gathering public wisdom through local legislative outreach offices, public consultations, third-party evaluations and other means.

The Legislation Law stipulates that legislative bills shall be deliberated three times. Legislative bills included in the agenda of the NPC Standing Committee sessions generally are deliberated three times before being put to a vote. According to the Legislation Law and legislative practices, for legislative bills with relatively straightforward amendments or partial modifications, and where opinions are largely consistent or in cases of emergency, they can be put to a vote after a single deliberation by the NPC Standing Committee session. Decisions on legal issues and "package of amendments" to legislative bills are generally adopted by the first deliberation, while some may be put to a vote after deliberations for the second time at the NPC Standing Committee sessions.

In case that significant issues remain after a bill has been deliberated three times by the NPC Standing Committee sessions and further study may be required, the bill may not proceed for passage but be further deliberated by the Constitution and Law Committee and relevant special committees of the NPC. For example, the draft property law was deliberated by the NPC Standing Committee seven times before being submitted to the NPC for deliberation; the draft administrative compulsion law was deliberated six times and the draft securities law was deliberated five times before being put to a vote. Additionally, in the case that the deliberation of a legislative bill has been suspended for two years due to substantial differences of opinion on the necessity and feasibility of enacting a law after deliberation or that a bill has not been included in the agenda of the NPC Standing Committee session for two years, the Council of Chairpersons of the NPC Standing Committee may decide to terminate the deliberation and report to the NPC Standing Committee. If necessary, the Council of Chairpersons may also decide to postpone the deliberations.

In China, the voting on legislative bills follows the principle of majority rule. Legislative bills submitted to the NPC sessions for deliberation shall be passed by over half of all deputies. Amendments to the Constitution shall be proposed by the NPC Standing Committee or by at least one-fifth of the NPC deputies and shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of all NPC deputies. Legislative bills submitted to the NPC Standing Committee for deliberations shall be adopted by over half of all members of the NPC Standing Committee.

The promulgation of laws is the final step in the legislative procedure. Laws are promulgated by the president of the country in accordance with the decisions made by the NPC and its Standing Committee. The presidential order to promulgate laws shall specify the enacting body, the date of approval and implementation. ■

The author is director of the National People's Congress Library.