

NPC



ISSUE 3 • 2014

《中国人大》对外版

National People's Congress of China



SIXTY YEARS ON THE MARCH

ISSN 1674-3008



9 771674 300147

On August 31 at its bi-monthly session, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress took a decision that September 30 every year is designated Martyrs' Day, a national day to commemorate martyrs.

The decision says Martyrs' Day will be marked with events across the country.

The move is aimed at "publicizing martyrs' achievements and spirits, and cultivating patriotism, collectivism, and socialist moralities so as to consolidate the Chinese nation's cohesiveness," the top legislature said in the decision.



Chinese President Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders pay respects to the Monument to the People's Heroes in Tian'anmen Square, Beijing, September 30. Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli offered flower baskets at the monument on the first Martyrs' Day on September 30. Huang Jingwen

Gao Kangyu (C), an 89-year-old veteran, tells the story of Guayun mountain battle to the local students on September 29. Song Wei



People rally to honor and remember the deceased national heroes at the Monument to the People's Heroes in Tian'anmen Square, Beijing, September 30, on the occasion of the first Martyrs' Day. *Liu Jiansheng*



On September 29, students from Zhuoheli Elementary School in Handan, Hebei Province come to a local cemetery to pay tribute to revolutionary martyrs. The picture shows a group of students are visiting the memorial hall of General Zuo Quan. *Hao Qunying*



PLA soldiers present flowers to the martyrs buried in the Niutuoze cemetery in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province on September 30. *Fan Minda*



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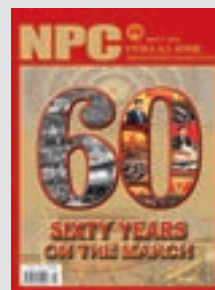
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ISSN 1674-3008

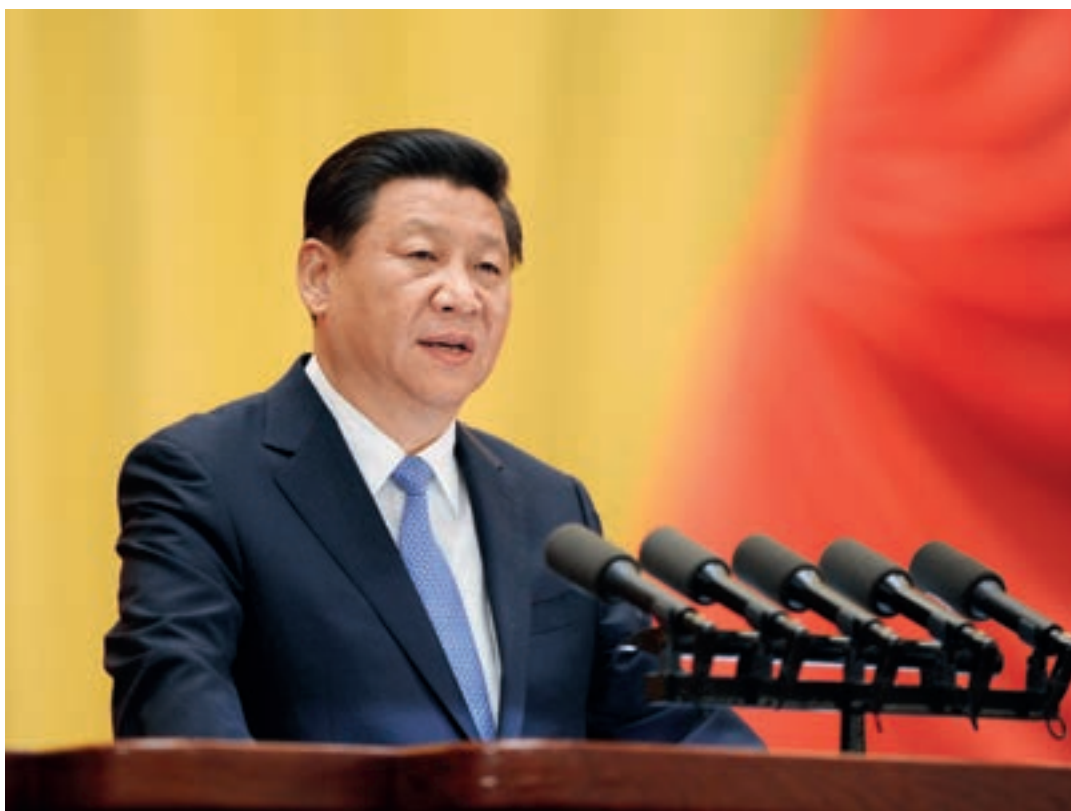
CN 11-5683/D

Price: RMB35

Edited by The People's Congresses Journal
Published by The People's Congresses Journal

Printed by Beijing Guo Cai Printing Co., Ltd. in China

Adherence to China's political path



President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, delivers a speech during a conference celebrating the 60th anniversary of the National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing, capital of China, September 5.

Xie Huanchi

President Xi Jinping on September 5 said China must promote socialist democracy through the improvement of the system of people's congresses, as the National People's Congress (NPC), the top legislature, celebrates its 60th anniversary.

While hailing the system of people's congresses as China's fundamental political system, Xi said "In new situations, we should hold high the banner of people's democracy, while adhering to and improving the system of people's congresses as required by the times."

"We should keep to the socialist path of political development with Chinese characteristics and continue to promote socialist democracy," he said at a conference to mark the anniversary, which falls on September 15.

China's socialist political system has proved itself feasible, efficient and has vitality because it was developed in the

country's social soil, Xi said, adding that any system should be designed and developed according to a country's actual conditions and situations.

"China needs to draw lessons from the achievements of foreign politics, but the foundations of our system should absolutely not be given up," Xi said.

Copying another country's political system is not feasible and will even ruin the future and fate of China, he said.

Advancing socialist democracy

The development of socialist democracy is a must for modernizing the country's "governance system" and "governance capability," he said.

"The key to developing socialist democracy is expanding rather than weakening our advantages and characteristics."

He stressed China must stick to the CPC's core role that exercises overall leadership and coordinates all efforts to ensure effective governance of the country and prevent engendering "a host of dragons without a head" or "a heap of loose sand," Chinese sayings which mean a country is leaderless or not united.

All power of the country must belong to the people, ensuring their power of voting as well as democratic decision-making, management and supervision in accordance to law, he said.

Politicians making boundless promises during elections with no responses to people's demands after the elections should be avoided, he added.

"We must stick to and improve the system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation led by the CPC so as to prevent parties being at strife and jostling each other (for positions)," he said.

Regional autonomy of ethnic minorities should also be followed and improved to consolidate socialist ethnic relations that feature equality, solidarity, mutual aid and harmony rather than estrangement and conflicts.

China must strengthen self-governance at the grass-roots

level to prevent phenomenon that the people seem to have power but are actually powerless, he said.

He also noted the system of "democratic centralism" which helps forge united forces to administer and govern the country and avoids impeding of each other and internal conflicts.

People should unswervingly stick to the CPC's leadership, ensure people's master status and promote the rule of law in their efforts to enhance the system of people's congresses, Xi said.

The President called for efforts to improve legislative work to provide legal support to China's development and major reform measures.

The country should deepen reform on its judicial system, expand channels for the public to supervise the use of power, and establish an effective system to curb corruption, Xi said.

Chinese leaders Li Keqiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli were also present at the conference, which was presided over by top legislator Zhang Dejiang. (Xinhua) ■

A conference celebrating the 60th anniversary of establishment of the National People's Congress (NPC) is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on September 5. Ma Zengke





The System of People's Congresses given full play



Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), said on September 15 that the system of people's congresses, which is China's fundamental political system, should be given full play.

He made the remarks at a theoretical symposium to celebrate the NPC 60th anniversary.

Zhang said the nation should unswervingly stick to the socialist path of political development with Chinese characteristics and enhance the system of people's congresses.

Zhang called on authorities to earnestly fulfill the duties endowed by the Constitution and law and make new contributions to the development of socialist democracy.

Zhang stressed that the system of people's congresses is full of vitality and has huge advantages because it has been closely linked not only with the endeavor and unremitting exploration by the Party and the people, but also with the grand achievements made and important experiences gained by the Party and the people.

Zhang said while the nation is striving to realize the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation, we must be confident in the system of people's congresses and make efforts to enhance it.

In his speech, Zhang summarized the experiences of the system, which included adhering to the role of the Communist Party of China (CPC) that exercises leadership, sticking to ensure people's master status and keeping to the rule of law. These principles should be followed and enriched in practice.

Zhang stressed adherence to the CPC's leadership, people's master status and the rule of law should be integrated and legislative workers should perform their duties with the focus on the overall interests of the work of the Party and the nation.

The event was jointly organized by the General Office of the Standing Committee of the NPC and the China Society for Theoretical Research on the System of the People's Congresses. (Xinhua) ■

Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC), addresses a theoretical symposium to celebrate the NPC 60th anniversary in Beijing on September 15. *Ma Zengke*



Sixty years on the march

A retrospective on the transformation of China's legislature into a mature political system with Chinese characteristics

By Yin Pumin

On September 5, China held a conference to celebrate the 60th anniversary of establishing its National People's Congress (NPC). President Xi Jinping addressed attendees of the event. While reiterating the role of the people's congress as China's fundamental political system, he called on the whole nation to continue to hold high the banner of democracy.

"In new situations, we should adhere to and further improve the system of the people's congress as required by the times," he said.

China's people's congress system was established in 1954. On September 15 that year, the First NPC convened its First Plenary Session, declaring the official formation of the system. After 60 years of development, the system has evolved into a mature legislative mechanism, governing the country's socialist democracy.

Xi Jinping (C, front), Li Keqiang (3rd R, front), Zhang Dejiang (3rd L, front), Yu Zhengsheng (2nd R, front), Liu Yunshan (2nd L, front), Wang Qishan (1st R, front) and Zhang Gaoli (1st L, front) attend a conference celebrating the 60th anniversary of the National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on September 5.
Liu Weibing

A legal framework

According to China's current Constitution, the NPC and its Standing Committee exercise the legislative power of the State. The People's Congress has played a significant role in uniting China under the rule of law.

In 2011, Wu Bangguo, then chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, declared that a comprehensive socialist system of law with Chinese characteristics had been established in China as of 2010. Under the system, the Constitution is the most fundamental law of the country.

In the initial years of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), adopted by the First Plenary Session of the First CPPCC in September 1949, served as a temporary constitution for the country.

In September 1954, right after the People's Congress was established in China through election, the First Session of the First NPC adopted the PRC's first Constitution. It established democracy, basic socialist principles, the Party's general political line in the country's transitional period, as well as the State system and the basic rights and obligations of citizens.

In the following years, the NPC and its Standing Committee formulated a series of laws and regulations, such as the Marriage Law, Trade Union Law and the Electoral Law, all of which ensured the smooth operation of the State and society.

However, during the two decades from 1957 when the country launched the "anti-rightist movement" through the "cultural revolution" (1966-76), China's drafting of legislation slowed down, even halting for periods of time. In 1975, China enacted its second Constitution during the First Session of the Fourth NPC. In 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China opened the door again for the development of the country's legal system.

In 1979, seven laws including the Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure Law, Organic Law of the Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments of the PRC, Electoral Law for the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses, Organic Law of the People's Courts, Organic Law of the People's Procuratorates, and Law on Chinese-Foreign Equity Joint Ventures were passed at the Second Session of the Fifth NPC. Since then, laws and regulations have been passed at every NPC session and plenary meetings of its Standing Committee.

In 1978, China had its third Constitution, which, however, soon proved inconsistent with social changes in the country after the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy.

In 1980, the NPC set up a Constitutional Amendment Committee, starting the amendment work to the Constitution. In April 1982, a draft of the new Constitution was released for a four-month-long nationwide debate, which eventually involved nearly 80 percent of Chinese citizens and resulted in around 100 changes.

In December 1982, the Fifth Session of the Fifth NPC passed the revised Constitution, popularly known as the 1982 Constitution.

"In the 1982 Constitution, the chapter on the fundamental rights and duties of citizens is put ahead of the chapter on

the structure of the State," said Han Dayuan, president of the Constitutional Law Institute of the China Law Society and dean of the Law School of Beijing-based Renmin University of China.

Han said that the Constitution adds some new stipulations regarding the fundamental rights and duties of citizens that were not included in the 1975 and 1978 constitutions.

"The change in the sequence of chapters suggests that State power is subordinate to citizen's rights, that is, the State cannot infringe upon citizen's rights," said Guo Daohui, a consultant at the Jurisprudence Research Association of the China Law Society.

The People's Congress has played a significant role in uniting China under the rule of law.



Deputies from Northwest China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region cast their votes at the First National People's Congress in 1954. *Xinhua*

In addition, the 1982 Constitution terminated the lifelong tenure of top State leaders. "Regular leadership reshuffles ensure overall social stability," Han commented.

In the following years, Chinese society underwent dramatic changes. Correspondingly, the text of the 1982 Constitution was revised respectively in 1988, 1993, 1999 and 2004 to keep up with the rapidly changing times.

In 1988, the private sector was officially acknowledged. The first amendment to the Constitution reads: "The State permits the private sector of the economy to exist and develop within the limits prescribed by law ... The State protects the lawful rights and interests of the private sector of the economy, and exercises guidance, supervision and control over the private sector of the economy."

In 1993, as China transformed from a planned economy into a market economy, the Constitution was again amended to declare, "The State has put into practice a socialist market economy." In addition, the national goal described in the



The Second Plenary Session of the Ninth National People's Congress ratifies the amendment which incorporated Deng Xiaoping's theory and "rule of law" into the Constitution on March 15, 1999. *Xinhua*

Between 2000 and 2010, China's legal system gradually became complete.

preamble of the Constitution, to "turn China into a socialist country with a high level of culture and democracy" was amended to "turn China into a socialist country that is prosperous, powerful, democratic and culturally advanced."

In 1999, "rule of law" was added to the Constitution. Article 5 was thus amended to read, "The People's Republic of China governs the country according to law and makes it a socialist country under the rule of law."

In the most recent amendment in 2004, the concept of "human rights" was included. Article 33 provides, "The State respects and protects human rights."

"The explicit recognition of the constitutional status of 'human rights' is generally seen as significant progress in the development of Chinese constitutional values and ideas," said Zhang Qianfan, a law professor at Peking University.

Meanwhile, such clauses as "lawful private property is inviolable" were also added to the Constitution. "The amendments will eliminate entrepreneurs' hidden worries about the security of their assets and boost their confidence in long-term investment," said Tang Haibin, an official with the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce.

Along with the changes of the Constitution, many practical laws were also adopted by the NPC to reflect the distinct characteristics of the times and social changes in China.

In 1986, the NPC adopted the Law on Enterprise Bankruptcy on a trial basis. To the surprise of many Chinese people, the law allowed state-run companies to file for bankruptcy even though China is a socialist country.

Later, the top legislature issued laws on securities, trade-

marks, intellectual property rights and many others aimed at promoting the country's economic reform and establishing a socialist market economy.

The NPC also enacted many other laws based on Chinese people's practices in social and economic administration such as the Law on Land Contract in Rural Areas, which grants farmers long-term and guaranteed land-use rights, and the law to supervise and prevent loss of State-owned assets.

In 1989, the NPC passed the Administrative Procedure Law, which challenges all illegal administrative acts.

According to statistics from the Supreme People's Court (SPC), Chinese courts accepted more than 1.4 million administrative procedure lawsuit cases from 1989 to 2008, many of which were suing governments.

Between 2000 and 2010, China's legal system gradually became complete. Many important support laws, such as the Property Law, Social Insurance Law, Tort Liability Law and Food Safety Law, were enacted by the NPC.

The Social Insurance Law, which was passed by the NPC on October 28, 2010, is an important sign of China establishing its social laws, said Zheng Gongcheng, a professor at Renmin University of China.

"Social law is a new legal concept, mainly dealing with affairs concerning social security, social assistance, public welfare and community special care," said Zheng.

"The Social Insurance Law is the first law in China's social



laws. It is a basic law,” said Zheng.

“We now have a complete set of laws covering all aspects of social relations, with basic and major laws of each type already in place, together with comprehensive corresponding administrative regulations and local statutes,” said Wu Bangguo, then chairman of NPC Standing Committee, at a plenary meeting of the NPC’s annual session in 2011.

According to him, by the end of 2010, China had enacted 236 laws, more than 690 administrative regulations and more than 8,600 local statutes, and reviewed all current laws, administrative regulations and local statutes.

“The formation of the system has solved the problem by having laws for all government departments and people to guide their behavior,” said Li Lin, director of the Institute of Law of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

The electoral system

In 1979, the NPC revised the Electoral Law of the National People’s Congress and Local People’s Congresses. The law was then amended five times in 1982, 1986, 1995, 2004, and 2010, respectively.

According to the amended Electoral Law, political parties and people’s organizations may either jointly or separately

The Second Plenary Session of the 12th National People’s Congress concludes on March 13 in Beijing. Chen Jianli



recommend candidates for deputies, and a joint group of at least 10 voters or deputies may also recommend candidates, which undoubtedly enhances voters’ nomination rights.

In view of the sharp gap between rural and urban populations in the early years of the PRC, the population ratio based on which NPC deputies were elected between rural and urban areas was 8 to 1, but in the most recent NPC, deputies were elected based on their make-up of the population, so as to guarantee equal rights for all citizens.

In addition, deputies to people’s congresses at and below county level are elected directly by their constituents. Previously, the rule was only practiced at lower levels such as urban towns or rural townships. “The change enables the people to better exercise their right to govern the State,” Li with the CASS said.

Another major breakthrough regarding the electoral system for deputies to the people’s congresses is a shift from non-competitive to competitive elections. “This not only enables voters and deputies to better exercise their rights to vote, but also encourages candidates to better perform their duties and represent the interests of their constituents, so as to realize the ultimate goal of elections—selecting the most capable,” Li said.

The NPC and local people’s congresses at different levels are constituted by deputies elected via democratic election. Along with the diversification of China’s economic entities and society, deputies to people’s congresses at all levels have also seen a tendency to become more diverse.

In 1983, Bai Shiming, who operated a private photo studio in Harbin of northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province, was elected a deputy to the Sixth NPC, a significant breakthrough in an era when the private economy was relatively new to the country.

In 1993, Liu Guansong, a private entrepreneur in South China’s Guangdong Province, was elected an NPC deputy. According to the Constitution amended later, non-public sectors of the economy were placed at a higher position, becoming an “important component of the socialist market economy.” From that point on, more and more private entrepreneurs have been found amongst NPC deputies.

The social identities of NPC deputies are increasingly diversifying, with three migrant workers being elected NPC deputies in 2008. The amended Electoral Law states that among deputies to the people’s congresses at all levels, “there shall be an appropriate number of grassroots deputies, especially from among workers, farmers and intellectuals.”

Moreover, increasing numbers of young people born in the 1980s and 1990s have become deputies to people’s congresses at every level.

Statistics show that 74 deputies to the 12th NPC were born in the 1980s in addition to two born in the 1990s. Despite their lack of social and political experience, these young deputies have shown great interest in State affairs and impressed veterans with their creativity. For instance, Sun Xiaolei, a 1990s-born senior at Fudan University who was elected a deputy to the Shanghai Municipal People’s Congress, impressively gathered public opinion via microblogging platforms.

“Along with China’s social progress, the people’s congress system is improving accordingly and will serve as a solid foundation for realizing the people’s dream of national rejuvenation,” said Li. (Beijing Review) ■

Memorable 'firsts' in China's



From September 15 to 28 of 1954, the first plenary session of the 1st National People's Congress is convened in Beijing. The session passes the first Constitution of the People's Republic of China and elects the State leadership according to the constitution. The picture shows the presidium in the closing ceremony of this session. From the left to the right are Chen Shutong, Huang Yanpei, Li Jishen, Soong Ching Ling, Zhou Enlai, Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Guo Moruo and Zhang Lan. *Xinhua*

During the period of first Five-Year Plan, tremendous achievements are scored in China's socialist development.

(Top left: On July 14, 1956, Changchun First Automobile Works manufactures the first group of Jiefang trucks. Workers are cheering the good news.

Top right: On October 15, 1957, Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge launches its inaugural ceremony. Hundreds of vehicles are driving through the road on the bridge.

Bottom left: On the New Year of 1956, the Baocheng Railway from Guangyuan to Lueyang is formally open to traffic.

Bottom right: On December 25, 1954, the Sichuan-Tibet road and Qinghai-Tibet road are formally open to traffic. Grand inaugural ceremony is held in the square of the Potala Palace.)

Photos by Xinhua

First Constitution in New China

On the afternoon of September 20 1954, at the first plenary session of the 1st National People's Congress (NPC) 1,197 deputies cast their votes, unanimously passing the first Constitution of the People's Republic of China, which is now referred to as the Constitution of 1954.

The Constitution of 1954 provides that all State power belongs to the people. The NPC and local people's congresses are the organs through which the people exercise their power. The making of the Constitution opens a new era of socialist democracy and legal construction in New China.

It was Chairman Mao Zedong who presided over the drafting process, which took more than seven months. The draft constitution was put on a nation-wide discussion for three months. More than 150 million people put forward approximately 1.18 million revisions and supplementary suggestions. Typically, a scientific and democratic way of doing legislation.

First Five-Year Plan and first approval of key projects

On July 30, 1955, the second plenary session of the 1st NPC passed the First Five-Year Plan (1953-1957) of China's national economic development.

The session also passed the resolution on a comprehensive plan of bringing the Yellow River under permanent control and topping its water resources, approving the principle and contents of the plan. The State Council was required to take prompt measures so that Sanmenxia and Liujiaxia reservoirs and relevant hydro-power projects would be completed on time.

It was the first time in history for the NPC to examine and approve key construction projects.

NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS OF CHINA



legislation history

By Wang Yiyin and Yin Hong



The Great Hall of the People witnesses the convening of the second session of the 2nd National People's Congress. The picture is taken on March 30, 1960. *Jiang Qisheng*

Premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) delivers a government work report at the 1st session of the 3rd National People's Congress on December 21, 1964. *Xinhua*



First meeting at the Great Hall of the People

Huairan Hall of Zhongnanhai was the venue that NPC held its sessions from 1954 to 1959. In other words, there was no people's house then.

In order to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the New China, the central government decided to build 10 landmark buildings in the summer of 1958, among which the Great Hall topped the list. Architects and workers who came to Beijing from all over the nation worked round the clock at the construction site. Within 10 months erected to the west side of Tian'anmen Square was a huge complex of buildings. The Great Hall of the People was inaugurated on September 24, 1959.

At 3 pm on March 30, 1960, the grand opening of the second plenary session of the 2nd NPC was held at the Great Hall of the People. Since then, NPC meetings have been held there.

First proposition of 'Four Modernizations'

From December 21, 1964 to January 4, 1965, the first plenary session of the 3rd NPC was convened in Beijing.

Upon the suggestion of the CPC Central Committee, Premier Zhou Enlai stated in the government work report that the major task of the future economic development was to keep pace with the advanced Western countries and build China into a strong socialist country with modern agriculture, industry, national defense and science and technology.

It was the first time for China to specifically promulgate the concept of "Four Modernizations".



On December 30, 1979, people in various autonomous counties in Longsheng of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region directly elect deputies to the people's congresses at county and township levels by secret ballot according to the Electoral Law for the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses. *Xinhua*

On December 20, 1962, Cuomu, who was born a slave, is elected township head in the 1st People's Congress of Jiaodanba Township in Lhasa. *Xinhua*



First election by margin

In 1953, the first election since the founding of the People's Republic was launched in China. It was a single-candidate election.

On July 1, 1979, the second plenary session of the 5th NPC made major revisions to the Election Law and Local Organic Law, providing that an election-by-margin system should be exercised regarding the election of deputies to the NPC and local people's congresses. In specific, deputies to the congresses at county and township levels should be directly elected by the voters with a margin ranging from 1/3 to 1/2. Deputies to the congresses at municipal, provincial and national levels should be elected by the congress at the next lower level with a margin ranging from 1/5 to 1/2. Election of local leading government officials, members of the standing committee of local people's congress, president of the people's court and chief procurator should also adopt the marginal election system.

First standing committee of the people's congress at provincial level

Normally, there was only one plenary session for people's congresses at all levels. Prior to 1979, no permanent organs established at the local people's congresses, whose power of legislation, supervision, decision-making, appointment and removal of personnel cannot be exercised in a timely fashion.

On July 1, 1979, the second session of the 5th NPC passed a resolution on several constitutional provisions, and later local organic law was revised, by which local people's congresses above the county level should set up the standing committee.

On August 14, the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Tibet Autonomous Region was officially set up, which is the first one at the provincial legislature.



On August 26, 1980, Zeng Tao, then deputy secretary-general of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, holds a press conference in Beijing upon the convening of the third session of the 5th National People's Congress. Zhao Tianpin

First NPC press conference

On August 26, 1980, the first press conference in the history of NPC was held before the opening of the third session of the 5th NPC. Zeng Tao, deputy secretary-general of the session, briefed Chinese and foreign journalists on the draft agenda of the session. Over the past three decades, press conferences have become an important window for the world to observe China's most important annual political events.

So far, there have been seven spokespersons in NPC's history: Zeng Tao, Yao Guang, Zhou Yue, Zeng Jianhui, Jiang Enzhu, Li Zhaoxing and Fu Ying. What they have in common is that all of them once served as chairperson or vice chairperson of NPC Foreign Affairs Committee.

Fu Ying is the first female spokesperson in the history of NPC.

First adoption of the proposal system

Starting from the first session of the 6th NPC in June 1983, proposals made by deputies were categorized into deputy bills and deputy suggestions (including criticism and opinion). It was explicitly stipulated in the NPC organic law passed in 1982 that one delegation or over 30 deputies were entitled to submitting bills within the NPC jurisdiction. Meanwhile, deputies could make suggestions in all fields to the NPC or its Standing Committee.

Altogether 61 proposals were submitted in the first session of the 6th NPC in 1983 among which 33 were handled as bills and 28 as suggestions.

First law passed after two examinations

On September 2, 1983, the second meeting of the Standing Committee of the 6th NPC passed the Maritime Transportation Safety Law after the second examination. It was the first law in China's history that was promulgated after two examinations.



March 11, 1996 is the deadline to submit bills in the fourth session of the 8th National People's Congress. Workers with the secretariat are sorting and compiling the deputies' bills. Liu Jiansheng



The second meeting of the Standing Committee of the 6th National People's Congress concludes in Beijing on September 2, 1983. The meeting was presided over by Chairman Peng Zhen. *Tang Likui*

On July 15, 1989, upon the public suggestion, the Chairmen's Council meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress decides to hang the plate outside the south entrance of the Great Hall of the People. *Cui Baolin*



Before that, there were no established proceedings when the NPC Standing Committee examined bills. In some cases, some bills were handed in just one day before the meeting. The Standing Committee was urged to pass the bill on time, thus having no time to conduct detailed investigation and deliberation. It attracted attention from Peng Zhen, then NPC chairman, who believed there was a strong need to consider regulating the procedures on the examination of bills.

In March 1983, after careful consideration, Peng Zhen proposed at a Chairmen's Council meeting that it was the Council that should suggest whether a bill be submitted to the Standing Committee and put into its agenda. Once a bill had been put into the agenda, the Standing Committee should first listen to a brief explanation of the bill, conduct the initial examination, and then refer the bill to the Law Committee and other relevant special committees for deliberation. In the meantime, members of the Standing Committee would have the bill before them together with additional materials, make further research and prepare for future Standing Committee meeting to deliberate the bill. Peng's proposal was adopted, and a bulletin was printed and distributed as the procedure on the examination of bills.

In 1987, the procedure was written in the standing orders of the NPC Standing Committee. The Legislation Law enacted in 2000 made further stipulations that a bill should generally be put to vote after three examinations. Over the years, the procedure on the examination of bills in China has been steadily improved and perfected.

First time to hang the plate in the office building

On July 15, 1989, a plate cast by red copper, which was written "the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China" in Chinese, was hung on the circular pillar outside the south entrance of the Great Hall of



On July 1, 1988, the second meeting of the Standing Committee of the 7th National People's Congress concludes in Beijing. Chairman Wan Li delivers a speech. *Cui Baolin*

On March 19, 1990, the preparatory meeting for the third session of the 7th National People's Congress is convened at the Great Hall of the People. Deputies vote on the name list of the presidium by electronic voting system. It is in this session that the self-innovated electronic voting system is put into use for the first time. *Liu Jianguo*



the People. It was the first time for the permanent organ of China's top legislature to hang the plate in its office building.

It was reported by Xinhua News Agency previously that some people complained that they had no idea where the NPC was located. In response to that, the Chairmen's Council meeting made the decision upon the proposal made by Chairman Wan Li to hang the plate outside the south entrance of the Great Hall.

First legislative plan

In November 1991, the Legislative Plan of NPC Standing Committee (1991-93) was promulgated, the first legislative plan approved by the CPC Central Committee.

Early in April 1988, Chairman Wan Li said in his address to the first meeting of the Standing Committee of the 7th NPC that a five-year legislative plan should be formulated. On July 1, 1988, the second meeting of the Standing Committee of the 7th NPC explicitly stated that a plan should be formulated, and legislative work must be carried out in a systematic and progressive manner.

Also at the meeting, the Law Committee put forward the preliminary proposal on the five-year legislative plan. It was an initial attempt for the Standing Committee to work on the legislative plan.

First use of electronic voting system

The electronic voting system was first used in the 15th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 6th NPC. With this system, deputies could vote for, against or abstain according to their own will. "Using the electronic voting system is helpful to protect the democratic rights of voters, and deputies can vote as they think fit", said Wang Hanbin, then secretary-general of NPC Standing Committee.

In the third session of the 7th NPC in 1990, the plenary session started to use the electronic voting system. By counting the numbers of "for, against, abstention and non-voting", the com-



On September 16, 1996, the 96th Inter-parliamentary Conference opens at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Parliamentarians from 124 countries took part in the inaugural ceremony. *Cheng Zhishan*

A bookstore sells the draft property law on August 2, 2005, in Shanghai. The NPC received more than 6,500 suggestions after it began to solicit public opinions on July 10, 2005. *Wu Mangzi*



On September 27, 2005, the Law Committee and the Legislative Affairs Commission of the National People's Congress conduct a hearing on the individual income tax threshold in the NPC Convention Center in Beijing. *Xinhua*



puter would show the results on the two gigantic screens in a few seconds, making the process much more efficient.

First IPU conference in China

On September 16, 1996, the 96th Inter-parliamentary Conference was convened at the Great Hall of the People. It was the first IPU conference China ever hosted. More than 1,400 delegates and guests from 124 countries, including 70 speakers or deputy speakers and more than 600 parliamentarians attended the conference.

Established in 1889, IPU is the world oldest, largest, and most influential international parliamentary organization. It is composed of parliaments of sovereign States and thus called "Union of Parliaments". In April 1984, IPU decided to accept China's affiliation. As an important IPU member, NPC actively participates in IPU activities. Rich experiences gained over the past 30 years on IPU occasions are of great importance to multilateral parliamentary exchanges.

First time to solicit online opinions on draft bills

From June 26 to July 1, 2005, the 16th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 10th NPC conducted the third examination on the draft Property Law. After the meeting, the NPC website opened the full text of the draft law in an effort to solicit public opinions. In the next one month or so, 2,249 netizens offered 9,605 suggestions online.

It was the first time that the full text of a draft law listed online for public opinions.

First hearing on legislation

On September 27, 2005, the NPC Standing Committee held a legislation hearing for the first time. Twenty representatives from all walks of life gathered



On June 24, 2010, the 15th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 11th National People's Congress conducts group examinations on the Annual Report of Central Final Account in 2009 submitted by the State Council and conducts a special inquiry for the first time. Entrusted by the State Council, several senior officials with the Ministry of Finance are present the meeting to answer the inquiries. *Sheng Jiapeng*

On April 25, 2013, the second meeting of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People is concluded in Beijing. The meeting takes a vote on passing the Tourism Law. *Du Yang*



in Beijing. Each of them made a presentation within 8 minutes, which became an important leverage for the NPC to revise the Individual Income Tax Law and raise the taxation threshold.

First special inquiry

In June 2010, the 15th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 11th NPC conducted the first special inquiry while listening to and deliberating on the central final account report and auditing work report. Special inquiry is a unique form of supervision. Compared with other inquiries previously made, special inquiries are better prepared and organized, and questions and answers are more focused and efficient.

Till June 2014, while listening to and deliberating on relevant work report submitted by the State Council, the Standing Committee of the 11th and 12th NPCs has totally conducted 12 special inquiries on such major topics as fiscal final account, food security, affordable housing construction and treatment of pandemics. More than 300 questions were answered.

First pre-introduction assessment

On April 17, 2013, before the 2nd meeting of the Standing Committee of the 12th NPC was convened, the Legislative Affairs Commission invited NPC deputies, frequent travelers, tourism business representatives, experts and scholars to attend a seminar, inviting them to make their assessment and judgment on the adoption, possible social impact and potential problems of the tourism law.

It was the first time for the NPC to conduct pre-introduction assessment on draft legislation. Representatives from all walks of life expressed their opinions freely and made many precious recommendations. The Tourism Law was the first law the current NPC Standing Committee passed with high ballots.

The practice of pre-introduction assessment is welcomed and applauded by the general public. (Guangming Daily) ■

Small stories reflect major achievements

By Tang Duoduo

Changes of venues for NPC annual sessions

Today, NPC holds plenary sessions at the Great Hall of the People. At the very beginning of the People's Republic of China, such meetings were held in the Huaiaren Hall of Zhongnanhai, Beijing.



On September 15, 1954, the first session of the 1st National People's Congress convenes in Beijing. The deputies were stepping into the conference hall. *Liu Dong'ao*

In 1952, the Huaiaren Hall was selected for the convening of the first NPC meeting. In 1953, China's population surpassed 600 million. Limited by the size of the venue, there were only 1,226 deputies attending the first plenary session of the First National People's Congress.

In October 1958, the construction of the Great Hall of the People, located in west side of Tiananmen Square was completely finished. Peng Zhen, then vice chairman and secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee requested the architects that "the Grand Auditorium on the first floor shall accommodate all the deputies to be totaling from 3,000 to 3,500".

On the early morning of September 9, 1959, Chairman Mao Zedong inspected the construction site of the building. Wan Li, then vice mayor of Beijing, asked Mao, "Chairman, the building is yet to be named and only you, as Premier Zhou told us, can give a name to the building." After thinking for a while, Chairman Mao said, "If people are asked 'where are you going', the answer will be 'to the great hall of the people'. So, call it 'the Great Hall of the People'".

On the eve of the 10th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Great Hall of the People with Grand Auditorium with a seating capacity over 10,000 people appeared on the west of the Tiananmen Square. From March 30 to April 10 of the following year, the second plenary session of the First National People's Congress was held at the Great Hall of the People. Since then, NPC convenes its annual sessions at the Great Hall of the People where deputies exercise their legislative power.

Change of leaders' ranking order in news reporting

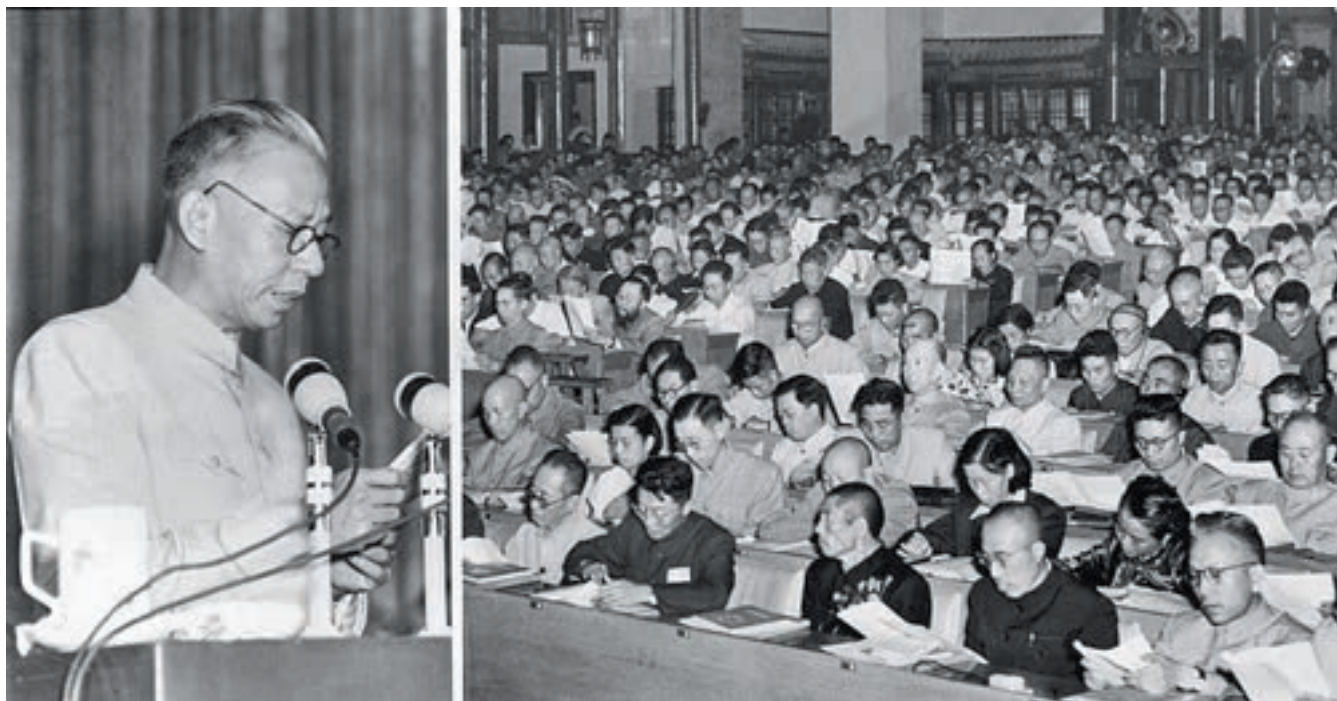


On December 9, 1982, the fourth Presidium's meeting in the fifth session of the 5th National People's Congress is convened at the Great Hall of the People. The meeting, presided over by Chairman Peng Zhen, passes relevant proposals that would be submitted to the plenary session for voting. *Wang Jingde*

In reporting political news, leaders' ranking order is strictly followed. As recalled by Cheng Xiangqing, the former director-general of the NPC Research Office, chairman and vice chairmen of the NPC Standing Committee were executive chairmen of the Presidium of NPC plenary session whose names, however, appeared after those leaders who sat on the Political Bureau and the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee in early news reporting.

According to Wang Hanbin, former vice chairman of NPC Standing Committee, Li Shangzhi, a reporter from Xinhua, pointed out that such an order was inappropriate. Wang brought up this issue to the CPC Central Committee which then agreed to an adjustment. Since then, in reporting the NPC annual sessions, the Executive Chairmen of the Presidium have appeared before those on the Political Bureau and the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee. Meanwhile, the seating arrangement of the NPC Standing Committee has also changed accordingly.

As the highest organ of State power, the National People's Congress (NPC) is awe-inspiring in many respects. After 60 years of vicissitudes, every march of NPC is accompanied by numerous historical "small stories". Those "small stories" map out the ever-improving process of the system of people's congresses.



On September 15, 1954, the first session of the 1st National People's Congress is convened in Huairan Hall, Beijing. Liu Shaoqi, member with the drafting committee of the Constitution was delivering a report. *Xinhua*

Set for the first time as 'the fundamental political system'

"The Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference", adopted by the first plenary session of the First Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, has the nature of an interim Constitution. It provides for New China's State and political institutions and stipulates that the system of people's congresses is the organizing form of the State power. It does not set it as China's fundamental political system.

In 1954, Liu Shaoqi proposed in the report on the draft Constitution, "Our State affairs are not decided by one person or a few people. Since the system of people's congresses is defined as the fundamental political system of the country, all major issues shall be subject to the deliberation and decision of the people's congresses". It is the first time for the Party to

formally take the system of people's congresses as the fundamental political system.

Yang Jingyu, chairman of the 10th NPC Law Committee, said that "Such a definition was initially put forward by Peng Zhen, but not on behalf of the Party, in one of his private talks." Peng explained that the system of people's congresses was the basic organizing way by which the Chinese people would rule the country. It was the best, most effective and important form of adhering to the Party's mass line in exercising State power. To follow the mass line, concentrate on people's welfare, build on common wills and supervise their enactment, this is what the system of people's congresses is all about.

"The system of people's congresses as the fundamental political system in China was a major proposal put forward in our political explorations. The proposal was recognized by the CPC Central Committee. And it was Liu Shaoqi who first made it public", said Yang.

Nation-wide discussion of the draft Constitution of 1982



On April 30, 1982, members of the Guangmingli Neighborhood Committee in Xuanwu District, Beijing read reports on the draft revision to the Constitution. *Gu Dehua*

From April to late August of 1982, public opinions were solicited on the draft Constitution of 1982. It was the first draft legislation ever put to the public for opinion since the reform and opening-up. “It is a typical democratic way of doing legislation”, said Yang Jingyu. The nation-wide discussion is also a process of planting the Constitution into people’s hearts.

“I remember that Yang Shangkui, former Party Secretary of Jiangxi Province, expressed his opinion by himself with a brush, in a highly serious manner. Wang Yinxian, a worker from the Northeast China, put forward four views. For fear of missing the deadline, he paid one-fourth of his monthly salary to telegram a 200-word proposal to the Constitution Revision Committee”, recalled Xu Chongde, a late law scholar who took part in drafting the Constitution of 1982.

The Secretariat of the Constitution Revision Committee afterwards compiled and edited opinions from all walks of life into five volumes entitled “Opinions of all nationalities on the draft constitution of 1982”. Copies were sent to all members of the Constitutional Revision Committee.

As Wang Hanbin recalled, “The secretariat revised the draft after studying the solicited opinions. Many opinions are incorporated into the draft. The basic framework of the draft is kept intact and hundreds of additions and revisions are made to the articles. Not included into the Constitution are those opinions, which were good but difficult to be implemented and had better find their way into other laws and regulations.”

This nation-wide discussion becomes an example of public involvement in the legislative process.

From single-candidate election to multiple-candidate election



On June 30, 1980, people in Guanghe county in Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province conduct the direct election by exercising the method of election by margin. Local ethnic minorities are rejoiced to vote and exercise their democratic rights. *Min Zhongjie*

“The top issues the list of nominees and we just pen a circle with each name.” This is what once depicted about one-candidate election.

At the initial stage of nation building, learning from experiences of the former Soviet Union, China conducted single-candidate election for the people’s congresses, which suited actual conditions then. With progress made in the political, economical and cultural fields, voices of electoral system reform became louder and louder.

In 1957, Liu Shaoqi stated at the 75th session of Standing Committee of the First NPC that candidates should outnumber the positions open for election while addressing the issues of the incoming election of NPC deputies. The fourth plenary session of the First NPC in the same year reached consensus on a multiple-candidate election. Specific provisions by law were yet to be adopted.

Nevertheless, this consensus was shelved. According to Liu Zheng, former deputy secretary-general of NPC Standing Committee, under the leftist influence a multiple-candidate election was labeled as the practice of capitalist countries.

In 1979, the Election Law that was adopted by the second plenary session of the 5th NPC stipulates that deputies at all levels shall be elected. The local organic law adopted at the session stipulates that competitive election shall apply to electing the leaders of local governments, members of the standing committee of local people’s congresses, and presidents of courts and procurators.

From single deliberation to multiple deliberations



Cai Cheng, vice chairman of the Law Committee of the National People's Congress, delivers a report on the results of deliberation on the draft Prison Law. On December 21, 1994, the 11th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 8th National People's Congress is convened at the Great Hall of the People. Chairman Qiao Shi presides over this meeting. *Bai Liansuo*

According to Wang Hanbin, there were no unified procedures to deliberate bills in the past. Some bills were submitted just one day before the meeting of NPC Standing Committee for adoption. The Standing Committee did not have enough time for deliberation.

In March 1983, Peng Zhen put forward a procedure for the NPC Standing Committee to deliberate bills. The procedure includes several steps. First, the meeting of Executive Council of Chairmen of NPC Standing Committee makes a decision whether or not to put a bill for deliberation on the plenary meeting of the Standing Committee. Second, the plenary meeting of the NPC Standing Committee listens to the report of the bill and makes the initial deliberation. After the meeting, members of the NPC Standing Committee conduct a study of the relevant documents on the bill. The second deliberation is to be conducted on the plenary meeting of NPC Standing Committee thereafter.

In 1987, this process was written into the Standing Order of the NPC Standing Committee. As a result, a bill would go through two deliberations during the 6th, 7th and 8th NPC. Since the 9th NPC, the Standing Committee often conducts three deliberations.



On September 13, 1996, the secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Union holds a press conference in Beijing, inviting Tian Jiyun (C), vice chairman of China's National People's Congress, Ahmed F. Sorour (R), president of IPU Council and Pierre Cornillon (L), IPU secretary-general to address the audience on relevant questions of the 96th Inter-parliamentary Conference.

Fan Rujun

Bumpy road to IPU affiliation

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the world oldest (founded in 1889), largest (composed of 166 parliaments of sovereign states), and most influential international parliamentary organization.

For NPC, joining IPU is full of twists and turns. In fact, soon after the founding of New China, IPU took the initiative to contact and post relevant documents to China. But at that time NPC had not yet be established.

In September 1954, NPC was formally established. Soon after, joining IPU was put on the agenda. In July 1955, the second plenary session of the First NPC was convened. Peng Zhen, secretary-general of the annual session, sent a telegram

to president of IPU Council, secretary-general of IPU and president of the 44th IPU Conference respectively, informing them that NPC would organize a "People's group" to join the Union, and send a delegation to attend helsinki Conference. On August 6, the Chinese delegation attending the 44th IPU Conference were officially formed. In the following days, NPC adopted a resolution on the NPC's affiliation to IPU, the Charter, and elected Peng Zhen as chairman of the Group. On August 6, "People's Group" held an executive committee meeting, composing the delegation to the 44th IPU Conference. On August 9, Li Yimang, secretary of the delegation, flew to Helsinki for preparation and People's Daily carried a newsreel. Everything was ready and China's joining IPU would be a sure thing. Amongst IPU members there was wide support.

On the 5th day after Li arrived in Helsinki, however, China's affiliation was suddenly called off. The Executive Committee of IPU decided to postpone the discussion of China's application due to the fact that US delegation threatened to withdraw from IPU if China's application was to proceeded. After Helsinki Conference, IPU discussed China's affiliation several times but went no where because of the United States' intervention.

In 1971, China restored the lawful seat of the United Nations. IPU contacted China several times and hoped China could join IPU soon. It was during the the "cultural revolution" that China turned down IPU's invitation upon consideration of the international and domestic situations.

Entering into the 1980s, it finally turned the corner. On December 8, 1983, the resolution on joining IPU was adopted at the third plenary session of the 6th NPC. Soon after, a delegation was formed. On April 2, 1984, the 71th IPU Conference which was held in Geneva adopted a resolution on accepting China's NPC as its formal member. The NPC delegation led by Vice Chairman Geng Biao made its first presence at IPU conference.

Thirty years have elapsed since Geneva conference. (Outlook Weekly) ■



A new chapter for democracy

The first ever round of universal suffrage for
Hong Kong's chief executive will be held in 2017

By Li Li



Hong Kong, Pearl of The Orient CFP



On September 1, Li Fei (C), deputy secretary-general of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, appears in a press conference in Hong Kong. Li said that the decision of the NPC Standing Committee is made in strict compliance with Hong Kong Basic Law and lawful procedures on the basis of carefully examining the report submitted by the HK Chief Executive and hearing opinions from all social stratus. Therefore, it enjoys unquestionable legal authority. CFP

Hong Kong's democracy is about to make another leap forward after the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee decided to grant universal suffrage in the selection of Hong Kong's chief executive on the basis of nomination by a "broadly representative" committee.

The decision on how the chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) will be selected was passed unanimously at the bi-monthly session of the standing committee of China's top legislature on August 31.

The decision allows two or three candidates to run for the HKSAR's top job after obtaining support from at least half of a nominating committee that "shall be chosen in accordance with the number of members, composition and formation method of the election committee for the fourth chief executive."

According to the NPC decision, all eligible voters in the region will be able to have their say in who the chief executive for the HKSAR will be, while the existing system and voting procedures for the Legislative Council will remain unchanged. Under Hong Kong's Basic Law, it is stipulated that "all permanent residents of the HKSAR shall have the right to vote and the right to stand for election in accordance with law."

Li Fei, deputy secretary-general of NPC Standing Committee, said during a press conference on August 31 afternoon that the size of the nominating committee was set at 1,200.

The chief executive-elect, after being selected through voting by the populace, will still need to be appointed by the Central Government, according to the decision, which stressed that the chief executive has to be a person who "loves the country and loves Hong Kong."

Li said this is a basic requirement for the "one country, two systems" policy. The method for selecting the chief executive by universal suffrage must provide corresponding institutional safeguards for this purpose.

Chairman Zhang Dejiang also said on the same day that the new decision was of great importance to implementing the principles of "one country, two systems" and ensuring

that the region maintains a high degree of autonomy while following the Hong Kong Basic Law.

“The decision is vital for steadily developing democracy in Hong Kong and implementing the selection of the HKSAR chief executive by universal suffrage according to law,” he said.

Britain made no mention of democracy for Hong Kong until the dying days of its colonial rule. Before Hong Kong was returned to China on July 1, 1997, the Governors of Hong Kong were all appointed by the British Crown, without recourse to any pretense of democracy.

A milestone

The first chief executive of the HKSAR was elected by a 400-member selection committee in early 1997, while the second, third and fourth chief executives were elected by an election committee, the membership of which had grown from 800 to 1,200 in the meantime.

In December 2007, the NPC Standing Committee resolved that the election of Hong Kong’s fifth chief executive in 2017 may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage.

The latest decision said that “implementing universal suffrage represents historic progress in Hong Kong’s democratic development and a significant change in the political structure of the HKSAR.”

Speaking during the press conference, Li said the NPC Standing Committee’s decision marked a “key moment” in Hong Kong’s democratic development and is crucial to its current and future stability, as well as the fundamental inter-

ests of Hong Kong residents and foreign investors.

“Hong Kong has accomplished democratic progress it never enjoyed under the British rule of over 150 years,” said Chen Zuo’er, head of the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macao Studies. “I should congratulate the Hong Kong people today for being so close to universal suffrage.”

Speaking at an event on September 1 to discuss the NPC’s decision, Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying said, “The majority of Hong Kong citizens—namely, the 5 million qualified voters of the selection of chief executive in 2017—will be able to cast their votes to select the chief executive.”

“This is the first opportunity, a very good opportunity, for Hong Kong to have one-person-one-vote universal. This is something we should all feel proud of,” he added.

The HKSAR Government will now draft a detailed election proposal and consult the public in the coming months. A resolution detailing the reform will be given to the Legislative Council in the first quarter of next year.

Hong Kong’s former chief secretary, Tang Ying-yen, said he supports the decision and hopes that the new round of public consultation will be launched at an early date.

The Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce Chairman Pang Yiu-kai said that Hong Kong people wish to implement

Britain made no mention of democracy for Hong Kong until the dying days of its colonial rule.



A flag raising ceremony is held at the Golden Bauhinia Square in celebrating the 17th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to China on July 1, 2014.

Huang Benqiang

universal suffrage as soon as possible, and “it will be a historic milestone for Hong Kong if we can elect our ideal leader in 2017 through ‘one person, one vote.’”

The Chinese General Chamber of Commerce appealed to all sectors of Hong Kong to put away prejudices and seek for consensus to implement universal suffrage and promote the democratic development of Hong Kong.

The Chinese Manufacturers’ Association of Hong Kong said the decision created a clear framework for Hong Kong’s constitutional reform, and it will be helpful to the Hong Kong government and different sectors in accelerating the process of democracy.

The Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, the biggest political party in Hong Kong, said the decision marked an important step in Hong Kong’s constitutional reform, and it calls on the region’s society to concentrate on discussion and build consensus.

“The nominating committee shall nominate two to three candidates for the office of chief executive in accordance with democratic procedure,” the decision read. “Each candidate must have the endorsement of more than half of all the members of the nominating committee.”

Not everyone in Hong Kong has been pleased by the Central Government’s decision. The protest movement Occupy Central has vocally demanded for elections in which any candidate can run for chief executive. For weeks, protesters have taken to the streets. The organizers of the movement had threatened to lock down Hong Kong’s central business district on an unspecified date if the election reform plan did not satisfy them.

But in response, the Alliance for Peace & Democracy, an anti-Occupy Central movement, managed to gather close to 1.5 million signatures during a one-month campaign that ended in mid-August.

When asked about the demands advocated by groups like Occupy Central, Li said they clearly run against the Hong Kong Basic Law, adding that such “unpractical” calls had led to “a tremendous waste of time” in Hong Kong society. He said the changes demanded by the group are “tailored only for their own interests and needs.”

He said having two or three election candidates will make for an efficient election system and complies with the opinions of the majority expressed during a five-month consultation conducted by the HKSAR Government from December 4, 2013, to May 3, 2014.

Beijing University professor of law Qiang Shigong said that the stipulation of two to three candidates will allow the ballot to be more efficient and avoid having to hold multiple rounds in case several candidates each only get 10 or 20 percent of the vote.

Defending the requirement that the candidates have to be endorsed by half of the nomination committee, Professor Qiang said in the past the chief executive was elected only by the 1,200 members of the election committee while in the future universal suffrage will apply to over 6 million Hong Kong residents. “The elected candidate must have the endorsement of over half the committee, which takes into consideration all the different political, religious and social groups’ standpoints,” Qiang said.

“The proposed Occupy Central protest would harm the region’s prosperity and growth. I believe the SAR has prepared



July 1, 2014 marks the 17th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to the motherland. The Hong Kong Garrison of the People’s Liberation Army opens the Angchuanzhou military camp of naval base to the general public. Tens of thousands of citizens come and visit the camp. Since the troops are stationed in Hong Kong, the garrison has opened the military camp to the public for 25 times and received the visits of more than 520,000 citizens. Qin Qing

plans in accordance with the Basic Law, if the illegal protest continues. The Central Government will not just sit back and watch if the protest escalates,” Chen from the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macao Studies said.

No stagnation

Experts believe the NPC Standing Committee’s decision has offered a clear direction and provided guidelines for achieving the goal of universal suffrage in 2017. But there remains room to negotiate, such as how to make sure the selection of the nomination committee is more democratic.

“We cannot afford a standstill in our constitutional development or else the prosperity or stability of Hong Kong will be at stake. All Hong Kong people, irrespective of their political affiliations, should come together with one heart, one vision, to take forward the democratic development of Hong Kong, and to implement universal suffrage,” said Leung.

He added that different opinions must be expressed peacefully, rationally and legally.

“The decision has clearly shown the Central Government’s bottom line over the debates over the election procedures of the chief executive,” Lau Siu-kai, emeritus professor of sociology of Hong Kong-based Chinese University and vice president of the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macao Studies, said that the Central Government has indicated that it would not back off on fundamental issues.

“It is really time for radicals to decide between these two paths: resisting the amendments to pursue their personal short-term gains or truly putting the long-term democratic development of Hong Kong first,” said Professor Lau. He said that the leaders of those opposing the reform should lower their expectations of becoming chief executive and instead focus on maximizing their influence during the first round of universal suffrage.

Tai Yiu-ting, an associate professor of law at the University of Hong Kong and a co-founder of Occupy Central, admitted at an interview with the South China Morning Post on



At 0 am on July 1, 1997, the conference hall on the 5th floor in the new wing of Wan Chai Convention and Exhibition Centre. Along with the magnificent sound of the national anthem, the bright five-star red flag and the Bauhinia flag are rising together slowly. It is a solemn declaration that China resumes the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is officially set up. *Liu Jiansheng*

September 2 that his movement's strategy to win concessions from the Central Government on election reform had failed and that support for the sit-in was waning.

The adoption of the NPC decision represents the second step in Hong Kong's five-step electoral reform. The first step was that Leung filed a report to the NPC Standing Committee on issues relating to the election methods for the chief executive and Legislative Council on July 15 based on the five-month consultation.

During the following stages, the specific method of universal suffrage shall be prescribed in accordance with legal procedures through amending Annex I to the Hong Kong Basic Law. Such amendments must be endorsed by at least two-thirds of all the members of the Legislative Council and with the consent of the chief executive before being submitted to the NPC Standing Committee for approval.

If the specific method of universal suffrage for selecting the chief executive is not adopted in accordance with legal procedures, the method used for selecting Hong Kong's leader for the preceding term shall continue to apply, the decision said.

Li said whether Hong Kong could achieve universal suffrage depends on the subsequent steps, and called on "certain groups in Hong Kong to set aside prejudices and personal interests, showcase their political courage and wisdom to push forward universal suffrage in the 2017 election."

"Some might say that if we don't have universal suffrage in 2017, we could still redo everything in 2022. But I think if we

miss the opportunity in 2017, Hong Kong may never have the chance to regain the momentum lost," he said.

Ng Leung-sing, the finance committee chair of the Legislative Council of HKSAR, said the mainstream public opinions in Hong Kong will play a significant role in the final results of Hong Kong's election reform during an interview with www.thepaper.cn on September 2. "If all voters decide that watching the 1,200 election committee members cast the ballots is not as good as casting their own ballots, the 'pro-democracy' legislators will have to take their opinions into consideration and turn to support the electoral changes in the decision," said Ng. (Beijing Review) ■

Proposed Election Process for HKSAR Chief Executive in 2017

- A broadly representative nominating committee will be formed, which must be consistent with the size, composition and methods of choosing its members of the election committee that chose the current chief executive in 2012.
- The nominating committee will endorse two to three candidates, each by a majority of all the committee members.
- Each eligible voter is entitled to pick one candidate.
- The winner of the election will be subject to appointment by the Central Government.

Significant step for Hong Kong

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress decided on August 31 to grant residents universal suffrage in the election of Hong Kong's chief executive on the basis of nomination by a "broadly representative" committee.

This move marks a milestone in the development of Hong Kong's democratic governance and will lay a solid foundation for realizing the direct election of the chief executive.

There have been numerous controversies in Hong Kong in the past few years concerning how the chief executive should be selected. Occupy Central and Anti-Occupy Central represent such disputes.

In fact, since China resumed its exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, the Central Government has been pushing forward the progress of democracy in the special administrative region (SAR) according to its Basic Law, the SAR's mini-Constitution. In 2007, it further established a timetable for achieving universal suffrage in Hong Kong.

The decision to elect Hong Kong's chief executive by popular vote starting from 2017 onward represents the common will of its people. This approach has a solid legal basis and highlights the Central Government's commitment to achieving Hong Kong's long-term interests. It will allow groups holding different political opinions to shelve differences and reach a consensus, thus playing a significant role in keeping Hong Kong prosperous and stable.

Under the British colonial rule of more than 150 years,

28 governors were all appointed by the British Crown and Hong Kong residents played no role in the process. Since Hong Kong's return, the Central Government has established a set of democratic systems in the region based on the "one country, two systems" policy and the principle of "Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong."

Since it is unrealistic to immediately establish a democratic system in the region after more than 150 years of colonial rule, the Chinese Government has put in place a transitional period, working toward universal suffrage starting in 2017. In this period, Hong Kong's chief executive is selected by an election panel made up of representatives from all across the SAR.

Over the past two years, certain groups in Hong Kong have attempted to deny the Central Government's right to oversee the region's political system and have advocated a different approach according to so-called "international standards." Such radical activities aimed at swaying away from the Central Government and leading Hong Kong astray is doomed to fail.

Achieving the direct election of Hong Kong's chief executive requires the concerted efforts of the Central Government, the SAR Government and ordinary Hong Kong citizens. It is widely expected that residents in the region will work together with the government to improve the region's governance and turn universal suffrage into a reality. (Beijing Review)



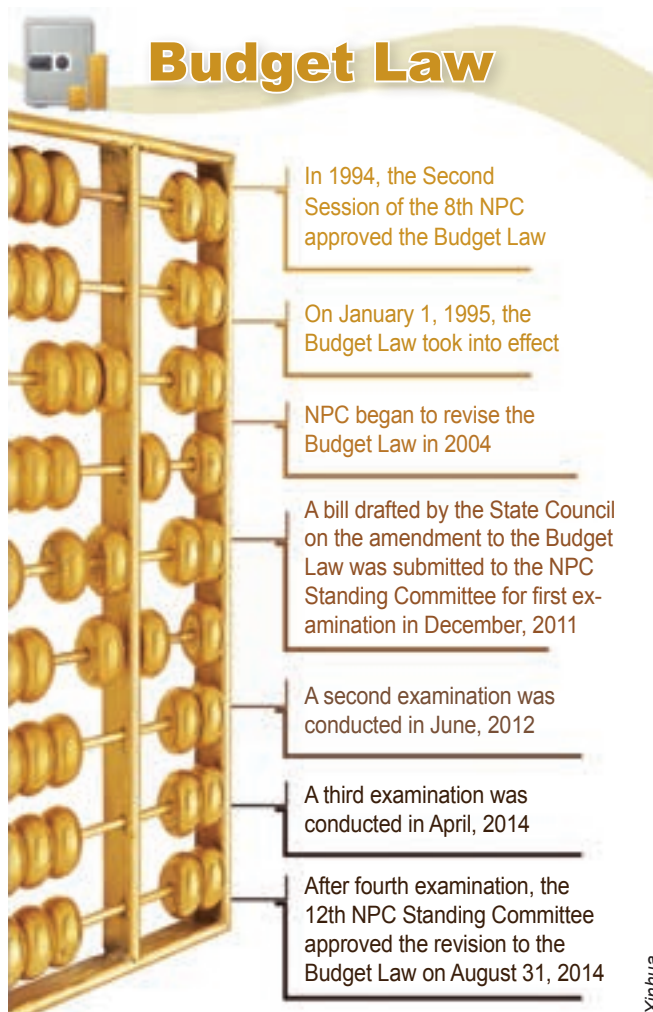
CFP

Budget Law revised to rein in government spending

The 10th session of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress on August 31 adopted a revision to the Budget Law which clears ambiguity and closes loopholes in managing the trillions of yuan involved in fiscal revenue and spending.

This is the first time the Budget Law has been revised since it took effect in 1995.

As the law is closely interrelated with China's ongoing fiscal reform, it took the country an unusually long time to revise it – seven years to draft a bill for the first reading in 2011 and four readings to get it passed.



Xinhua

Members of the Standing Committee of the NPC adopted the bill through a vote, saying that the revision has responded to improvement in the fiscal system and the most controversial and concerning problems.

In 2014, China's fiscal revenue is budgeted to be 13.9 trillion yuan (\$ 2.26 trillion) and government spending to be more than 15 trillion yuan.

The management of such a huge amount of public funds and supervision of its use remain key challenges for the Chinese government.

The revision to the law is a big move to further the fiscal reform and establish a modern fiscal system, said Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, at the closing meeting of the session.

The revised law will help establish a complete and transparent budgetary system, transform government functions and modernize governance Zhang said.

The revision of the law laid the foundation for fiscal reform in the next step, said Prof. Liu Jianwen with the Law School of Beijing University.

"The first revision took such a long time because a number of disputes concerning the direction of fiscal reform had not been settled then," Liu said.

"If the current fiscal reform measures were not acknowledged by legislation, new moves would be held back."

Local government bonds

One of the most controversial issues is local government bonds. The old version of the law banned local governments from issuing bonds, but in practice some local governments have sought back doors to raise funds, mostly to fund infrastructure. The money has remained unsupervised.

To tackle this situation, the revision green-lights bond sales by provincial-level governments but places them under strict conditions. It not only restricts the amount of bonds but also regulates how to issue them and use funds raised through bonds.

Under the new version, provincial governments are allowed to issue bonds within a quota set by the State Council, and approved by the NPC or its standing committee.

Money raised by the bonds can only be used for public services, and not for government operations.

The debts must be included in the provincial budget and supervised by provincial people's congresses.

The central government will assess risk in local debt. If the risk is out of control, it has promised warnings, a fast re-



The 10th Meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee concluded at the Great Hall of the People on August 31. *Liu Weibing*

The revised law introduces detailed provisions to ensure the public's access to government budget information.

sponse and punishment for those responsible.

Finance Minister Lou Jiwei told a press conference here that local governments across the country had about 12-trillion-yuan debts by the end of last June.

“As far as I know, the size of local government debts has not increased notably in the past year and the risks are under control,” he said.

The revised law has helped clarify several important principles on how to manage local debts, setting rules and dividing liabilities, he said.

Fully budgeted government funds

The old Budget Law was adopted when the country was still strongly influenced by planned economy concepts and at an early stage of applying budget management. It had only a very general definition of what the government budget covered, leaving huge room for interpretation by governments.

The revised law, on the other hand, defines the government budget in four parts: the general budget, the budget for government-managed funds, the budget for State-owned assets and the budget for social insurance funds.

For years, China's government budgets only included the general budget, largely made up of tax revenue and spending

on public services and government operations.

The revenue gained through transactions in use rights of State land, accounting for a large part of local government revenues, and finances of State-owned enterprises were not budgeted nor supervised by legislatures.

Under the revised law, the revenue from land transactions is covered by the budget for government-managed funds, while the financial situations of State-owned enterprises are supervised through the budget for State-owned assets.

In 2013, the central government for the first time included these four parts in its annual budget submitted at the NPC annual session.

Greater transparency in budget

The revised law introduces detailed provisions to ensure the public's access to government budget information.

“The old law did not have any provisions about public supervision. The provision to improve budget transparency is another highlight of the revised law,” said Wang Chaoying, head of the economic laws division with the Commission for Legislative Affairs of the NPC Standing Committee, at a press conference on August 31.

It asks government financial departments to publish their budgets and final account reports within 20 days after they are adopted by the legislature. It also gives the public access to information about local government debts, purchases, budgets and audits.

The new law also clearly regulates how the legislature to examine the government budget report and what to examine. It specifically asks the legislature to examine major expense items and big investments as well as to inspect the development and efficiency of such projects. (Xinhua) ■

More measures needed on administrative approval reform

Recognize administrative approval decentralization efforts

“In one year or so the State Council has cancelled or delegated altogether 632 administrative approval processes,” said Yang Jing, State Councilor as well as secretary-general of the State Council on August 27. He delivered a report on “Efforts Made by the State Council on Transforming Government Functions by Deepening the Reform of Administrative Examination and Approval” during the 10th Session of the Standing Committee of 12th NPC. He said that major progress had been made at current stage of reforming administrative approval system and restructuring government functions.

Yang Jing announced that the State Council would cut and streamline more than 200 administrative approvals this year. In addition, more than 700 items will be sorted out by various government departments for potential cutting. The move is expected to endow businesses with easier resource allocation and encourage them to focus more efforts on supervision and macro-management than administrative approvals.

The progress was recognized by members of Standing Committee during their bi-monthly meeting on August 25 to 31. In the meantime, they also put forward suggestions on how to delegate more real power to locality through reform.

Prevent superficial decentralization

To hear and deliberate on Yang’s report, the Law Committee and the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the NPC carried out special studies on this issue.

“During our study, we found some problems. What had been delegated were those no longer needed to go through administrative approval. Government power remains big. Some decentralized superficial power which had not existed for many years. In some places, small power was decentralized instead of big one.” Lü Wei, a member of NPC Standing Committee made the remarks when reviewing the report.

“Superficial power has been decentralized instead of actual ones” as exposed in Yang’s report. Some departments and officials paid more attention to their own interests. As a result, they did not want to decentralize power which should be done. Even if they had to, they would choose small or superficial



power. Some even took this chance to delegate their responsibilities instead of power. Others decentralized their power within government systems instead of to the locality.

Wang Zuoshu, a member of NPC Standing Committee, said this phenomenon would bring negative effect on the move to cut or unleash administrative approval items and may become an obstacle, which will fail the whole reform. He suggested that the State Council should be on alert and take tough measures to address this issue.

Arken Imirbaki, vice chairman of NPC Standing Committee, Padma Choling and Li Shenglin, members of NPC Standing Committee, also raised the issue of “superficial decentralization”. Li said some departments only decentralized power to other government departments, bringing little change to the market entities. Members suggested more attention be paid to this problem and a quick solution be worked out as soon as possible.

Zhang Shaoqin suggested that in order to address the “rent-seeking” problem from the root-cause, reform measures should be carried out so that government departments and their staff responsible for administrative examination and approval dare not, do not want, or even do not think about rent-seeking power.

Wen Fujiang suggested that hearings or inquiries should be held based on random selection of government departments, and all the items of administrative examination and approval that have not been abolished be listed publicly, so that experts and applicants can give their own comments and suggestions, which might be helpful to the central govern-



On May 20, staffs with administrative examination and approval bureau of Binhai New Area in Tianjin are handling business on the spot in the office hall. *Tong Yu*

Public servants brief the villagers on working procedures in Faguanquan village. On March 6, the government service bus in Yiling district of Yichang in Hubei Province drives into Faguanquan village in Longquan Town. Staff with local government service center answered the villagers' questions and handed out government service brochures. *Zhang Guorong*



ment's efforts on cutting administrative approvals.

"Central government must have retained many powers which are all real and strong," NPC Standing Committee Member Ma Wen said the final powers remained in the government should be the most crucial ones. Therefore an operational mechanism should be established in a scientific way so as to prevent the abuse of power and control the risks in building a clean government. More attention should be paid to those powerful departments or departments with comprehensive administrative power.

During a special inquiry held on August 30, in response to issues raised by the NPC Standing Committee members concerning the "superficial decentralization", He Jianzhong, head of the State Council Office on Deepening the Reform of Administrative Examination and Approval, said efforts had been made from various aspects to decentralize important items as many as possible. Acceding to recent practice, the percentage of important items had been increased gradually. For instance, during the sixth round of decentralization one half of 53 items were important ones. During the executive meeting of the State Council held in August, among 87 items to be cut, 70 are important ones, accounting for 80 percent of the total.

He said as a next step the State Council would step up supervision on regular basis, expand public participation, and improve the comprehensive evaluation mechanism so that government departments will be under regular review on their performance on decentralizing administrative approval and streamlining functions.

Scale down staff and functions

The number of employees is always closely linked to their duty and responsibility. In line with decentralization, relevant departments should cut their staff number, observed many members during the current NPC Standing Committee session.

"With streamlining and transfer of power, human resources should go hand in hand with the allocation of power: as powers are decentralized downward, supervision and regulation should be enhanced", said Ma Wen, chairperson of NPC Internal and Judicial Affairs Committee. In order to curb the power of bureaucrats, staff should be relocated. The reform of administrative approval should create conditions for the future reform of government departments.

Ma said, currently in the areas such as food and drug supervision and regulation, production safety, environment protection, grassroots authorities remain weak. Governments of various levels should do a good job in the administration of housing accumulation fund, old-age insurance fund and medical insurance fund. She suggested that more efforts be put in these areas and relevant laws and regulations be formulated and implemented.

Another NPC Standing Committee Member Long Chaoyun said, as powers are streamlined, redundant staff and departments should be readjusted and reduced. The transformation of government functions should be closely integrated with the efforts to streamline government functions and the reform of institutions.

"In our country, there are too many government institu-



On August 30, a joint meeting of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress is convened in the Great Hall of the People. A special inquiry is held while the meeting conducts deliberation on the report submitted by the State Council on deepening administrative examination and approval system reform and accelerating the transformation of government functions. *Liu Weibing*

In areas where market can play an effective role, government should withdraw from them.

tions, which have never or rarely been cancelled. Some temporary institutions gradually change into permanent ones, some staffs of public institutions become public servants and the number is increasing. "Wen Fujiang suggested that in the reform of administrative examination and approval, some programs and institutions should be abolished or merged, and their staffs should be reduced accordingly. Wang Qingxi, vice-chairman of NPC Environment Protection and Resources Conservation Committee, suggested that efforts to streamline government and its staff should go hand in hand with the decentralization of power, saying a law on the establishment of civil services to be formulated. Such a law, as he believed, would solve the problem of redundancy as well as prevent the departmentalization of public interests or department interests being made into law.

In answering relevant inquiries, He Jianzhong said nowadays, some local governments had made initial approaches. For instance, in Shanghai, 10 percent of staff working in higher level of government was required to work in local governments, and other provinces followed suit. But situation differs among various places. In Shanghai, more staffs are willing to work in local governments, but in other places less staffs are willing to do so as working condition is better at higher level of government. He stressed that more efforts should be made to encourage public servants to work in the governments at lower levels.

Upgrade 'government omnipotent' mentality

During group review, members of NPC Standing Committee offered sharp and problem solving comments.

"Although a lot of work has been done over the year or so, the task remains difficult. The progress is not obvious or deeply felt at the local level," Wen Fujiang said the transfor-

mation of government functions is the precondition of administrative examination and approval, but this has not been widely recognized by the whole country in terms of minds or deeds. People should free their mind to think what a government should be.

"Government should change its functions from examination and approval into providing services and carrying out supervision," Ou Guangyuan, vice-chairman of NPC Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, said the reduction and cancellation of administrative examination and approval serve the transformation of government functions. He suggested that the welfare of public servants should be improved so as to avoid misconduct in this area. Fang Xin said efforts should be made to study the relationship between government and market. The boundary of government functions should be clearly defined. In the economic management, government should be the supplement of market. In areas where market can play an effective role, government should withdraw from them.

What should be managed by government? Wei Liucheng said government should focus on planning, policy-making and standard-setting. As for the examination and approval of specific programs, government should decentralize its power as much as possible.

NPC deputy Han Jianmin said in the future market will be entitled to playing its role in areas that are not prohibited by law. As for government, without legal authorization, it is not allowed to function in these areas. By following this basic principle, market and government will return to their original positions and carry their due duties respectively.

"In the process of deepening the reform of administrative examination and approval as well as transforming government functions, we must get rid of some incorrect mindset and habits. New mindset such as negative list, power list, list of function and responsibility should be set up as soon as possible," Han Jianmin stressed that due to the long existing mindset and administrative practice of "Omnipotent Government", some government staffs have been used to the mode of being arrogant and waiting for application as well as using the power of approval to replace management, they lack the sense of serving the people and do not want to solve problems for market entities. On the other hand, some market entities always uphold the ideas such as once encountering problems, one should ask for help from top officials instead of market; let others abide by the rule while making oneself be the exception. Therefore, in the process of reform, we must fight against unhealthy mindset and ideas. We must make good use of legal mindset and lawful practice to promote law-based supervision and public participation. He suggested that the people's congresses and governments at various levels should adjust relevant laws and regulations and set up an open mechanism for supervision featuring public participation, openness and transparency.

During the special inquiry, He Jianzhong also answered questions raised by member Peng Sen on how to further improve the efforts in deepening the reform on administrative examination and approval. He said that as a next step, the State Council would focus on decentralizing more real power; greatly streamline intermediary services related to pre-approval items; adopt new measures to enhance supervision during middle and final process based on the decentralization of power. (Procuratorial Daily) ■

Government power delegated to unleash market dynamics

By Jiang Xuejie

Recently the State Council executive meeting has decided to remove administrative approval of commercial and public sport events and relax restriction on their TV broadcast right in order to “untie” the enterprises to the largest extent. This is just an epitome for the State Council to further streamline administration and delegate government power. Over the year, the State Council has abolished or delegated administrative approval of 632 items in seven batches, accounting for 1/3 of those previously subject to State Council review and approval. A series of reform measures has worked effectively and continuously so as to unleash market dynamics.

Reform of business registration system is well-known among many people for easier access to market. Specifically, business license is issued ahead of relative administrative authorization instead of the other way around. The cost of start-ups is reduced by changing actual paid-in of registered capital to commitment to payment of registered capital. 126 business items subject to preliminary examination and approval have changed to post-examination and approval. Annual inspections on registered companies are replaced by companies' annual reports.

The policies to streamline administration and delegate government power, including removing or delegating administrative approval process and reforming business registration, endow businesses with easier resource allocation and encourage them to focus more efforts on supervision and macro-management than government approvals.

Thanks to simplified business registration procedures, more than 11.3 million businesses were registered last year, an increase of 19.6 percent year on year. The figure reached 5.9 million during the first half of this year, up 16.7 percent against the same period last year. Breaking the figure down, newly registered private companies rose by 60.17 percent and people engaged in private business grew substantially: the January-June period saw 13 million newly employed in private business, up more than 3 times from a year ago.

The central government has removed or reduced charges for services, saving an expected 10 billion yuan for enterprises and individuals each year. It has led to relaxed control of the market, boosted investment and creativity of businesses. Investment projects requiring government review and approval are to be reduced by 60 percent. 34 administrative fees in central government and 314 in local government are canceled, and 20 standard charges are lowered.

When it comes to local governments, provinces like Liaoning, Shandong and Hebei recently buckled down to introduce administrative power list. Zhejiang Province was the first to release a full list of provincial power on the Internet as early as June, covering 4,236 administrative powers under 42 provincial government departments. Its municipal power list was set to publicize in October, meaning no additional power except those on the list.



On December 6, 2013, a woman conducts registration applications in the government service center in Loudi, Hunan Province.

Cheng Tingting

These policies have an active impact on emerging industries and service sector. In the second quarter the number of newly registered companies in telecommunication, software and information technology industries rose 138.5 percent year on year. Data from the National Bureau of Statistic showed that this year industry growth rate dropped, but the tertiary industry still exceeded the secondary industry as a percentage of GDP with the service sector developing even faster.

It is worth noting that streamlining administration and delegating government power do not imply to ignore supervision. The State Council executive meeting held on August 27 indicated that delegating power and strengthening supervision should be further coordinated and issues such as “delegate approval without supervision” and “obsessed by approval, confused by supervision” should be tackled.

As few matters are subject to preliminary review and approval, stronger oversight has been exercised over delegated matters when they are being handled and after they have been handled, such as implementing informative recording, bringing industry associations into play, and introducing industry standards. In June the State Council issued “Opinions on Promoting Fair Competition in the Market and Maintaining Market Order”. It specified 27 reform policies on issues ranging from market entry and exit, oversight on market entities and supervisors, to market supervision mechanism and market supervision security system. In particular, with the promulgation of Provisional Regulations on Enterprise Information Publicity and Social Credibility System Construction Plan (2014-2020), the enterprise credit system has apparently restricted the enterprise behavior to a larger extent. In this sense, credibility becomes a foundation pile in socialist market economy. (People's Daily)

Partner aid to Tibet yields fruits

By Yang Buyue and Chen Zewei

Twenty years in place is a special mechanism by which the other parts of the country provide counterpart assistance to Tibet Autonomous Region, which has witnessed an all-round development vibrant with life as never before.

In July twenty years ago, the central government held the third Working Conference on Tibet and took a major strategic decision on the principle of providing aid to Tibet, every other parts of the country would be responsible for a designated area in the region to concentrate on its needs and send in aid personnels on a rotating basis.

Twenty years have passed, with the joint efforts and dedication by aid personnels sent there in one after another, the desolate and snow-capped Qinghai-Tibet plateau has undergone epoch-making changes. With the economy growing fast, the people's living standards ever improving, the ethnic unity sound, the tie with the rest of the country closer, the region is embracing a better tomorrow.



On December 29, 2003, kids boarding in the dormitory for roads maintenance workers in Shannan district receive food in a clean dining hall.

Tu Deng

Help between brothers

The arrival of an aid group of 622 cadres at the roof of the world in July, 1995, marked the very beginning of the 20-year aid.

Why do we come here? What shall we do? What can we achieve? The more they discussed, the surer they would feel of being a doer rather than a guest on this vast land. They came here not only to help the local Tibetans to get rid of poverty with money and goods, but more importantly, to innovate the system and mechanism within the central government's overall policies on Tibet.

The whole country is mobilized to support Tibet's development, like brothers helping one another.

"Previously, it was the central government that cared about this region," said Zhu Xiaoming, vice president of China Tibetan Culture Protection and Development Association, "now the whole country is mobilized to support Tibet's development, like brothers helping one another. Some aid group even brought their own families members and friends to Tibet to help them out."

In Shanghai, a leading group was established at municipal level to coordinate, discuss and decide significant issues regarding partner aid and cooperation. It was led by top leadership of the municipal committee of CPC and the municipal government, composed of leading officials from 56 competent units.



On August 16, in the Xinsheng village of Jinda town in Tibet's Gongbujiangda County, several Tibetan women sit and chat in front of their new houses. *Pan Xu*



A section of the Sichuan-Tibet Expressway Li Hualiang

Jilong County was once China's largest land port of trade with Nepal. Early this year, a decision was made at the meeting held by the Chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region that they would invite first-class design institutes to work out a plan of building Jilong into the bridgehead of China's land pass-way towards South Asia. Dai Jingbin, one of the latest cadres sent by Shanghai to work in Tibet, currently serves as deputy Party secretary of Shigatse. Dai was then on vacation at home in Shanghai. He hung up the phone and went up to Shanghai leading group and municipal government departments for help. Quickly, a joint team of Tongji University urban planning institute and related institutions was set up for the design task.

From late February to early March, 11 experts came to Tibet and started their field research which lasted nearly one month and extended over 5,000 kilometers. Feng Liwen, a bridge expert, and Zhang Changchu, a design expert, were of old age and suffered severe altitude sickness. They planted themselves on the site in daytime, and sorted out data in the evening, communicating with the back-up team in Shanghai whenever necessary, sometimes even late night. After one month, the planning scheme was completed.

"We were astonished that such a big thing could be done in such a short period of time. Indeed, they put all their heart and soul into it," said Nima Ciugene, deputy head of Jilong County.

The aid teams tried every means to ensure the assistance to Tibet was continued, stable and effective.

To make the transition of two different batches more smoothly, Jiangsu aid team sent the major officials one year earlier than the others of the same batch, saving time for adaptation.

"I came to Tibet in September 2012, one year earlier than my teammates," said Chen Yong. He was the head of the seventh aid team sent by Jiangsu Province and served as deputy secretary of CPC municipal committee and first deputy mayor of Lhasa. "What the previous team handed over was something of regularity, so that I know what to do when I take over. One year later, when my teammates come, I know how to drag them into their roles."

In 2012, a document was issued by Lhasa Party Committee to remove and combine rural teaching stations, and focus on primaries and junior highs of county and township level.

"Knowing well the situation before hand, I put a substantive amount of the aid fund into four counties including Linzhou, Qushui, Dazi and Mozhugongka, and established a primary school and improved a junior high school for each county." Chen was quite proud of what he did.

Provinces like Hubei, Hebei and Guangdong took a similar approach, making the secretary of the county Party Committee to be the head of the next aid team.

Provinces like Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Shandong established local chamber of commerce, which encouraged and attracted well-known enterprises to invest and do business in Tibet, bringing benefit to both the enterprises and the local people.

Over the two decades, 5,965 cadres (not including those replaced in between) from the central government, provincial and municipal governments and the State-owned enterprises were sent to Tibet, 26 billion yuan was invested and 7,615 projects were accomplished. In particular, many key projects

of transportation, energy, communication, agriculture, animal husbandry, and social undertakings have laid solid foundation for further development and stability in the region.

In 2013, the GDP of Tibet Autonomous Region reached 80.767 billion yuan, an increase of 20.2 times over that of 1994; the revenue 11.04 billion yuan, an increase of 18.3 times; the fixed-assets investment 91.848 billion yuan, an increase of 43.3 times; the per capita net income of farmers and herdsman 6,578 yuan, an increase of 8.2 times.

Happiness one can see and touch

For those aid personnels, Tibet is their second hometown. They made indelible contribution in various areas including public health, transportation, education, medical care, water and electric power projects, creating happiness which can be really seen and touched by the Tibetan people.

During the two decades, 1.38 billion yuan was invested in public health sector, including fund, projects and medical facilities, 2,187 medical personnel and 172 management cadres

For those aid personnels, Tibet is their second hometown.

were sent there, over 70,000 grassroots medical staff were trained. Especially from 2012 to 2013, over 2.57 million urban and rural residents and 27,000 monks and nuns received free health examination, 1.11 million person-time children received screening test and review check, of which 2,597 children diagnosed with congenital heart disease and basically treated and cured.

At present, the maternal mortality rate declined from 343.8 per 100,000 in 1994 to 154.51 in 2013, the infant mortality rate decreased from 59.61‰ to 19.97‰, the hospital parturition rate increased from 6.6 percent to 82.33 percent, and the average life expectancy increased from 65 to 68.17.

Poverty alleviation can not be done without education.



Qamdo Jinhe hydropower station, located along the upper reaches of Lancang River in Tibet Autonomous Region, is a key power construction and aid-for-Tibet project during the 10th Five-Year Plan period and its total installed capacity is 60,000 kw. *Chen Haining*

From 2001 when the fourth Working Conference on Tibet was held in 2013, 960 million yuan was earmarked, 1,823 projects carried out, 6,829 personnels trained, and 1.06 million books and materials donated. Only science and talents can provide confidence for a brighter future.

Breakthroughs were made one after another in transportation sector. The operation of Qinghai-Tibet Railway became the first railway in Tibet. The very first expressway in Tibet was built between Lhasa and Gonggar airport, and the total mileage of highway open to traffic reached 70,591 kilometers. Civil aviation networks has been established with Gonggar airport in Lhasa as the core and extend to Bangda airport in Qamdo, Mainline airport in Nyingchi, Gunsa airport in Ngari, and Peace airport in Shigatse. They are not only traffic artery, but also promising paths for Tibetan people.

Water and electricity projects turned on the light of hope for farmers and herdsmen on the plateau. Starting from 1991, the Ministry of Water Resources sent working teams to Tibet and in 2001, the partner aid was made into mechanism, which specified 14 related organizations, including units directly under the Ministry of Water Resources and the agencies of major water areas. Traveling through the whole region, you can see the anticipated harvest in Yalong irrigation area, the magnificent water control project in Manla, the surging Yarlung Zangbo River and the drinking water projects everywhere. All in all, tremendous changes have taken place.

Eleven electric power enterprises fully played their advantages of capital, technology, management and talents, intensifying their efforts of building hydropower stations, includ-



Tibetan students read books in a library on May 29. The library is jointly donated to Luoma Township's Central Elementary School by Beijing Railway, Beijing Fuxue Elementary School, Yangfangdian No.5 Elementary School and other kind-hearted people in Beijing. More than 5,000 donated books are Tibetan and Chinese extracurricular readings for elementary school students. *Tang Zhaoming*



On May 6, 2011, soldiers from Aligor Frontier Brigade come to the Kong Fansen Elementary School in Ngari, Tibet, washing hair and doing the haircut for the school pupils. By so doing from 2008 till today, it has become an emotional bond between the soldiers and the pupils. *Tao Xiyi*

ing Shiquanhe station in Ngari and Pangduo station in Lhasa. Currently the power grid in Tibet has covered 45 counties where farmers and herdsman basically have access to electricity in their daily life and the electricity-using population is four times more than that in 1994.

Farmers and herdsman benefit most

“In Tibet, farmers and herdsman account for 80 percent of the total population. As long as they get rich, Tibet is of great hope and better future,” said Ge Hailong, a member of the aid team sent by Zhejiang Province and served as deputy director of Organization Department of Nagqu Municipal Party Committee.

Bainang County is located at over 4,200 meters above sea-

level. People there grow highland barley and eat zanba which is made of the barley. When Shi Wenjin, one of the second aid team members sent by Shandong Province and served as secretary of Bainang County Party Committee came here in 1998, he got to know that the status quo of single economic structure and difficulty in increasing income need to be changed. Later on, greenhouse growing was introduced and injected fresh blood into Bainang County, his second hometown.

The small greenhouses brought about by Shi have turned out to be the national vegetable production standardization demonstration area, with tomatoes bending the heavy branches and strawberries giving off a pleasant smell.

Fourteen years ago, there were only 50 greenhouses, growing 10 high quality varieties of fruits and vegetables. Now, 5,367 greenhouses and 116 varieties made Bainang County



A water project, which is constructed with the aid from Shanghai, resolved the problem of drinking water for residents in Shigatse. This project provides 20,000 tons of water to Shigatse on a daily basis and thus greatly improves its urban landscape. Till September 29 1997, 56 out of the total 62 aid-for-Tibet projects had been accomplished. *Tang Zhaoming*



On June 6, 2006, in Namling County of Shigatse Region in Tibet, doctors from Weifang of Shandong Province have eye-checks for the Tibetan people. That day is the national Eye-care Day. Doctors in the medical team went to the agricultural and pastoral areas, taught Tibetan farmers the basic knowledge of eye diseases, and conducted reexamination for the patients who once received cataract surgeries. *Wang Ning*



Li Lianning, deputy secretary-general of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, briefs the students on the basic knowledge of NPC. On July 15, the activity of "Dream Dandelion—a closer look at the National People's Congress", which is co-sponsored by the Ministry of Education and the General Office of NPC Standing Committee, is launched in Beijing. Representatives from the ethnic minority students from Beijing, Jiangxi, Xinjiang and Tibet, children of rural migrant workers, rural left-behind children and students from old revolutionary bases visited the Great Hall of the People. *Wu Xiaoling*

the largest plateau vegetable production base in Tibet. The grass which even sheep and cattle don't like to eat made them rich. Last year, the yield of vegetable in Bainang County reached 37.6 million kilogram, the sales revenue 82.651 million yuan, and the per capita income increase of farmers and herdsmen 1,360 yuan. Among every 100 yuan they earned, 20 are from vegetables. The reputation of Bainang's vegetables in Tibet is like that of Shouguang in the whole country.

Zhai Jun, one of the seventh batch of Shandong aid team who used to be secretary of Bainang county Party Committee, said that "teaching a man to fish is better than just giving him the fish". The annual vegetable and fruits picking festival has become a major platform for Bainang County to build modern ecological agriculture, which integrates landscape, picking, leisure, technology and exhibition into one.

Gar County is an important agriculture and husbandry base in Ngari area, but its further development is for quite a long time restrained by the forage shortage. The aid team sent by Shaanxi Province came here and popularized the planting of alfalfa which could be used as forage.

As calculated, the yield of alfalfa is 100 times more than that of natural grassland. Up till now, the planting area of alfalfa has been as large as 23,000 mu (1,533 hectares), and an agriculture and husbandry industry chain has come into place, featuring artificial grass, dairy farming and short-term fattening of sheep and cattle.

According to the Statistic Bureau of Tibet Autonomous Region, last year, the per capita net income of farmers and herdsmen in Tibet has increased by 15 percent, reaching 6,578

yuan, a historic record of double-digit increase for 11 consecutive years.

Jin Wei, a professor of Party School of the CPC, has published the first book on aid to Tibet entitled *Tibet: Aid and Development*. She shared the survey results with us that more than 60 percent of Tibetan people believed that the farmers and herdsmen there benefited most from the aid policy and program.

Unique Tibet

Since 2000, more and more aid teams have realized that Tibet not only belongs to China, but also to the world. Tibet is unique and the aid there is to better protect its characteristics rather than to make it another Beijing, Guangdong or Zhejiang.

The first and most important is culture. According to the strategy of the central government, Tibet has become one of the major protection bases for culture with Chinese national characteristics. In 2002, Jilin Province became the aid partner with Shigatse area as well as three counties including Dingjie, Jilong and Saga. Almost 80 million yuan has been invested for local culture and folk art protection.

Culture aid promotion association was established to explore and protect historical and cultural heritage of Tibet, promote the development of cultural industry and communication among different ethnic cultures, and ensure ideological security. About 1,700 people have participated in the campaign.

Local farmers and herdsmen participated in planting trees, growing grass and crops, earning 2,000 yuan more than before every year.

It is reported that the cultural tourism output in Dingjie County, Jilong County and Saga County in 2013 has increased by tenfold than the number of 2002, and the number of tourists were 5 times more than that level.

Ecological environment requires protection. Known as the third polar in the world and water tower in Asia, Tibet takes the responsibility of ecological protection for 1/8 of the country's land area, regulating the climate, and safeguarding the ecological security of the country and Asia at large.

"Below the high sky and above the thick soil, ecological protection is of priority. We need to hold the bottom line of ecology, retain the last piece of pure land, and build an inexhaustible green bank for the future generations," said Zhao Zhiyuan, head of the seventh aid team sent by Shandong Province who used to be deputy secretary of Shigatse municipal Party Committee.

Since July last year when Shandong aid team came to Tibet, they have actively participated in the forestation cam-

paign initiated by the local government to protect major river basins, improve the wasteland ecological protection in Namling county on the northern bank of the Yarlung Zangbo River.

Namling County is the hometown of the fifth Panchen Lama and the sixth Panchen Lama. The xiangba Tibetan opera there is well-known as one of the national intangible cultural heritages. However, it is located at over 4,000 meters above sea-level where the severe coldness and lack of oxygen make it hard for the green vegetation to survive. The county is ravaged by desertification and sandstorm.

With the support of Party committee and government of Namling county, an integrated ecological demonstration base has been built, with over 80 million yuan invested, 600 thousands trees newly planted, more than 60 kilometers forest belt formed, 3,800 mu (253 hectares) artificial grass and 1,000 mu (67 hectares) high-yield highland barley newly grew.

Local farmers and herdsmen participated in planting trees, growing grass and crops, earning 2,000 yuan more than before every year. "The wasteland near my home now turns out to be green woodland, Buddha bless me! I am a forest ranger, and the salary plus what I get for planting trees makes my income about 15 thousands yuan every year. My family stands behind me," said Mima, a villager in Aima town.

The official data released by Namling County shows that since this year, the frequency of sandstorm has been declined by one third, while the oxygen level and air humidity have substantively improved. (Outlook Weekly) ■



On March 28, the national flag raising ceremony to commemorate the 55th anniversary of the emancipation of Tibetan serfs is held in the square of Potala Palace in Lhasa. Liu Kun

Designated by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in February, Victory Day of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression is officially observed on September 3.



China's top leaders Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli present flower baskets to martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the Anti-Japanese War during a ceremony marking the 69th anniversary of Victory Day in the war at the Museum of the War of the Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression in Beijing on September 3. *Wang Ye*



On September 9, 1945, He Yingqin (L), representative of the Chinese Government and the Southeast Asia Ally Forces, accepts the Japanese army's instrument of surrender in Nanjing, then China's capital. *Xinhua*

On September 2, 1945, the ceremony of Japan's surrender to the Allies is conducted in the US battleship Missouri perched at Tokyo Bay. Watched by representatives from the 9 surrender-receiving countries including China, Japan signs in the capitulation. *Xinhua*





President Xi Jinping (R front) meets with veterans, relatives of martyrs and family representatives for deceased foreigners who contributed to the victory of the Anti-Japanese War before a ceremony marking the 69th anniversary of Victory Day in the war at the Museum of the War of the Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression in Beijing on September 3. Yao Dawei



On September 3, in front of the tomb for the unknown martyrs in the Tai'erzhuang Battle, Sun Dianxiu, a 100-year-old veteran, presents flower basket to the martyrs.

Guo Xulei

China's top leaders Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli present flower baskets to martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the Resistance War Against Japanese Aggression during a ceremony marking the 69th anniversary of Victory Day in the war at the Museum on of the Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression in Beijing on September 3. Yao Dawei



On September 3, students from Wanzai No.1 Elementary School in Yichun, Jiangxi Province wear "victory flowers" for war heroes. Deng Longhua





WENZHOU

ECONOMIC & TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE



- Investment hot spot
- Vibrant blue-chip new area
- Example of urbanization and industrialization

