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National People's Congress of China

DEEPENING REFORMS IN A COMPREHENSIVE WAY

—A roadmap for China's future development



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1. Young pioneers from Wanghulu Primary School in Shenyang, capital of Liaoning Province attend a "China Dream" theme activity on October 11, 2013 to stimulate students to work hard for the development and progress of the nation. CFP

2. Students from Tielu (Railway) Primary School in Handan, Hebei Province draw pictures to express their dreams in the future on August 30, 2013. They also participate scientific experiments and other activities. Hao Qunying

3. Students from Experimental School in Ganyu County, Jiangsu Province attend a party to celebrate the birthday of the nation on September 27, 2013. CFP





中国共产党第十八届中央委员会第三次全体会议



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Deepening reforms in a comprehensive way

—A roadmap for China's future development



China's top decision makers have unveiled reform guidelines for the next decade. Four days of discussion by the Party's 204-member Central Committee has yielded a statement.

It sets the tone for how the world's second largest economy will deepen reforms in the new stage, after the transformation began more than three decades ago.

Xi Jinping, head of the Communist Party of China, delivered a work report at the Third Plenary Session of the Party's Central Committee. He unveiled development guidelines for the country.

Xi said the Party has worked to speed up the development of a socialist market economy, democracy, cultural development, social harmony and environmental protection.

Faced with a complicated global environment, and pressures for domestic reforms and a more efficient development path, the Party's political bureau has upheld the spirit of the 18th CPC National Congress, leading the Chinese people in constructing a socialist economy. The bureau has also been striving to ensure that the Chinese people enjoy the fruits of development.

员会第三次全体会议



Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, addresses at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in Beijing on November 12, 2013. *Lan Hongguang*



Top Chinese leaders Xi Jinping (C), Li Keqiang (3rd R), Zhang Dejiang (3th L), Yu Zhengsheng (2nd R), Liu Yunshan (2nd L), Wang Qishan (1st R), Zhang Gaoli (1st L) attend the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in Beijing on November 12, 2013. The session lasted from November 9 to 12. *Lan Hongguang*

“Reform and opening up” will decide the destiny of modern China, and will be key to ensuring the country adapt to a rapidly changing world.

After analysing major issues concerning the need to deepen reforms, the statement affirms that “reform and opening-up” has been a successful revolution led by the CPC in the new era. It also adds that “reform and opening up” will decide the destiny of modern China, and will be key to ensuring the country adapt to a rapidly changing world.

The statement concludes with the calling to deepen reforms in order to build a moderately prosperous society, and a strong and democratic country, as well as to realize the China Dream of national rejuvenation.

China's political reforms

- Ensure the people are masters of their own fate
- Ensure the country is governed according to the law
- Provide political support for opening-up and modernization

In terms of political reforms, the meeting requires ensuring that the people are the masters of their own fate under the leadership of the Communist Party. Efforts should insist on governing the country by law.

The session says the Communist Party should make its leadership more scientific and democratic. The Party must also be in the vanguard and clean to provide political support for opening-up and socialist modernization.



The picture taken on November 7, 2013 shows the container dock of Qingdao Port, Shandong Province. Qingdao Port ranks No. 7 of the world in its incoming and outgoing freights. *Li Ziheng*



Ruan Yuying, a resident from Zhuanta community in Xicheng district, Beijing, shows her elector's certificate issued in 1953 on October 13, 2006. The people's congress system, the basic political system of China, plays a fundamental role that ensures the Chinese people to be the masters of the country. *Xinhua*

The session says the Communist Party should make its leadership more scientific and democratic.

China's economic reforms

- Strike a balance between government and market
- Follow the path of "reform and opening-up"
- Stick to the Party's leadership and socialist road with Chinese characteristics
- Learn from other countries' experiences

In deepening economic reforms, we must center on economic development, and the key is to balance the relationship between government and the market. The session also says we must follow the experience in the opening-up, and most importantly, we should stick to the Party's leadership and the socialist road with Chinese characteristics. We must learn from other countries' experiences and encourage both theoretical and practical innovation. We must rely on the people in deepening reforms and promote the overall development of the people.



China's economic reforms

- ➔ **Build a unified and open market system with orderly competition**
- ➔ **Allow the market to play a decisive role in resources allocation**
- ➔ **Establish fair, open and transparent market rules**

The session also proposes to build a unified and open market system with orderly competition, to allow the market playing a decisive role in resources allocation. China needs to accelerate forming a modern market system in which enterprises operate independently and compete fairly. The focus should be given to clearing market barriers and improving the efficiency and fairness of resources allocation.

It also stresses the need to establish fair, open and transparent market rules, for the market to decide prices, to build a unified land market between urban and rural areas, and finally to deepen technological innovation.

Tax and fiscal reforms are also a big focus. The plenum agrees that China must improve legislation, transparency and efficiency in order to build a modern fiscal system.

China must promote internal and external openness, by both going global and attracting overseas investment. China needs to promote deep market integration and adopting a

leading role on the international stage. China needs to relax investment access, speed up the development of free-trade areas and expand Chinese inland's openness to the world.

The session also stresses the importance of developing socialist democratic politics and grass-roots democracy.

It proposes to deepen judicial reforms, by constructing an efficient and authoritative socialist judicial system to safeguard people's interests.

The session notes the key to putting power in a cage is to institutionalize the management of power, affairs and people, and to let the public participate in the supervision of power. This means a system of power administration that is scientific and well supervised, and another system that punishes and prevents graft.

For more equitable distribution of the benefits of development, the country needs to speed up reform in social affairs and education, and to create more job and business opportunities, and a reasonable, orderly income distribution system.

A National Security Committee has been proposed to improve the national security system and strategy.

Protecting China's ecosystem requires a comprehensive system. Specific actions include a compensation mechanism and an environmental protection management mechanism.

The importance of innovation in terms of national defense and the military was stressed. This applies to military theories and improving military strategies and policies, which are key to building a modern military system with Chinese socialist characteristics.

To improve the Party's leadership and governing ability, a leading group is to be set up for the general design of reform.

The session calls on all Party members to unite closely around the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping as the General Secretary. Together they will write a new chapter for China's reform and opening up, build a moderately prosperous society, achieve new victories in building a socialist country with Chinese characteristics and achieve the China Dream of rejuvenating the great Chinese nation. (Xinhua) ■



A photo taken from a patrol helicopter on October 29, 2013 shows the bird's-eye view of Waigaoqiao Container Port of Shanghai Pilot Free Trade Zone. *Fan Jun*

Party sets course for next decade (excerpts)

The Decision on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reforms was adopted at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee on November 12, 2013. The following is an abridged version concerning political system, rule of law and supervision of power:

Political system

Efforts are to be made to uphold and improve the People's Congress system, the CPC-led multi-party cooperative system and political consultative system, the system of autonomous government in ethnic areas, and the system of grassroots-level mass autonomous government.

Pushing forward the system of people's congresses to keep up with the times. The quality of legislation should be improved to prevent local protectionism and prevent some departments from legalizing their interests. People's congresses should provide more supervision of the government's financial budget and State-owned assets. Governments at all levels must report to the local people's congresses before adopting important policies.

Pushing forward the multi-layer development of the consultative democracy system. Enhance the construction of new types of think tanks with Chinese characteristics. Promote a consultative policy system. Strengthen and develop equal, unified and harmonious ethnic relationships. Governments should seek advice from the local Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference before making important decisions.

Developing grassroots democracy. Improve the system of grassroots election, discussion, publicity and responsibility. Improve supervision by urban residents and villagers. Improve the democratic management system, such as the workers' representative conferences in companies and government institutions.

Rule of law

Efforts are to be made to deepen the reform of judicial system, to protect the people's rights and let the masses feel equality and justice in every court verdict.

Upholding the Constitution and laws. Establish a system of legal counsel and improve the review mechanisms on regulations. Give big cities the right to make regulations.

Deepening reforms of administrative law enforcement. Centralize administrative powers and allocate more law enforcement resources in key areas, including food production, medicine production and environmental protection. Improve the service quality of urban management.

Ensuring independence and fairness in courts and prosecuting bodies. Unify the management of staff members and properties of courts and procuratorates below the provincial level. Separate the jurisdiction of courts from administrative decisions.

Making the judicial system be more transparent. Record and keep all court files. Strictly regulate procedures of sen-



A primary student school explains the meanings of a logo of a balance to his classmates on December 3, 2013 in Handan, Hebei Province. Accompanied by judges, students from Qinhe Primary School visited Congtai District People's Court. Hao Qunying

tence commuting, parole and medical parole.

Boosting the judicial system to protect human rights. Improve mechanisms to avoid false accusations and confessions obtained through torture. Gradually reduce the number of charges that could lead to a death penalty. *Laojiao*, or re-education through labor, will be abolished. Meanwhile, strengthen the judicial relief and legal aid system.

Supervision of power

The key to empowering the system is to keep it open and easy to monitor by the people and to have a complex system governing its proceedings.

Establishing a scientific and effective means of power restriction, with a coordination mechanism. Improve the leadership of the Party and the State, and insist on enforcing the principle of democratic centralism. Specify the responsibilities and scope of power of officials at various levels. Provide a list of the powers of local governments and affiliated bodies at various levels.

Enhancing innovative systems for identifying corruption. Anti-corruption responsibility belongs to the Party committee, with the commission for discipline inspection being responsible for supervision. Ensure that the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection sends discipline inspectors to central-level Party and government organs and exercises unified management.

Normalizing a system for improving the work style of officials and government departments. Speed up reform to fight formalism, bureaucracy, hedonism and extravagance. Reduce meetings and simplify official documents. Improve the financial budgeting process, along with approval and audit systems, and focus on the control of administrative expense. Reform the evaluation process for officials and focus on solving the problem of vanity projects. (China Daily)



China details reform decision-making process

A worker works at the construction site of Baliuhu Bridge in Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province on October 11, 2012. CFP

Details about how decisions were reached on major issues of reform emerged on November 18, 2013.

More than 300 reform measures were adopted unanimously at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) on November 12. Published in full text on November 15, the document plots the course of all aspects of China's next round of reform.

In April, after the new leadership was elected, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee decided that the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee would deal with comprehensive reform and make important decisions.

The Political Bureau decided to found a drafting group, headed by President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee. It was the first time since 2000 that the Party's top leader leads the drafting of a document to be tabled at a plenary session.

On April 20, the CPC Central Committee informed Party organs and governments at the central level and of all provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, the armed forces and all non-governmental organizations that their opinions would be solicited. In less than a month, 118 items and proposals were gathered.

From its first meeting on April 24, the drafting group of about 60 members worked hard for 200 days under the leadership of Xi until the opening of the plenum on November 9.

At the first meeting of the drafting group, Xi asked the group to make a strategic plan for deepening reforms in all aspects, based on a good understanding of the country's new circumstances, reality, missions and people's expectation.

Speaking at a number of meetings from April to July, Xi instructed the drafting group to produce a landmark document that could be tested by the people, the world and the times.

The drafting group tried their best not to include measures

that were too general or had been put forwards before.

During the six months, the Standing Committee met three times and the Political Bureau members met twice to discuss the draft. All meetings were presided over by Xi.

Besides Xi, other members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee also contributed to the drafting, with research and important proposals.

On July 25, the first draft decision was submitted to the seven members of the Standing Committee. It was later amended a number of times.

On September 4, the draft was distributed to more than 100 departments at the central and local levels for opinions. Former Party and State leaders also contributed to the draft.

On September 17, Xi hosted a meeting with representatives of non-communist parties, of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce and those without party affiliation, in order to hear their suggestions.

From September 4, the drafting group received a total of 2,564 proposals and more than 40 percent were included in the final document.

On October 29, the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau reviewed the draft and decided to submit it to the Third Plenary Session.

On November 9 when the Third Plenary Session opened, Xi explained the decision. In the following four days, 204 members of the CPC Central Committee and 169 alternate members discussed the document thoroughly.

On the evening of November 11, the members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee met last time to hear the proposals gathered during the session and decide on a new draft that went to panel discussions on the morning of November 12.

On the afternoon of November 12, the final version of the decision was distributed to every participant and put for the vote. (Xinhua) ■

Top legislator: People's congress system advances with the times

Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) of China, recently made important remarks on the progress of the people's congress system on various occasions. He said that this system is an integral part of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is a good system that conforms to China's national actual conditions and keeps abreast of the times as it guarantees the people as masters of the country. With the rapid economic and social development as well as the deep-going progress in the rule of law, NPC is playing a more and more significant role in China's political life. It is an arduous task to draw experiences from the historical development of the system, actively explore and summarize the features and rules of the work of NPC, unceasingly promote theoretical and practical innovation, give full play to its role as the fundamental political system of China, so that the people's congress system can be further improved and strengthened in a solid manner.

The people's congress system has gone through six decades and is now displaying strong vitality and superior advantages. Particularly since the reform and opening up, remarkable progress and tremendous achievements have been scored in the system itself along with the work of NPC. For instance, China has reformed and improved its electoral system in the way that direct election is in place to elect deputies to the people's congresses at county level. Moreover, the system of election by margin has become a universal practice. China also vows to gradually accomplish the goal that deputies shall be elected according to the same population ratio in both urban and rural areas. It is an urgent task to identify the functions and powers of the Standing Committee, providing that it enjoys parallel powers with NPC to exercise both legislative and supervisory powers. For example, standing committees have been set up in all local people's congresses above the county level, and legislative power is now granted

to the people's congresses of provinces and major municipalities. Operational mechanism of the legislative branch has been improved, and a series of important laws including Organic Law of the National People's Congress, Legislation Law, Supervision Law and Rules of Procedures are now in place to regulate functions and powers of the people's congresses. For another instance, the socialist legal system with the Chinese characteristics has been established on time to ensure that there are laws to abide by in all walks of life. NPC has been seriously exercising functions and powers granted by the Constitution and laws to ensure solid implementation of major decisions made by the CPC Central Committee. Concurrently, local people's congresses at various levels have also made many new explorations and scored tremendous achievements on the improvement of the people's congress system.

The 3rd Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee has made decisions on deepening comprehensive reform and explicitly announced the general goals to improve the socialist system as well as to accelerate modernization of national administrative system and capabilities. The meeting points out the direction for the country's future development.

As to NPC and its Standing Committee, their mission cannot be fulfilled without the progress of the people's congress system. The top legislature must resolutely shoulder historical responsibilities, reinforce its confidence in the path, theory and system of socialism with the Chinese characteristics, unswervingly adhere to and improve the people's congress system, constantly enrich the system with innovative thoughts, and inject new vitalities into the fundamental political system of the country. In specific, there are three categories of tasks. Firstly, theoretical and practical innovation should be encouraged. The NPC should intensify its efforts on the research of the people's congress system, improve its organizational and operational mechanism, and



make the system more mature in the future. Secondly, the legislature has to ensure that reforms are conducted in an active and orderly fashion on the track of the rule of law. Many measures initiated by the central authority have bearings on the existing laws and regulations. Every major reform must have legal basis. When there is a need to revise existing laws, legislators shall do it immediately. When there is a need to legally authorize certain reform measures, it has to be made according to legal proceedings. Therefore, NPC is required to further enhance legislative performance, improve the socialist legal system with the Chinese characteristics, and upgrade the quality of legislation so that legislation can play a more important role in the top-level design. Thirdly, NPC should guarantee that goals of reform are smoothly achieved. Many reform measures put forward by the Party need to go through the State Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate. It is the responsibility of NPC to promote the implementation of measures by exercising supervisory and decision-making powers. According to the Constitution, the State Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate are elected by and held responsible for NPC, under which they are supervised. This established practice should be adhered to alongside with the systems of deliberation and decision-making of NPC. Meanwhile, functions and powers of NPC to examine and oversee budget and final account as well as to supervise State asset should be strengthened to ensure that goals of the reforms are accomplished on time. That explains why, as the nation is ushered into a new era, the system and the work of the people's congress also faces new opportunities and challenges.

At present, the work of the people's congress is at a brand new starting point. After the Standing Committee of the 12th NPC was elected, it explicitly stated that its prioritized assignment is to adhere to and improve the people's congress system, make it progress with the times, promote the rule of law in an all-around way, safeguard the authority of the Constitution and laws, accelerate reforms in key areas, protect social fairness and justice, constantly enrich the people's congress system, and provide mighty political and legal guarantee for the fulfillment of a well-off society and the China Dream of national rejuvenation. 2013 was the first year for the new NPC Standing Committee to exercise its power. A good beginning indeed. At this point, the pressing task is to organize and prepare for the 2nd plenary session as well as to make appropriate arrangements for the legislative and supervisory plans in 2014. By doing so, the work of NPC can surely make another step forward. ■



China's top legislature ends bimonthly session



Zhang Dejiang (L), chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, presides over the closing meeting of the sixth session of the 12th NPC Standing Committee in Beijing on December 28, 2013. Liu Weibing

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) closed its bimonthly session on December 28, 2013, easing the one-child policy and abolishing the *laojiao* system (reeducation through labor).

Lawmakers passed two important resolutions through votes at the session's final meeting.

One resolution allows couples to have two children if either parent is an only child, a key change to the family planning policy.

The resolution, equal to a legal document in China, entrusts provincial congresses and their standing committees to make their own calls on implementation of the new policy.

Another resolution, which takes effect on December 28, 2013, abolishes legal documents on *laojiao*.

The resolution stresses that all legal *laojiao* penalties before the abolition of the system remain valid, but after abolition, those still serving *laojiao* time will be set free. Their remaining terms will not be enforced.

Lawmakers also approved a motion to streamline business administration through changes to seven laws, exempting more items from central government approval: administration of pharmaceuticals, customs procedures, fisheries, marine environment protection, metrology and tobacco monopoly.

The top legislature approved a treaty between China and Kyrgyzstan on exchange of convicted nationals serving jail terms in either country.

It also fixed the date for the next annual session of NPC in Beijing on March 5 in the year of 2014.

Before the closing of the session, chairman and vice chairpersons of the NPC Standing Committee held a meeting to decide what bills to be put to the vote.

Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, delivered a speech at the closing meeting of the six-day bimonthly session of the NPC Standing Committee, saying that with improvements to the rule of law, the historical mission of the reeducation through labor system had been completed.

He said, that family planning, as one of China's fundamental policies, must be adhered to in the long run, adding that it is necessary to adjust the policy based on economic and social development and changes to the population structure.

The legislative session also read a draft amendment to the Administrative Procedure Law.

Zhang said that administrative litigation system relates to public power exertion and the protection of citizen's legitimate rights. Members of the committee agreed that amending the Administrative Procedure Law is necessary to alleviate citizens' difficulties in filing cases in which governments are defendants, allowing courts to hear such cases and implementing the verdicts, he added.

Zhang presided over a lecture on implementation of the decisions of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China after the session closed. (Xinhua) ■

A glorious chapter in political civilization

As a Chinese saying goes, the path one pursues determines his destiny. In order to fulfill the China Dream of national rejuvenation, China has to walk cautiously and solidly on the path of development that well conforms to its own national conditions.

In compliance with the blueprint charted by the 18th CPC National Congress concerning political reform, the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping as General Secretary, adheres to the systems of people's congress and socialist democratic consultation, improves the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics, safeguards social justice and impartiality, and paves a broader way for the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

In the past year, China has witnessed further rise in the public awareness to learn, honor, abide by and practice laws. There have also been more abundant ways for the people to participate in State affairs. The Party is now more determined in promoting the socialist democratic and political development. In addition, only by making the people feel the sense of fairness and impartiality in every legal case and seeking a more scientific and democratic approach in lawmaking, can this country move forward steadily in that direction.



A flag-raising ceremony is held at the Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Zhang Yu

Continuously promoting Chinese-style democracy

Not long ago, a cartoon video titled *How Top Leaders Are Made* has gone viral in the cyber space. Using the headshots of President Xi Jinping, US President Barack Obama and United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron and superimposing them over cartoon bodies, the video explains how the three nations select their top leaders. “Every road leads to presidency. It does not matter how a leaders is selected. As long as it meets the demand and satisfaction of the people, the country and the society, it is considered a right way.” The concluding remarks of the video, as it goes, have left a deep impression on the minds of the netizens.

In the NPC plenary session held in March 2013, for the first time in 60 years, more than 2,900 deputies were elected with the same ratio of population in both urban and rural areas.

Among the incumbent deputies to NPC, the ratio of CPC leading cadres dropped by 6.93 percent, while the ratio of workers and farmers from grassroots increased by 5.18 percent. The optimization of the structure shows a more extensive representation of the deputies. With more deputies coming from grassroots, voices from lower levels are more easily collected and submitted to the top legislative and consulting bodies of the nation.

Respect for differences, inclusiveness and diversity has become key features of NPC and CPPCC annual sessions. The suggestions put forward by the deputies were considered to be sharp but not radical. There has been hot debate in the discussions, yet there is no hostility. Deputies air their views in a truthful and straightforward manner, and consensus are reached amid dialogues and argumentation. Among the

401 proposals submitted in NPC annual session in 2013, 393 are about legislation. Among the 5,641 proposals collected by CPPCC annual session, 5,254 have been registered. Most of these proposals touch upon hotspot social issues including anti-corruption, prevention and control of air pollution, establishment of ecological compensation mechanism and fulfillment of fairness in education.

Here are some vivid examples. Du Guoling, NPC deputy from grassroots, spent three years in getting the word “PM2.5” written into the report of the work of the government. She finally made it in 2013. Jiang Hong, a member of CPPCC, has released the Chinese Fiscal Transparency Report for five consecutive years in an attempt to improve government fiscal budget transparency. By the end of November in 2013, two special inquiries have been conducted by the Standing Committee of the 12th NPC at the Great Hall of the People. One is about the prevention and control of pandemics, and the other focuses on the distribution and use of State funding in science and technology. Special inquiries have now become a regular practice of NPC to oversee the work of the executive branch. Entering 2013, CPPCC has also held two consultative seminars to analyze current macroeconomic situations and make thorough discussions on the topic of architectural industrialization. The delegates spared no efforts to make their recommendations on how to adjust industrial structure, promote reforms and maintain a good momentum of economic growth. The unique democratic consultation system, which started at an early stage ensuing the founding of New China, has sustained in the new century and sparked fresh innovations.

Bearing in mind the spirit of “speaking for and serving the wellbeing of the people”, NPC deputies and CPPCC members participate in the political agenda on an equal basis. The combination of balloting and consultation portraits the advantages of the Chinese-style democracy.

It is important for a country to keep the channel of free expression open to its people. The systems of people’s congress and political consultation have continuously improved to promote the development of the Chinese-style democracy on the basis of which the China Dream is spreading its wings.

Persistently improving the socialist legal system

On October 30, 2013, the 12th NPC Standing Committee released its new 5-year legislative plan. Altogether 47 pieces of legislation will be submitted to the committee for deliberation.

“The new legislative plan tries to integrate reform into lawmaking so as to transform outmoded patterns of economic growth, stick to socialism with Chinese characteristics, improve people’s livelihood, and promote cultural prosperity and ecological civilization,” said Xin Chunying, vice chairperson of Legislative Affairs Commission of NPC Standing Committee.

The timetable of legislation in 2013 is listed as follows:

On April 25, the 2nd Session of NPC Standing Committee passed the Tourism Law. “There was far less forced shopping by the tour guide than it used to be.” During the golden week of National Day vacation, many tourists gave positive comments on this new law.

We still face pressing and daunting tasks as how to increase the scientific and democratic level of legislation.

On June 29, the 3rd Session passed the Special Equipment Safety Law, providing legal bindings for the production and use of daily utilities including liquidized gas cylinders, elevators, zip lines and recreational facilities.

On August 30, the 4th Session revised the Trademark Law in which new articles were added to further streamline trademark registration and examination procedures, broaden the sphere of registration, rectify the protection system of famous trademarks, and make stricter the legal responsibilities of infringement.

On October 25, the 5th Session revised the Law on Protection of Consumer Rights. Thus, the principle of “return goods without giving a reason in 7 days” becomes an amulet for the vast number of online shoppers in China.

“Legislate for whom” is a question of utter importance which concerns the nature, direction and effect of legislation. The socialist legal system has already been established in China. The reason why current Constitution, laws and regulations are embraced by the people is that they reflect on the aspirations and demands of the public. However, we still face pressing and daunting tasks as how to increase the scientific and democratic level of legislation, build solid foundation for law enforcement and protect the fundamental interest of our people.

Since the beginning of 2013, the State Council Legal Affairs Office has successively solicited opinions and suggestions from the general public on the drafting of Licensing Procedures for the Establishment of Pension Institutions, Measures for the Administration of Pension Institutions and Drafted Amendments to a series of laws on education. Public participation has made legislation a process to exchange opinions, balance interest and reach consensus.

People are participating in legislation in a more orderly way. The socialist legal system, as a key instrument of State administration, is now being polished and gaining maturity year after year, which lays a solid foundation for the fulfillment of the China Dream.

Unswervingly pursuing social justice

Recently, cases of Bo Xilai and Yang Dacai etc have sparked a hot wave to pursue justice in the society. Meanwhile, it also serves as a window for the public to observe China's judicial system.

Instant court lives on MicroBlog, independent trial under pressure, full respect for and protection of defending rights... All these brand new practices tell us about China's determination and confidence in building a country with the rule of law.

“In order to achieve the rule of law, we should give full respect to the Constitution. We have to strengthen our ability

to adopt legal thinking and means to reach consensus, regulate market behaviors, mitigate crisis and safeguard social harmony. We shall make our people feel the sense of fairness and justice in every legal case.” General Secretary Xi Jinping described his vision of the rule of law in China as above.

Before the convening of the 3rd Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee, the Supreme People's Court outlined a series of suggestions on serving the people, promoting judicial fairness and credibility. By doing so, a roadmap leading to social justice in China has taken shape.

Judicial organs should resolutely resist all kinds of local and organizational protectionism, get rid of disruptions such as power, money and guanxi, and keep perfecting systems and mechanism of people's courts to exercise jurisdiction independently according to law. Judicial organs should also set up a comprehensive working mechanism to avoid unjust, false and erroneous cases to a maximum level. Modern information technologies and utilities such as internet, MicroBlog and WeChat etc should be applied to expand the influence of judicial openness. With regard to cases and disputes that the people are most concerned with, relevant authorities should respond immediately and try to address the public concern in time. Understanding and respect should be paid to the lawyers' professionalism and prioritized concern. The lawyers' bestowed legal rights to reviewing files, bearing the burden of proof, cross-examination and defending should be fully protected. Their advocacy and opinions should be dealt with and responded in a serious way.

In short, the roadmap conveys inspiring messages to the people that one important goal of reform is to realize social justice which, in turn, will make the fruits of reform benefit every ordinary Chinese.

Thus far, 18 provinces nationwide have promulgated suggestions on the reform of household registration system. 14 provinces have established the urban-rural unified registration system on a pilot basis. A solid foundation is now laid for rural residents to settle down in urban areas.

Moreover, according to the National Working Conference on Politics and Law convened in 2013, reform on the work of handling people's letters and visits is now on the agenda.

Since 2013, the central government has abrogated or decentralized 334 items of administrative examination and approval. The number of registered enterprises has risen by 25 percent as compared with last year in comparable terms. In particular, the number of private enterprises is up by 37 percent. While cutting the red tapes, governments at all levels have, at the same time, strengthened and regulated post-approval monitoring and supervision in order to overcome randomness and construct a unified market environment featured by openness and fair competition. Again, entrepreneurship becomes an upsurge today.

2013 is the first year since China's new leadership steps into power. The international community pays strong attention to and makes positive comments on China's political reform. The key element of the remarkable achievement of Chinese economy in the past three decades, as Martin Davids (CEO of Frontier Consulting Group in South Africa) believes, rests upon a powerful and efficient administrative system which has effectively implemented all rational and pragmatic economic policies and driven the economic growth. ■

Legislative priority shifts from enactment to revision

By Peng Bo

What is Law? Law is social conduct the whole society must abide by, which adjusts and regulates people's rights and obligations. When changes take place in the way of their work and life, revisions must be made to the laws accordingly to maximize the protection of people's legitimate rights and interests.

Legislative quality improved steadily

As China's first comprehensive legislation on tourism, Tourism Law of the People's Republic of China was passed at the second session of the 12th NPC Standing Committee. "It is to protect tourists' legitimate rights and interests", according to Yin Zhongqing, vice chair of NPC Financial and Economic Affairs Committee.

With people's lives getting better, traveling has become their real spiritual needs rather than adventure once for a very few. Disorders of varied forms, however, happened frequently due to lack of legislation, like tourist groups turned into "shopping groups", forced shopping disguised as "zero fare", higher and higher vocational ticket charges. The enactment of Tourism Law provides adequate legal basis to regulate such disorders in tourism market and protect travelers' legitimate rights.

Except for Tourism Law, the revised version of Law on the Protection of Consumers' Rights and Interests, which has been for the first time overhauled in 20 years after it came into effect, provides protection for on-line shopping. The

newly enacted Special Equipment Safety Law covers elevators and large recreational facilities. The modified Trademark Law provides a legal ground for electronic applications. In the year 2013, the laws, newly enacted or revised, are much closer to people's lives and echo to their needs, which should be attributed to the efforts by NPC and its Standing Committee to lift up the quality of legislation.

"Currently the whole society pays a widespread attention to the quality of legislation. People's expectation on legislation has been more focused on whether the laws and regulations could solve real problems effectively and work for the good", Chairman Zhang Dejiang said on the legislative conference of NPC Standing Committee in October, 2013. This is the guideline for NPC and its Standing Committee to promote legislation in a scientific and democratic way and conduct adequate research and debate before new laws or revisions are made, so as to base laws on the national conditions and better respond to economic and social needs.

With the formation of the socialist legal system with the Chinese characteristics, the legislative priority has been shifting from "enacting new laws" to "revising existing laws". NPC is actively expanding ways and opportunities to ensure views fully expressed in the legislative process. In the legislation of Tourism Law and Special Equipment Safety Law, for example, people from all walks of life, such as experts, officials, ordinary citizens, professionals and deputies to the people's congress, were invited to take part in the pre-legislation appraisal process and their views were fully heard.

A picture taken on May 5, 2013 shows an escalator that leads to the underground shopping mall of Gongbei Port in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, which is adjacent to the Macao Special Administrative Zone. CFP



Fenghuang, an ancient town, in western Hunan Province CFP





Presided by Chairman Zhang Dejiang, the 5th Meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee concluded on October 25, 2013 at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. The meeting approved the amendments to Consumer Rights Protection Law and other resolutions. *Sheng Jiapeng*

Judicial interpretations make laws more enforceable

As supplements and refinements to Law, judicial interpretation is one of the ways that ensure correct application of laws. The goal is to turn complex and abstract legal rules into rational and applicable measures.

Food safety concerns people's basic interests and draws widespread attention. The relevant legal provisions seem vague and inadequate to cope with rampant food problems. Criminal Law, for example, prescribes that "production and sales of food below the safety standard, which is severe enough to cause serious accidents of food poisoning or other food-borne illnesses, shall bear criminal responsibilities". In judicial practice, it is difficult to discern what is "severe enough to cause serious accidents of food poisoning". On May 3, 2013, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate jointly issued a judicial interpretation which stipulates that the corresponding provision of Criminal Law applies to cases of pesticide residues, excessive microbial content, processed meat products from unknown sources

Food safety concerns people's basic interests and draws widespread attention.

and baby food in which nutritious elements are serious inadequate. This stipulation is closely linked with accidents concerning gutter oil, poisonous milk powder and sausage that received widespread attention.

On September 9, 2013, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate jointly issued a judicial interpretation which regulates posting messages and delivering remarks online. People had suffered from online rumors. To name a few, the rumor about "maggot oranges" discouraged sales of oranges nationwide, several millions of Shanxi residents ran to the streets to escape the rumored earthquake, and the rumor that an explosion would happen caused several deaths when people were running away. With more and more rumors prove false, people are surprised by

Consumers select electrical appliances at a chain store of Suning Appliance in Zhengzhou, capital of Central China's Henan Province on December 10, 2013. *CFP*



the fact that in some cases spreading rumors even means huge profits. Zhou Lubao, nicknamed as “online warrior”, extorted 860,000 yuan from a real estate developer and local residents by taking advantage of the rivalry between the two and posting false messages online.

To stop rampant spreading of rumors, the judicial authorities didn’t hesitate. According to the judicial interpretation, a person who makes false news to slander others, if the false news is forwarded more than 500 times, will face a prison sentence. Acts like forging false messages that cause severe disorders and deleting online messages for payment will also face criminal charges. Those measures enable the public security bureaus to fight against online rumors more effectively and help people have a clearer understanding of acts of forging and spreading online rumors.

Legislative planning focuses on hotspot issues

On October 30, 2013, the 12th NPC Standing Committee announced the legislative plan for the next 5 years. It covers 68 legislative items, including items that draw wide attention and hot debate, such as the revision of Food Safety Law, Administration Reconsideration Law and Law on the Prevention and Control of Atmospheric Pollution, and the enactment of Law on the Prevention and Control of Soil Pollution and Social Assistance Law.

“The formulation of 5-year legislative plan is conducive to the legislative coordination and unification and reflects the overall requirements of NPC Standing Committee during the new term”, according to Xin Chunying, deputy chair of NPC Legislative Affairs Commission. The NPC Standing Committee has formulated 5-year legislative plans during each term since the 8th NPC.

The legislative plan of the 12th NPC Standing Committee shows the efforts to combine legislation with reform. The plan includes items responding to promoting the upgrade of economic development mode, adhering to the socialist political development road with Chinese characteristics, safeguarding and improving livelihood, promoting development and prosperity of the socialist culture and advancing environmental and ecological protection.

Meanwhile, the legislative planning makes scientific and rational arrangements of the amount and classification of legislative items. The 47 legislative items, such as revising Administrative Litigation Law and Law on the Prevention and Control of Atmospheric Pollution and enacting Social Assistance Law, will be put forward for deliberation by the 12th NPC Standing Committee, since those items have gone through a long-term research or several deliberations. The 21 items, such as the revision of Law on Commercial Banks and the enactment of Electronic Commerce Law and Law on Community Correction, are put into the category that “needs to be taken urgently and will be deliberated when the conditions are met”. The other items are put into the category that needs more research and debate since those items concerns complicated issues and their legislative conditions are not met yet.

All the legislative items demonstrate the rights and obligations in the current economic and social life which need to be adjusted urgently, and their influence on the social life is far reaching. (People’s Daily) ■

Xin Chunying: promote the quality of law making

By Mao Lei and Zhang Yang

On October 30, 2013, the 12th NPC Standing Committee held a legislative conference on the implementation of its 5-year legislative plan. After the Conference, Xin Chunying, vice chairwoman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of NPC Standing Committee, took questions from People’s Daily.

Q: At the legislative conference, Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, made an in-depth analysis of the new legislative tasks and requirements. Can you explain how the legislative plan incorporates those new tasks and requirements?

A: Rule of law is the basic way of governance. The plan includes items responding to promoting the upgrade of economic development mode, upholding the road of the socialist political development with Chinese characteristics, safeguarding and improving people’s livelihood, promoting development and prosperity of the socialist culture and advancing environmental and ecological protection, with the aim to lay a legal basis for economic, social, cultural and ecological development. It takes a comprehensive and balanced approach to legislative needs of all aspects. For legislation on environmental protection, for example, the laws on environmental protection, water pollution, the prevention and control of atmospheric pollution are to be revised and improved. In the principle of statutory taxation, the VAT law and other specialized laws are to be enacted and Law on Tax Collection is to be revised. To promote innovation, Law on Promoting the Transformation of Scientific and Technological Achievements is to be revised.

The Legislative Plan demonstrates the new tasks and requirements. In the context China is deepening reform and opening-up in an all-around way, while making the Plan, we have diligently studied and explored the objectives and tasks for deepening reform and opening-up, attached great importance to innovating the systems and combining reform and legislation so that legislation can play a better role in guiding and promoting reform.

Q: Please introduce the history of NPC legislative plan and its role.

A: It started from the Standing Committee of the 7th NPC. Since the 8th NPC, the Standing Committee in each term would make a 5-year legislative plan to guide the legislative work. The legislative plan would demonstrate the overall requirements for the Standing Committee’s legislation work during its term, promote the formation of the socialist

legal system with Chinese characteristics, and is conducive to the legislative coordination and unification.

Q: During the formulation of the legislative plan, many legislative proposals were put forward, of which only 68 items were incorporated. Can you explain the formulating process?

A: We took a scientific and democratic approach throughout the formulating process. First, we gave full play to the role of deputies. Particularly, we summarized and analyzed the legislative proposals put forward by deputies during the First Plenary Session of the 12th NPC, and combined the work on those proposals with the formulation. Second, we solicited legislative proposals from a wide range of sources. Apart from soliciting suggestions from relevant departments, we also conducted seminars to hear from experts and scholars and collected suggestions on-line. Third, we set a strict and high standard for legislative items. A supportive report was required for each legislative item, which should elaborate the legislation's necessity, feasibility, main content, timing and its relations with relevant laws.

The current legislative plan makes scientific and rational arrangements of the amount and classification of legislative items. There are three categories, with 68 items in the first and second categories. The first category includes 47 legislative items which will be put forward for deliberation by the Standing Committee of the 12th NPC since those items have gone through a long-term research or several deliberations. The second category includes 21 items that need to be taken urgently and will be deliberated when the conditions are met. The third category covers those items that need more research and debate since those items concern complicated issues and their legislative conditions are not met yet.

Those proposals which didn't make significant adjustments or changes to existing laws had not been incorporated into the plan, but we will arrange it accordingly in an annual legislative working plan.

Q: The NPC Standing Committee attaches great importance to the quality of legislation. What is the standard of

legislative quality and what measures will be taken to further lift up legislative quality?

A: To promote the quality of legislation is a lasting subject. It is measured by the following standards: whether laws conform to the reality, national conditions and needs of social and economic development; whether laws are specific enough to be applied; whether laws can meet the need of reform and development and solve practical problems; whether laws are coordinated and unified; whether laws ensure a balance between rights and obligations, empowering the State organs while exercising adequate supervision, and safeguarding a person's legitimate interests while ensuring his obligations are fulfilled. The foundation and power of a law is people's heartfelt support and willingness to follow. If a law can meet the requirements above, it will be considered well-grounded, feasible, applicable and of high quality.

To lift up the quality of legislation, it is vital to take a scientific and democratic approach. Since the 6th Plenum of the 16th CPC Central Committee, the central authority has clearly required for several times that the principle of scientific and democratic legislation should be adhered to. The 18th Congress of CPC has put forward specific requirements for promoting scientific and democratic legislation. NPC and its Standing Committee have made years of active exploration and come to many effective experiences. At this conference, Chairman Zhang Dejiang profoundly elaborated the importance of and the requirements for promoting scientific and democratic legislation, which would be put into force.

Q: What are the measures in place to implement the plan?

A: We must safeguard the authority of the plan, enhance the coordination, planning and unification of legislation. This conference has made an overall layout on the implementation of the plan, with tasks and division of work clarified. All parties concerned are to follow the principle of scientific and democratic legislation, improve working mechanism, enhance communication and coordination, take the initiative to improve legislative quality and ensure all the tasks of the plan to be accomplished. (People's Daily) ■



The picture shows the venue of the working conference on legislation of the NPC Standing Committee. Ma Zengke

Legislation plan of the 12th NPC Standing Committee

Category 1: Items that will be submitted for deliberation within this term (47 pieces)

| No. | Title | To be submitted by/status |
|-----|--|--|
| 1 | Legislation Law (Amendment) | Chairmen's Council of the NPC |
| 2 | Organic Law of the People's Court (Amendment) | Internal and Judicial Affairs Committee of NPC |
| 3 | Organic Law of the People's Procuratorate (Amendment) | Internal and Judicial Affairs Committee of NPC |
| 4 | Trademark Law (Amendment) | Passed |
| 5 | Patent Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 6 | Copyright Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 7 | Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Consumers (Amendment) | Passed |
| 8 | Securities Law (Amendment) | Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of NPC |
| 9 | Administrative Reconsideration Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 10 | Vocational Education Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 11 | Law on Promoting the Transformation of Scientific and Technological Achievements (Amendment) | State Council |
| 12 | Public Libraries Law | State Council |
| 13 | Basic Health Law | State Council |
| 14 | Food Safety Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 15 | Drug Administration Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 16 | Law of the Traditional Chinese Medicine | State Council |
| 17 | Land Management Law (Amendment) | Submitted for deliberation |
| 18 | Environmental Protection Law (Amendment) | Submitted for deliberation |
| 19 | Law on Water Pollution Prevention and Control (Amendment) | State Council |
| 20 | Law on Atmospheric Pollution Prevention and Control (Amendment) | State Council |
| 21 | Law on Soil Pollution Prevention and Control | Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee of NPC |
| 22 | Law on Wild Animal Protection (Amendment) | Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee of NPC |
| 23 | Law on Military Facilities Protection (Amendment) | State Council & Central Military Commission |
| 24 | Civil Air Defense Law (Amendment) | State Council & Central Military Commission |
| 25 | Defense Traffic Law | State Council & Central Military Commission |
| 26 | Budget Law (Amendment) | Submitted for deliberation |
| 27 | Value Added Tax Law | State Council |
| 28 | Law on Administration of Tax Collection (Amendment) | State Council |
| 29 | Food Law | State Council |
| 30 | Seed Law (Amendment) | Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee of NPC |
| 31 | Asset Valuation Law | Submitted for deliberation |
| 32 | Waterway Law | State Council |
| 33 | Telecommunications Law | State Council |
| 34 | Forest Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 35 | Standardization Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 36 | Advertisement Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 37 | Law on Promotion of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (Amendment) | Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of NPC |



| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 38 | Railway Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 39 | Tourism Law | Passed |
| 40 | Red Cross Law (Amendment) | Education, Science, Culture and Public Health Committee of NPC |
| 41 | Social Assistance Law | State Council |
| 42 | Philanthropy Law | Internal and Judicial Affairs Committee of NPC |
| 43 | Production Safety Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 44 | Mine Safety Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 45 | Special Equipment Safety Law | Passed |
| 46 | Amendment of the Criminal Law | Chairmen's Council of NPC |
| 47 | Administrative Procedure Law (Amendment) | Chairmen's Council of NPC |

Category 2: Items that will be submitted for deliberation when the conditions are met (21 pieces)

| No. | Title | To be submitted by/status |
|-----|---|--|
| 1 | Law on National Medal of Honorary Title | Chairmen's Council of NPC |
| 2 | Basic Law on Sea | State Council |
| 3 | Commercial Bank Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 4 | Futures Law | Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of NPC |
| 5 | E-Commerce Law | Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of NPC |
| 6 | Law on Chinese Foreign Equity Joint Ventures, Law on Foreign Capital Enterprises, Law on Chinese Foreign Contractual Joint Ventures (Amendment) | State Council |
| 7 | Officers in Active Service Law (Amendment) | State Council & Central Military Commission |
| 8 | Community Corrections Law | State Council |
| 9 | Detention Law | State Council |
| 10 | Law on Maritime Transportation Security (Amendment) | State Council |
| 11 | Law on Film Industry Promotion | State Council |
| 12 | Law on Cultural Relics Protection (Amendment) | State Council |
| 13 | Nuclear Safety Law | Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee of NPC |
| 14 | Law on Anti-Unfair Competition (Amendment) | State Council |
| 15 | Development Planning Law | State Council |
| 16 | Chinese People's Bank Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 17 | Mineral Resources Law (Amendment) | State Council |
| 18 | Law on Infrastructure and Public Utility Franchise | State Council |
| 19 | Law on Deep Seabed Resource Exploration and Development | Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee of NPC |
| 20 | Anti-Domestic Violence Law | State Council |
| 21 | Law on Criminal Victims Assistance | Chairmen's Council of NPC |

Category 3: Items that require further research and verification

This category includes legislative programs concerning finance and taxation, national economic security, industry associations, social credit, aviation, aerospace, compulsory execution, land borders, organization, international criminal judicial assistance, administrative procedures, cyber security, radio and television transmission security, promotion of cultural industries, protection of public cultural services, rural poverty alleviation and development, pre-school education, etc. (Xinhua) ■

China's *laojiao* system phased out

ABOLISH

Reeducation through labor

On December 28, 2013, the 6th session of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) adopted a resolution to abolish the system of Reeducation through Labor, commonly known as the *laojiao* system. According to the resolution, before the abolition of *laojiao*, the decisions made according to relevant legal documents are still valid. However, after the abrogation, those who are currently subject to labor reeducation will be set free.

On August 1, 1957, the 78th session of the 1st NPC Standing Committee approved "The Decision on the Issue of Reeducation through Labor by the State Council", and established *laojiao* system according to law." On December 23, 2013, Yang Huanning, vice minister of Public Security, made supplementary remarks to the NPC Standing Committee while submitting a proposal to abolish the relevant *laojiao* regulations originally made by the State Council. He added that on November 29, 1979, the 12th session of the 5th NPC Stand-

ing Committee approved "The Supplementary Provisions about Reeducation through Labor by the State Council", thus legally providing the establishment of Laojiao Administrative Committee, the detention period and the supervisory power of the procuratorial organs.

The proposal pointed out that *laojiao* had played a historical role in safeguarding public security, maintaining social stability and educating law-breakers since its implementation more than 50 years ago. Along with the development of socialist democracy, the rule of law, and the improvement of legal system in China, the historical role of *laojiao* has come

CFP

to an end.

Yang said that along with the enforcement of the Law on Public Security Management and Punishment, the Anti-Drug Law, and the amendment of Criminal Law, the role of *laojiao* has been gradually replaced. The application of *laojiao* has been reduced. So it is high time to start the legal procedure to abolish the system.

Concerning the follow-up work, Yang said that after the NPC Standing Committees made the decision to abolish *laojiao*, some related laws, judicial interpretations, rules and regulations should be clarified and reviewed according to the legal procedure. The State Council will urge related departments to properly lift the reeducation period according to law, transform the function of the police force in the reeducating administrative organs, and utilize reeducating facilities for other purposes.

On the morning of December 24, 2013, when group discussions and deliberation were conducted on the above proposal, members of the Standing Committee and special committees of NPC, leading officials from various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities held that the proposal to abolish *laojiao* was made upon the enforcement of *laojiao* system, and the decision to be made based on the conclusion of the historical roles, requirement of the development of the society, economy and the rule of law. Besides, legal adjustments after the abolition of *laojiao* should be arranged properly. They thought that the measures listed in the proposal were both clearly targeted and practical.

The participating members believe that *laojiao* played a very important role in educating and rehabilitating those who had broken laws and jeopardized social security, safeguarding public security, and ensuring social stability since its implementation more than 50 years ago. Alongside the enforcement of the Anti-Drug Law, the Law on Public Security Management and Punishment, and also the amendment of Criminal Law, we could properly punish and educate those



The 6th Meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee concluded at the Great Hall of the People on December 28, 2013. The meeting approved the abolition of the regulations and laws on labor-education system. Liu Weibing

law-breaking activities that were formerly applicable to *laojiao* with existing laws, and the legal procedure is more strict and standardized. As a result, the application of *laojiao* has been reduced gradually. Thus, the abolition of *laojiao* was due at the right time.

On December 28, 2013, the 6th session of the Standing Committee of the 12th NPC voted for a resolution to abolish the legal documents on *laojiao*. The decision came into force right upon its promulgation on December 28, 2013. ■

The timeline of *laojiao*

--In 1957, the 78th session of the Standing Committee of the 1st NPC approved "The Decision on the Issue of Reeducation through Labor" by the State Council, and established *laojiao* system according to law.

--In 1979, approved by the Standing Committee of NPC, the State Council announced "The Supplementary Provisions on Reeducation through Labor", providing that the length of *laojiao* was one to three years.

--In 1982, the Ministry of Public Security announced "The Proposed Regulation of Reeducation through Labor" which had been approved by the State Council.

--In 1986, the Standing Committee of the 6th NPC approved "The Regulations on Administrative Penalties for Public Security", which clarified some situations under which *laojiao* was applied.

--In 1990, the Standing Committee of 7th NPC approved the Anti-Drug Rules, providing that those taking or injecting drugs after compulsory rehabilitation must receive *laojiao*.

--In 1991, the Standing Committee of the 7th NPC approved the Decision on Prohibiting Prostitution, stipulating that those who reengage in prostitution after being arrested for the same reason must receive *laojiao*.

--In January, 2013, the National Working Conference on Politics and Laws decided that efforts would be made to accelerate the reform of the *laojiao* system, and the application of *laojiao* would be ended in 2013.

--On November 12, 2013, the 3rd Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee approved the decision to abolish *laojiao* system.

-- On December 28, 2013, the 6th session of the Standing Committee of the 12th NPC passed a resolution to abolish *laojiao* system. (NPC)

China's family planning policy adjusted



China has decided to relax its decades-long family planning policy. According to amended policy, couples with one spouse from a one-child family are allowed to have a second child. CFP

After years of expectation, the *dandu'erhai* policy (i.e. couples can have two children if either parent is the only child), was unveiled. On the 6th plenary session of the Standing Committee of the 12th National Peoples' Congress (NPC), members of the Standing Committee reviewed the proposal submitted by the State Council and made the decision to adjust family planning policy (hereinafter referred to as the Decision), allowing families to have two children if either parent is the only child. The Decision stipulated that people's congresses and its standing committees of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities shall promptly revise relevant local regulations or make relevant adjustment according to the Population and Family Planning Law, the Decision and the local actual conditions.

Since its implementation in the 1970s, China's family planning policy has undergone constant amendments and revisions. "Every revision made was closely based on the development of China's national condition. This latest revision is no exception," said Cai Fang, member of NPC Standing Committee and director of the Institute of Population and Labor Economics under Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

As a demographic expert, Cai told NPC journalists frankly that China's family planning policy was designed to ease the pressure caused by then rapidly growing population. Different policies should be adopted when the situation changes. In his eyes, China's birth rate has been falling continuously, far below the birth replacement level of 2.1 for at least 20 years. Population pressure faced by China now is less related to population size but more to its structure, i.e., aging population, labor shortage, etc. As a result, adjusting family planning policy in due course will ensure China's long-term development as well as meeting people's needs to have more children.

This adjustment will pave the way for the introduction of the two-child policy, meaning all families to be allowed for two children. "Adjusting and improving family planning policy is a long process. This is only the first step and there is no end to such move," told Cai.

The reform should be carried out step by step. During his interview with NPC magazine, Ding Wei, director-general of population, health-care and sports office under NPC Education, Science, Culture and Public Health Committee noted that the two-child policy should be carried out step by step. Once the Decision becomes effective, relevant government agencies should strengthen research and intensify data testing and assessment, so as to lay the foundation for the introduction of the two-child policy in the next phase and appropriately adjust and improve the family planning policy.

The Decision stipulates that China's family planning policy remains a fundamental state policy, as the policy is moving towards an important step ahead. "For the long time to come, the fact that China has a large population will not change." When reviewing and discussing the bill, many NPC deputies deemed that the contradictions between the population and environment would exist in the long run. The latest adjustment doesn't imply that family planning policy will be abandoned. The decision and the State policy of family planning should be implemented concurrently to promote a long-term balanced population in accordance with the Constitution and the Population and Family Planning Law.



Under the guidance of a teacher, some kids blow bubbles at Yangfushan Park in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province on April 26, 2012. A spring outing has brought great joy to the kids. CFP

While the labor force is shrinking, China's aging population growth accelerates in an unprecedented rate.

Adjustment landed just in time

Since 2010, it appeared that it is more difficult and expensive for many businesses to employ workers as labor costs are surging. An experienced HR manager, Liu Qian told NPC journalists that applicants tended to be very picky even when given a pay raise. She said nowadays, it has become very hard for businesses to keep their employees by paying a salary of 3000 yuan after tax per month in Beijing. In contrast, 3 or 4 years ago the average monthly pay was between 2000 to 2500 yuan.

Insufficient labor force and high labor cost reflected the fact that China is losing its demographic dividend. "China's working age population between 15 and 59 reached the peak

in 2011 and after that it started to decline in recent 2 years. In the meantime, the support ratio began to grow, implying a turning point of demographic dividend." Many interviewees noted that China's working age population between 15 and 59 reached a record of 940 million in 2011 and in 2012 the number fell by 3.45 million. If labor population continues to decrease, it is evident that China's economic and social development will be hampered.

Ou Guangyuan, vice chairman of NPC Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee used to supervise family planning in Guangdong Province. He said impressively that the issue of demographic dividend decline has become even more serious. Since the reform and opening-up, extraordinary accomplishments have been achieved in Guangdong and demographic dividend is one of the driving factors. However, nowadays this advantage is weakening and labor shortage appears to be a realistic issue.

While the labor force is shrinking, China's aging population growth accelerates in an unprecedented rate. "In fact, China's aging population growth starts to accelerate just from now. In the next 20 years, the growth will be particularly fast with a negative growth of China's working age population and approaching of population size peak," some members of



Nurses take care of a newborn baby at Ganyu County People's Hospital in Jiangsu Province on October 1, 2013. CFP

the NPC Standing Committee worried that by 2013, people over 60 will exceed 200 million with an annual growth of more than 8 million during the 12th Five-Year Plan period, which means China will be among the countries that have the fastest growing aging population.

On one hand, China is facing an imbalanced population structure and increased pressure by aging society. On the other, billions of families are waiting anxiously for the government to adjust family planning policy, which allows them to have more children. During every year's "two sessions", proposals on the family planning policy submitted by deputies to NPC and CPPCC have constantly been a focus. "People from all walks of life are very concerned with the new policy and looking forward to its implementation". When interviewed, NPC deputy Fu Chunli suggested that it be necessary to adjust and improve China's family planning policy by implementing the decision according to law, which complies with the new trend of population and economic development of China, rules of population growth as well as the people's expectations.

Blaze trails to improve population policy

A set of figures released by the National Health and Family Planning Commission of China has confirmed the sever-

If total fertility rate remains less than 2.1 for a long time, China's population would suffer from absolute decrease and population structure issue will become even more serious.

ity of current status of China's population. According to the statistics of the 6th census and annual population change, the National Health and Family Planning Commission calculates that China's total fertility rate is about 1.5 between 2010 and 2012. Considering family planning research in national population, population planning evaluation, enrollment in elementary school, vaccination and UN statistics, the rate is 1.6 during that time. In this sense, China's total fertility rate should be in the range of 1.5 and 1.6, 0.1 to 0.2 less than in 2000. "It is suggested that every woman can only give birth to around 1.5 children on the average during her entire life, while the normal level should be around 2.1," said Cai Fang. He noted that if total fertility rate remains less than 2.1 for a

long time, China's population would suffer from absolute decrease and population structure issue will become even more serious.

Can the new adjustment help resolve the above problems effectively? "It is predicted that in the following years after the adjustment, the newly-born population will increase at a reasonable speed and the total population will be less than 1.38 billions by 2015." Some interviewees said. In spite of a growing population, China's population policy needs further adjustment and improvement. "The changes here finally come after repeated calls for adjusting the family planning policy. China implemented *shuangdu'erhai* (i.e. both parent are the only child of their family are allowed for two children) many years ago. And now the family planning policy has been adjusted, which is a very significant step," said Cai.

In his view, the latest adjustment cannot solve problems of aging population and labor shortage completely. Preparations should be made for the two-child policy as early as possible, which can accumulate experience and facilitate the integration of family planning policies of urban and rural areas, different regions and ethnic groups. After all, the reform is a gradual process.

During the review, some NPC deputies were strongly supportive of the gradual phase-in of the two-child policy. NPC deputy Ren Maodong suggested the State Council endeavor to improve population quality and maintain a balanced long-term development of the population in China by strengthening research, analyzing demographic data scientifically and accumulating experience for the two-child policy.

Adhere to the basic State policy of family planning

Many interviewees considered that although great changes in population situation have taken place since the beginning of the 21st century, China's huge population remains a serious issue, which hampers economic and social development. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that in 2012, the total population of China was 1,354,040,000 with 16.35 million new borns and 9.66 million deaths. The birth rate, death rate and natural grow rate were 12.10 ‰, 7.15 ‰ and 4.95 ‰ respectively.

"The figures show that China has a huge population, but a weak economic foundation with resource shortage and high environment pressure. These remain its basic national conditions and it will be the case in a very long time," said Lu Hao, chairman of NPC Environment Protection and Resources Conservation Commit-

During the review, some NPC deputies were strongly supportive of the gradual phase-in of the two-child policy.

tee. He noted that under this circumstance, the family planning is still our basic State Policy, which we need to adhere to in the long run. Jiang Fan, vice chairman of NPC Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee also agreed that a huge population would be one of basic national conditions of China and it would not change over an extended period of time.

In this context, NPC deputies insisted that China should implement *dandu'erhai* policy according to law and concurrently adhere to the basic State policy of family planning. "Negative phenomenon observed in China usually include so called 'where there are policies from above, there are counter-measures from below'. Therefore we need to ensure the basic work of family planning such as strengthening census registration management, and preventing this kind of loopholes in law enforcement," said deputy Li Yi.

Deputy Huang Boyun commented that China's family planning agency has taken many measures in the past in accordance with the basic State policy of family planning and has achieved some progress. "Nevertheless, the manner in which the policy has been implemented is sometimes overdone. For instance, in rural areas, houses of families with more children than allowed are sometimes torn down. When it comes to implementing family planning policy now, we should not copy the wrong practice. In the meantime we should avoid the loophole in the process of law enforcement." (NPC) ■



A picture taken on January 26, 2013 shows a mother and a newborn baby in Qingdao, Shandong Province. CFP

Five questions on combating corruption



Anti-corruption efforts have been shown during an ongoing campaign that features the establishment of inspection system at central and provincial levels by the CPC Central Committee. Xu Jun

In less than a year since the new leadership took office, 11 senior officials at or above minister level have been removed from their positions, almost one per month, making people believe in what General Secretary Xi Jinping said “bring all corrupted officials to justice, be they big shots or small potatoes”. Xi promised on one hand to resolutely investigate and punish leading officials who violated disciplines or laws, and effectively solve problems concerning unhealthy atmosphere and corruption on the other. The anti-corruption campaign has swept across China at an unprecedented pace.

While drawing high attention from all walks of life and winning applause from people, the Supreme People's Procuratorate submitted a report to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) on combating corruption and bribery on October 22, 2013, the first time in 24 years. How long will the campaign on fighting tigers and bashing flies last? Are people encouraged to tip off corruption cases in the Internet? How to regulate naked officials? These are the questions people are looking for answers but also the highlights of deliberation for the members of NPC Standing Committee.

Question 1: People have suspicions over whether combating corruption is only about “bashing flies”, not “fighting tigers”. Do procuratorial organs have the courage to withstand the pressure and advance the campaign?

Cao Jianming, procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate: In recent five years, 32 officials at or above minister level have been brought under investigation by procuratorial organs. In the future, priority will be given to handling corruption cases that occurred in State organs and involved leading officials. We will seriously handle cases in important areas and crucial sectors and punish those working in State organs who seek or receive bribery or derelict their duties. At present, there are still some procuratorial organs and personnel who shy away



Cao Jianming

from their duties and lack courage to overcome difficulties.

Li Yalan, deputy to the NPC: The major problem of anti-corruption nowadays is that procuratorial organs dare not to dig into tough cases and report truth to discipline inspection organs. I suggest that, as for the cases entrusted by the discipline inspection organs, the approval of arrest be issued by the procuratorate at the next higher level. In this way, we can avoid disruption and pressure from the local government, and cases will be handled in a

fair and just way. Procuratorial organs should let power operate in the sunlight while not treat people unfairly or commit crimes.

Media observation: The Communiqué of the 3rd Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee comprehensively described the judicial reform. In specific, efforts should be made to ensure judicial organs are in the position to exercise adjudicative and procuratorial powers independently. Mechanisms should be further improved to ensure the smooth operation of judicial



Li Yalan

power. Some analysts point out that the authority of judicial power should be upheld by the Party and the government. Some powerful officials attempt to violate the laws once they feel their freedom is somewhat restricted by law when seeking personal gains. In order to limit power and prevent people in power from derailing the legal track, we must rely on a good system. Only when a good judicial framework is in place are we able to ensure that socialist judicial system is justified, highly efficient and authoritative.

Question 2: Soon after the 5th Session of the Standing Committee of the 12th NPC reviewed the Report on Anti-corruption and Bribery, it is estimated that nearly a hundred public officials are investigated every day on cases related to corruption. This has drawn wide attention from netizens. So what measures should be adopted to limit the power of public officials?

Cao Jianming: 13,368 public servants at or above county level have been brought under investigation by procuratorial organs. Among them, 1,029 are officials at bureau level. 79,955 cases took place in areas such as social security, public health, education and scientific research, poverty alleviation and disaster relief, as well as environment protection. In the future, efforts will be intensified to investigate and punish public servants involved in bribery and dereliction of duty.

Wang Shengming, member of the NPC Standing Committee: Taking a look at the major cases nowadays, you will easily find the names of many departmental chiefs. There are also frequent occurrences of group misconduct. This is closely related to China's current administrative approval system, official appointment system, financial and taxation system as well as the jurisdiction of government authorities and their leading officials. I suggest that departments including procuratorial organs formulate detailed regulations on both punishment and prevention while laying emphasis on preventing corruption. Loopholes should be avoided from every aspect and through every channel, so as to combat corruption from the root through institutional arrangement and create an environment in which no one has the chance to be corruptive or dare to corrupt.



Wang Shengming

Media observation: For local officials who have been removed from their positions, many have similar nick names. For example, Li Chuncheng is called "City Breaker Li", Ni Fake is called "Destroyer mayor", and Ji Jianye is called "Digger Ji". Corruption has spread from the sector of public transportation to urban construction, demolition, personnel appointment, and particularly real estate since 2008.

Jiang Ming'an, professor of the Law School of Beijing University: The central authority should further restrict the operation of public power, especially the power of personnel appointment, project management and financial expenditure. The rule of law on administrative procedures matters hugely as it is one of the root causes to corruption. Therefore, legislation must be launched as early as possible on the internal administrative procedures and regulations in a bid to provide a legal deterrent to the exercise of public power. Once the legislation is in place, the big bosses will be required to make decisions in a more open and transparent way, ensure a wider participation from both the public and the counterparts through hearings, seminars and even balloting. In this way, misbehaviors such as power renting and abuse by the departmental chiefs will be avoided.



Jiang Ming'an

Question 3: A typical example of bureaucracy is that “People have difficulty in getting administrative approval or support from public organs due to bad attitude and low efficiency of the staff”. Although the people feel awful, they have no choice but bribe in order to get things done. How to bash these “Flies”?

Cao Jianming: Since the beginning of this year, the Supreme People’s Procuratorate has launched special campaigns against crimes of abuse-of-power which affected people’s everyday life and harmed their interest, thus giving a strong push to the resolution of hot and tough problems around the general public.

Rita Fan Hsu Lai-tai, member of the NPC Standing Committee: Many people tend to give small bribes in order to get things done more quickly. Not long ago, according to a media report, a person working far away from his hometown had to apply for a birth certificate in his original place of residence. In order to obtain such a certificate, he went back to his hometown several times. However, each time, the local staff required different materials. In the end, he bribed the staff with 1,000 yuan and got the certificate immediately. This kind of deal is a common practice in



Rita Fan Hsu Lai-tai

China and has been accepted by people. But people ignored the fact that such behavior is corruption. Therefore, relevant institutions must be established to prevent corruption. The Supreme People’s Procuratorate should call on local procuratorates to inspect the cru-

cial departments of government so as to avoid loopholes of the current system. They should give instructions to these departments and urge them to implement in the way as required before follow-up inspections and revaluation is made in a certain period of time. Some people may wonder why we should mess up with such a trivial thing. But from the aspect of people, once their matters are handled quickly and easily by government organs without additional cost, they will gradually get used to such style and refrain from bribery in the future. This will help to improve the general atmosphere of the society, and corruption will vanish in the end. One should do things for people’s vital interest even they are small matters, because these small ones will become great cause in the long run. This is the only proper way to win people’s support. I suggest the Supreme People’s Procuratorate make more efforts in preventing corruption.

Question 4: The word “naked official” appeared as early as 2008. For officials removed from their posts in the past five years, the ratio of “naked officials” has become larger and larger. People call them “live in the Cao camp but with one’s heart in the Han camp”. How to resolve this problem?

Cao Jianming: For more than five years, procuratorial organs closely worked with public security and customs organs to improve the mechanism of criminal chasing and have intensified such efforts in and outside China. As a result, 6,694 criminal suspects on the run who were involved in corruption and bribery have been arrested. The Supreme People’s Procuratorate worked with 14 departments and established a collaborative law enforcement mechanism based on real-name express search. A national on-line search network has been established with information regarding organizational codes and flight passenger. Meanwhile, exchange and cooperation among anti-corruption departments of various countries and regions have been strengthened to im-



Chen Jianguo

prove the mechanism of offshore judicial cooperation and criminal chasing.

Chen Jianguo, member of the NPC Standing Committee: Nowadays, spouses and children of some officials

make huge money in China, while they consume and settle down outside China. People are extremely critical about this. The country should strengthen oversight and regulation, stop such misbehaviors, and avoid this loophole by legal and institutional means. In particular, China should enhance supervision on officials and public servants in this regard. It is reported that Russia has promulgated relevant laws prohibiting officials to possess assets abroad. If their assets are large, they should no longer hold official posts. This is a good example for us to learn.

Jiang Ming’an: In recent years, the phenomenon of “naked official” has drawn more and more attention across the country. China has traced and arrested more than 6,000 absconding cor-

rupt officials. This is deterrence on corruption and bribery. In order to prevent “naked official”, the most important measure is to improve openness and transparency. Once the Party and people know who “naked official” is, they will pay more attention to his or her move. Currently, although the property reporting system for leading officials and their family members has been implemented for many years, and it works to some extent, yet facts show that reporting alone without reviewing and disclosure

makes no sense at all. Maybe, it is still not time to do so at the current stage. For instance, the real-name system has not yet been introduced in people’s bank deposit and real estate registration process. Therefore, it is difficult to verify the actual property owned by the official. However, the difficulties cannot serve as an excuse for our reluctance in moving forward.

Media observation: This July, Canada and China reached an Agree-

ment on Confiscation, Sharing and Returning Illicit Money and Goods. For the first quarter of this year alone, Chinese procuratorial organs carried out investigation on nearly 3700 corruption related cases involving 87.5 million US dollars in total. China’s anti-corruption campaign has made important breakthrough in some key areas. For instance, in Bo Xilai and Zhang Shuguang cases, huge amount of assets abroad have been exposed to the public and recovered.

Question 5: The online tip-off has put Liu Tienan, a vice minister level official, under investigation. This made people feel the power and importance of internet. Do Chinese procuratorial organs support such mass-based anti-corruption means?

Cao Jianming: The Supreme People’s Procuratorate and 1,161 local people’s procuratorates have set up an online tip-off platform. A comprehensive report system has been established with the functions of receiving letters, visits, phone calls and online tip-offs. They also investigate into corruption cases reported by the media and public opinion online. Efforts have been made to guide online tip-off to operate within legal framework. In addition, they handle real-name based online tip-off first and give reply in a timely fashion. Meanwhile, a clarification system against false tip-off is established. For those proved to be false and brought serious impact to alleged wrongdoer, clarification measures are taken to eradicate the impact. In the future, efforts will be made to improve the working system such as further open tip-off channels, enhance real-name based reply and protection of reporters as well as rewarding. They will strengthen the management and supervision on tip-off clues, intensify research and judgment on online tip-off and public opinion on corruption, so that public tip-offs will be handled in a justified and efficient way.

Guo Fenglian, member of the NPC Standing Committee: Although the people are aware of some corruption behaviors and targets, they dare not speak out. How to encourage people to blow the whistle on corruption so that there is no room for corrupt officials to hide? Relevant departments should



Guo Fenglian



Zhou Shuzhen

create a good environment for people to carry out supervision without fear.

Zhou Shuzhen, professor of the Information Relations Institute of Ren-

min University: Prior to online anti-corruption move, the level of public participation against corruption was low. At that time, the reporting channels were not smooth. Through the information technology, people’s enthusiasm for anti-corruption turns stronger. Once the channel for people to report problems becomes smoother, they tend to be more passionate. Meanwhile, we should also take notice that online anti-corruption is sometimes misleading. Departments concerned should guide and regulate such practice.

Media Observation: On September 2, 2013, the website of the Ministry of Supervision under the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection was formally launched. On the same evening, national news reported on the study tour to the website by Wang Qishan, member of the standing committee of CPC political bureau as well as chief of the central commission for discipline inspection. When interviewed by the media, Luo Changping, a famous online tip-off activist, said that soon after he exposed the case of Liu Tienan, former chief of national energy commission, through microblog, Wang Qishan was informed. Although Wang himself does not have time to log into microblog, he has a special task force that is engaged in collecting information on corruption. The information will be reported not only to Wang but other leaders as well. (NPC) ■



More than 150,000 corruption cases handled within 5 years

By Zhang Yang and Mao Lei

On October 22, the 2nd session of the 12th NPC Standing Committee heard the report on the work of anti-corruption in China delivered by Cao Jianming, procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

According to his report, from January 2008 till August 2013, 151,350 corruption-related cases have been investigated by people's procuratorates at various levels, involving 198,781 people. Among them, 167,514 were subject to public prosecution. Through such move, 37.7 billion yuan pecuniary loss was redeemed.

Cases of 1,029 officials at bureau level and 32 above minister level filed and investigated

For cases investigated by people's procuratorates since 2008, 48,671 cases were tipped off by the public, accounting for 32.1 percent. 53,532 cases were discovered by people's procuratorates, accounting for 35.4 percent. 14,354 cases were transferred from discipline inspection organs, accounting for 9.5 percent, and 34,793 cases were transferred by other judicial organs or derived from self-confession, accounting for 23 percent of the total.

13,368 public servants at or above county level have been brought under investigation by procuratorial organs. Among them, 1,029 officials were at bureau level, while 32 officials were above minister level. 4,834 cases were related to bribery over 1 million yuan or embezzlement of more than 10 million yuan.

In addition, 65,629 public servants were investigated for abusing power to seek or receive bribes. 23,246 were suspects of offering bribes to public servants. The number of criminals receiving or offering bribes from 2008 to 2012 increased by 19.5 percent and 60.4 percent respectively compared with the previous five years.

Cao stated in his report that procu-

ratorial organs nationwide are highly concerned of corruption and bribery cases as they have severely affected people's life and triggered strong public resentment. They filed and investigated into 79,955 corruption cases in areas such as social security, public health, education and scientific research, poverty alleviation and disaster relief as well as environment protection, etc.

178,185 pieces of suggestions provided to relevant departments where corruption cases occur

Procuratorial organs nationwide made intensive efforts to prevent corruption from the root. Since 2008, they have provided 178,185 pieces of suggestions on prevention to departments where corruption cases took place.

Cao stated in his report that in recent years, procuratorial organs across the country carried out special prevention measures on 37,904 major projects such as post-disaster reconstruction, South-to-North Water Diversion, etc. Efforts were also made to improve archives query system on bribery. An annual reporting system has been universally set up to punish and prevent duty crimes.

Confronted with new situation and features of crime related to corruption and bribery, procuratorial organs fur-



A narrator from the anti-corruption education center in the city of Wuyishan, East China's Fujian Province briefs spectators major corruption cases on July 5, 2013. Zhang Guojun

ther improved working mechanisms on case reporting, coordination and cooperation as well as multi-sector joint investigation. Meanwhile, they enhanced self-supervision so as to enforce laws and regulations in a justified and civilized manner. As a result, in 2012, the rate of prosecution and guilty verdict of corruption and bribery cases increased by 4.6 percent and 0.23 percent respectively, while the rate of withdrawing and non-prosecution reduced by 1.8 percent and 4.6 percent respectively.

Procuratorial organs insist on giving top priority to the building of a clean anti-corruption task force. Since 2008, 214 anti-corruption police staff members have been brought to justice for violation of laws and disciplines, and 12 of them were put under criminal charges.

An integrated reporting system set up to handle letters, visits, phone calls and Internet tip-offs

Cao mentioned in his report that the unified tip-off hotline 12309 is now

open to the public by procuratorial organs nationwide, and the Supreme People's Procuratorate and 1,161 local procuratorial organs have also established on-line reporting platforms to handle incoming letters, visits, phone calls and Internet tip-offs.

The report pointed out that there still exist some problems and weaknesses in the current anti-corruption work.

Intensified efforts are needed in handling cases. It is by no means uncommon that some procuratorial organs and prosecutors shy away from major cases. In some places, there is a lack of procuratorial personnel to handle cases that take place in great number.

The working mechanism needs to be further improved. The mechanism to manage case clues and integrate resources of investigation is yet to be improved. Coordination and cooperation between some local procuratorial organs and other relevant government departments by no means are smooth and regular. We should rely more on the people in fighting against corruption.

Capacity building of the task force needs to be strengthened. Some prosecutors do not have the right outlook of law enforcement, and their professional quality is left far behind from what is actually needed. Moreover, there is also a lack of talented investigators specialized in economy, science and technology, etc.

Standardized law enforcement needs to be reinforced. In some places, the legitimate rights and interests of parties concerned are seriously violated by prosecutors. Some prosecutors even abuse their power to seek personal gains.

In a bid to address these problems in the future, Cao Jianming vowed that the Chinese procuratorial organs will continuously impose heavy pressure on crimes related to corruption and bribery. More attention will be paid to the prevention of corruption cases, and greater efforts will be made in capacity building and creating favorable environment for law enforcement. And by doing so, China will surely make a step forward in anti-corruption campaign. (People's Daily) ■

China's poverty-relief efforts contribute to the world



Two pupils of Lisu ethnic feed Siberian black-headed gulls in Kunming, Yunnan Province days before the 2014 Spring Festival. Around 100 villagers and primary students from poverty-stricken Chadian township in Wuding county, Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province were invited to visit the capital city for the first time under the arrangement of anti-poverty personnel. *Chen Haining*

“It is the nature of socialism to eradicate poverty, improve people’s livelihood, and achieve common prosperity”, said Chairman Zhang Dejiang at the conclusion of the 6th Session of the 12th NPC Standing Committee.

Liu Yongfu, minister of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, said in his report of the work on rural poverty alleviation and development during the meeting, “poverty alleviation and development is an important component of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Since reform and opening-up, under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, China’s efforts in poverty alleviation and development have made remarkable achievements with worldwide attention, creating a new poverty-relief approach with Chinese characteristics.”

The goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects by 2020 was introduced at the 18th CPC National Congress. “There won’t be all-round prosperity without prosperous rural areas, neither will there be an overall well-off

society without the poor being well-off.” Therefore, the Outline for Development-Oriented Poverty Reduction for China’s Rural Areas (2011-2020) was issued in 2011, with the aim to provide adequate food and clothing for poverty-stricken people while ensuring their access to compulsory education, basic medical services and housing by 2020, to keep the growth of per capita net income of impoverished rural residents above national average, and to ensure the major index of basic public service in poverty-hit areas close to national average, so as to narrow the widening development gap between urban and rural areas. The Outline has also set goals from 12 aspects including farmland and water conservancy, industries with local advantages, drinking water safety, transportation, education, healthcare, etc.

What about the implementation of the Outline? What are the problems of rural poverty alleviation and development? According to its supervision plan 2013, the 12th NPC Standing Committee was to conduct deliberation and inquiry on rural poverty alleviation and development of the State Council. To

this end, NPC Standing Committee carried out field studies from August to November 2013, during which Vice-Chairmen Ji Bingxuan and Zhang Baowen headed two working groups respectively to visit Anhui, Fujian and Hunan provinces. Vice-Chairpersons of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee Ou Guangyuan, Chen Guangguo, Wang Guosheng, Jiang Fan, Liu Zhenwei and Member of the Committee Zhang Zuoha, Zhang Xiaoshan, Chen Daheng conducted field studies in Gansu, Chongqing, Liaoning, Sichuan, Jiangxi, and Shaanxi. Reports of those field studies were submitted to the 6th session of 12th NPC Standing Committee for deliberation.

The rural poor dropped by 67 million within two years

The Outline for Development-Oriented Poverty Reduction for China's Rural Areas (2011-2020) is the second Ten-Year Plan of its kind. In 2011, the Outline set the per capita annual net income of 2,300 yuan as the new rural poverty threshold, 92 percent higher than the original 1,274 yuan standard. According to the new standard, there are 130 million people are living under the poverty line.

China's rural poverty alleviation and development has achieved desirable results since the implementation of the Outline.

"Rural poverty alleviation and development has brought tangible benefits to the people." "No country in the world attaches such great importance to poverty relief as China does, which demonstrates the nature of Socialism." said members and deputies attending the 6th Session of the 12th NPC Standing Committee.

Numbers speak for themselves. Liu Yongfu said that central government allocated 227.2 billion yuan into the poverty relief fund in 2011, up 40.4 percent, 299.6 billion yuan in 2012, up 31.9 percent on year-on-year basis. Local fiscal input continued to rise too. In 2012, poverty relief fund of 28 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities reached 16.45 billion yuan, an increase of 62.4 percent than that of the previous year.

Wu Yongchun, deputy to the NPC, mayor of Sanjiang Autonomous County of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region said that increasing attention were paid to the development of poverty-hit areas and ethnic minority regions in recent years. "Poverty alleviation efforts are further strengthened. Take Sanjiang County for example, poverty-relief fund increased from 28 million yuan in 2011 to 46.86 million yuan this year."

Located at the junction of Guangxi, Guizhou and Hunan, Sanjiang County has residents of Dong, Zhuang, Miao and Yao ethnic minorities. It has one of the major poverty-relief project involving 43 impoverished villages and 173,782 people, which makes up 47.6 percent of the county's agricultural population. "Poverty alleviation has made great contribution to the well-off of the impoverished areas and ethnic minority region", said Wu.

Thanks to the poverty-relief policy, Sanjiang County has seen great improvement in infrastructure, industrial development and residents' income. Liu Yongfu said that access to highway, electricity and telephone of the 592 poverty-relief counties reached 92.8 percent, 98.8 percent and 93.2 percent respectively in 2012, 4.7 percent, 0.8 percent, 0.3 percent higher than 2010 level.

There is also marked development in compulsory education, basic medical services and housing in poverty-hit areas. According to statistics, school enrollment of children between 7 and 15 years old is 97 percent, youth illiteracy and semi-illiteracy is 8.9 percent, 1.4 percent lower than 2010; 98 percent farmers are covered by the new rural cooperative medical care system; per capita living space of rural households is 27.8 square metres, 2.9 square metres more than 2010 in those counties, said Liu.

Liu added, "China's rural poor dropped by 67 million

China's rural poverty alleviation and development has achieved desirable results.



Waitresses from a farmer's hotel in Yejia village in Jingyuan county, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region welcome tourists on June 10, 2012. Jointly approved by the China National Tourism Administration and State Council Poverty Alleviation and Development Office, Liupanshan established a pilot anti-poverty zone through the development of tourism. Peng Zhaozhi



Farmers from Jiujian dian village in Xuan'en county, Hubei Province harvest white pomelos on November 27, 2013. Started from 2001, local departments of finance, forestation, agriculture and anti-poverty have assisted farmers to plant pomelos in order to increase their income. Statistics indicate that a total of 4,000 hectares are estimated to bring 250 million yuan income to local farmers. Tan Ling



A joint meeting is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on the sideline of the ongoing 6th Meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee on December 27, 2013. The meeting heard the work reports on the progress of anti-poverty efforts made by the State Council. *Liu Weibing*

from 2010 to 2012 and rural poverty rate decreased from 17.2 percent to 10.2 percent. Per capita net income of rural residents in major poverty-relief counties increased from 3,273 yuan to 4,602 yuan, a rise of 18.6 percent higher than national average.”

“China’s poverty alleviation and development has transformed from providing basic life need to a new stage focused on achieving prosperity, improving ecological system, tap development potential and narrow wealth gap,” Wu said.

The central task of poverty-relief shifts from traditional infrastructure projects to industrial development and technological training. Sanjiang County will make full use of the poverty-relief fund to participate in the pilot project of developing industries with local advantages, so as to advance the development of tea, oil-tea and bamboo industry as well as scaled livestock farming.

An all-dimensional and multi-level poverty-relief pattern taken shape

“To focus on destitute areas and build an overall poverty-relief pattern”, the Outline designates 14 destitute areas as the main poverty-relief areas, requiring more support to old revolutionary bases, regions of ethnic minority and border areas. Liu Yongfu said, “In the principle of ‘regional development and poverty alleviation providing driving forces for each other’, the State Council has approved development and poverty-relief plan of 11 areas.”

According to the Outline, the main tasks of poverty-relief at the new stage are relocation of impoverished residents, making overall plan of village development, providing jobs, supporting industrial development, rejuvenating old revolutionary bases, launching pilot projects, etc. Liu said that poverty alleviation programs of 15,000 villages have been launched, including relocation of 2.12 million rural residents of destitute areas.

Wu Yongchun told journalist, “By making use of poverty alleviation projects, targets were met by stages with the focus on industrial development and training”. Considering its local conditions, Sanjiang County created a new poverty-relief method of combining poverty alleviation with agricultural,

industrial and urban development. It was a path with local characteristics.

Sanjiang County, said Wu, took development of tea, oil-tea and bamboo industry as the major method of poverty alleviation. 142,000 mus of land of tea trees with an annual output of 8,000 tons of tea worth of over 600 million yuan; 617,500 mus of land of oil-tea trees with an annual output of 13,000 tons of tea seeds worth of over 75 million yuan; bamboo trees 160,800 mus worth of 29 million yuan. “Residents’ per capita net income brought about by tea planting reached over 2,382 yuan, accounting for half of the total annual net income of the county, 51 percent higher than before.”

Government-led poverty alleviation always receives active social participation. China’s poverty alleviation and development is featured with designated and cooperative poverty-relief between the East and the West. Till now, there are 310 designated poverty-relief agencies involving 592 major counties. Eastern provinces are stepping up financial support to their western counterparts. According to statistics, fund of designated poverty-relief has risen from 1.5 billion yuan to 1.9 billion yuan while fund raised indirectly hit to 9 billion from 5 billion. Fund involved by cooperative poverty-relief between the East and the West has reached 1.98 billion yuan. As Liu put it, “People from democratic parties, military forces, All-China Women’s Federation, public organizations, private sectors are also taking active part in poverty-relief campaign.”

“Cooperation among different agencies and public participation are effective ways to carry out poverty alleviation,” said Wu. Poverty-relief efforts are faced with arduous tasks of far-reaching effects on people’s livelihood. In Sanjiang County, different agencies at regional, municipal and county level are designated to make full use of their functions in finding projects and raising fund for impoverished villages each year.

In China, a three-dimensional pattern combining special programs, industrial sectors and civil society is now taking shape. Many members of NPC Standing Committee believe this pattern displays Chinese characteristics. “China’s way of poverty alleviation is an all-directional and multi-level one,” said Member Zheng Gongcheng. The extensive participation of all social circles and various financial, industrial, technological and project assistance are rarely seen in other countries in the world.

“By mobilizing different parties, China’s poverty alleviation has found efficient ways to solve poverty issues of the country. It suits China’s national conditions,” said Zheng.

Building an overall well-off society challenges ahead in rural areas, especially poverty-hit areas

NPC supervision aims at finding problems while providing solutions. Great achievements are made in rural poverty alleviation, however, problems exist, pointed out by NPC deputies from various constituencies.

“Because of historical, environmental and social reasons, in accordance to the 2,300 yuan standard, there are still 98.99 million people living under poverty line in China and the net income of the rural poor is only 58 percent of national average.” Report of Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee showed.

Through field study, Members find that in poverty-relief

More thoughts should be given to ways of providing flexible and favorable policies to those areas for an overall development.

counties the labor force illiteracy rate is 3.6 percent higher than national average. 8.3 percent of rural families are still living in houses built with bamboo and soil. 3.8 million residents in 3,917 villages have no access to electricity. Almost 100,000 villages are in lack of transportation facilities. 38.62 million rural resident and 6.01 million teachers and students face drinking water safety issues.

“Located at remote area, Sanjiang County is confronted with harsh natural, ecological and living environment. A great number of residents are living in remote mountain areas in lack of medical and educational opportunities but frequently hit by natural disasters,” said Wu Yongchun. Due to harsh natural conditions and fragile ecological environment, there lies great difficulty in carrying out poverty alleviation measures. Residents of impoverished areas can easily fall back into poverty due to disaster or sickness.

There are also problems of unsustainability. “Some local governments put GDP before poverty-relief, large projects before livelihood projects, urban development before building of new socialist countryside,” said Member Mu Dongsheng.

“At present, poverty displays conspicuous regional features. More thoughts should be given to ways of providing flexible and favorable policies to those areas for an overall development,”

Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee report suggests.

“The problem of survival has already been solved in many poverty-stricken areas. Once the need for food and clothing is satisfied, people begin to care more about other rights. We can no longer meet their demand merely by money. The increasing need for equality in enjoying public services and other social rights is a new challenge in our poverty alleviation work. We need to adopt a long-term perspective in tackling this problem,” said Zheng.

Zheng also said that at the new stage, government should play a bigger role in poverty-relief while public poverty alleviation efforts are facing new challenges because of the reform of local government, government agencies and State-owned enterprises. At the same time, he suggested that public poverty alleviation should be further strengthened while social resources increasing.

During deliberation, Members analyzed difficulties facing rural poverty-relief and brought forward many constructive suggestions. They are more confident in fulfilling the goals of rural poverty alleviation and development as well as building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way. “I believe it is a new beginning for the NPC Standing Committee, and I hope the undertaking of poverty-relief can be further accelerated,” said Zheng.

Member Long Chaoyun from Guizhou said, “Deliberation of the NPC Standing Committee on the report of rural poverty alleviation and development will greatly promote future poverty-relief and encourage people of poverty-hit areas. We need to work with people all over the country to speed up development, transformation and reform, in a bid to build a moderately prosperous society.” (NPC) ■



Zhang Zheng (R), a vice-director of Liuzhou Agricultural Technology Promotion Center in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, teaches tea farmers of Dong ethnic knowhow of tea planting on September 24, 2013. The city has established service stations in Sanjiang, Rongshui and Rong'an counties to spread agricultural knowledge and help alleviate poverty. Li Bin

35 years on the road to poverty alleviation

Reform dividends paid off and impoverished population reduced (1978-1985)

There were 250 million people under extreme poverty line in China's rural areas and the impoverishment rate was as high as 30 percent in 1978 according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

Thanks to the reform of rural production system, the agricultural production efficiency in many places made remarkable improvement and people's income and consumption increased noticeably. As a result, the number of poor people in the rural areas was reduced by a wide margin. The data shows that poor population dropped from 250 million in 1978 to 125 million in 1985 and 17.86 million on average per year. Within 7 years, the number of poor population was cut by half. The impoverishment rate dropped to 14.8 percent.

It was an extraordinary progress achieved in poverty elimination.

It is worth mentioning that starting from 1982, China allocated 200 million yuan every year to support a 10-year-long poverty alleviation and development campaign targeting at three poverty-stricken areas namely Dingxi in Gansu province, Hexi and Xihai in Ningxia province, which opened the prelude to relieve poverty in the targeted areas. Those three areas suffered terrible draught, serious ecological damage and severe shortage of food and clothing. In 1992, the campaign was extended into another 10 years with a remarkable result. A study showed that the targeted areas basically solved the problems of food and clothing in 1999.

Special organization set up and large-scale poverty alleviation pushed forward (1986-1993)

Some people living in the eastern coastal areas and cities got rich thanks to the rapid economic growth. However, in the interior and western part of China, former revolutionary bases, the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, remote countryside and poverty-stricken areas, the economic development was left far behind and the people there led very poor life, some of them even did not have enough food and clothing.

In order to promote balanced development, the 4th plenary session of the 6th National People's Congress

made it an important agenda of the 7th Five-Year Plan for National Economic Development (1986-1990) in 1986 getting poverty-stricken areas out of backward economic and cultural conditions as soon as possible.

China started the work of large-scale development-oriented poverty alleviation in 1986. One apparent feature was that the government established an institution to lead the campaign. In May 1986, the State Council Leading Group for the Economic Development in Poverty-stricken Areas was formed, assuming the responsibilities of organizing, leading, coordinating, supervising and examining the work of boosting economic development in poor areas. The institution changed its name to the State Council Leading Group of Poverty Alleviation and Development in December 1993 and set up its office to handle the day-to-day work. Hence the Office of State Council Leading Group of Poverty Alleviation and Development, followed by poverty alleviation and development offices being formed throughout China.

With the promotion made by those poverty-alleviation institutions, China identified 331 poor counties as the major target of assistance. The first criteria for national-level poor county were drafted in 1986, which provided that counties with per capita annual net income lower than 150 yuan and the ethnic minority autonomous counties with per capita annual net income lower than 200 yuan could be marked as National-level Poor County and that the former revolutionary base counties making important contributions to China's democratic revolution could be put into the list of National-level Poor County if its per capita annual net income was lower than 300 yuan.

The government focused on poverty alleviation and development in key counties and achieved remarkable progress. The number of the poor people in rural areas dropped to 80 million in 1993 from 125 million 8 years before, 6.4 million people got out of poverty every year and the impoverishment rate dropped from 14.8 percent to 8.72 percent. The farmer's per capita annual net income grew from 208 yuan in 1985 to 483.7 yuan in 1993 in the key poor counties.

Seven-year priority poverty alleviation program implemented and food and clothing problems solved (1994-2000)

Thanks to the arduous and unrelenting efforts, China's poor population declined tremendously. But those

who were yet to be out of poverty mainly live in the alpine region of middle and western parts of China or in mountainous villages, featured with bad natural conditions, inconvenient transportation, weak infrastructure. The poverty alleviation task there was more complicated and difficult.

Against that backdrop, the Chinese government released the famous guiding document for poverty alleviation and development: Seven-Year Priority Poverty Alleviation Program. The Program proposed to make every effort and mobilize all resources to solve the food and clothing problem for 80 million poor people in rural areas in about 7 years by the end of 2000. It was the first guiding document with clear-cut goals, targets, measures and timetables for poverty alleviation and development since 1949.

Meanwhile, the Chinese government readjusted the criteria for National-level Poor County. The new criteria said that all counties with per capital annual net income lower than 400 yuan in 1992 would be incorporated into the list of National-level Poor County supported by the state as priorities. All National-level poor counties with per capita annual net income higher than 700 yuan in 1992 should be taken out of the list and would not be given financial support by the state. China marked 592 key poor counties at this stage.

In order to realize the objectives of poverty alleviation, China released in September 1996 The CPC Central Committee, the State Council Decision on Solving the Problems of Food and Clothing for Poverty-Stricken People in Rural Areas as Soon as Possible. In February 1998, the State Council convened a meeting on poverty alleviation and development, clarifying that the poor rural families were the main targets of the poverty alleviation work. In June 1999, the meeting for poverty alleviation and development issued The Decision on Further Strengthening the Work of Poverty Alleviation and Development.

Encouraged and helped by the central government, 8 million people solved the problem of food and clothing every year from 1997 to 1999. By the end of 2000, the number of the poor people who did not have adequate food and clothing declined to about 30 million in rural areas and the impoverishment rate dropped to about 3 percent. Objectively speaking, the goals of Seven-Year Priority Poverty Alleviation Program were basically realized. The work of poverty alleviation and development made great achievements.

Rural poverty alleviation concentrated and production and living conditions improved (2001-2010)

The problem of food and clothing in rural areas was solved primarily since the targets of Seven-Year Priority Poverty Alleviation Program were met on time. However, the development gap between the urban and rural areas

was widening into the 21 century. People under the poverty line were still there in rural areas, about 30 million people facing the food and clothing problem making up 3 percent of the total rural population, more than 60 million people with very low income. 90 million people in total were the new targets.

For that purpose, the CPC Central Committee held a meeting on poverty alleviation and development in May 2001, and released the Outline for Poverty Reduction and Development of China's Rural Areas (2001-2010) to solve the problem of food and clothing for the poor rural people, improve their production and living conditions and advance the work of building a well-off society in an all-round way.

In the past decade, the Chinese government incorporated the development-oriented poverty reduction into its overall plan for national economic and social development, made poverty reduction a priority in public finance budget, and poor areas key recipients of public finance support, continuously increased support to poor areas and earnestly enhanced ability in the implementation of poverty-reduction policies.

The State gradually raised the national poverty line for rural residents from 865 yuan in 2000 to 1,274 yuan in 2010. Based on this change, the poverty-stricken rural population decreased from 94.22 million at the end of 2000 to 26.88 million at the end of 2010. The problems of subsistence, food and clothing for rural residents have been basically solved, the production and living conditions of the poor have been markedly improved, infrastructure in poor areas has continuously improved, the level of social development has been enhanced, and ecological degradation has been initially contained.

Public services ensured and a well-off society being built (2011-2020)

At the new historical stage, China issued the Outline for Development-oriented Poverty Reduction for China's Rural Areas (2011-2020) in December 2011 in order to promote the development of poor areas and attain the goal of completing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020.

The new 10-year outline for development-oriented poverty reduction points out that by 2020, the poor people will have adequate food and clothing and they will enjoy compulsory education, basic medical care and housing. Meanwhile, China raised the poverty line to per capita net income of farmer to 2,300 yuan, 92 percent higher than the old one. Under the new poverty line, there are more than 160 million people.

This is a new round of poverty alleviation. Through hard work from 2010 to 2012, the rural poor population was reduced by about 67 million, and the economic strength in poverty-stricken areas has been built up.

Qiangba Puncog, a State leader from the snowy plateau

By Xia Lina



NPC Vice-Chairman Qiangba Puncog (2nd R) visits Yaoren National Forest Protection Zone in Sandu Shui Autonomous County in Guizhou Province. Yang Jin

Back to August, 2010 when he was the chairman of the Standing Committee of Tibet People's Congress, Qiangba Puncog sat with me in a two-hour interview, wearing dark blue suit, blue oblique stripe tie and light brown glasses on his high nose. Being tall and thin with clear facial outline, he was a man of charisma. He spoke fluent mandarin with gentle tone and unadorned words. Being learned, pragmatic, and calm, he impressed me a lot.

Not long ago when I interviewed him again he had been elected vice chairman of NPC Standing Committee. We met in his office in the Great Hall of the People.

He shared with me his experience many years ago. It was in the year 1981 he came to Beijing CPC Central Party School on a training program. Carrying two rope-tied bags on the back, a Tibetan young man, born a serf, came all the way to the capital city. He was 34 years old then. The door of memory opened slowly. "At that time, my teacher felt unbelievable about how I looked like, but I explained that it was quite common in Tibet, two bags on my back hunting for a job."

The willow tree in hometown

Changdu, Tibet was Qiangba Puncog's hometown. He was born in an ordinary family growing vegetable for livelihood. "Sufferings were all about my early days. The elder people used to say in those days serfs and slaves had nothing but the sun, the moon and the air." Changdu was liberated by PLA in 1950. That was an important turning point in the history of Changdu and Tibet as well. Qiangba Puncog's fate was ever changed.

"People of my age live in good times. When five-star red flag waved over Changdu I was three years old." His memory was trickling. "There was a big willow tree in my hometown with five households around it. The PLA came, serfs emancipated and the five families' life changed completely. Their children mostly were sent out, later became officials of different levels, two of minister-level, three mayor-level, and several others county-level. The willow tree breezed good fengshui as people joked about it. At the bottom of my heart, the tree is the Communist Party. Without PLA liberating Changdu, without

peaceful liberation and democratic reform, without the caring and support of the CPC Central Committee, State Council and people of all ethnic groups across the country, we, the Tibetan people would not have come today thus far. I was born in 1947, the year of pig. I don't remember the very day I was born, in August or September perhaps. However, the day I became a CPC member I will never forget. That was May 6. I joined the Party as a university student. The Party gave me a second life. Since then, my birthday is May 6."

In March, 1959, in order to maintain the theocratic feudal serfdom system, the local government in Tibet and the reactionary clique, as supported by imperialism, torn up the Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet ("17-Article Agreement" for short), blatantly started armed rebellion aiming at splitting the country. On March 28, then Premier Zhou Enlai signed the Decree of the State Council, declaring the dissolution of the local government of Tibet whose power was later exercised by the preparatory commission. This day became the watershed, with old Tibet under serfdom on one side and new Tibet with people being their own masters on the other side.

Qiangba Puncog said emotionally, "I was blessed with a good time. Enrolled in Tibet's first primary school set up by our Party, I had a mixed class, Han students making up one third. The teachings were bilingual, Tibetan language and Putonghua, we spoke both in school. Teachers of our school were very good, some of whom were relatives of Han officials coming to work in Tibet, and some used to be university tutors. I felt so lucky."

In 1970, Qiangba Puncog started working in an agricultural machinery factory in Changdu. Two years later, he was recommended to study in Chongqing University. Then step by step, from technician in the very beginning, to workshop director, factory head, deputy bureau director, county-level Party Secretary, Lhasa Party Secretary, Governor of Tibet Autonomous Region, Chairman of the Standing Committee of Tibet People's Congress, and now Vice-Chairman of NPC Standing Committee. "It is impossible for me to achieve the progress from a grassroots official to the current position without the care of the Party, the support of people, and the help of my colleagues and friends. It is a good era that officials from ethnic minorities are given opportunities to play their roles. I am always thankful for what I've got and looking forward to doing more to fulfill my mission, better serve the Party and the people."

Note-taking as a habit

Talking about the changes after he took the position of Vice-Chairman of NPC Standing Committee, Qiangba Puncog said that there were more foreign affairs activities. For example, in July, 2013, as the special envoy of President Xi Jinping, he attended the inauguration ceremony of Mongolia President Tsakhia Elbegdorj; in September, 2013, he met with Lambrinidis, the special representative for EU human rights affairs, exchanging views on human rights issues and China-EU relations; in October, 2013, invited by Latin American Parliament, he led an NPC delegation to attend the 29th annual conference of Latin American Parliament in Panama. Apart from that, he also met many delegations of foreign parliaments in Beijing. "When I finished routine work and arranged activities, I am always in my office, reading official documents, newspapers and

reference materials."

He loves reading and his special interest is in traditional culture. "I like social science and read a lot of books and articles about the reform and development of the country. Now we are in the critical phase of reform, I have to learn more to keep abreast the present times. Sometimes I read about history and literature, but spend more time on books and readings on democracy and rule of law now as a legislator." He showed me many notebooks and said "I take note when I attend meetings, do readings on documents and magazines. Taking notes has become my habit."

NPC a warm family

Talking about his work as a legislator, Qiangba Puncog said: "The Third Plenum of 18th CPC Central Committee has set new and even higher targets. As rule of law advances, the

"The Party gave me a second life. Since then, my birthday is May 6," said Qiangba Puncog.



NPC Vice-Chairman Qiangba Puncog (C) visits villagers of Lapien village in Yaoshan township, Guizhou Province. Yang Jin

public raises expectations for what we can do. Currently, we are confronted with arduous legislative tasks. The framework of socialist legal system is already there, but a lot needs to be done. The economic development and deepening reform require improving the legal system, making new laws while amending current ones. In terms of supervision, people have higher expectation on NPC. The media, however, has been playing a role in exposing problems and pushing for solutions. NPC should strengthen its work in this regard to meet the expectation of the public."

The country develops quickly, in this context, the ethnic minority areas would have been left far behind without the support of the central government.

He added: “The current NPC Standing Committee exercises its power less than one year. My feeling is that we bear in mind a stronger sense of duty and have done it better than before on legislation or supervision. When the NPC Standing Committee is in session, members and invited deputies are happy to share what they think, and the time for panel deliberation is much longer than before. What one speaks is of good preparation, straight into the subject, and not avoiding problems. The Group Party meeting and NPC Chair meetings are also held in a democratic way, with the opinion of every attendee taken into consideration. Chairman Zhang Dejiang, a man of rich experience as the leader, is clear aware of what NPC needs to do to represent the will of the Party and the people. As members of the highest organ of State power, we have to, first of all, study the Party documents, understanding what the Party expects and what the people are looking forward to. We come from all parts of the country, from all walks of life, being involved in different professions. We engage in efficient coordination and consultation, treat each other well. The staff members of NPC are qualified, dedicated and familiar with their own areas. Their research and analysis beforehand made deliberations easier and smoother. We have done a lot, and we still have a lot to do.”

Ethnic affairs as an ongoing undertaking

Qiangba Puncog is a man of good memory, speaking quite a lot of numbers at one time. As refer to the economic development of ethnic minorities regions, he felt a strong sense of urgency. “As required by the supervision plan of NPC Standing Committee in 2013, we sent a research group to see how the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy has been implemented, particularly some new situations and new problems, for example, how to further improve the regional ethnic autonomy system, how to build a moderately prosperous society in ethnic minority areas, how to push forward the urbanization in those areas, how to protect the legitimate rights and interests of ethnic minority people, and how to better implement related rules, regulations and measures. I led the research group to Guangxi and Guizhou where we saw unique ethnic features, high development speed and beautiful natural landscapes. Although they were not as wealthy as the urban people, they didn't feel less happy. On the one hand, their ethnic tradition and culture attracts more and more tourists. The local government has taken measures like capital support and transfer-payment to strengthen the local economy, improve the infrastructure and maintain the ecological environment. On the other hand, there are still many problems in front of them. My opinion is that we have clearly stated that we will build a comprehensively well-off society by 2020. For different parts

of the country, they have different starting point, different base and different condition, but they share the same target. At the end of 2013, NPC Standing Committee held a special inquiry on rural poverty alleviation and development. The responsible office under the State Council submitted a report in which we could see that poverty was still an outstanding issue, especially in Tibet, Xinjiang, Guizhou, Qinghai and Gansu where poverty covered over 20 percent of the region. Among 10.19 million poor people in Guizhou, more than 60 percent were of ethnic minorities. In Guizhou, 36 out of 50 poor counties and 719 out of 934 poor townships were in ethnic minority areas. In Guangxi, there were 7.55 million poor people by the end of 2012, accounting for 18 percent of rural registered population. So many poor areas, so many poor people, such a serious issue. The government has attached great importance to it and a lot of work has been done. There are many aspects contributing to the occurring of the problem. The country develops quickly, in this context, the ethnic minority areas would have been left far behind without the support of the central government. I am of ethnic minority background, so I understand well that the ethnic minorities should try to achieve the balance between dependence and independence in terms of economic development, stimulating our vitality and moving forward. In all, a lot of work remains to be done.”

Reaching out to the people

Qiangba Puncog used to be the Chairman of Standing Committee of Tibet People's Congress for three years. “The People's Congress is the organ of State power. Each deputy is its member, thus the main body. Therefore, I always hold that we should let deputies play their roles as possible as they can. They can be a strong driving force for legislation and supervision. Tibet has a small population with 34,000 deputies of various levels. For other provinces with large population, they may have deputies of various levels as many as over 100,000, altogether, there are more than two million deputies of different levels in the whole country. If each deputy can play the role of representing people and communicating with people, then we can do a lot of things. When I was working in Tibet People's Congress, I set a rule that the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen should go back to their constituencies, telling what they have done to the voters who elect them to the position, and asking them what they are looking forward to. Chairman Zhang Dejiang also advocates that the deputies should fully play their roles, and the Chairman and Vice-Chairpersons of NPC Standing Committee frequently contact several grassroots deputies, listening to what the public thinks and expects us to do. Now each member of NPC Standing Committee is also required to do so.”

For NPC, it is unprecedented that its Chairpersons directly contact grassroots deputies. “When I was working in Tibet, I once talked with two deputies, one was a village Party Secretary in Changdu, the other was a Tibetan engaged in medical care in Naqu. Both of them lived in remote areas under difficult conditions for a long time, representing the will of the grassroots. I also keep contact with another 4 deputies who are comparatively well-educated, not all of them are CPC Party members. They are of different ethnic groups and work in different areas. I believe this kind of communication will bring the NPC and the deputies closer, and also the deputies and the public closer.” ■



Headed by Vice-Chairwoman of NPC Standing Committee Shen Yueyue (C), an NPC inspection team visit Yingli New Energy Company in Baoding, Hebei Province on July 26, 2013. The team conducted special investigations in Shijiazhuang, Xingtai and Baoding in Hebei Province.

Courtesy of NPC Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee

Let people's voice heard

“Urbanization should be people-oriented, providing comfortable life for people and integrating urban and rural areas.” “Culture-poverty alleviation is in urgent need in remote and poor areas, and competent local authorities should stop being involved in blind competition.” “Since the vast majority of elder people prefer home care, we suggest that the government formulate and improve related policies and plans.”During the first session of the 12th National People's Congress, deputies submitted 7,569 proposals on what the public cares about and is eager for.

Deputies submit proposals after soliciting public opinions, and push the government, the court and the procuratorate to

address those issues. It is not only one of the effective ways for deputies to exercise the power of administrating the State and social affairs, but also one significant part of people's congress system.

Coming to the end of the first year of 12th NPC, how are those proposals handled? What progress has been achieved? According to the information given by the General Office of NPC Standing Committee, at present all proposals have been handled and the deputies have got the responses. In terms of the effect, most of the problems reflected in the proposals have been resolved or put on the agenda. A great majority of the deputies are satisfied with how their proposals are being handled.

Always bear people's livelihood in mind

Since elected as deputy in 2003, Lü Zhongmei quite cherished her 11-year experience of being a deputy to the NPC. She speaks for environment protection from the beginning to the end.

Lü has submitted propositions for five times about revision of the Environment Protection Law, and put forward many proposals regarding different aspects of environment protection, for example, heavy metal pollution, rural waste treatment, environment court, environment-protection-related litigation and judicial affairs, etc.

All these propositions and proposals are attached great importance to by the NPC. In 2012, the revision process of the Environment Protection Law started. In June, 2013, when Lü attended the Standing Committee session deliberating the second version of draft amendment, she noticed that a considerable part of her propositions and proposals had been incorporated.

Being Dean of Hubei University of Economics, Lü has been involved in environment protection for over three decades. "Every time when I start writing proposition and proposal, I have done a lot of theoretical and practical research." She admitted that not all research about environment pollution went on smoothly, sometimes blocked by the responsible enterprises and even the local government. However, she is still committed to truthfully reflecting what people think and expect for, integrating grassroots situation with her professional study and being an accountable and reliable deputy.

In fact, there are a lot more deputies who have similar experience with Lü. Also being deputy for many years, Song Xinfang believes that proposals should be from the people and for the people, targeting at addressing concerns of the public as required by the economic and social development.

The proposals covered a wide range of areas, including air pollution prevention and treatment, housing, social assistance, medical care reform, poverty alleviation, privacy protection, and so on. According to the General Office of NPC Standing Committee, the proposals in 2012 focused on the major policies of the Party and the State, and issues related to livelihood, particularly, environment protection, balance between urban and rural development, medical care, education, and food and drug safety.

During the interviews, many deputies agree that a proposal is informative and constructive only when the voice of the public is heard, the actual problem reflected, and general development plan bore in mind. It is also deputies' responsibility to track the processing of the proposals, communicate with the competent department and try to solve the problem as soon as possible.

Innovate the way of proposal-handling

Deputy Sun Jing is vice-chairperson of Standing Committee of Liaocheng People's Congress, Shandong Province, also deputy dean of Liaocheng Vocational and Technical College. Given the hot-debate issue of unfair enrollment distribution among provinces given by universities and colleges directly under the central ministries, Sun did a lot of research, together with her experience, put up a proposal on education



Headed by vice chairman Gu Shengzu (1st L), an NPC Financial and Economic Affairs Committee inspection team conduct an investigation of urbanization in Huangshi, Hubei Province on March 29, 2013. The committee slates to push forward urbanization through on-the-spot inspection and listening to the work report of the State Council.

Courtesy of NPC Financial and Economic Affairs Committee

A proposal is informative and constructive only when the voice of the public is heard.

fairness. The proposal was transferred to responsible departments by the General Office of NPC Standing Committee without delay. As coordinating partner, Ministry of Education sent staff to Liaocheng and had a patient and in-depth discussion with Sun. "They took my proposal seriously, and respected what I've done as a deputy."

Through recent years, communication between the respective departments in charge of the proposal handling and the deputy who put up the proposal has been more common and effective.

As a deputy, Lü said that she got response for all propositions and proposals she raised, and was more participative in the handling process. "I am inspired indeed."

Talking about revision of the Environment Protection Law, Lü said that she was invited by the NPC Law Committee and other competent departments for many times to join the research. "I cannot remember how many times I attended seminars about the law revision in 2012, and 2013 as well, I've been invited twice to attend the NPC Standing Committee meetings."

In 2013, the departments in charge of proposal handling paid increasing attention to communication. Some innovative ways impressed Sun Jing very much.

"In the past, it was the major responsible party which replied to the deputies and the co-handling department didn't do so. In 2013, as the co-handling party, the Ministry of Finance contacted me and informed the progress. What's more, we could ask for confirmation once we had any question about the reply." That never happened before, said Sun. This is not the only case. When the deputies got the response from Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quar-



Headed by vice chairman Ou Guangyuan, an NPC Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee inspection team talk with local farmers from Mapo township, Yuzhong county in Gansu Province on August 13, 2013. The committee organized NPC deputies and State Council officials to conduct poverty alleviation tours to Gansu in August. *Guan Chongyong*

antine, they also got the questionnaire about whether they were satisfied with the response and why not. Sun shared her feeling with us that during recent years, the proposals of deputies are given increasing attention, and the reply is not only about final written document, but also the consultation and communication with respective deputies.

Handling proposals is about the process rather than the status, that is to say, repeated communication makes the outcome more constructive and feasible. Officials from the General Office of Supreme People's Court who have been involved with proposal handling for many years said that if the deputy says "no" to the reply, then the responsible department should pay special attention. All related parties shared the common goal of solving the problem and should work hand in hand to achieve it.

The deputies are entitled to know, to participate, to express and to supervise, thus to play their due role. It is one of the major ways to demonstrate the superiority of socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics, and a specific measure to combining CPC leadership, the people, and rule of law. Recalling the progress in handling proposals in 2013, Lü said what impressed her most was that the strong departments have changed the way of thinking and upgraded their working style.

Effect speaks

How well the proposals are handled is one of the key points to judge how well the deputies fulfill their duties. Thanks to the urging and supervision of competent departments, a series of key issues, difficult issues and hot issues have been resolved.

In recent years, the sky is shrouded by haze in many parts of the country and people feel scared about it. Air pollution prevention and treatment has become an issue of hot debate when NPC was in session in 2013. After the session, 23 proposals about this topic were transferred to 11 competent departments including the Ministry of Environment Protec-

tion to address the problem while the NPC Environment Protection Committee supervised what they have done. In July, 2013, the NPC Environment Protection Committee sent a research group headed by Shen Yueyue, vice-chairwoman of NPC Standing Committee to Shijiazhuang, Xingtai, and Baoding in Hebei province. The group discussed with the local people's congress, the government, the enterprises and the public, and sent the final report with a lot of firsthand grassroots information to the Ministry of Environment Protection for working out the resolution.

The Ministry of Environment Protection took the suggestions of deputies seriously and formulated feasible and practicable policies about air pollution prevention and treatment, focusing on three major areas. The first one was PM_{2.5} prevention and control; the second one was drinking water safety and underground water system protection; the third one was rural ecological environment and soil conservation.

Urbanization is an inevitable choice for China to realize modernization, carrying about the dreams shared by the Chinese people, especially the peasants who are looking forward to becoming urban dwellers. During the session in 2013, deputies put forward a large number of suggestions on major economic and social issues, and expressed their ideas about top-level design. In April, 2013, as the supervising body of this proposal, NPC Financial and Economic Affairs Committee sent a research group to more than 10 provinces and cities, including Hubei, Guangdong, Shandong and Zhejiang. NDRC, as the major responsible department, also did a lot of field work, collected numerous suggestions from all walks of life, further combed the State New Type Urbanization Plan (2013-2020), making the policies more operational and feasible.

"Currently, the society is lack of credit system. The integrated social assets supervision system and credit system haven't been established yet. That's why we failed to prevent and combat some behaviors like hiding and transferring assets." In 2013, NPC deputy Liang Mingyuan submitted a proposal on the above-mentioned problem which bothered the Supreme People's Court in their daily work.

Taking full consideration of the suggestions of the deputy and the outcome of the research, the Supreme People's Court announced several provisions on the list of dishonest persons subject to enforcement in July, 2013, and opened the platform for publishing and inquiring relative information on October 24. By November 4, 1,045 qualified persons fulfilled their duty due to the possible tough punishment.

According to the General Office of NPC Standing Committee, all the proposals raised by deputies have been handled. The competent departments carried out arrangement of the CPC Central Committee on comprehensively deepening reform as required by the mass line campaign, accepted what the deputies suggested and the effect proved to be satisfactory. The situation of how the proposals, criticisms and suggestions were handled had been reported to the NPC Standing Committee session in December, 2013.

The Spring Festival is around the corner, but some deputies are currently doing research as organized by standing committee of local People's Congress. We must spare no effort to listen to what the public think about and appeal for, collecting firsthand information which is helpful for us to submit propositions and proposals to the 2nd annual session of NPC, said Sun Jing. (NPC) ■



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