

# NPC



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National People's Congress of China

**CHAIRMAN  
ZHANG DEJIANG  
VOWS TO PROMOTE  
SOCIALIST  
DEMOCRACY,  
RULE OF LAW**

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Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee Zhang Dejiang (7th, L) has a group photo with vice-chairpersons Zhang Baowen, Arken Imirbaki, Zhang Ping, Shen Yueyue, Yan Junqi, Wang Shengjun, Li Jianguo, Chen Changzhi, Wang Chen, Ji Bingxuan, Qiangba Puncog, Wan Exiang, Chen Zhu (from left to right). *Ma Zengke*



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COVER: Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, delivers a speech at the closing meeting of the first session of the 12th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 17, 2013. Ma Zhancheng



**NPC**

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# China's new leadership takes shape amid high expectations



Xi Jinping greets deputies at the fourth plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on March 14, 2013. Xi was elected president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and chairman of the Central Military Commission of the PRC at the NPC session in Beijing on March 14. *Lan Hongguang*

China's new State leadership has taken shape at the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC).

On March 14, Xi Jinping was elected president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and chairman of the Central Military Commission of the PRC. Zhang Dejiang was elected chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature.

On March 15, Li Keqiang was endorsed premier of the State Council. Zhou Qiang was elected president of the Supreme People's Court and Cao Jianming was re-elected procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

On March 16, a new lineup of the State Council was endorsed, including vice-premiers, State councilors, ministers, heads of the commissions, the central bank governor and auditor-general, thus completing the election and appointment proceedings at the first session of the 12th National People's Congress.

"I have witnessed a smooth and transparent transition of State leadership, which will lay a solid foundation for the country's development in the future," said Sun Xianzong, an NPC deputy and research fellow with the Institute of Law, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Sun said he was impressed by the political careers of President Xi and Premier Li.

"Over the past four months, they have shown an image of being pragmatic and innovative. They have brought new style and policies," he said.

The new leadership is to lead the world's most populous country and second largest economy through complex challenges at home and abroad.

NPC deputies voiced high expectations on the new State leadership.

Zhang Wencheng, an NPC deputy and village Party chief from northeast China's Liaoning Province, said he hoped the new government could take measures to improve rural infrastructure and protect farm land.

"It is correct to push forward urbanization, but urbanization should not be carried out at the cost of farm land," he said. (Xinhua) ■





Above: Hu Jintao (L) congratulates Xi Jinping on his election as president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and chairman of the Central Military Commission of the PRC at the fourth plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on March 14, 2013. *Pang Xinglei*

Below: Deputies queue to cast ballots at the fourth plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 14, 2013 to elect chairman, vice-chairpersons, secretary-general and members of the 12th NPC Standing Committee, president and vice-president of PRC, and chairman of the Central Military Commission of PRC. *Liu Weibing*



# Chinese top legislature has younger leaders



Wu Bangguo (R) shakes hands with Zhang Dejiang after Zhang was elected chairman of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee at the fourth plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th NPC in Beijing on March 14, 2013. *Xie Huanchi*

**A** younger generation of leaders from different political parties, ethnic groups and professional backgrounds are now taking to the center stage of the Chinese National People's Congress.

Nearly 3,000 lawmakers elected the new leadership of China's top legislature through secret ballots at a plenary meeting on March 14, 2013.

Zhang Dejiang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, was elected chairman of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC), replacing Wu Bangguo.

After the announcement of his election, Zhang stood up and bowed to NPC deputies, and then shook hands with Wu. The election was held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Born in northeast China's Liaoning Province in November 1946, Zhang studied economics at the Kim Il Sung University in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from 1978 to 1980.

He served as CPC secretary of Jilin, Zhejiang and Guangdong provinces successively before he became vice premier in

2008. From March to November 2012, he also served as secretary of the CPC Chongqing Municipal Committee.

Zhang was elected a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in November last year.

Assuming his new role as China's top legislator, Zhang will be assisted by 13 newly-elected vice chairpersons, namely Li Jianguo, Wang Shengjun, Chen Changzhi, Yan Junqi, Wang Chen, Shen Yueyue, Ji Bingxuan, Zhang Ping, Qiangba Puncog, Arken Imirbaki, Wan Exiang, Zhang Baowen and Chen Zhu.

Wang Chen was also elected secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee.

After the elections, a younger generation born after the founding of New China joined the top legislature leadership and take the center stage, including 56-year-old Shen Yueyue, the youngest vice chairperson.

With an average age of 62.8 years, the new NPC leadership members are two years younger than their predecessors when they took office five years ago.

The new NPC leadership lineup is made up of experienced ex-ministers, well-trained CPC officials, regional leaders and heads of non-Communist parties who have shown their leadership capabilities in their previous positions.

According to the election results, CPC members take up eight of the 13-seat vice chairmanship of the top legislature, namely Li Jianguo, Wang Shengjun, Wang Chen, Shen Yueyue, Ji Bingxuan, Zhang Ping, Qiangba Puncog and Arken Imirbaki, while leaders of non-Communist parties take the remaining five seats.

Before their elections, most of the newly elected vice chairpersons had assumed posts of regional leaders and ministers, where they showed their experience and leadership capabilities.

Li Jianguo was one of the three re-elected as vice chairpersons, along with Chen Changzhi, chairman of the Central Committee of the China National Democratic Construction Association, and Yan Junqi, chairwoman of the Central Committee of the China Association for Promoting Democracy.

Born into a farmer's family in April 1946, Li has assumed many community-level positions in Tianjin Municipality and once served as CPC secretary in Shaanxi and Shandong provinces before he was elected vice chairman of 11th NPC Standing Committee and secretary-general in 2008.

Also a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, Li was elected chairman of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions in early March, replacing Wang Zhaoguo.

One of the best known vice chairpersons of the top legislature is 66-year-old Wang Shengjun, who served as chief justice of the Supreme People's Court over the past five years.





## **"Improving the consultative democracy system and working mechanism provides a broad stage for participating parties to play a role," Yan Junqi has said.**

Wang Chen and Ji Bingxuan are two vice chairpersons quite familiar with the Chinese press due to their work experience in the media or publicity department.

Once a journalist for the Guangming Daily, Wang was head of the State Council Information Office before his election.

Ji stayed in the publicity department for quite a long time before he was appointed Party secretary of the CPC Heilongjiang Provincial Committee.

Yan Junqi and Shen Yueyue are the only two female vice chairpersons.

As a participant in the country's multi-party cooperation system, Yan has full confidence in and expectation for the multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC.

"Improving the consultative democracy system and working mechanism provides a broad stage for participating parties to play a role," Yan Junqi has said.

Yan's female colleague in the top legislature, Shen used to be a worker and teacher in communities in eastern Zhejiang Province. She is executive deputy head of the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee.

Another well known vice chairman is Zhang Ping, who served as the country's top economic planner over the past five years. Zhang started his career as an accountant at a local bank in east China's Anhui Province and stayed there for 28 years before transferring to the central government to head the National Development and Reform Commission.

Qiangba Puncog and Arken Imirbaki are vice chairpersons from the country's ethnic minority groups, a tradition that has been followed since the very beginning of the top legislature.

A 65-year-old Tibetan, Qiangba Puncog has been working in Tibet since graduating from university, first as a technician, then as CPC secretary of Lhasa and chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Arken Imirbaki, 59, worked at a ceramic factory in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region when he was 19 years old. He was later elevated all the way up to the post of chairman of the Standing Committee of the Xinjiang Regional People's Congress.

The eldest vice chairperson of the top legislature, 66-year-old Chen Changzhi urged leading officials of the CPC at all levels to have a broad mind to tolerate dissenting views, listen to the voice of criticism and correct mistakes. He encouraged the non-Communist parties to be courageous, dare to tell the truth regardless of the possibility of offending CPC officials.

He said with multiple ways of supervision from non-Communist parties, the ruling party can make their decisions more scientific and democratic.

A veteran legal expert and chairman of the Central Com-

mittee of the Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang, Wan Exiang has been working for the Supreme People's Court and said the existing political party system is suitable for the country.

"Only by trying the shoes oneself can one know whether they fit the feet or not," he once cited a Chinese saying to defend the country's existing multi-party cooperation system.

Zhang Baowen, 66, is chairman of the Central Committee of the China Democratic League. He returned to China in the mid-1980s after studying agriculture in the University of Minnesota in the United States.

He leads the country's largest non-Communist party, with about 230,000 members in the league that is made up of mainly intellectuals from the culture, education, science and technology sectors.

Chen Zhu has been chairman of the Central Committee of the Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party for nearly six years. He was the second non-Communist minister of the central government since reform and opening up in the late 1970s, after Wan Gang, chairman of the Central Committee of the China Public Interest Party and minister of science and technology. Wan was elected vice chairman of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's top political advisory body.

A famous hematology expert, Chen Zhu was widely reported in the past. During his tenure as health minister, China launched a new round of reform to provide health care to 1.3 billion Chinese people.

"It is my biggest dream to have all the sick treated," he once said. (Xinhua) ■

### **Special Committees of the 12th National People's Congress:**

#### **► Ethnic Affairs Committee**

Chairman: Li Jingtian

#### **► Law Committee**

Chairman: Qiao Xiaoyang

#### **► Internal and Judicial Affairs Committee**

Chairwoman: Ma Wen

#### **► Financial and Economic Affairs Committee**

Chairman: Li Shenglin

#### **► Education, Science, Culture and Public Health Committee**

Chairman: Liu Binjie

#### **► Foreign Affairs Committee**

Chairwoman: Fu Ying

#### **► Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee**

Chairman: Bai Zhijian

#### **► Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee**

Chairman: Lu Hao

#### **► Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee**

Chairman: Chen Jianguo

# New leadership elected for China's top legislature at the fourth plenary



**Zhang Dejiang**

Chairman of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC)



**Li Jianguo**

Vice-chairman of the 12th NPC Standing Committee



**Wang Shengjun**

Vice-chairman of the 12th NPC Standing Committee



**Ji Bingxuan**

Vice-chairman of the 12th NPC Standing Committee



**Zhang Ping**

Vice-chairman of the 12th NPC Standing Committee



**Qiangba Puncog**

Vice-chairman of the 12th NPC Standing Committee







# meeting of the first session of the 12th NPC



**Chen Changzhi**

Vice-chairman of the 12th  
NPC Standing Committee



**Yan Junqi**

Vice-chairwoman of the  
12th NPC Standing  
Committee



**Wang Chen**

Vice-chairman and sec-  
retary-general of the 12th  
NPC Standing Committee



**Shen Yueyue**

Vice-chairwoman of the  
12th NPC Standing  
Committee



**Arken Imirbaki**

Vice-chairman of the 12th  
NPC Standing Committee



**Wan Exiang**

Vice-chairman of the 12th  
NPC Standing Committee



**Zhang Baowen**

Vice-chairman of the 12th  
NPC Standing Committee



**Chen Zhu**

Vice-chairman of the 12th  
NPC Standing Committee



# China unveils new cabinet amid function reform



Wen Jiabao (R) shakes hands with Li Keqiang at the fifth plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 15, 2013. Li Keqiang was endorsed the premier of China's State Council at the meeting on March 15.

*Lan Hongguang*

**C**hina's new cabinet, which was unveiled on March 16, is expected to accelerate its functional transformation and present a new style under new Premier Li Keqiang.

Citizens expect the new cabinet members to create a favorable environment for development, provide high-quality public services and maintain social fairness and justice. All of these will set a decisive foundation for building a well-off society in an all-round way and realizing the "Chinese dream" -- the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Members of the State Council, or China's cabinet, include ministers, heads of commissions, the central bank governor and auditor-general.

With the launch of a restructuring plan, the current cabinet lineup has 25 members, two fewer than the previous one. According to legal procedures, they were nominated by the new premier, endorsed by lawmakers at the first session of the 12th National People's Congress.

The average age of the new cabinet members is 60, nearly three years older than the last lineup. On the whole, however, they have richer work experience in central and local departments and remarkable advantages in terms of their knowledge, education and professionalism.

All cabinet members have a college education background, an 11-percent increase over the last cabinet. In the new cabinet, one member has a junior college certificate and three are university graduates. Twenty-one members have postgraduate diplomas, accounting for nearly 85 percent, or 14

percent higher than the previous cabinet. Furthermore, their college majors are more diverse, with a remarkable increase in humanities.

The cabinet has eight new faces, including Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Defense Minister Chang Wanquan, Finance Minister Lou Jiwei, Minister of Supervision Huang Shuxian, Commerce Minister Gao Hucheng, Minister of Land and Resources Jiang Daming and Minister of the National Health and Family Planning Commission Li Bin.

Wang Yi, who was previously head of the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, had also worked in the Foreign Ministry before as vice foreign minister.

Lou Jiwei was previously chairman of the China Investment Corporation, China's sovereign wealth fund, and Central Huijin Investment Ltd. He also served as vice finance minister and deputy secretary-general of the State Council.

Gao Hucheng was formerly the vice minister of Commerce. Wang Zhengwei, Jiang Daming and Li Bin were former governors of northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and east China's Shandong and Anhui provinces, respectively.

Chang Wanquan is a member of the CPC Central Military Commission. Huang Shuxian is from the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection.

Of the 17 other members, Xu Shaoshi was previously minister of Land and Resources. Sixteen cabinet members kept their current posts.

Defense Minister Chang Wanquan, 64, and Minister of Public Security Guo Shengkun, 58, are also new State councilors. Chang is in charge of national defense construction. Guo is responsible for maintaining public security, social stability and harmony.

The new cabinet has 24 CPC members. Jiang Weixin, minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, and Zhou Xiaochuan, governor of the People's Bank of China, are not members of the CPC Central Committee.

A great test for the new cabinet will involve transforming how the government functions and correcting defaults and overlaps in duty and work to build a well-structured, clean, efficient and service-oriented government that has scientifically defined functions and that the people are satisfied with, observers say.

Function transformation is the core of the State Council's institutional reform plan, which is not simply institutional restructuring. The transformation will mark new and significant progress in deepening China's administrative system reform.

The reform means the new cabinet will exert more efforts to overcome difficulties and problems, speed up the transfor-





mation of China's economic growth mode and achieve sustained and sound economic and social development.

In the reform plan adopted by the NPC, the Ministry of Railways has been abolished. Administrative functions pertaining to railway development planning and policies will be covered by the Ministry of Transport. The proposed China Railway Corporation will carry out the commercial function of the dismantled railway ministry.

Transport Minister Yang Chuantang, 58, kept his post. In a country with the biggest population and third-largest land area in the world, Yang faces the tough task of accelerating the construction of the country's comprehensive transport system.

The Health Ministry and the National Population and Family Planning Commission were merged into a new National Health and Family Planning Commission. The merge is aimed at improving the quality of new births and the health condition of the people. The new commission is also in charge of assessing food safety risks and formulating food safety standards.

Li Bin, 58, heads the National Health and Family Planning Commission. She is one of two female cabinet members. She was head of the National Population and Family Planning Commission in the previous cabinet and later became governor of Anhui Province, making her the only female governor in China.

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) has undertaken the task of laying out population development strategies, plans and policies.

Meanwhile, the State Electricity Regulatory Commission was dissolved and merged with the National Energy Administration, which is under the jurisdiction of the NDRC.

Deepening reform and achieving substantial progress in key sectors and processes will be an urgent challenge for Xu Shaoshi, the 61-year-old minister of the NDRC.

In addition to the China Marine Surveillance, the department in charge of enforcing maritime law, the regrouped National Oceanic Administration (NOA) also includes the coast guard forces of the Public Security Ministry, the fisheries law enforcement command of the Agriculture Ministry and the maritime anti-smuggling police of the General Administration of Customs.

The NOA is administered by the Ministry of Land and Resources, headed by 60-year-old Jiang Daming. Jiang had been governor of Shandong Province for five years. He will handle the tasks of improving land resource development and carrying out maritime law enforcement to resolutely safeguard the country's oceanic rights and interests in a highly efficient way.

Three cabinet members -- Wan Gang, minister of Science and Technology, Wang Zhengwei, minister in charge of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and Zhou Xiaochuan, governor of the People's Bank of China, are also vice chairmen of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the country's top political advisory body.

Wan Gang, 60, is the only non-Communist in the cabinet. Wan, chairman of the China Zhi Gong Party's Central Committee, was also vice chairman of the 11th National Committee of the CPPCC. He is the first ministerial-level non-Communist in the cabinet since the start of country's reform

## Function transformation is the core of the State Council's institutional reform plan, which is not simply institutional restructuring.

and opening up drive more than 30 years ago. One of Wan's key tasks will be to deepen the reform of the management system for science and technology and promote innovation-driven development.

Wang Zhengwei, 55, of the Hui ethnic minority group, is the youngest cabinet member. He was previously chairman of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region for about five years. Overseeing the implementation and improvement of the regional ethnic autonomy system will be his most important task.

Zhou Xiaochuan, 65, is the oldest member of the cabinet. He has been central bank governor for more than ten years. The efforts and effects of financial system reforms conducted during his tenure made him impressive. He was spotlighted by global media when he proposed the creation of a super-sovereign reserve currency at the beginning of the global financial crisis in early 2009.

Due to the sustained impact of the global financial crisis, fiscal policy has played an increasingly important role in stabilizing economic growth, adjusting China's economic structure, pushing forward reform and improving people's well-being.

Deepening tax reform, improving the government expenditure structure, increasing investment in people's well-being and controlling financial risks are important tasks for 62-year-old Finance Minister Lou Jiwei.

The Chinese government has made it the starting point and goal of all the government's work to ensure and improve public well-being. Four members who remain in office in relevant ministries are Zhou Shengxian, 63, minister of Environmental Protection, Jiang Weixin, 64, minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Yin Weimin, 60, minister of Human Resources and Social Security and Li Liguang, 59, minister of Civil Affairs.

People expect them to make new breakthroughs in improving public well-being with their accumulated rich experiences and knowledge. These expectations include improving the quality of air, soil and water, enhancing housing security, improving the regulation of the real estate industry, creating more and better job opportunities and improving the social assistance system.

The ministers of education and culture also remain unchanged. Education Minister Yuan Guiren faces the tasks of promoting fairness in education, creating education innovation and cultivating creative talent. Cultural Minister Cai Wu is expected to deepen the reform of the cultural sector, promote the fast development of cultural industry and improve the public cultural service system so as to meet the growing cultural demands of the public.

The 18th National Congress of the CPC held in November 2012 put forward a new goal of promoting the harmonized development of industrialization, IT application, urbaniza-



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (3rd L) greets the journalists at a press conference after the closing meeting of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 17, 2013. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Vice Premiers Zhang Gaoli, Liu Yandong, Wang Yang and Ma Kai met the press, and Premier Li answered questions on March 17. *Jin Liwang*

tion and agricultural modernization.

Three relevant ministers kept their posts, including Miao Wei, 57, minister of Industry and Information Technology, Han Changfu, 58, minister of Agriculture and Chen Lei, also 58, minister of Water Resources. People hope they will work efficiently to promote the implementation of the CPC congress' strategic goal.

Adhering to governance according to law, improving oversight and strengthening the building of a clean government have been listed as the basic tenets of the Chinese government's work. The Ministry of Supervision and the National Audit Office will shoulder the great responsibility of restraining power.

Supervision Minister Huang Shuxian, 58, will need to innovate working mechanisms to strengthen oversight over the political integrity of leading officials. Enhancing auditing oversight will be the key task of Liu Jiayi, 56, auditor-general of the National Audit Office.

Justice Minister Wu Aiyong, is the cabinet's only other female member. She is expected to reform the much-disputed re-education through labor system and promote the rule of law.

China is the world's second-largest economy and second-largest trader. The stance, role and actions of Chinese diplo-

macy are of great interest to others.

Facing a complex and volatile international environment, new Foreign Minister Wang Yi is expected to focus on promoting Chinese diplomacy, helping to resolve international and regional hotspot issues, effectively dissolving risks and challenges and fostering an international environment that will be favorable for China's reform, development and stability.

New Commerce Minister Gao Hucheng is expected to tackle growing international trade protectionism, ensure stable export growth and create new advantages for China in terms of participating in global economic cooperation and competition in order to realize mutual benefit.

Geng Huichang, 61, minister of State Security, kept his post.

The modernization of the government is the key to national development, analysts say. At a new historical juncture and starting point, China's new leadership has launched a new round of reform focusing on functional transformation.

"The members of the new cabinet will be the main executors of the modernization of the Chinese government, as well as shoulder the responsibility of building an image of a modern government," said Chi Fulin, director of the China (Hainan) Institute for Reform and Development. (Xinhua) ■





# Report on the work of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

(excerpt)

Delivered at the First Session of the 12th  
National People's Congress on March 8, 2013

Wu Bangguo, chairman of the 11th NPC Standing Committee

## Plan for This Year's Work

At its Eighteenth National Congress in November 2012, the CPC held high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, fixed the historical position of the Scientific Outlook on Development, laid down the basic requirements for achieving new victories for socialism with Chinese characteristics, set the objectives of finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and comprehensively deepening reform and opening up, formulated a master plan for advancing socialism with Chinese characteristics under the new historical conditions, and drew up a grand blueprint

for finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and accelerating socialist modernization, thereby charting the course for developing the cause of the Party and country, and setting out new, clear requirements for strengthening and improving the work of the NPC. We will thoroughly study and implement the guiding principles of the Eighteenth National Party Congress, concentrate our wisdom and strength on fulfilling the tasks it set, enhance our sense of responsibility and awareness of dangers, do the work of the NPC with greater energy and drive, and adhere to and improve the system of people's congresses.

We will unswervingly keep to the socialist path of making



The second plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) is held at the Great Hall of the People on March 8, 2013.  
*Ma Zhancheng*



NPC deputies attending the opening of the first session of the 12th NPC have a group photo taken in front of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5. *Li Bin*

political advances with Chinese characteristics. Taking the principle that the people are the masters of the country as the foundation, and enhancing the vitality of the Party and country and motivating the people's enthusiasm as the goal, we will make people's democracy more extensive, fuller in scope and sounder; support and ensure the people's exercise of State power through people's congresses; and make socialist democracy more institutionalized, standardized and proceduralized. We will make full use of the political strength of the CPC in its position as the firm leadership core of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the institutional strength of the people wielding all State power, and the systemic strength of State bodies implementing the principle of democratic centralism, and ensure that China always forges ahead with the orientation of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Focusing on the grand objective of finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, we will fully play our role as the highest body of State power, exercise the powers of legislation, oversight and making decisions on the appointment or removal of employees in State bodies, strengthen organization and coordination of our legislative work, and improve legislation in key areas. We will promptly formulate or revise laws relating to improving the socialist market economy, giving impetus to the change of the growth model, ensuring and improving peoples wellbeing, strengthening and making innovations in social management, developing a strong socialist culture in China and furthering ecological progress. We will make full use of the role of laws to guide, stimulate, standardize and guarantee. We will strengthen oversight of the State Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate. We will spur the attainment of the central leadership's new targets and the implementation of its new measures. We will focus

on giving impetus to developing in a scientific way, promoting social harmony, and improving people's lives and wellbeing, and enable the Chinese people to lead happier lives.

We will comprehensively advance law-based governance of the country. We will enhance the important role that the rule of law plays in national governance and social management. We will safeguard the unity, sanctity and authority of our legal system and improve the socialist system of laws with Chinese characteristics. We will make legislation more scientific and democratic and expand channels for orderly public participation in legislation. We will strengthen constraints and oversight of the exercise of power, oversee and support State bodies in exercising their power in accordance with statutory mandate and procedures, and make sure that laws are obeyed and strictly enforced and lawbreakers are prosecuted. We will carry out intensive publicity and education about the law, and make officials more aware of the law and better able to act in accordance with it. We will guide the people to express their reasonable demands, protect their legitimate rights and interests, and resolve their problems and disputes in accordance with the law. We will move faster to build a socialist country under the rule of law and put all the country's work on a legal footing.

The year 2013 is the first year for fully implementing the guiding principles of the Eighteenth National Party Congress and also the first year of the term of the Twelfth NPC and its Standing Committee. In accordance with the guiding principles of the Eighteenth Party Congress and the arrangements of the Central Economic Work Conference, and with help from relevant departments, the General Office of the Standing Committee has identified the key areas of the Standing Committee's work and drawn up a plan for its legislative and oversight work for 2013, which has been passed in principle





by the Chairperson's Council of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh NPC. Its priorities are:

First, we will quickly formulate a five-year legislative plan and continue to deliberate the draft revisions of the Budget Law, the Trademark Law, the Environmental Protection Law and the Land Administration Law and the drafts of the Tourism Law, the Asset Evaluation Law, and the Special Equipment Safety Law.

Second, we will listen to and deliberate reports on thoroughly implementing the strategy for large-scale development of the western region, advancing urbanization, and combating graft and corruption; investigate compliance with the Law on Administrative Reconsideration, the Law on Compulsory Education, and the Law on Renewable Energy; carry out investigations and studies on strengthening examination and oversight of all government budgets and final accounts; and deliberate reports on rural poverty reduction and development and on prevention and control of commu-

nicable diseases and conduct inquiries on these issues.

Third, we will improve the system by which our deputies maintain contact with the people, conscientiously handle deputies' bills and proposals, arrange activities for deputies when the NPC is not in session, organize deputies to perform their duties and study, and support and ensure their lawful performance of their duties.

We believe that under the firm leadership of the CPC Central Committee and with the strong support from the people of all the country's ethnic groups, the new NPC and its Standing Committee will surely prove worthy of the great trust placed in them, accomplish their mission, raise the work of the NPC to new levels, and make a great contribution to upholding and improving the system of people's congresses and finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. (Xinhua) ■

## Highlights of the work report

Following are the highlights of the work report of the Standing Committee of the 11th National People's Congress over the past five years:

### Legislation

-- A socialist system of laws with Chinese characteristics was established in 2010 on schedule.

-- The system has several types of laws – constitutional laws, civil and commercial laws, administrative laws, economic laws, social laws, criminal laws, and litigation and non-litigation procedure laws – as its core; and consists of three levels of laws -- national laws, administrative regulations, and local statutes.

-- Over the past five years, the NPC and its Standing Committee deliberated 93 bills, legal interpretations and draft decisions on legal issues and passed 86 of them.

### Supervision

-- The NPC Standing Committee listened to and deliberated 70 reports from the State Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, organized 21 inspections of law enforcement, and held nine special hearings.

### Exercise of lawmakers' duty

-- The NPC Standing Committee handled 2,541 bills introduced by NPC deputies. It deliberated and passed 38 laws introduced in 227 bills and are deliberating eight legislative programs introduced in 136 bills.

-- About 76 percent of the 37,527 deputy proposals were resolved or to be resolved, winning content from more than 90 percent of deputies.

-- It invited over 1,000 deputies to attend meetings of the Standing Committee in a nonvoting capacity, and over 3,800

deputies to take part in inspections of law enforcement and in activities of NPC special committees.

-- It organized over 9,000 deputies to carry out investigations and studies on special issues, which resulted in more than 500 investigative reports. A total of 33 study sessions were held on special topics in which over 6,300 deputies participated.

### Foreign contact

-- The NPC has a mechanism for regular exchanges with the parliaments and congresses of 14 countries and the European Parliament.

-- It has established 106 bilateral friendship groups.

-- It is a member of 15 multilateral parliamentary organizations and an observer at five multilateral parliamentary organizations.

-- It ratified 39 treaties and agreements between China and foreign countries as well as about China's accession to international conventions.

### Experience

-- Keeping to the correct political orientation for the NPC's work.

-- Focusing on the overall work of the Party and country in doing the NPC's work.

-- Making safeguarding the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people the starting point and objective of the NPC's work.

-- Getting deputies to the NPC to fully play their role in participating in the administration of State affairs.

-- Adhering to the principle of democratic centralism and acting in accordance with the law and procedures.

-- Carrying out innovation in the NPC's work by proceeding from China's national conditions and realities. (Xinhua)

# President Xi Jinping vows to bring benefits to people in realizing **‘Chinese dream’**



Chinese President Xi Jinping speaks at the closing meeting of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 17, 2013. *Li Tao*

Chinese President Xi Jinping has pledged to rely on the people and bring benefit to the people in achieving the “Chinese dream.”

“The Chinese dream, after all, is the dream of the people. We must realize it by closely depending on the people. We must incessantly bring benefits to the people,” Xi said in a keynote speech delivered at the country’s top legislature on March 17.

He said 1.3 billion Chinese people should bear in mind the mission, unite as one, and gather into invincible force with the wisdom and power.

He vowed to always listen to the voice of the people and respond to the expectations of the people.

“In face of the mighty trend of the times and earnest expectations of the people for a better life, we cannot have the slightest complacency, or get the slightest slack at work,” Xi said at the closing meeting of the first session of the 12th National People’s Congress.

“We must make persistent efforts, press ahead with indomitable will, continue to push forward the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and strive to achieve the Chinese dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,” Xi said.

To realize the “Chinese dream,” China must take the Chinese way, said Xi, who was elected the State president on March 14 at the NPC annual session, replacing Hu Jintao.

People of all nationalities must gain confidence in the theory, the road and the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and forge valiantly and unswervingly ahead along the right road, Xi said.

“To realize the Chinese road, we must spread the Chinese spirit, which combines the spirit of the nation with patriotism as the core and the spirit of the time with reform and innovation as the core,” Xi said.

“We must follow the strategic thinking that development is of overriding importance,” said Xi. “We must constantly tamp the material and cultural foundations for the realization of the Chinese dream.” (Xinhua) ■







# Chairman Zhang Dejiang vows to promote socialist democracy, **rule of law**



Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, delivers a speech at the closing meeting of the first session of the 12th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 17, 2013. CFP

The National People's Congress (NPC) will dutifully fulfill its obligations to promote socialist democracy and the rule of law, and safeguard the authority of the Constitution, top legislator Zhang Dejiang said on March 17.

"We are fully aware of the lofty missions and the huge responsibilities," Zhang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, made his first public speech after his election to the new post. "We shall not fail the trust of people of all ethnic groups."

The NPC is the highest institution through which the people exercise State power. The Standing Committee is the NPC's permanent organ.

"It is the primary task for people's congresses at all levels and their standing committees to uphold the rule of law and safeguard the authorities of the Constitution and the laws," Zhang said at the closing meeting of the first session of the 12th NPC.

Zhang Dejiang, 66, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, was elected chairman of the NPC Standing Committee on March 14. He replaced Wu Bangguo, who held the position for the past decade.

A new leadership lineup including 13 vice chairpersons and a Standing Committee made up by 161 members were also elected.

"To ensure people's democratic rights, we must strengthen the rule of law and put democracy under institutional and legal frames," Zhang said.

"We need to make sure that the system and the laws will not change due to leadership switch, nor due to variations of personal opinions and focuses of the leadership," he added.

China's legislative organs will support deputies to the congresses to participate in the management of State affairs, Zhang said.

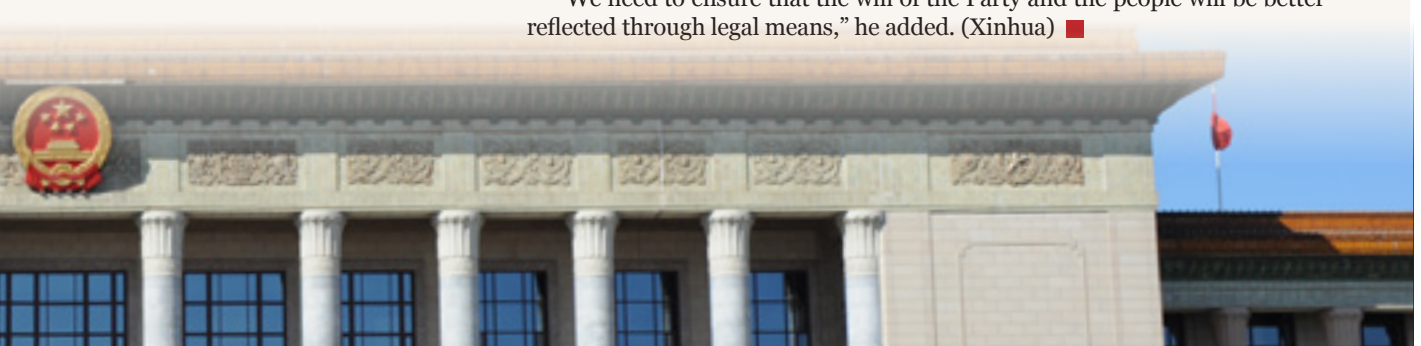
"People's will should be more effectively put into practice through the people's congress system, the main channel of Chinese democracy," said Zhang.

The NPC and its Standing Committee will make continuous efforts to improve on the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics and provide legal support to the goal of building a moderately prosperous society and China's reform and opening-up drive, Zhang said.

"We should put into full play the functions of legislation and strengthen legislation in key areas," Zhang said.

"We should enhance organization and coordination of legislation work, expand people's orderly participation in legislation and improve the quality of legislation," the top legislator said.

"We need to ensure that the will of the Party and the people will be better reflected through legal means," he added. (Xinhua) ■



# Chairman Zhang Dejiang:

## ‘Power should not be aloof from public supervision’



In this file photo taken on March 5, 2013, Zhang Dejiang presides over the opening meeting of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. *Li Ge*

### Legal promoter

Reliance on the rule of law in governing the country is the CPC's basic policy in leading the people to rule the country.

Zhang perceives the rule of law as the fruit of the progress of human civilization and the fundamental guarantee of a harmonious and healthy society and a prosperous and strong country.

The NPC is the highest organ of State power in China as it is authorized by the Constitution to elect the country's top leadership, enact laws and supervise the State Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate. The NPC Standing Committee serves as its executive body when the NPC is not in session.

Since he was elected as a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in November last year, Zhang has reiterated several times the importance of stepping up the construction of the national democratic legal system and channeling every type of work through the legal system.

One of his major concerns is legislation in the field of the environment.

In a panel discussion on March 4 during the recently concluded annual session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, the top political advisory body, Zhang acknowledged the necessity of environmental legislation.

"The heavy smog that shrouded north China including Beijing for several days has further heightened public concern about environmental protection," Zhang said.

Zhang recalled that he could drink directly from a brook when he got thirsty while working as an "educated youth" in rural areas more than 40 years ago. "I'm afraid no one dares to drink directly from it now."

Zhang was sent to Luozigou Commune in Wangqing County in Jilin Province in 1968 to work as an "educated youth" -- a term referring to middle and high school graduates dispatched to the countryside from cities to learn from farmers during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

Zhang held the post of chairman of the Standing Committee of the Jilin Provincial People's Congress, the provincial legislative body, while serving as Jilin's Party chief from 1995 to 1998. In this role, he attached great importance to legislative work.

In fact, he undertook much exploration to improve legislative work in his jurisdiction while serving in several provincial-level regions.

"(We) should always take enhancing and safeguarding the fundamental interests of the broadest mass of the people as

**M**ore than a hundred days after becoming a member of the top decision-making body of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Zhang Dejiang was elected as China's top legislator on Thursday to lead the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), the institution at the apex of State power in China.

As the ninth chairman of the NPC Standing Committee since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, 66-year-old Zhang faces many heavy responsibilities as China increasingly emphasizes reliance on the rule of law to govern the country in the new era.





In this file photo taken on March 8, 2013, Zhang Dejiang (C, front) shakes hands with Zhong Nanshan, a deputy to the 12th National People's Congress (NPC), while joining a discussion with deputies attending the first session of the 12th NPC from south China's Guangdong Province, in Beijing. *Li Tao*

both the starting point and goal of legislation,” Zhang said in 2005 when he served as Party secretary of Guangdong, a booming economic province in south China.

He stressed the need to follow the mass line and adhere to a democratic, open and scientific legislative process while gradually expanding citizens’ orderly participation in legislative work.

When he served as Party chief of southwest China’s Chongqing Municipality, a post he held between March and November last year, Zhang reiterated the importance of cultivating a legal environment.

“Everyone is equal before the law and it is absolutely impermissible for any organization or individual to stand above the law,” he said, calling for efforts to “resolutely prevent and oppose the practice of taking a person’s words or power as a substitute for the law and intervening in individual cases.”

He called for “enhanced awareness and capability to govern and serve the society through law and solve problems and settle disputes through legal means.”

Non-Communist party members constitute an important part of the NPC Standing Committee.

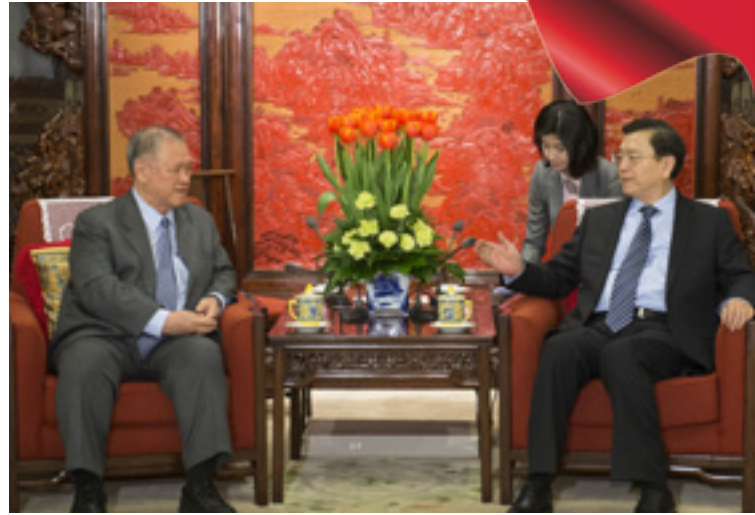
When attending events held by non-Communist parties recently, Zhang expressed his hope that they would research and offer suggestions on topics including social management and governance by law since many of their members are specialists in the social and legal fields.

## Supervision of power through the law

“All of our power is bestowed by the people. The foremost duty of the ruling power is to serve the people,” Zhang said in a signed article published in 2006.

“Power should never be used to seek personal gain and it should not be aloof from public supervision and restraint,” he said.

The CPC should improve its leading role regarding the work of people’s congresses and respect their status if it wants to improve the quality of governance and consolidate



In this file photo taken on January 30, 2013, Zhang Dejiang (R) meets with Brunei’s Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Lim Jock Seng in Beijing. *Li Xueren*

**“All of our power is bestowed by the people. The foremost duty of the ruling power is to serve the people,” Zhang Dejiang said in a signed article published in 2006.**

its ruling status, Zhang once said while serving as Guangdong’s Party secretary.

“Adhering to and improving the people’s congresses system and giving full play to the functions of people’s congresses and their standing committees is of importance to the overall situation of the country’s reform, development and stability,” he said.

He stressed that people’s congresses and their standing committees at various levels should build themselves into genuine local State power organs, which shoulder various functions empowered by the Constitution and the law and keep close ties with the people.

Zhang was born in Tai’an County in northeast China’s Liaoning Province in November 1946. He joined the CPC in January 1971. He graduated from the Department of Economics at Kim Il Sung University in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Zhang is married to Xin Shusen, a senior economist and a member of the 11th CPPCC National Committee. They fell in love when they were working as “educated youths” in the countryside. They have a daughter.

Zhang served as vice president of Yanbian University, deputy secretary of the CPC Yanji Municipal Committee and later deputy secretary of the CPC Yanbian Prefectural Committee, Jilin Province. In 1986, he went to Beijing after being appointed Vice Minister of Civil Affairs and deputy secretary of the ministry’s Leading Party Members’ Group.

Zhang served as Party secretary in four provincial-level regions from 1995 until late last year. These regions include



In this file photo taken on February 22, 2013, Zhang Dejiang (2nd R) visits a laboratory on the application of the superconducting technology at a plant of Futong Group in Tianjin, north China. *Huang Jingwen*

the provinces of Jilin, Zhejiang and Guangdong as well as Chongqing Municipality. He also served as vice premier over the past five years.

Before he was elected to the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Committee on Nov. 15, Zhang was a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee for two consecutive terms.

Zhang has repeatedly emphasized the supervisory role of people's congresses during his political career.

"The NPC and its Standing Committee should conduct supervision in a firm and confident manner," he said in 2003, encouraging them to enhance supervision so as to ensure that the State Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate and their personnel govern by law and ensure justice.

He has repeatedly called on the State Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate to consciously accept supervision and improve the mechanism of reporting their work to the NPC and its Standing Committee and informing them of major issues.

Moreover, he has called for efforts to improve the supervisory system by setting up a series of power restraint and supervisory mechanisms featuring intra-Party and public supervision as well as supporting the people's congresses and political advisory bodies to carry out their supervisory power independently in accordance with the law.

All these measures aim to put the power bestowed by the country's 1.3 billion people under better supervision and restraint.

Zhang also believes that the deputies to people's congresses, as the general public's spokespersons, should earnestly fulfill their duty and be models of law abidance.

"Efforts must be made to safeguard the deputies' right to know and expand channels for them to get access to information and to understand government affairs," he said.

## Sense of responsibility

"I'll not leave until the water in the Nenjiang River retreats to a safe level," said Zhang as he was directing flood control and relief work in northeast China's Jilin Province in 1998.

The summer floods of 1998, the worst up to that time since 1954 on the Yangtze River in central China and the most devastating flood ever in northeast China, shocked the govern-

ment and the people at the time.

People still remember the image of Zhang boarding a motorboat to visit flood-stricken residents in a village in Zhenlai County, Jilin, when he was the province's Party secretary.

When major disasters occurred, Zhang, as Party chief of provincial-level regions, would set out for a disaster site immediately to oversee rescue operations.

Zhang also showed his concern for the people by attending to issues concerning their livelihood, such as employment and social security, during the last five years when he served as vice premier of the State Council, where he was in charge of employment, social security and other important sectors.

On several occasions, Zhang reiterated that getting college graduates employed was a key task and efforts should also be made to help migrant workers from rural areas and disadvantaged groups to find jobs.

Based on extensive research, the State Council introduced a series of policies and measures to promote employment.

Meanwhile, Zhang put special emphasis on vocational training for laborers.

"An entire household could be lifted out of poverty with one family member finishing schooling or getting employed," he said.

Zhang advocated the building of a modern and life-long education system as well as a vocational training system covering all laborers so as to tap human resources in a comprehensive way.

Zhang has attached great importance to the development of the private economy and stressed the importance of a sound policy environment for the sector's development.

"This is not a makeshift plan. Instead, it is a strategic policy," he said.

"The private economy will grow vigorously as long as we provide it with suitable soil and sunshine," he said.

When he worked at the State Council, Zhang actively pushed for building a new-type rural pension system and a pension system for urban residents. Now, the systems cover almost all parts of China.

In addition, when he served as Party secretary of Guangdong, between 2002 and 2007, he was very concerned about the development of the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macao.

While participating in discussions with NPC deputies from Hong Kong and Macao on March 7, Zhang acknowledged the great achievements made based on the successful implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy since the two regions returned to the motherland.

On March 8, he reiterated the need to strengthen the co-operation among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao while participating in a panel discussion with lawmakers from Guangdong Province.

When he served as Guangdong's Party chief, Zhang put forth a creative plan to boost cooperation in the pan-Pearl River Delta region, which strengthened economic links among nine provincial-level regions on the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong and Macao.

"CPC members should foster an image of clean governance, love of the people, pragmatism, plain living, hard work and perseverance," he once wrote in an article.

This is also Zhang's expectation for and portrayal of himself. (Xinhua) ■





## The biographical sketch of **Zhang Dejiang**

Zhang Dejiang, born in November 1946, is a male ethnic Han from Tai'an, Liaoning Province. He entered the workforce in November 1968 and joined the Communist Party of China in January 1971. He graduated from the Department of Economics at Kim Il Sung University in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and has a university education.

He is currently a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC).

1968-1970 Educated youth, Taiping Brigade, Luozigou Commune, Wangqing County, Jilin Province

1970-1972 Administrative secretary, Publicity Group; and secretary, CYL Branch; of the Wangqing County Revolutionary Committee, Jilin Province

1972-1975 Student of Korean language, Department of Korean Language, Yanbian University

1975-1978 Deputy secretary, General Party Branch, Department of Korean Language; member, Standing Committee, Party Committee; and vice chairman, Revolutionary Committee; of Yanbian University

1978-1980 Student, Department of Economics; and secretary, Party Branch of Chinese Students; of Kim Il Sung University, DPRK

1980-1983 Member, Standing Committee, Party Committee; and vice president; of Yanbian University

1983-1985 Deputy secretary, CPC Yanji Municipal Committee; member, Standing Committee, CPC Yanbian Prefectural Committee; and concurrently deputy secretary, CPC Yanji Municipal Committee; of Jilin Province

1985-1986 Deputy secretary, CPC Yanbian Prefectural Committee, Jilin Province

1986-1990 Vice minister; and deputy secretary, Leading

Party Members' Group; of the Ministry of Civil Affairs

1990-1995 Deputy secretary, CPC Jilin Provincial Committee; secretary, CPC Yanbian Prefectural Committee

1995-1998 Secretary, CPC Jilin Provincial Committee; chairman, Standing Committee, Jilin Provincial People's Congress

1998-2002 Secretary, CPC Zhejiang Provincial Committee

2002-2007 Member, Political Bureau, CPC Central Committee; secretary, CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee

2007-2008 Member, Political Bureau, CPC Central Committee

2008-2012 Member, Political Bureau, CPC Central Committee; vice premier; member, Leading Party Members' Group; of the State Council

2012-2012 Member, Political Bureau, CPC Central Committee; vice premier; member, Leading Party Members' Group; of the State Council and concurrently secretary, CPC Chongqing Municipal Committee

2012-2013 Member, Standing Committee, Political Bureau, CPC Central Committee; vice premier; and member, Leading Party Members' Group; of the State Council

2013- Member, Standing Committee, Political Bureau, CPC Central Committee; chairman of the Standing Committee of 12th NPC

Alternate member, Fourteenth CPC Central Committee; member, Fifteenth through Eighteenth CPC Central Committees; member, Political Bureau, Sixteenth and Seventeenth CPC Central Committees; member, Political Bureau and its Standing Committee, Eighteenth CPC Central Committee; chairman of the Standing Committee of 12th NPC. (Xinhua)

# China capable of sustaining economic growth: **Premier**



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang speaks at a press conference after the closing meeting of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 17, 2013. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang with vice premiers Zhang Gaoli, Liu Yandong, Wang Yang and Ma Kai met the press, and Premier Li answered questions on March 17. *Qi Heng*

**C**hina is capable of achieving sustainable economic development and a stronger China will not seek hegemony, Premier Li Keqiang said on March 17.

"China is capable of maintaining continuous and healthy economic development and pursuing social progress," Li said at a press conference held in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

"There are more than 1.3 billion people in this country, and we are still on a long journey towards modernization," Li said. "That requires an international environment of lasting peace."

"Even if China becomes stronger, we will not seek hegemo-

ny," the premier said in response to concerns from overseas.

China has an unswerving commitment to peaceful development and unshakable determination to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity, Li said.

"These two are not contradictory to each other. In fact, they are essential to regional stability and world peace," Li said.

China will take up its due international obligations as a large developing country, said the premier.

"We are willing to work with countries of the world to maintain global peace and expand global prosperity in the 21st century," said Li. (Xinhua) ■





# China rolls out plan to transform government functions

**T**he State Council plans to transform government functions at the ministerial level to reduce administrative intervention in the market and on social issues, State Councilor Ma Kai said in a report to the NPC annual session on March 10.

The plan by China's cabinet aims to build an efficient and law-based government with a clear division of power, reasonable distribution of labor and well-defined responsibilities, Ma said while explaining the report on the State Council's institutional reform plan.

In a bid to offer quality public services and promote social justice, the State Council plan outlines major problems in the existing functions of the central government, and it sets the orientation, principles and priorities in transforming the ministerial functions.

"Departments of the State Council are now focusing too much on micro issues," Ma said, noting that overlapping in government functions often leads to buck-passing among government departments. "We should attend to our duties, and we must not meddle in what is not in our business."

The official reform plan came amid mounting public calls for boosting government transparency and efficiency and curbing corruption.

"As a person working in communities all my life, I desperately hope for streamlined administrative procedures and fewer government approvals," said Li Zhensheng, a deputy from east China's Fujian Province to the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature.

While delivering his last government work report to the top legislature on March 5, Premier Wen Jiabao acknowledged that some government departments are prone to corruption, saying the central government is "keenly aware that we still face many difficulties and problems" in economic and social development.

Wen vowed that the government will continue transforming government functions, as well as separate government administration from the management of enterprises, State assets, public institutions and social organizations, to build a "well-structured, clean, efficient and service-oriented government."

## A bigger role for the market

The reform package vows to cut the review and approval of investment projects to minimize the inconveniences and high costs involved when enterprises and individuals are trying to obtain the services they require and boost their independence to start a business or make an investment.



State Councilor Ma Kai delivers a report on the State Council institutional reform and transformation of government functions during the third plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 10, 2013. CFP

“In the past, what we produced and any new project must be approved by the central government, which greatly restrained our development,” said Li Baomin, Party secretary of Jiangxi Copper Corp., China’s largest copper producer.

“The government and enterprises must be separated. The government must leave the market to the market, and what it needs to do is to supervise,” said Li, who is also an NPC deputy.

For those investment projects still subject to State approval, the plan introduces a deadline for completing the application process, as well as simplified procedures for each case, while emphasizing enhanced management over land use, energy consumption and emissions of pollutants to prevent duplication in investment and disorderly competition.

The plan also pledges to reduce review and approval items over business and operation activities, minimize the issuance of certificates and licenses according to the Administrative License Law, reduce administrative fees and charges, and gradually loosen conditions regarding the registration of industrial and commercial entities.

## Better positions for NGOs

The plan acknowledges that the requirements for establishing social organizations are too high, and even some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) tend to operate in a bureaucratic way like government departments.

“The current management mechanism is no longer suitable for the standardized development of social organiza-

tions,” Ma said.

The State Council plans to separate industrial associations and chambers of commerce from administrative departments, as well as introduce a competitive mechanism featuring multiple associations for a single industry, which will boost their independence and vitality.

Priority will be given to the establishment of social organizations in the fields of commerce and science and technology, and those related to public interests and charitable and rural-urban community services.

The establishment of a social organization regarding politics, legal issues and religion is subject to prior government examination and approval, as are overseas NGOs applying to open representative offices in China, according to the plan.

## More say for local governments

If the proposed reforms are passed by the top legislature, local governments across the country will have a greater say in approving local investment projects.

However, in the meantime, local governments are ordered to follow suit to greatly reduce reviews and approvals of investment projects for an optimized investment environment.

The central government will no longer review or approve items related to business and operation activities that directly target communities, according to the plan.

“The proposed reforms for transforming government functions are moving in the right direction, but more work needs to be done,” said national lawmaker Zhou Wenbin, who is also president of Nanchang University in east China’s Jiangxi Province.

The State Council will reduce its special transfer payment for designated purposes to local regions through budgeted appropriation, and it will increase local government funding through general transfer payment to boost the fiscal strength of local governments, enabling them to better fulfill their duties.

However, in the event of an emergency, the State Council or another authorized government department can take emergency measures in line with laws and regulations to adjust the transfer payment amount.

## Functional integration

A longstanding problem facing the State Council lies in the overlapping or multi-channel allocation of functions.

The defects of the structure are abused by some corrupt officials who seek private gain through their position of power, thus damaging the Party’s relations with the people and undermining the government’s authority.

To optimize the structure, the State Council needs to integrate identical or similar institutional functions into a sole government department, such as the registry of housing, forest, grassland and land, which currently falls to various government agencies, according to the plan.

The State Council plans to establish a unified real estate registry administration to protect the security of property transactions and effectively protect the legal rights of property owners, while setting up a unified social credit code system based on resident ID card numbers and codes for organizations and institutions to fight corruption. (Xinhua) ■



Top: Citizens take photos in front of the defunct Ministry of Railway on March 10 after the National People’s Congress, the country’s top legislature, adopted a cabinet reshuffle plan to dismantle the ministry into administrative and commercial arms.

Above: People take photos of newly-hung nameplate of China Railway Corp, which will perform the business functions of former Ministry of Railway, on March 17. Xu Zijian



An entrance guard stands beside the newly-hung nameplate of the State General Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television in Beijing on March 22. China’s National People’s Congress, the country’s top legislature, has adopted a cabinet reshuffle plan in which two media regulators, the General Administration of Press and Publication and the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, were merged into a single entity to oversee the country’s press, publication, radio, film and television sectors. Guo Haipeng



# China's anti-graft efforts to get institutional impetus

By Li Laifang, Ma Yang and Wang Xiaojie



China's anti-graft campaign is expected to gain more momentum through institutional reforms, as the country's leadership has vowed to fight corruption resolutely, analysts have said.

A cabinet restructuring plan, adopted by the National People's Congress (NPC) on March 14 said the country will establish a unified social credit code and real property registration systems, as well as improve the real-name registration system used for financial accounting.

"Establishing the systems mentioned in the plan is of great significance," said Shen Weixing, a law professor at Tsinghua University.

"For example, it will be very difficult for someone to hide the fact that they own several houses in different cities," Shen said.

"The systems are a deterrent for corrupt officials, as they will help prevent them from hiding illegal gains by using fake names or other methods," he said.

Home ownership and land rights are currently managed by multiple government departments. Before 2007, banks had some difficulties in confirming the authenticity of people's identification due to a lack of communication between the banks and local public security departments.

The plan, which aims to reduce bureaucracy and make the government more efficient, includes splitting the Ministry of Railways into two separate business and administrative units, as well as restructuring food and drug safety regulatory bodies.

Food and drug safety and railway service have been the source of numerous complaints for years, particularly in light of multiple food safety scandals and a high-speed train collision that killed 40 people in east China in July 2011.

A senior official from the NPC Standing Committee said that improving anti-graft legislation to punish and prevent corruption will be a major legislative task over the next five years.

The NPC Standing Committee will listen to and review an anti-graft report this year, as well as conduct researching concerning oversight for the government's budget and final accounts.

"The reforms and measures are concrete and substantial," said Mo Yuchuan, a professor of constitutional and administrative law at Renmin University of China.

"The anti-corruption campaign is gaining momentum and is proceeding institutionally," said Liu Xuezheng, a senior member of the China Zhigong Party, a non-Communist political party.

Prosecutors have investigated about 13,000 officials at the county level or above for corruption and other duty-related crimes since 2008, including 30 officials at the ministerial level or higher, according to official data released during the ongoing annual session of the NPC.

"Keeping power contained within a cage of regulations is the key to preventing graft. The role of regulatory systems should be strengthened," said Ma Huaide, vice president of the China University of Political Science and Law.

Over the past decade, China has made efforts to combat corruption and build a clean government, including amending existing laws and creating new laws, such as those pertaining to civil servants and money laundering. In 2007, China established the National Bureau of Corruption Prevention.

Legal experts and lawmakers have called for drafting a more specific anti-graft law and enhancing the independence, professionalism and authority of supervisory bodies.

"We should unwaveringly combat corruption, strengthen political integrity and establish institutions to abolish the excessive concentration of power," said a government work report presented to the NPC session.

"We should uphold democratic oversight, legal oversight and public opinion-based oversight," the report added.

"The excessive concentration of power is the root of corruption. The reform of the power structure is a precondition for combating corruption institutionally," said Li Yongzhong, an associate dean at the China Academy of Supervision and Discipline Inspection.

The Internet has become an effective platform for ordinary Chinese to expose corruption scandals over the last several years. Their efforts to investigate officials who have largely been ignored by government supervisory bodies have led to the sacking of multiple government officials.

Beijing lawyer Liu Hongyu said online anti-corruption efforts should act as a supplement to the current supervisory systems, as related legislation has yet to be created to regulate online muckraking.

"The thinking and methods for fighting corruption should keep pace with the times," said Li Dajin, an NPC deputy and lawyer.

"Research should be done to better deal with social factors that lead to corruption," said Li.

"Corruption is common globally. Anti-graft efforts should be put in a more important position," said Mo. (Xinhua) ■

# China defense budget to grow 10.7 percent in 2013

By Zhou Erjie

China plans to raise its central government defense budget by 10.7 percent to 720.2 billion yuan (114.3 billion U.S. dollars) in 2013, according to a budget report submitted to the country's top legislature for review on March 5, 2013.

The military spending will be used to improve living and working conditions of service people, make the armed forces more mechanized and information-based, and safeguard national security, the report on draft central and local budgets for 2013 says.

China spent 650.6 billion yuan on national defense in 2012, an increase of 11.5 percent than the previous year, says the report to the first session of the 12th National People's Congress.

Moderate growth of defense spending can better achieve PLA's goal to boost combativeness, said Yin Zhuo, director of the Expert Consultation Committee of the PLA Navy.

"The PLA is at a stage of intensifying efforts to accomplish the dual historic tasks of military mechanization and full IT application. It is a critical moment that calls for greater defense expenditure," Yin said.

General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Xi Jinping has ordered the PLA to intensify

its "real combat" awareness in order to sustain military readiness.

"It is the top priority for the military to be able to combat and win battles," Xi, who is also the chairman of CPC Central Military Commission, made the remarks during an inspection in December.

China strives to basically complete military mechanization and make major progress in full military IT application by 2020, according to a keynote report at the 18th National Congress of CPC in November last year.

"It is a military norm that the higher IT application level an armed force is at, the greater the spending on procurement, operation and maintenance would be," Yin said.

Chen Zhou, a researcher with the PLA Military Science Academy noted that the growth of China's defense expenditure had historically lagged far behind the country's economic development.

"After years of 'compensatory' budget growth, China's military spending is getting more coordinated with the country's economic growth," said Chen.

"How could the military effectively safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity without more spending?" Chen said.

The government has been trying to play down media frenzy surrounding China's defense spending in the legislative session.

Spokeswoman of the NPC annual session Fu Ying told a press conference on March 4 that "it seems China has to explain every year to the outside world why we should strengthen national defence and why we should increase the military budget."

"China's peaceful foreign policies and its defensive military policies are conducive to security and peace of Asia," Fu said.

China's military spending is dwarfed by that of the United States, and its per capita figure is also far less than that of the U.S.

In recent years, China's military spending amounted to about 1.6 percent of its GDP. The ratio was less than that of the United States, Britain and many other countries.

Fu said that China's participation in UN peacekeeping missions and anti-piracy patrols showed that its military was promoting global peace and stability.

"Overseas military missions are often several times, or even dozens of times, more costly than domestic ones," Yin said.

By moderately raising its defense budget, China is capable of making more contributions to world peace, the military expert said.

China is the largest personnel contributor to UN peacekeeping missions among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Since 2008, China has sent 12 batches of naval task forces to conduct escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. (Xinhua) ■



Chinese soldiers attend a ceremonial parade in Tajikistan on June 14, 2012. Armed forces from Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states hold the "Peace Mission 2012" drill, the ninth joint anti-terrorism military exercise launched under the SCO framework. Li Xiang



# Rural reform helps China ensure grain security

By Li Laifang, Cai Min and Ma Yang



A corn processing factory is shown in this October 13, 2012 photo in Heilongjiang Province in northeast China, which produces large quantity of grains, including wheat and corn. *Lu Wenxiang*

**D**espite annual increases in agricultural output over the past nine years, national lawmakers and political advisors still call for more measures to boost agricultural production and ensure the country's grain security.

Affected by the shrinking amount of agricultural land area, weather-related disasters and a decrease in the rural labor force, the possibility of grain output reduction is rising, said Shang Jinsuo, a deputy to the 12th National People's Congress (NPC).

During the annual sessions of the NPC and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the top political advisory body, Chinese leaders have urged the acceleration of constructing socialist new countryside and modernizing agriculture.

China's grain output rose 3.2 percent year on year to hit a record-high of 590 million tonnes in 2012, marking the ninth consecutive year of growth.

However, official customs figures show that the country's grain imports also hit a record high of 72.3 million tonnes last year, which is evidence of a strained balance between domestic grain supply and demand.

"It is a rare achievement to have had good harvests for the past nine straight years, but we should be more aware of the problems behind it," said Qin Boyong, a CPPCC National Committee member.

Qin pointed out problems such as the lack of large-scale grain production in rural areas and inadequate investment in agricultural infrastructure facilities.

Chinese farmers "own" farmland through collectives, often a village committee, which distributes land-use rights to farmers through long-term deals under a household contract responsibility system introduced in the late 1970s.

Due to rapid industrialization and urbanization, the country's agricultural and rural development have entered "a new stage" and various challenges have emerged, including higher production costs, rising demand for farm produce and the influx of the rural labor force into cities.

China's first policy document for 2013, dubbed the No. 1 central policy, states that the government will create policies to speed up rural land transfers and offer more subsidies for family farms and farming cooperatives in an effort to develop large-scale farming.

The reforms have already been implemented in many rural areas.

In Huaiyuan County, east China's Anhui Province, former farmer Zhang Xiaohong is now a technician in charge of a workshop of the Xintai Grain and Edible Oil Company.

Last year, Zhang and more than 100 households rented their 333-hectares of farmland to the company. Since then, 180 farmers have taken jobs with the company.

"I used to plant the farmland and take care of my children by myself. I was very busy. Now, my family's annual income is more than 50,000 yuan, which includes my monthly salary of 3,000 yuan and the land rental fee," she said. (50,000 yuan is equal to about 7,955 U.S. dollars.)

The changes in Zhang's village exemplify the ongoing rural reforms.

Huang Wenming, a farmer in Changshan Village, Dehui City in northeast China's Jilin Province, said he has earned 6,000 yuan more than previous years since he joined a local farmers cooperative two years ago, which provides members with rice seeds and farming guidance.

The number of farmers cooperatives in Jilin reached 30,000 in 2012, up 37 percent year on year, and nearly half of the rural households have joined cooperatives, whose services can boost grain output and farmers' income.

The cooperatives should cooperate with each other to better develop the local economy, said Ren Kejun, an NPC deputy and senior agricultural official of Jilin.

The country will "support the development of various forms of new farmers cooperatives and multi-level commercial organizations that provide agricultural services, and it will gradually establish a new type of system of intensive

**"Some big companies in cities go to rural areas to rent farmland. But companies always pursue their vested interests. I doubt all companies will focus on planting crops," said Li Liancheng.**

agricultural operations that are specialized, well-organized and commercialized," Premier Wen Jiabao said in the government work report delivered at the opening of the annual session of the NPC on March 5.

"The reform and innovation in rural operations, which touch upon fundamental issues related to agriculture and farmers, will bring significant changes to agricultural production," said Han Jun, a rural studies researcher with Tsinghua University.

The moves are of great importance to ensuring grain security and raising farmers' income, he said.

However, Li Liancheng, an NPC deputy and secretary of the Communist Party of China branch committee in Xixinzhuang Village, Henan Province, urged that land transfers be carried out carefully.

"Some big companies in cities go to rural areas to rent farmland. But companies always pursue their vested interests. I doubt all companies will focus on planting crops," said Li.

Li, a rural representative, proposed that the central government lay out policies to support the development of more professional farmers.

Vice Minister of Agriculture Yu Xinrong said the country will also invest more in agricultural technologies to boost output. (Xinhua) ■

# Doubling income is easy, narrowing regional gap is anything but

By Cheng Yunjie and Zhang Yao

**L**egislators attending the annual legislative session are discussing one of China's greatest challenges: narrowing the country's wealth gap.

In the eyes of legislators from underdeveloped regions, doubling the average income is easy, but narrowing the yawning wealth disparity is anything but.

Xia Qingfeng, mayor of the city of Tongren in southwest China's Guizhou Province, believes his province is the weakest link in China's drive to build a moderately prosperous society by 2020.

Home to one-ninth of China's 99-million-strong poor population, Guizhou posted an aggregate GDP of 680.2 billion yuan in 2012, the lowest among all 31 provincial-level regions.

The province's urban residents earned 16,495 yuan in per capita annual income in 2011, while rural residents earned just 4,145 in per capita net income that year.

Chinese urban residents earned 24,565 yuan in annual per capita income in 2012, while rural residents earned 7,917 yuan in per capita net income, official statistics show.

"Only after Guizhou fulfills its dream of getting rid of poverty, can China achieve its dream of rejuvenation," said Xia.

Wang Chang, director of the Industry and Information Bureau of north China's Hebei Province and deputy to the NPC,



Farmers at Sanmatun, Rong'an County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region pick tangerines on December 17, 2011. Lu Bo'an





Tourists select goods at a duty-free store in Sanya, south China's Hainan Province, on October 24, 2012. Hou Jiansen

urged the government to make all-out efforts to eliminate the wealth gap.

In Hebei's city of Baoding, there are 1.38 million people struggling to make ends meet in nine poverty-stricken counties.

The city's low-income households earned just 4,742 yuan in per capita income in 2011. In Beijing, the figure was 8,880 yuan.

When China started its economic reform and opening-up drive in 1978, the per capita income for urban residents stood just at 343 yuan.

Letting some people get rich first and then help others achieve common prosperity has been regarded as a viable strategy for China to pull people out of poverty.

However, when China released its first official rich-poor index since 2000 in mid-January, it painted a far-from-rosy picture of what the country needs to do to bridge the wealth gap.

Statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) show that the country's Gini coefficient reached 0.474 in 2012, higher than the warning level of 0.4 set by the United Nations.

The index has retreated gradually since peaking at 0.491 in 2008, dropping to 0.49 in 2009, 0.481 in 2010 and 0.477 in 2011, according to NBS chief Ma Jiantang.

However, Du Ying, deputy chief of the National Development and Reform Commission, said that China's regional wealth disparity has been large for some time.

In 2000, the average per capita GDP for the east China coast was 7,200 yuan more than that of the western interior. Last year, Du said, the spread broadened to 26,000 yuan.

## Meaningful change

At its 18th National Congress held in mid-November, the Communist Party of China (CPC) announced plans to double the 2010 GDP and per capita income for both urban and rural residents by 2020.

As there are only eight years left to meet the target, legislators from undeveloped regions are competing to make poverty elimination proposals to the State Council, or China's cabinet.

Zhong Mian, vice governor of southwest China's Sichuan Province cautioned against using averages as a gauge to evaluate the improvement of people's living standards.

"A rise in average income does not necessarily mean a meaningful life-of-quality improvement in underdeveloped regions," said Zhong.

He urged the State Council to grant more transfer payments to undeveloped regions and narrow regional disparities related to public utilities and services.

Ma Yufeng, mayor of Baoding, said he doesn't think meeting the 2020 target is a bridge too far to cross.

"Using averages as a measurement, we see no significant problem in meeting the income-doubling goal. The real challenge for us comes from the poverty-stricken population. Helping the needy is a matter of fairness and justice," said the NPC deputy.

"Monolithic macro-management policies that don't take regional disparity into account will put poverty-stricken regions at a disadvantage," said Wang Hailin, director of the Sichuan Provincial Economic and Information Commission and a deputy to the NPC.

"The State Council must figure out tailor-made incentives to boost the development of undeveloped regions," Wang said.

In early February, the State Council issued a guideline on income redistribution reform, although the details of its implementation have yet to be announced.

Describing regional disparity as an issue that is essential to the overall health and efficiency of China's economy, Du said helping undeveloped interior regions cultivate advantageous industries will help narrow the gap.

"A more effective way is to facilitate the smooth flow of production factors between the interior and the east coast for more coordinated development," said Du. (Xinhua) ■



# New national legislature sees more diversity



Chinese President Xi Jinping and former Chinese president Hu Jintao shake hands with deputies after the closing meeting of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on March 17, 2013. Ma Zhancheng

**M**ore migrant workers and women, as well as younger people, have been elected to the 12th National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, while fewer government and Party officials have won places.

The 11th NPC Standing Committee confirmed the credentials of all 2,987 elected deputies on February 27, 2013.

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, and the other six members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee – Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli – were elected as new NPC deputies.

The number of farmers-turned migrant workers elected to the 12th NPC has notably increased, according to the NPC Standing Committee.

A total of 401 workers and farmers have been elected deputies. They comprise 13.42 percent of the total, up 5.18 percentage points from the 11th NPC, the Standing Committee announced.

The younger generation has also entered the top legislature, with two deputies born in the 1990s and 74 born in the 1980s.

Chen Ruolin, the youngest deputy, was born in December

1992. She won a gold medal in the women's synchronized 10-meter platform diving competition at the London Olympic Games in 2012.

Tie Feiyan, also born in 1992, is a road toll collector in southwest China's Yunnan Province. She was hailed as "the most beautiful girl born in the 1990s," as she once rescued people from drowning and has adopted an abandoned infant.

The number of female deputies has risen to 699, accounting for 23.4 percent of the total. The proportion rose 2.07 percentage points from a year earlier.

Moreover, 1,042, or 34.88 percent of the 12th NPC deputies, are government officials and leading Party cadres, down 6.93 percentage points from the 11th NPC.

Such a decrease will help to "improve the representation of the people, motivate political participation at grass-roots levels, nurture more practical government decisions and better reflect the people's will, wishes and interests," said Xue Qingchao, researcher with the Party History Research Center of the Communist Party of China Central Committee.

All the deputies were elected from 35 election units representing 34 Chinese regions and the People's Liberation Army in December and January.

The biggest difference between this election and previous



elections is that deputies were elected this year using the same population ratio for both rural and urban areas, said Wang Wanbin, deputy secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee.

Each rural NPC deputy used to represent a population eight times that of an urban deputy between the 1950s and the 1990s, when the country had a dominating rural population.

Thanks to fast urbanization, the representation ratio reduced to four times after the Electoral Law was revised in 1995 and remained the same under the 2010 amendment.

This change helps to spread the notion of upholding equality during elections, according to Han Dayuan, dean of the Law School of Renmin University of China.

“It will contribute to the country’s rural-urban integration, greatly encourage farmers’ political participation and speed up the development of democracy. It may also help push forward reform in the household registration system,” Han added.

This election has also stressed equality among different ethnic groups.

According to the 11th NPC Standing Committee, 409, or 13.69 percent of the newly elected deputies, are from the country’s 55 ethnic minority groups, with each of these groups represented.

Among the elected deputies, there are 36 from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and 12 are from the Macao SAR.

All these deputies are patriotic and committed to local communities, upholding the Constitution and the Basic Laws of Hong Kong and Macao and supporting the practice of “one country, two systems,” according to the 11th NPC Standing Committee.

Thirteen deputies have been elected to represent Taiwan in the 12th NPC. They were born on the mainland and are second-generation Taiwanese, who “support the country’s reunification, push forward exchanges across the Taiwan Strait and oppose “Taiwan independence.”” (Xinhua) ■

1. This combined photo shows Wang Liang, a staff member of a heavy industry group in Dalian, northeast China’s Liaoning Province, adjusts equipment in a workshop (R, photo taken on February 9, 2006) and he, as a deputy to the 12th National People’s Congress, attends a press conference in Beijing on March 10, 2013.

2. Toll-taker Tie Feiyan, who works in Yanjin County in southwest China’s Yunnan Province (R, undated file photo) and is also a deputy to the 12th National People’s Congress, attends a press conference in Beijing on March 10, 2013.

3. Liu Li, who works at a foot massage clinic, in Xiamen, southeast China’s Fujian Province (R, photo taken on August 23, 2011), attends a press conference as a deputy to the 12th National People’s Congress in Beijing on March 10, 2013.

4. Zhu Liangyu (C), a staff member of a security service company, conducts a research work in a residential community in Haidian District of Beijing (R, photo taken on March 2, 2013), attends a press conference as a deputy to the 12th National People’s Congress in Beijing on March 10, 2013.

5. Zhu Xueqin, a staff member of a clothes shop in Shanghai, east China (R, photo taken on February 28, 2011), attends a press conference as a deputy to the 12th National People’s Congress in Beijing on March 10, 2013.

6. Deng Qiandui, a village doctor from southwest China’s Yunnan Province, moves across the Nujiang River by a cable and pulley to give medical advice to villagers (R, photo taken on February 19, 2011), attends a press conference as a deputy to the 12th National People’s Congress in Beijing on March 10, 2013.

(Photos by Xinhua)





# New age for China's women deputies

By Hu Tao and Liu Wei



NPC deputies arrive at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing to attend the second plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th NPC on March 8, 2013. Yu Xiangjun





Xi Jinping (C), general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), talks with Chen Ruolin (1st L), the youngest deputy to the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on March 8, 2013. Xi joined a discussion with deputies from east China's Jiangsu Province, who attend the first session of the 12th NPC in Beijing. *Huang Jingwen*

**T**he annual session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) has given Shen Jilan, 84, a chance to consolidate her position as one of the world's most venerable political figures.

With her 59 years as an NPC deputy, Shen is the only deputy serving all 12 terms of the NPC.

With the International Women's Day being marked on March 8, she has become the figurehead for a growing number of women in Chinese politics.

When Shen began her role as deputy, she was in a much smaller minority and experienced a very different Chinese political situation as she learned the ropes in what was understandably a daunting male-dominated atmosphere.

From a remote village in northern Shanxi Province, the national model worker says her overriding prerogative in her early 1950s days in the NPC was that "we must elect Mao Zedong as chairman."

How times have changed -- in political and also practical senses. Shen remarked recently to media, "I used to start my four-day journey to Beijing by riding a donkey from my village to the county. And this year, the high-speed train journey to Beijing took only two hours."

This year, Shen showed she was capable of keeping up

with these fast times by presenting proposals on narrowing the gap between rich and poor regions, and optimizing rural land use.

While she may have record-breaking longevity in terms of politics, this grandmother is far from the only female to bring new life to this year's key political session in China.

Of the 2,987 NPC deputies this year, 699 are women, 62 of them newly elected. Females comprise 23.4 percent of the deputies, representing a 2.07-percent increase from the previous NPC term.

Among a number of high-profile female NPC appointments, Fu Ying, who served as Chinese ambassador to the Philippines, Australia and Britain, becomes the NPC's first ever spokeswoman for this session.

Further headlines were generated by Liu Yang, a newly elected deputy from the People's Liberation Army.

China's first female astronaut, 35-year-old Liu said she felt honored to take up her new position. "I used to watch [the congress] on television, but this year I am obliged to deliberate on and examine the government work report," she said.

Young diver Chen Ruolin, who won gold medal in the 10m platform category at the London Olympic Games, is



Fu Ying, spokesperson for the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC), speaks at the press conference on the first session of the 12th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 4, 2013.

*Liu Jinhai*



NPC deputy Shen Jilan casts a vote during the fifth plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th NPC on March 15 at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. *Chen Jianli*

likewise making her debut as an NPC deputy.

Worries over such young debutantes' inexperience have also been highlighted. "She is so young. Obviously, she needs more political training," said a domestic journalist surnamed Xu after interviewing Chen.

Inexperience is an issue that will need to be worked through as the NPC embraces more deputies from all walks of life, not just the political elite.

Even Shen Jilan has her detractors. Some have labeled her a "living fossil," a reputation that can't be helped by her admission that she has never voted against any motion.

Decades before, the few women NPC deputies were generally selected from those with outstanding contributions such as model workers or officials. Nowadays, female migrant workers and even female poets have joined this team.

"Political training' is utterly important, as being a new deputy, I knew little about the law," said Zhu Xueqin, who is in her second five-year term as an NPC deputy.

The 36-year-old was the first-ever migrant worker deputy five years ago.

She still remembers her nervousness when she stood at the front of the Great Hall of the People for the very first time. "I take the NPC as my school, a law school. The law matters so much to both women and migrant workers," according to Zhu.

This year, before attending the NPC, she voluntarily

took part in the deputy training, going over what she learned last time.

Shen Jilan's political education has been less formal but no less hard earned.

"The first time I came here, I dared not to speak," she recalled.

As she learned more about the NPC and its functions, however, she came to realize it was a channel for ordinary people to express their opinions. "As a people's deputy, I must listen to their voices and help them to relieve their stresses," she believes.

Of course, opportunities to join the top legislature of a nation are prized for both men and women. But, for Chinese women, this trend underscores the fact that their overall status has gained an unprecedented leap forward over the last century.

A hundred years ago, the grandmas and great grandmas of women like Zhu Xueqin and Chen Ruolin may have suffered foot-binding, and now their descendants are talking about State affairs.

In addition to their responsibilities as mothers, housewives and daughters, Chinese women are shouldering more political roles. As the saying goes, Chinese women "hold up half the sky" along with their elevation into the country's politics. (Xinhua) ■



# Style changes take center stage at Beijing's political season

By Shi Shouhe

**R**eciting an adapted “poem” by an unknown author from late leader Mao Zedong’s poem, Yao Tandong made fun of the heavy smog that has plagued Beijing over the past months.

But Yao’s audience was in no way a group of nobodies. Among them was one of the country’s top leaders, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee.

Xi was attending a group discussion of political advisors from the sectors of science and technology at the annual political session, the country’s top political arena where issues of importance are deliberated and decisions made by lawmakers and discussed by advisors from across the nation.

Yao, a researcher on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, is particularly concerned about the deteriorating air conditions in Beijing as well as in other parts of the country.

“It is a tremendous task to build a beautiful China and protect its environment,” Yao said. “To address air pollution needs concerted efforts in many aspects such as social management, scientific research and engineering. It is a systemic project.”

Xi, after a brief laugh at the ironic “poem”, turned solemn upon Yao’s remarks about the air.

Media coverage of Yao’s unorthodoxy went viral online, with some Internet users expressing their surprise at the boldness of the scientist.

“It is the responsibility of a political advisor to tell the truth, to expose the problems, and to try to solve them,” Yao said.

Yao is not the only one who become more outspoken and critical at this year’s political sessions, at which there are much fewer yawns but more wrangling.

At a gathering convened to extend Lunar New Year’s greetings to people from non-Communist parties last month, Xi urged the Communist Party of China to be more tolerant of criticism and receptive to different views.

“The Party should be able to put up with sharp criticism, correct mistakes if it has committed them and avoid them if it has not,” he said.

Xi’s “New Deal” after his crowning as the Party’s top leader in November went even farther.

Apart from a campaign to crack down on waste of food at banquets, the central authority has taken the lead to change work styles, canceling red-carpet receptions or traffic-controls for senior officials’ motorcades.

Lengthy reports have also been cut short to improve clarity

and efficiency, and to take on more substantial and practical issues.

In the government work report delivered at the opening of the national legislature’s annual session, Premier Wen Jiabao called for changes of the growth model and a shift of priority to the well-being of the people.

The 15,000-word report, the media later found, is the shortest of its kind made by the premier over the past decade.

“In a sign of changing styles, the language in Wen’s report is much plainer than the often turbid phrasing of years past,” an Associated Press report said.

Changes, big or small, can be found almost everywhere. The outcry for changes rising from the political circle is blowing a touch of fresh air even into people’s daily lives.

The government-initiated “empty plate” drive is evolving into a trend among both officials and the public, some of whom used to turn a blind eye at waste.

At a buffet luncheon for journalists covering the political sessions, a reporter requested a glass from a waitress for some juice.

“May I have a larger one, please?” the reporter asked.

“That’s ok, but you are not supposed to waste any,” the waitress reminded him.

“Of course not,” the reporter said. (Xinhua) ■



Staffers label green tags on the bottled water, reminding deputies attending the first session of the 12th NPC to conserve water. CFP



# What is the difference between NPC and CPPCC?

The difference between the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference:

## 1. Different nature

The NPC is the highest organ of State power. Its permanent body is the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. The National People's Congress and its Standing Committee exercise the legislative power of the State.

The CPPCC is not an organ of the State. It is a Chinese people's patriotic united front organization and an important institution of multiparty cooperation and political consultation led by the Communist Party of China.

## 2. Different legal status, power and functions

The NPC elects president and vice-president of China, chairman, vice-chairman and members of its Standing Committee, decides on the choice of the premier of the State Council upon nomination by the president of the People's Republic of China, and on the choice of the vice-premiers, State councilors, and ministers in charge of ministries or commissions upon nomination by the premier. It also elects chairman of the Central Military Commission, the president of the Supreme People's Court and

the procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

The CPPCC is an important institution of political consultation, democratic supervision and participation in the deliberation and administration of State affairs. It conducts consultations before policy decisions are made. The NPC votes on policy decisions after the consultations are finished and the government carries them out after policy decisions are made.

## 3. Different mode of selection

Deputies to the NPC are elected from 35 electoral units from the people's congresses of provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government, the People's Liberation Army, the deputy election councils of the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions respectively and the Taiwan compatriots' consultation election council.

CPPCC members are selected through consultation and recommendation. The Standing Committee decides through consultation on the number of members and the candidates for each CPPCC National Committee after they are examined and approved by the Chair's Council of the preceding CPPCC National Committee.

## 4. Different work mode

The NPC exercises its power through amending the Constitution and supervising the enforcement of the Constitution, to enact and amend basic laws governing criminal offences, civil affairs, the State organs and other matters, to elect, appoint and remove from office members to central State organs, and to determine major State issues.

It also deliberates and approves the plan for national economic and social development and the report on its implementation and deliberates and approves the State budget and the report on its implementation.

Meetings are an important way in which the CPPCC exercises its functions and its members participate in the deliberation and administration of State affairs.

Members of a CPPCC committee, political parties or mass organizations affiliated with the CPPCC can make proposals, individually or jointly, over State affairs.

The basic procedures for handling the proposals are presenting the proposals, forwarding them, handling them, and replying the proposal presenters.

(Source: Official websites of the NPC and the CPPCC)

# How does the NPC exercise its power of supervision?

The National People's Congress (NPC) and its Standing Committee have the power to supervise other national organs of State power and ensure that the government runs in accordance with the will of the people.

The supervisory power of the NPC and its Standing Committee, as defined by the Constitution, includes supervising the enforcement of the Constitution and laws and overseeing the work of the State Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

The NPC and its Standing Committee supervise the enforcement of the

Constitution, while people's congresses and their standing committees at local levels ensure that the Constitution, laws, administrative regulations and decisions by people's congresses and their standing committees at higher levels are abided by and enforced in their respective regions.

Another supervisory function of the NPC and its Standing Committee is to check whether the State Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate follow the Constitution and laws in their work, whether they appropriately implement the principles and policies of the Com-

munist Party of China and the State, whether their work accords with the fundamental interests of the people and whether relevant officials do their jobs competently.

They also examine and approve national or local economic and social development plans and the implementation of such plans on the national or local level, in addition to examining and approving fiscal budgets and their implementation on the national or local level. The body also supervises the elections, appointments and dismissals of government officials and assesses officials' performances. (Xinhua)



# What are the functions of the NPC?

The NPC is the highest institution through which the Chinese people can exercise their State power.

The First NPC was convened in 1954, marking the establishment of the people's congress system in China.

According to the Constitution, the NPC exercises the following functions and powers:

- to amend the Constitution;
- to supervise the enforcement of the Constitution;
- to enact and amend basic laws governing criminal offenses, civil affairs, State organs and other matters;
- to elect the president and vice president of China;
- to decide on the choice of the premier of the State Council upon nomination by the president and on the choice of vice premiers, State councilors, ministers in charge of ministries or commissions, the auditor-general and the

secretary-general of the State Council upon nomination by the premier;

- to elect the chairman of the Central Military Commission and, upon nomination by the chairman, to decide on all other members of the Central Military Commission;
- to elect the president of the Supreme People's Court;
- to elect the procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate;
- to examine and approve the national economic and social development plan and the report on its implementation;
- to examine and approve the State budget and the report on its implementation;
- to alter annul inappropriate decisions made by the NPC Standing Committee;
- to approve the establishment of provinces, autonomous regions, and

municipalities directly under the central government;

- to decide on the establishment of special administrative regions and the systems to be instituted there;
- to make decisions on questions of war and peace;
- to exercise other functions and powers the highest organ of State power should exercise.

The NPC Standing Committee, the permanent organ of the NPC, is elected by the NPC and exercises State legislative power together with the NPC.

The NPC is elected for a term of five years. It normally meets in an annual session and is convened by its Standing Committee.

An NPC session may be also convened at any time the Standing Committee deems it necessary or when more than one-fifth of the NPC deputies so propose. (Xinhua)

## How are NPC deputies elected?

The NPC deputies are members of the highest organ of State power in China and are elected in accordance with law.

Who can elect deputies or be elected?

All citizens of the People's Republic of China over age 18 have the right to vote and run in an election, regardless of nationality, race, sex, occupation, family background, religious beliefs, education, property status or length of residence. Only those who have been stripped of their political rights may not vote or run in an election.

According to the Electoral Law, deputies to county- and township-level people's congresses are directly elected by voters, while deputies to people's congresses above the county level are elected by deputies at the next lower level.

Deputies to the NPC are elected by people's congresses of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government. The armed forces elect their own deputies.

All parties and people's organizations may jointly or separately nominate candidates as NPC deputies, and a group of more than 10 deputies to a provincial-level people's congress may also nominate a candidate.

NPC deputies are elected by secret ballot, and candidates should outnumber deputy vacancies by 20 percent to 50 percent.

The number of NPC deputies is capped at 3,000, and their distribution is decided by the NPC Standing Committee.

The number of NPC deputies in the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, as well as electoral procedures there, are subject to separate regulations issued by the NPC Standing Committee.

Election process

A namelist of candidates for deputies to a people's congress is made public 20 days before the election, then officially announced five days before the election.

Voters may vote for or against candidates or abstain from voting. They

also have the option of voting for people besides the candidates on the official ballot.

Candidates who run in an election can be deemed elected if they receive more than half of the votes. If the number of candidates who receive more than half of the votes exceeds the amount of vacancies, those with more votes are deemed elected.

Election results are declared valid or invalid by the presidium. Expenses for the election are covered by the State, and the election is presided over by the NPC Standing Committee.

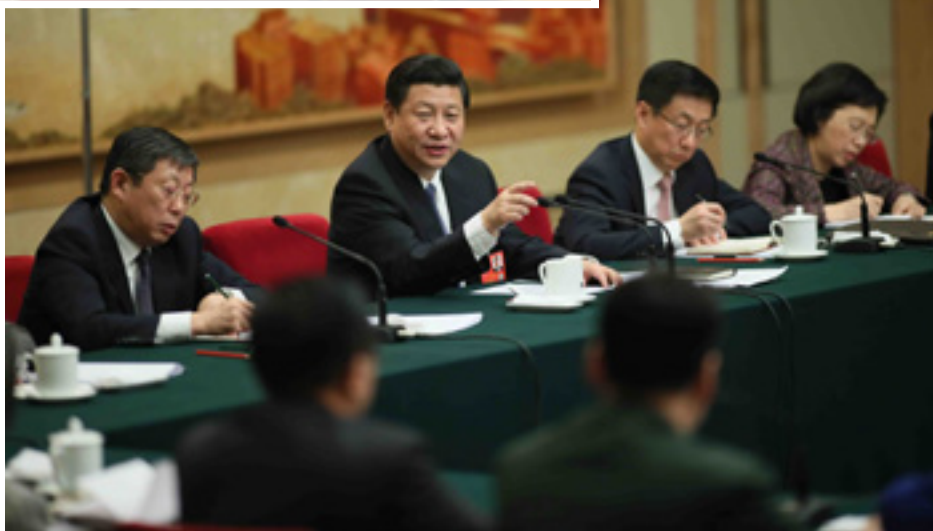
NPC deputies are subject to supervision by their electoral units, which also have the right to recall any deputies they have elected. An NPC deputy may submit his or her resignation letter to the standing committee of the people's congress that elected him or her.

If, for any number of reasons, a deputy must resign during his or her tenure, a by-election will be held by the same electoral unit to choose a new one. (Xinhua)



Xi Jinping (L), general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), receives a hada, a white silk scarf symbolizing respect and blessing, from a deputy to the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) from southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, in Beijing, on March 9, 2013. Xi joined a discussion with the Tibet delegation attending the first session of the 12th NPC in Beijing on March 9. *Ma Zhancheng*

Xi Jinping (2nd L), general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), joins a discussion with deputies from Shanghai, who attend the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC), on March 5, 2013. *Lan Hongguang*



Vice Premier Li Keqiang attends and makes a speech at the group discussion of Hunan Province delegation on March 6. NPC deputy and entrepreneur Xiao Anjiang made a sudden interruption to express his understanding of urbanization. After listening to Xiao's remarks, Li, who was later elected as the premier of the State Council, took the lead to give him a clap. *Liu Jiansheng*







▲ Zhang Dejiang (2nd L), a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, joins a discussion with deputies from Zhejiang Province, who attend the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC), on March 5, 2013. *Liu Jiansheng*



▲ Zhang Dejiang (2nd R), a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, joins a discussion with deputies from northwest China's Shaanxi Province, who attend the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC), on March 9, 2013. *Huang Jingwen*



▲ A photographer takes a picture on March 6, when the Beijing delegation opened to the press on the sideline of the first session of the 12th NPC. *Wang Shen*



▲ On March 6, reporters from home and abroad conduct an interview with the Hainan delegation on the sideline of the first session of the 12th NPC in Beijing. *Jin Liwang*



▲ On March 7, reporters from home and abroad conduct an interview with the Hunan delegation on the sideline of the first session of the 12th NPC in Beijing. *Wang Peng*



▲ On March 7, reporters from home and abroad conduct an interview with the Xinjiang delegation on the sideline of the first session of the 12th NPC in Beijing. *Chen Jianli*





NPC deputies examine votes when attending the sixth plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th NPC at the Great Hall of the People on March 16.

Chen Jianli

Riyangul Almire, a deputy from Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to the 12th National People's Congress (NPC), attends a group discussion of the Xinjiang delegation in Beijing, on March 10, 2013. She suggests that the government increase more funds for housing subsidies for people in remote areas and offer more language and vocational training. Riyangul, born in February 1989 in Aktau County in Xinjiang, now works in Zhejiang Province. She has organized hundreds of young people in Aktau County to work in inner cities and helped them strive for a more comfortable life. *Huang Jingwen*



Xu Wenyou (L) and Meng Lingbin, both NPC deputies from Liaoning Province, attend a panel discussion on March 4. *Yang Qing*



NPC deputy Liang Lina (R) chats with another deputy on March 8. Liang, who is also the Party secretary of Luhe Village, Luchuan County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, called the government to pay more efforts in curbing rural environmental pollution as well to do more for children of migrant workers. *Chen Jianli*





Donning colorful costumes of Yao, NPC deputy Long Feifeng delivers a speech at the group discussion of Hunan delegation on March 6.

*Liu Jiansheng*



Li Liancheng, an NPC deputy and Party secretary of Xixinzhuang Village in Henan Province, makes a speech at a group discussion on March 7. Li said major concerns of the farmers include food supply, education, medical treatment and employment. Vice Minister of Agriculture Yu Xinrong also attended the discussion. *Chen Bo*



Peng Weiping (R front), a deputy to the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) from east China's Anhui Province, is seen with her baby and husband at the airport upon their arrival in Beijing on March 2, 2013. The first session of the 12th NPC is scheduled to open in Beijing on March 5. *Xie Huanchi*

Yang Ming (R), an NPC deputy from Yunnan Province, talks with his wife Xiao Yan, a member to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on March 11. It was the first time that the couple reunited since the beginning of the annual "Two Sessions".

*Yang Zongyuo*



NPC deputies press the voting machines at the sixth plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th NPC at the Great Hall of the People on March 16. *Xie Huanchi*





State Council ministers attending the first session of the 12th NPC have a group photo taken at the Great Hall of the People on March 17, when the annual conference came to an end. *Liu Jiansheng*

Wan Gang, Vice-chairman of CPPCC as well as Minister of Science, appears at a press conference focusing on innovations and development on March 7 on the sideline of the first session of the 12th NPC.

*Wang Song*



Zhou Xiaochuan, China's central bank governor, speaks at a press conference on China's currency policy and financial reform held by the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on March 13, 2013. *Qin Qing*



NPC deputies He Yehui (C), Chen Sixi (2nd R), Xin Chunying (2nd L), Lang Sheng (1st L) and Yao Sheng (1st R) appear at a press conference on March 9 to introduce the latest work of NPC.

*Wang Peng*

Minister of Civil Affairs Li Liguao (C), vice ministers of Civil Affairs Dou Yupei (L) and Jiang Li (R) attend a press conference on people's livelihood and social service held by the first session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on March 13, 2013. *Wang Peng*



Vice Minister of Environmental Protection Wu Xiaoqing (C) answers an extra question after a press conference on environmental protection and construction of ecological civilization held by the first session of the 12th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 15, 2013. *Wang Peng*

A press conference on the reform of medical system is held at the press center for the first session of the 12th NPC on March 14. *Wang Song*







▲ A woman interpreter conducts simultaneous interpretation of Uygur at the opening of the NPC annual session on March 5. *Alimushabiti*



▲ Staffers of the secretariat of the first session of the 12th NPC arrange proposals submitted by NPC deputies on March 11, which was the deadline of the proposals submission. *Liu Jinhai*



▲ Qi Lin, an NPC staffer, burns midnight oil to file papers for deputies of Yunnan delegation on March 11. Hundreds of NPC staffers work arduously during the annual NPC session. *Qin Qing*



▲ Newspapers in Beijing publish the election results of national leaders. Deputies attending the fourth plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th NPC cast their votes on March 14. *Cui Nan*



▲ Frontier police of Yangkou Port in Jiangsu Province explain agricultural policies adopted during the annual "Two Sessions" to fishermen on March 10. *He Renfeng*



▲ Passengers watch a subway TV on March 17, when the newly-elected Premier Li Keqiang attended a press conference in Beijing. The first session of the 12th NPC concluded on the same day at the Great Hall of the People. *He Jinwen*



Photographers take pictures while Premier Wen Jiabao delivers a report on government work at the opening ceremony of the first session of the 12th NPC on March 5. CFP



A woman reporter from Workers' Daily grasps an opportunity to raise a question during the press conference attended by Zhou Xiaochuan, president of People's Bank of China, on March 13. Wang Song



Li Lihui, an NPC deputy, stands amid a media throng on March 5, when the first session of the 12th NPC opened at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. CFP



Premier Li Keqiang and vice premiers Zhang Gaoli, Liu Yandong, Wang Yang and Ma Kai attend a press conference at the Great Hall of the People on March 17. Chen Shugen



Reporters wait in line to enter the Great Hall of the People on March 5, when the first session of the 12th NPC opened in Beijing. Wang Peng





Diplomatic representatives observe the proceeding of the first session of the 12th National People's Congress on March 5. *Xie Huanchi*



Foreign reporters cover the first session of the 12th NPC in Beijing.

(Photos by NPC, Xinhua and CFP)



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