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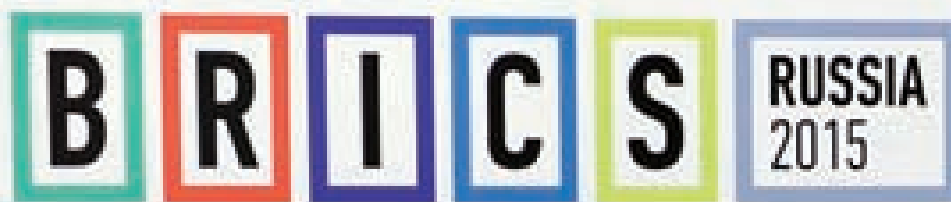


**CHINA LEARNS TO LOVE
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

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BRICS PA
June 8, 2015



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

15, Moscow, Russia



Zhang Dejiang (C), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) of China, speaks at the BRICS Parliamentary Forum in Moscow, Russia, June 8. *Li Tao*



24 China learns to love vocational education

Contents

Special Report

6

Zhang Dejiang wraps up fruitful trip to Russia, Republic of Korea and India

Legislation

18

Chinese officials shall pledge allegiance to Constitution

20

China adopts new law on national security

Supervision

24

China learns to love vocational education

28

Blue collar education

Vocational education requires a strong boost to supply skilled workers needed for smart manufacturing



Focus

32

Against the wishes of the majority of Hong Kong people

36

Heading for stable growth



6

Zhang Dejiang wraps up fruitful trip to Russia, Republic of Korea and India



20

China adopts new law on national security



ISSUE 2 · 2015

Economy

36

Heading for stable growth
Improved economic structure and greater benefits for the people usher in a new direction for China's economy

People

40

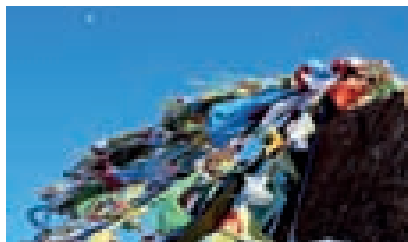
Arken Imirbaki: Ethnic unity a lifeline



Nationality

44

Legislation on Celestial Burial initiated in Tibet



COVER: Zhang Dejiang (2nd R), chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, communicates with students at Henan Medical Technician Institute in Central China's Henan Province, April 12.
Ma Zhancheng



NPC

General Editorial

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Zhang Dejiang (R), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, Russia, June 9. *Li Tao*



Zhang Dejiang (L), meets with ROK President Park Geun-hye in Seoul, Republic of Korea, June 11. *Xie Huanchi*

Zhang Dejiang wraps up fruitful trip to Russia, Republic of Korea and India

From June 7 to 16, 2015, Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) of China, paid a friendly visit to Russia, Republic of Korea and India at the invitation of his foreign counterparts. In Russia, Zhang attended the first meeting of China-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and the BRICS Parliamentary Forum. During the trip, Zhang took part in altogether 47 events, making this trip an exhausting yet fruitful one. Zhang's wife Xin Shusen, Vice Chairman of NPC Standing Committee Wang Chen and an entourage of diplomatic personnel also participated in the visit.

Promoting BRICS parliamentary cooperation in an all-around way

The successful convening of the BRICS Parliamentary Forum was an important step in the cooperation among BRICS member States. It was of great significance to enhance parliamentary exchanges and cooperation among BRICS members, improve mutual understanding and friendship, and promote the establishment of a more intimate, comprehensive and solid partnership among BRICS members. This forum was first proposed by Russia and actively echoed by China, Brazil, South Africa and India. On June 8, Zhang attended the



Zhang Dejiang (L) meets with Indian President Pranab Mukherjee in New Delhi, India, June 15. Li Tao

forum and delivered a keynote speech, the first appearance of Chinese top legislator in BRICS multilateral parliamentary activities. Chairwoman of Russia's Federation Council Valentina Matviyenko and State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin presided over the two sessions of the forum. President of the Brazilian Federal Senate Renan Calheiros, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil Eduardo Cunha, Chairwoman of South Africa's National Council of Provinces Thandi Modise, Deputy Speaker of South Africa's National Assembly Solomon Lechesa Tsenoli and Chairman of the External Affairs Committee of the Indian House of People Tharoor participated in the forum. Russian President Vladimir Putin conveyed his congratulations to the forum.

During the forum, Zhang participated in diversified diplomatic activities. In the first and second sessions, he made remarks on dealing with global political and economic challenges as well as enhancing BRICS parliamentary cooperation, met with South African and Brazilian parliamentary leaders, called upon leaders of delegations and attended the welcome reception hosted by the Russian side. On both multilateral and bilateral occasions, Zhang comprehensively explained the attitudes and positions of the Chinese side, had in-depth exchange of views with his foreign counterparts.

In the background that the international political and economic situation is undergoing continuous profound and complex changes, it was the greatest concern of all parties in the meeting that how the BRICS members could deepen mutually

The cooperation among BRICS members was in conformity with the tide of times featuring peace, development, and win-win cooperation, said Zhang Dejiang.

beneficial cooperation and make joint efforts to address the challenges. Zhang said that cooperation among BRICS members was in conformity with the tide of times featuring peace, development, and win-win cooperation. With the guidance of BRICS summit mechanism, cooperation among the member States has maintained a good momentum and scored fruitful achievements, which brings tangible benefits to the people and makes positive contribution to world peace and development. BRICS cooperation faces new opportunities and unprecedented challenges. Therefore, member States should be more confident and sober-minded, uphold the spirit of openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation, strengthen exchanges and cooperation, promote common development and play a constructive role in tackling global issues and promote peace and development in the world. To that end, Zhang proposed four recommendations. First, BRICS members should



Zhang Dejiang speaks at the BRICS Parliamentary Forum in Moscow, Russia, June 8. Xie Huanchi

jointly safeguard world peace, stability and international justice; push the international order towards a fairer and more reasonable direction. Second, BRICS members should make concerted efforts to promote common development, fulfill national rejuvenation and prosperity. Third, BRICS members should deepen pragmatic cooperation in all fields and strive to establish an interest community characterized by mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. Fourth, BRICS members should make joint efforts to optimize global economic governance, promote common and balanced development between the developed and developing countries.

Friendly exchanges of legislative sectors are an important part of BRICS cooperation. One theme of this forum was to further expand the forms and substance of BRICS parliamentary cooperation. Chairman Zhang stressed that parliaments should firmly grasp the momentum, move towards the positive direction, make use of advantages of respective States, strengthen exchanges and cooperation, and inject fresh air and vitality into BRICS cooperation. Works should be done in the following four aspects. First, parliaments should well serve the general goals of BRICS cooperation so as to promote the partnership of member States. Second, parliaments should safeguard global peace and international rule of law so as to create a favorable environment for the development of BRICS members. Third, parliaments should do a better job in sharing experiences regarding governance and administration so as to practice pragmatic cooperation among member

The visit achieved a complete success in strengthening unity, deepening mutual trust, promoting cooperation and consolidating friendship.

States. Fourth, parliaments should forge effective platforms for friendly cooperation so as to promote the establishment of BRICS cooperation mechanism.

Chairman Zhang's remarks were complimented and supported by the participating delegates who unanimously vowed to protect the good momentum of BRICS cooperation, establish a more effective parliamentary platform within the framework of BRICS, strengthen communication and coordination in multilateral parliamentary organizations and make greater contribution to the exchanges and cooperation among BRICS members. The forum passed the Statement of the First BRICS Parliamentary Forum. In the process of drafting and negotiation, the Chinese side made sufficient communications and consultations with other parties, proposed suggestions and recommendations on substance as well as wordings of the document, and made important contributions to the success of the forum.

While meeting with Thandi Modise and Solomon Lechesa Tsenoli, Chairman Zhang pointed out that deepening BRICS cooperation served the common interest of China and South Africa. China's NPC is willing to reinforce its cooperation with the parliament of South Africa, including within the framework of BRICS cooperation, and promote the development of China-South Africa comprehensive strategic partnership. While meeting with Eduardo Cunha, Chairman Zhang emphasized that China-Brazil ties had developed rapidly in recent years. China's NPC highly valued its cooperation with the Brazilian parliament. The two sides should well utilize the platforms including regular exchange mechanism and BRICS parliamentary forum for the development of China-Brazil comprehensive strategic partnership. Top legislators of both South Africa and Brazil echoed that they were willing to make concerted efforts with Chinese counterpart to deepen bilateral parliamentary exchanges and cooperation, strengthen communication and coordination in multilateral parliamentary organizations so as to make parliamentary exchanges more enriched and effective.

Consolidating the good momentum of State-to-State relations

Chairman Zhang's trip took place when the international and regional situation was undergoing profound and complex changes, the newly emerging markets and developing countries were growing stronger, and China was smoothly carrying forward with a series of key diplomatic strategic deployment in its neighborhood. The visit was a major diplomatic action taken by Chinese leadership towards world powers and neighboring countries, which was of great significance to promote the in-depth development of State-to-State relations and strengthen the exchanges and cooperation between China's NPC and its foreign counterparts.

During the visit, Chairman Zhang respectively met with Russian President Vladimir Putin, ROK President Park Geun-hye, Indian President Mukherjee and Prime Minister Modi, held talks with Chairwoman of Russia's Federation Council Valentina Matviyenko and State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea Chung Ui-hwa, Chairman of Rajya Sabha and Vice President of India Ansari, and Speaker of Lok Sabha Mahajan, during which the leaders had in-depth exchange of views and reached wide consensus on bilateral relations, parliamentary exchanges as well as important international and regional issues of common interest. Russia, ROK and India attached high importance to the visit, and Chinese delegation was warmly received by all walks of life in these countries. The visit achieved a complete success in strengthening unity, deepening mutual trust, promoting cooperation and consolidating friendship.

China and Russia are each other's largest neighbor and the most important strategic coordination partner. Since 2013, President Xi Jinping and President Vladimir Putin have met several times. The two leaders made strategic planning and top-level design for further development of bilateral relations, which pointed out the direction for the cooperation in all fields. While meeting with Russian leaders, Chairman Zhang said that as the international situation became more volatile, China and Russia should enhance strategic mutual

trust and increase support to each other. This served the fundamental interest of both countries and both peoples. China had always been handling bilateral relations from the strategic, global and long-term perspective, and was willing to join hands with Russia to actively implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of State, firmly support the other side to pursue the path of development conforming to its basic national conditions, firmly support the other side to safeguard national sovereignty, security and national interest, firmly support the other side to do its own job well, firmly support the other side to fulfill development and rejuvenation so as to maintain the high-level development of China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination. Russian leaders stated that Russia highly valued its relations with China and was willing to maintain close interactions with China by providing firm support on a reciprocal basis, widening pragmatic cooperation in all fields and improving the bilateral ties to a higher level.

In the 23 years since the establishment of bilateral ties, China-ROK relations have escalated from cooperative partnership, comprehensive cooperative partnership to strategic cooperative partnership. The speed, width and impact of two-way cooperation serve as a role model for the development of State-to-State relations. At various meetings, Chairman Zhang made positive comments on the results of two-way cooperation, pointed out that the bilateral relations were at the new starting point of leap-forward development, and that the exchange of visits between President Xi Jinping and President Park Geun-hye as well as the important consensus they reached had injected new mighty vitality into the bilateral ties. China is willing to work with ROK to firmly grasp the general direction of the development of bilateral relations, continuously maintain friendly cooperation at all levels and pragmatic cooperation in all fields, and become reliable partners to achieve common development, safeguard regional peace, rejuvenate Asia and promote global prosperity. ROK leaders warmly welcomed the visit by Chairman Zhang, saying that the visit demonstrated the importance attached by the Chinese side to bilateral relations as well as China's firm support to ROK in tackling the epidemic of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). Republic of Korea was willing to participate more in the "One Belt and One Road" initiatives, expand bilateral pragmatic cooperation, push for the further development of ROK-China strategic cooperative partnership, and jointly promote regional peace, stability and prosperity in northeast Asia. Republic of Korea was a major stakeholder of Korean Peninsula issue on which Chairman Zhang had in-depth exchanges of views with its leaders. He reiterated that China upheld objective and fair positions on this issue, and was resolutely committed to realizing denuclearization on the Peninsula and addressing the issue through dialogue and consultation.

China and India are the two largest developing countries and the most dynamic emerging markets in the world. Since entering the new century, China-India bilateral relations have stepped in the new phase of comprehensive and rapid development. President Xi Jinping paid a State visit to India in 2014, and not long ago Prime Minister Modi paid a successful visit to China. The two leaders reached an important consensus on promoting the development of China-India strategic cooperative partnership and constructing a closer



Zhang Dejiang (3rd L) meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin (4th R) in Moscow, Russia, June 9. *Xie Huanchi*

development partnership. While meeting with Indian leaders, Chairman Zhang pointed out that both China and India are in the process of national rejuvenation, and the Chinese dream is closely linked with Indian dream. China is willing to join hands with India to enhance political mutual trust, deepen pragmatic cooperation, widen cultural exchanges, properly manage and handle disputes, achieve peaceful, cooperative and inclusive development so as to better serve the well-being of 2.5 billion people in two countries as well as safeguard regional and global peace and stability. Indian leaders stated that India takes China as a great neighbor and important strategic partner, and is ready to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with China in various fields, constantly improve the bilateral relations to a higher level, and achieve common development and prosperity.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascism War. In the meetings with the State leaders and people in the three countries, Chairman Zhang actively proposed that all parties should enhance mutual support and coordination to ensure celebration, and commemoration activities are well prepared in an effort to remember the history, commemorate martyrs, cherish peace, create the future and jointly safeguard the victory of World War II and international justice.

Exchange between political parties is an important part of State-to-State relations, and it is also closely related to parliamentary exchanges. During the visit, Chairman Zhang also met with head of Kim Moo-sung, chairman of the New Frontier Party, and Moon Jae-in, chief of the New Politics Alliance for Democracy in ROK, and President of the Congress Party Sonia Gandhi, former Prime Minister Singh in India. Chairman Zhang stated that Chinese Communist Party is willing to conduct diversified forms of exchanges with major political parties in all countries, play a more important role in improving mutual understanding, promoting mutually beneficial cooperation and activating cultural and people-to-people

Exchange between political parties is an important part of State-to-State relations, and it is also closely related to parliamentary exchanges.

exchanges. Leaders of major political parties in ROK and India expressed their strong willingness to strengthen party-to-party cooperation and make greater contribution to promote friendship between the countries.

Embarking on a new chapter of parliamentary exchanges

One intention of Chairman Zhang's visit was to promote the implementation of the important consensus reached by the heads of States from the legislature's perspective and improve the level of friendly exchanges between China's NPC and its counterparts in an all-around manner. During the trip, he attended the inaugural ceremony of the first meeting of China-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee in Moscow and the closing ceremony of China-India parliamentary's friendship forum in New Delhi. He made two keynote speeches, held in-depth exchange with the leadership and members of parliaments in the three countries. While talking about the functions, characteristics and advantages of legislative branches, he pertinently put forward recommendations on furthering the parliamentary exchanges and cooperation in a bid to promote the development of overall State-to-State relations.

In 2005, China's NPC established regular exchange mechanism with the Russia's Federation Council and the State Duma. Both mechanisms chaired by the Chairman of NPC



Zhang Dejiang (3rd L) meets with ROK President Park Geun-hye (3rd R) in Seoul, Republic of Korea, June 11. *Xie Huanchi*

Standing Committee on the Chinese side, were the highest-level exchange mechanisms set up between NPC and foreign legislatures. In the past 10 years, the two sides conducted friendly exchanges and pragmatic cooperation at various levels and areas under the framework of regular exchange mechanism. Lots of precious experience has been accumulated. Confronted with the strong need to develop bilateral relations in the new situations, in order to make better use of current resources and make the exchanges more efficient, both sides agreed to reform the existing cooperation mechanism in September 2014. The two exchange mechanisms were combined into one China-Russia parliamentary cooperation committee. In the just-concluded first meeting of the cooperation committee, Chairman Zhang Dejiang, Chairwoman Valentina Matviyenko and Speaker Sergei Naryshkin all took part in the inaugural ceremony and addressed the meeting. Chairman Zhang pointed out that the establishment of the new cooperation committee would provide a broader room for bilateral cooperation at a more profound and higher level, indicating that exchanges and cooperation between the two legislatures had entered into a new era. Both sides should take it as a new starting point to further enhance mutual support in order to lay a solid foundation for the promotion of strategic mutual trust, further strengthen exchanges of good experience to provide reference for respective national development and rejuvenation, further press ahead with friendship generation by generation to consolidate social foundation for the development of bilateral relations, and carry out closer multi-lateral cooperation in order to create favorable external environment for common development.

During the working session with Russian parliamentary leaders, Chairman Zhang stated that China-Russia legislative exchanges should conform to and serve the overall bilateral relations and provide powerful support and legal guarantee for the pragmatic cooperation between the two sides. He suggested that both legislatures take advantage of existing cooperative platforms, take legislative cooperation as the

priority, pick up key collaboration areas including national security, cyber security, social management and civil code compilation, and pertinently learn from the best legislative experience and practices on the other side. In the meantime, both sides should actively promote local cooperation, youth exchanges and media interaction to fuel the development of bilateral ties. The Russian side expressed gratitude to Chairman Zhang for attending the BRICS Parliamentary Forum, stating that this visit demonstrated China's firm political support to Russia. Russia was willing to further its cooperation with China's NPC, innovate new forms, enrich its contents, reinforce its effectiveness, and make greater contribution to bilateral friendly cooperation.

Chairman Zhang's visit to Republic of Korea was the first formal friendly visit paid by Chinese top legislator within 12 years. While talking about parliamentary cooperation, Chairman Zhang said that there was a solid foundation, and the two sides had thus far held nine rounds of meetings under the framework of regular exchange mechanism. The two legislatures should continue enhancing cooperation, strengthen friendship and mutual trust through high-level meetings, regular exchanges and friendship group activities, actively carry out exchange of experience on rule of law, economic development and improvement of livelihood, accelerate the approval of legal documents of bilateral cooperation so as to provide legal guarantee for the promotion of pragmatic cooperation. The ROK side showed its sincere respect for the remarkable achievement made by China on economic and social progress, aspiring that both legislatures could persistently adhere to the spirit of mutual understanding and trust, expand dimensions for exchanges, increase effectiveness for cooperation, strengthen friendly exchanges of parliamentarians, and make joint contribution to the sound and rapid development of bilateral relations.

Chairman Zhang's visit to India was the first one paid by NPC Chairman in 14 years. While meeting with India parliamentary leaders, Chairman Zhang said that it was not only

the general momentum but also the common aspiration of people to strengthen exchanges and cooperation between the legislative bodies of China and India. Compared with the rapid growth of bilateral relations in recent years, there was still huge room for legislative cooperation. Both sides should conduct closer exchanges at all levels and improve mutual understanding, strengthen exchange of experience on administration and governance so as to provide reference to reform and development, enhance communication on policies and legal issues in order to create favorable legal environment for the connection of development strategies and the deepening of pragmatic cooperation between the two countries. In order to institutionalize China-India parliamentary exchanges, the two sides agreed to hold China-India parliamentary's friendship forum during Chairman Zhang's visit. Chairman Zhang addressed the audience at the closing ceremony, wishing that members of both parliaments could firmly support and actively promote the friendly cooperation between the two countries, increase exchanges, deepen friendship, promote cooperation, and make contribution to the development of bilateral relations. Indian parliamentary leaders warmly welcomed Chairman Zhang's visit, believing that the visit opened a new chapter of China-India legislative cooperation, saying that India was willing to further its exchanges with China's NPC, exchange experience on economic development and rule of law, and consolidate the social and public foundation for the in-depth development of bilateral relations.

Deepening pragmatic cooperation and promote people-to-people friendship

Pragmatic cooperation is the inexhaustible driving force of State-to-State relations, and people-to-people friendship is the solid foundation for bilateral relations. Both ought to and have to be at the core of exchanges and cooperation between legislative branches. Considering the specific conditions of the three countries, Chairman Zhang had in-depth exchange with the leaders, local officials and business representatives in each country on key areas of cooperation and new points of economic growth. He also put forward a series of practical suggestions on the promotion of trade cooperation, people-to-people and cultural exchanges as well as local cooperation from the perspective of legislative branch.

China's economic and trade cooperation with Russia, ROK and India has achieved remarkable progress, and there is still huge potential. In 2014, the trade volume between China and Russia hit \$95.3 billion and China has been Russia's largest trading partner for five consecutive years. The trade volume between China and ROK reached \$300 billion, and the people-to-people visits exceeded 10 million. The signing of free trade agreement in June this year has brought about even broader prospect for the bilateral trade. China is India's



Zhang Dejiang (L) meets with Indian President Pranab Mukherjee in New Delhi on June 15. Li Tao

biggest trading partner, No.1 source of import and the 4th largest export market, and India is China's biggest trading partner in south Asia. During the trip, Chairman Zhang had in-depth discussions with the leaders of the three countries on the roadmap and measures to enhance trade cooperation, paid visits to Kazan helicopter factory and Tatarstan Republic national defense industry and enterprise exhibition, inspected LG, KIA Motors, CJ and other prestigious Korean companies, and held a round-table discussion with local business representatives including the corporate executives from Samsung. Chairman Zhang highly recognized the sound momentum for the stable and rapid development of trade cooperation, stressing that both sides should turn good political relations into more results of pragmatic cooperation, strengthen the coordination and connection of macroeconomic policies and development strategies, accurately find converging points of interest and growth point of cooperation, and promote bilateral trade relations to develop in broader areas and at a higher level.

With regard to the different conditions of the three countries, Chairman Zhang proposed that China and Russia should accelerate the docking and integration concerning the construction of Silk Road economic belt and the cooperation on Eurasian Economic Union, promote the smooth development of bilateral cooperation on key areas such as investment, finance, energy, aviation and space, high-speed railway as well as infrastructure facilities, and make joint efforts to create a more convenient, efficient and orderly environment for cooperation. China and Republic of Korea should take advantage of the free trade agreement, actively explore cooperation in strategic emerging industries including new energy, telecommunication and high-tech sectors, conduct all-round

Pragmatic cooperation is the inexhaustible driving force of State-to-State relations, and people-to-people friendship is the solid foundation for bilateral relations.

and high-level pragmatic cooperation, and play a guiding role in regional economic growth. China and India should work hard to promote cooperation in key areas such as railway and industrial parks, continuously expand cooperation in new-type urbanization, new energy and human resources development, speed up the construction of Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar economic corridor, strengthen interconnection, intercommunication and economic integration, and achieve complimentary advantages at a higher level. Political leaders and business representatives in the three countries all responded that there was an unprecedented opportunity to enhance trade relations with China, and they were willing to make concerted efforts with China, bring into full play the advantages and potentials of economic trade cooperation, actively implement the cooperative projects previously agreed by both sides, promote the balanced and stable growth of two-way trade, encourage more Chinese enterprises to conduct investment and business, and welcome more tourists from China to visit their countries.

As a Chinese saying goes, "Amity between people holds the key to sound relations between States." The visit of Chairman Zhang brought the cordial greetings and sincere regards from the Chinese people to the people in Russia, Republic of Korea and India. During the visit, Chairman Zhang reached important consensus with national leaders and local officials in the three countries on energizing people-to-people and culture exchanges. All parties agreed, from the strategic perspective, to attach high importance to and enhance exchanges and cooperation on think tanks, media, culture, education, science, technology and tourism, encourage and promote all-level people-to-people exchanges in all fields, conduct diversified exchange activities, promote understanding and friendship between peoples, encourage the youths to contribute to the friendship between States, persistently consolidate the social and public foundations of State-to-State relations. Chairman Zhang made extensive contacts with representatives from all walks of life, paid a visit to Kazan Federal University in Russia, revered China-Russia traditional friendship, and proposed recommendations on strengthening cooperation in education, science, technology and culture. In Seoul, he met with heads of seven friendly organizations including Korea-China Friendship Association, 21 Century Korea-China Exchange Association and Korea-China Culture Association, expressing his wish that both countries could, under the framework of China-ROK people-to-people and culture exchange joint commission mechanism, bring into full play the unique advantages of civil organizations and cultivate a stronger friendly force that knows China well in order to promote friendly cooperation. In Mumbai, Chairman Zhang met

with the relatives of Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis and members of the Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis Memorial Committee, attended a photo exhibition of Doctor Kotnis, and revered the precious contribution made by Doctor Kotnis and Indian medical team to Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. In New Delhi, Chairman Zhang laid a wreath at the tomb of Gandhi, received an interview by the Lok Sabha TV station on the development of China-India relations, emphasizing that China-India friendship was a great and noble undertaking, and it took the power and wisdom of tens of thousands of people cherishing the same ideals to make the tree of friendship deep-rooted so that it could one day yield ripe fruits. Chairman Zhang also announced that China would provide India with 100 government scholarships in the future on an annual basis.

Chairman Zhang cared deeply about friendly exchanges and pragmatic cooperation at local level. During the visit, he met with President of Russian Republic of Tatarstan Minnikhanov, Governor of ROK Gyeonggi Province Kyungpil Nam, and Maharashtra Governor Rao, Chief Minister Fadnavis, as well as Lower House Speaker Bagade in India, stressing that more emphasis should be laid on local cooperation and relevant parties should grasp opportunities, explore potentials, take active measures to achieve more fruitful results. Parliament of Tatarstan Republic held special sessions to receive the visit of Chairman Zhang in which Chairman of the State Council Makhmetshin delivered the welcome remarks. Chairman Zhang encouraged Tatarstan Republic to actively participate in the cooperation regarding the interconnection of China-Russia development strategies, provide strong support to the construction of Moscow-Kazan high-speed rail project, and strengthen its cooperation with China on machinery, automobile, aviation and petrochemical industries. Chairman Zhang praised the achievements made by Gyeonggi Province regarding its friendly cooperation with relevant provinces and cities in China, suggesting that both sides make greater efforts on cooperation in digital information, bio-tech, cultural industries, urban management and environmental protection. In India, Chairman Zhang expressed his wish that the state of Maharashtra could grasp the new opportunities generated by the rapid development of China-India relations, strengthen exchanges and cooperation with China's local areas, create a more efficient and convenient environment so as to serve as a role model in deepening bilateral cooperation. His proposals were echoed by the national leaders and local officials in the three countries, which consolidated the foundation for deepening local exchanges and cooperation.

On various occasions during the visit, Chairman Zhang introduced China's development, situation of economic and social development, comprehensively deepening reform and rule of law as well as the system of people's congresses. He emphasized that the deep-rooted reason for China's remarkable progress was to adhere to the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the socialist road with Chinese characteristics and the system of people's congresses. All parties highly complimented Chairman Zhang's briefings, saying that the development and progress made by China since the reform and opening-up was quite admirable, and the experience and lessons were both precious and conducive to the future development of many other countries in the world. ■

Speech at the first session of the BRICS Parliamentary Forum on the topic of ‘Role of the Parliaments of the BRICS Countries: Addressing the Issues of Global Politics and Economy’

Zhang Dejiang

Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China
Moscow, June 8, 2015



Zhang Dejiang (L), chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, shakes hands with Valentina Matviyenko, chairwoman of Russia's Federation Council, in Moscow, Russia, June 9. *Li Tao*

Your Excellency Speaker Matviyenko,
Dear colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to join you at this first meeting of the BRICS Parliamentary Forum in the beautiful city of Moscow. This meeting, a major event in BRICS cooperation, will have a positive and far-reaching impact on strengthening inter-parliamentary exchanges and cooperation between BRICS countries, increasing mutual understanding and friendship, and building an even closer, more comprehensive and more solid partnership between BRICS countries. Here, I would like to extend appreciation and thanks to the Russian colleagues for their initiative to convene the meeting and the thoughtful arrangements for this event.

BRICS cooperation has not been in place for long, but it has enjoyed a sound momentum of growth. In particular, the establishment of the BRICS summit mechanism in 2009 has provided political guidance and a strong impetus for the sound and in-depth development of the coop-

eration. Thanks to the joint efforts by various parties over the past six years, the BRICS cooperation framework has been improved, expanded and enriched with new results, which has brought tangible benefits to people of various countries and made positive contribution to world peace and development. This fully proves that BRICS cooperation is in line with the trend of the times featuring peace, development and win-win cooperation, and helps make the world economy more balanced, international relations more reasonable, global governance more effective, and world peace more enduring.

Dear colleagues,

The topic of this morning's session, "Role of the Parliaments of the BRICS Countries: Addressing the Issues of Global Politics and Economy", is important and has attracted wide attention. The world is experiencing profound and complicated changes. World multipolarity and economic globalization have gathered momentum. Links

and interdependence between countries have reached an unprecedented level. And the pursuit of peace, development and win-win cooperation has become the common aspiration of people of all countries. However, it needs to be noted that human development is still confronted with many difficulties and challenges. The deep-seated impact of the international financial crisis is lingering. Regional and international hotspot issues keep emerging. Traditional and non-traditional security problems are interwoven. Upholding world peace and promoting common development remains a daunting task.

BRICS countries are an important force in international relations and an active builder of the international system. Emerging markets and developing countries represented by BRICS countries have grown stronger, and are working for a more equitable and reasonable international political and economic order. This is a major change in world history since modern times. Despite difficulties and challenges, this historical trend will not stop. BRICS cooperation is now faced with both new opportunities and unprecedented challenges. We need to strengthen confidence, keep to our goals, and uphold the spirit of openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation. We need to step up exchanges and cooperation, advance common development, and play a constructive role in dealing with global political and economic issues and in the lofty cause of promoting peace and development of mankind. To this end, I would like to make the following proposals.

First, we should jointly uphold peace, stability, equity and justice in the world. Peace is the ever-lasting aspiration of people of all countries. BRICS countries should be committed to the maintenance and promotion of global peace and stability. To bolster peace and security, we should advocate the new vision of comprehensive, common and cooperative security, strengthen communication and coordination on international political and security issues and deepen cooperation on counter-terrorism and cyber security. BRICS countries should pass on positive energy in international affairs, uphold justice, respect the right of all countries to independently choose social system and development path, and work for a more just and equitable international political and economic order. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War this year, we should take an active part in the commemorative activities, never allow any force to reverse the history of aggression, and jointly uphold the international security cooperation system with the UN at its core.

Second, we should work together for common development. BRICS countries share the same strategic goal of ensuring long-term, steady growth and achieving prosperity and revitalization. Given the current complex and fluid international environment and sluggish recovery of the world economy, we should stick together to meet the challenges, ease the downward pressure on the economy, respond to various risks and maintain overall stability and sustainable development. We should also intensify reform and innovation, cultivate new growth

areas, increase the impetus of the economy, enhance core competitiveness and improve the quality and performance of economic development. BRICS countries have accumulated good experience and practice in promoting reform, development and stability. We should increase experience sharing on governance, abide by the law of development, foster new visions and jointly address difficulties in the development process.

Third, we should deepen practical cooperation in various fields. The rich diversity and complementarity in resources endowment and industrial structure of BRICS countries means huge potential for cooperation. We should translate our strengths in political relations and economic complementarity into practical cooperation, and forge a community of shared interests for win-win outcome. We should work to promote integrated markets for trade and investment, multi-tiered financial and currency network, infrastructure development connecting land, sea and air, and greater cultural exchanges so as to cement the economic, social and public foundation for BRICS cooperation. The BRICS Development Bank and contingent reserve arrangement is an important outcome of the sixth BRICS Leaders Meeting. We should complete the preparatory work at an early date through close coordination and make it a model for BRICS cooperation in order to boost confidence and momentum in cooperation.

Fourth, we should improve global economic governance. In the era of deepened economic globalization, we the BRICS countries should not just seek our own development, but also work for the common development of all countries. We need to step up communication and coordination under the framework of the UN, G20 and international economic and financial institutions, encourage countries to strengthen coordination of macroeconomic policies, reform the international monetary and financial systems, promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation and jointly uphold and develop an open world economy. We should enhance exchanges and cooperation with other emerging markets and developing countries, increase our representation and voice in international economic governance, promote South-South and North-South cooperation and work for common and balanced development of developing and developed countries.

Dear colleagues,

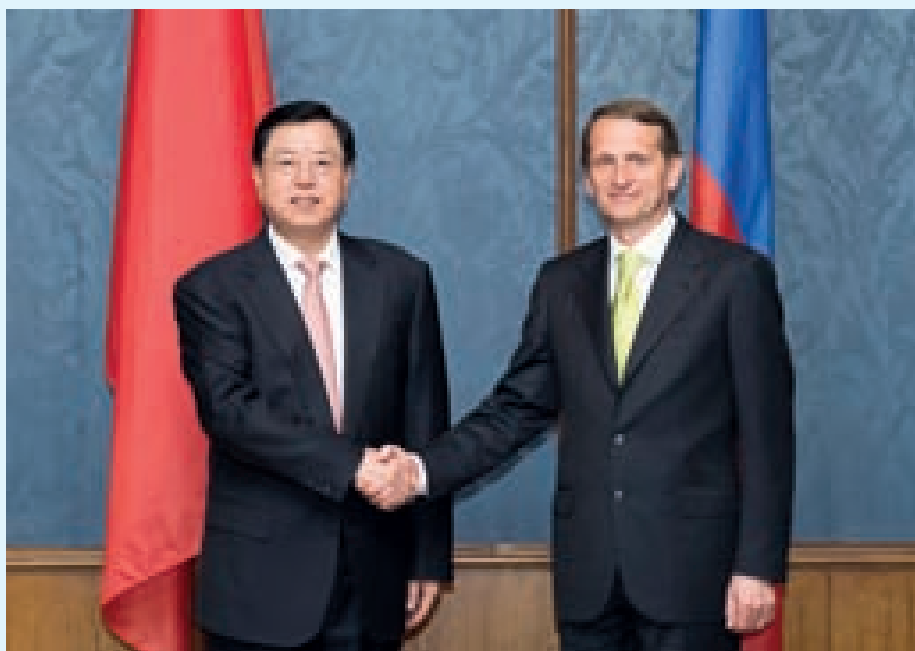
As an old Chinese saying goes, “Nothing can separate people with common goals and ideals, not even mountains and seas”. We, the five BRICS countries, come from four different continents. Despite the geographical distance, we have the same aspiration and support one another. BRICS cooperation has made splendid achievements. Looking ahead, there is even broader space for our cooperation. Next month, the seventh BRICS Summit will be held in Ufa, Russia. I am confident that this meeting will inject fresh impetus to BRICS cooperation and development. With joint efforts, we will make the “golden brick” of ours shine more brightly.

Thank you.

Speech at the second session of the BRICS Parliamentary Forum on the topic of ‘Formation and Development of the BRICS Parliamentary Dimension’

Zhang Dejiang

Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China
Moscow, June 8, 2015



Zhang Dejiang (L), chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, shakes hands with Sergei Naryshkin, speaker of the Russian State Duma, in Moscow, Russia, June 9. *Xie Huanchi*

Your Excellency Speaker Naryshkin,
Dear colleagues,

Just now at the first session, we had fruitful discussions on the joint response to international political and economic issues. I was much inspired by your views and insights. At this second session, I would like to share with you my views on the topic of the “Formation and Development of the BRICS Parliamentary Dimension”.

To listen to people's calls, convey their wish and uphold their interests is the lofty responsibility of parliaments of all countries and should be the fundamental purpose of inter-parliamentary cooperation between BRICS countries. Bilateral cooperation between our parliaments is doing well, but multilateral cooperation within the BRICS framework needs to be further enriched and expanded. As we strengthen partnership and mutually beneficial coop-

eration, we should bear in mind the larger picture, work toward the same goal, and take a strategic and long-term approach to planning inter-parliamentary cooperation. We should leverage our respective strengths, step up exchanges and cooperation, promote common development, and add new dimensions and impetus to BRICS cooperation. To this end, I suggest that we work hard in the following four areas.

First, we should keep to the overall goal of BRICS cooperation and facilitate BRICS partnership. BRICS cooperation is a good example for cooperation between emerging markets and developing countries. It meets the fundamental interests of the people of our five countries and is conducive to world peace, stability and prosperity. We should safeguard the sound momentum of our cooperation, follow the spirit of openness,

inclusiveness and win-win cooperation, contribute ideas, suggestions and strengths to exchanges and cooperation at various levels and in various fields, and actively support and coordinate with efforts of our governments and people to deepen BRICS partnership. We should move toward the goal of integrated markets, multi-tiered financial network, connectivity by land, air and sea, and greater cultural exchanges, and work together to make BRICS cooperation even more dynamic and fruitful.

Second, we should uphold world peace and international rule of law and create a favorable development environment for BRICS countries.

Without peace, there would be no development or people's happiness to speak of. Parliaments play an important role in the political life of BRICS countries and in regional and international affairs. We should perform our duties, strengthen cooperation, and jointly shape and maintain a sound external environment for development. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War, it is all the more necessary to encourage the international community to follow the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, honor the commitment to upholding world peace and international rule of law, observe international law and universally recognized basic norms in international relations, address differences and disagreements through dialogue, consultation and peaceful negotiations, and firmly safeguard world peace, stability and prosperity. We should actively participate in the reform of the global governance system, facilitate equal-footed participation of emerging markets and developing countries in the making of international rules, and help build a fairer and more equitable international political and economic order.

Third, we should share experience in governance and carry out practical cooperation among BRICS countries. Over the years, the BRICS countries, searching for a development path that suits their national realities, have made remarkable achievements along the way and accumulated a wealth of experience in governance. Such experience embodies distinctive wisdom of different countries, nations, cultures and groups and is part of the common wealth of human society. At the same time, with complex and profound changes in the international political and economic landscape, BRICS countries also face many new difficulties and challenges, many of which are the same. Parliaments are legally responsible for legislation, monitoring, decision-making on big issues. They have a major role to play in the formulation and implementation of government policies. As we pursue our respective national development goals and strategies, we should increase the exchange of experience in governance, particularly on prominent issues and problems hindering development. Such mutual learning will be helpful to improving the quality of legislation and making our decision-making better considered and more democratic, thus providing strong support and guarantee for economic and social development.

Fourth, we should set up platforms for inter-

parliamentary friendly cooperation, and contribute to the institutional building of BRICS cooperation mechanisms.

With distinguished members, parliaments are well-connected and have wide access to information. We should leverage these strengths to build a cooperation framework with Speaker's meetings at its top and supported by interactions between the parliaments, MPs and experts. We should establish multi-tiered and multi-channeled dialogue and exchange mechanisms to enhance mutual understanding and trust among the parliaments, MPs and peoples of our five countries and foster the popular support and social basis for BRICS cooperation. We should establish mechanisms for communication and coordination among BRICS parliaments under the multilateral frameworks such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union. This way, we will speak in the same voice on major international issues and enhance the influence and say of BRICS countries in international affairs.

Dear colleagues,

Rule of law is the basic way of governance. The Communist Party of China (CPC) attaches great importance to the strengthening of rule of law in China and pursues rule of law as a basic guideline for governance and law-based administration a basic way of governance. Historic achievements have been made in vigorous efforts of promoting the rule of law. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the CPC in October 2014 issued a resolution on major issues concerning the enhancement of all-round law-based governance. The meeting made it clear that in comprehensively advancing the law-based governance of the country, the overall objective is to establish the socialist system of rule of law with Chinese characteristics and build China into a country under the socialist rule of law. The Chinese people, led by the CPC, are working under the comprehensive strategic plan of building a moderately prosperous society, deepening reform, promoting law-based governance and enhancing the conduct of the Party. We strive to meet our two centenary goals and realize the Chinese Dream of great national renewal.

The National People's Congress (NPC) of China, as the supreme power organ of the country, shoulders important responsibilities in promoting rule of law. Keenly aware of the pioneering role of legislation, we in the NPC are committed to improving the quality of the laws we make. We are working to improve the socialist system of laws with Chinese characteristics with the Constitution as its core. We are also working to improve the system for monitoring law enforcement, uphold the legal authority of the Constitution and law, and ensure that our people enjoy extensive rights and freedom in accordance with the law.

The NPC is ready to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with all parliaments of the BRICS countries in promoting law-based governance, so as to add new dimensions to BRICS relations, enhance BRICS cooperation, provide it with new source of strength, and embrace new achievements.

Thank you.



Chinese officials shall pledge allegiance to Constitution



The newly-appointed government staffs from Hufang Town in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province swear a solemn oath of allegiance to the Constitution on December 2, 2014, two days of the Constitution Day. *WanXiang*

Chinese officials in State organs shall pledge allegiance to the Constitution when taking their posts, according to a decision adopted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on July 1.

All officials elected or appointed by people's congresses at all levels and their standing committees above the county level, as well as State functionaries appointed by people's governments, courts and procuratorates at all levels should take a public oath of allegiance to the Constitution while assuming office, said the decision.

The Constitution is the basic law of the country with supreme legal status, authority and force. State functionaries must have constitutional awareness, observe its principles, uphold its spirit and perform their constitutional obligations, read the decision.

The decision, to be effective from January 1, 2016, aims to inspire State functionaries to follow, observe and safeguard the Constitution, according to the document.

A system of pledging allegiance to the Constitution is an important form to the advancement of the rule of law, said Han Xiaowu, deputy secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee.

It will raise the public's awareness of the Constitution, he said.

After being elected or appointed, State personnel must swear the oath. This includes the president, vice president; chairman, vice chairpersons, secretary-general, and all members of NPC Standing Committee; premier, vice premiers, State councilors, ministers, the governor of the People's Bank of China, auditor general of the National Audit Office; chairman, vice chairpersons and members of the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the People's Republic of China; heads of the Supreme People's Court (SPC) and the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP), according to the decision.

Deputy secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee, members of various committees under the NPC Standing Committee, vice president and other officials of the SPC and SPP, officials appointed by the State Council and its ministries, as well as ambassadors to other countries should also swear the oath.

The draft of the oath reads: "I pledge to be allegiant to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, safeguard the Constitution authority, perform obligations given by the laws, be loyal to the country and people, be committed and honest when performing duties, accept people's supervision and work hard to build a socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious".

When State functionaries read the pledge alone, the right hand should be raised and formed into a fist, while the left hand is placed on the Constitution, according to the decision.

When read by a group, the right hand should be raised and formed into a fist, and the assigned leader of the group should put his or her left hand on the Constitution. The national flag or emblem should be hung in the hall where the ceremony is held.

The current Constitution was adopted on December 4, 1982, based on the 1954 version. December 4 is China's Constitution Day.

The Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Communist Party of China Central Committee decided to establish a system of pledging allegiance to the Constitution in October 2014. (Xinhua) ■

China adopts new law on national security

Comprehensive, overall and fundamental law on national security

Security covers a wide spectrum of areas including politics, defense, finance, culture, society, science and technology, cyber and information, ecology, resource, nuclear, etc.

Safeguarding national economic security

Affirming the basic economic system and socialist economic order, setting up a national security examination on foreign investment, particular materials and key technologies

Ensuring national cyberspace sovereignty

Strengthening cyber security management, preventing, deterring and punishing cyber attack, cyber intrusion, cyber theft and other harmful information spreading, etc.

Safeguarding culture security

Cultivating and putting the socialist core values into practice, preventing and resisting the influence of harmful culture

Providing legal support for the new realm of national security such as outer space, deep sea and polar regions

Adhering to the peaceful explorations and development in outer space, international sea bed and polar regions

New law on national security



The 15th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress is concluded on July 1 in Beijing. The meeting takes a vote on passing the National Security Law. *Du Yang*

China's top legislature on July 1 adopted a new national security law highlighting cyber security and demanding the establishment of a coordinated, efficient crisis management system.

Of the 155 lawmakers present at a bimonthly session of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, 154 voted for the legislation. One abstained.

The new law, which will be signed into force by President Xi Jinping later on July 1, covers a wide spectrum of areas including defense, finance, science and technology, culture and religion.

Outer space activities and assets, as well as those at ocean depths and in polar regions, were also brought under the national security umbrella.

A national security review and regulatory system and relevant mechanisms would be set up to censor items that have or may have an impact on national security, including foreign investment, particular materials and key technologies, network and information technology products and services, projects involving national security, it said.

Security is a top issue in China. A National Security Commission headed by Xi was established in 2013. An overall national security outlook put forward by Xi was also incorporated in the new law.

Speaking to reporters at a press conference, Zheng Shuna with the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee said the law was crucial in the face of "ever-growing security challenges".

"We are under dual pressures ... Externally speaking, the

An overall national security outlook put forward by President Xi Jinping was also incorporated in the new law.

country must defend its sovereignty, security and development interests, and internally speaking, it must also maintain political security and social stability," Zheng said.

Thus, overarching legislation is needed to guide responses to national security threats and risks, she said.

Ma Huaide, vice president of China University of Political Science and Law, also said the law could provide a sound framework for future legislation on national security.

The first national security law took effect in 1993 and primarily regulated the work of national security agencies, whose major duty is counterespionage. It was renamed the Counterespionage Law in November 2014.

The new law, meanwhile, said national security means that "the country's State power, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity; its people's wellbeing; its sustainable economic and social development; and other major interests are comparatively in a state of being in no danger and free of any threat from both within and without, and that the aforementioned state can be constantly guaranteed."

Zheng rejected the notion that the definition was "too broad".

"The definition does not cover broader areas compared

China will strengthen its capability to protect cyber and information security, and enhance Internet and IT research, development and application.

with other countries,” she said.

“Any government will stand firm and ensure that there is no room for dispute, compromise or interference when it comes to protecting their core interests,” she said. “China is no exception.”

When asked to comment on the inclusion of activities and assets in space, deep sea and in polar regions in the new law, Zheng pointed to similar legislation in the United States, Japan, Russia and Europe.

China’s explorations and development in outer space, the international sea bed and polar regions have contributed to better understanding and utilization of resources, and was “conducive to the common interests of mankind,” she said, adding that China had the right to protect its activities, assets and personnel in these “new frontiers”.

One key element of the new law is a clause on cyberspace sovereignty. China will make Internet and information tech-

nology, infrastructure, information systems and data in key sectors “secure and controllable”, it read.

The country will strengthen its capability to protect cyber and information security, and enhance Internet and IT research, development and application.

Zheng said cyberspace sovereignty was the embodiment and extension of national sovereignty, adding that the Internet is an important aspect of the nation’s infrastructure.

“Internet space within the People’s Republic of China is subject to the country’s sovereignty,” she said.

China is willing to cooperate with other countries in safeguarding cyber security, building a peaceful, secure, open and cooperative cyberspace, and establishing a multilateral, democratic and transparent international Internet management system, Zheng said.

The new law also vowed that an Internet and information security system would be established to ensure cyberspace security, enhance innovation, speed up development of “strategic” technology and beef up intellectual property protection and application.

A coordinated, efficient crisis management system under a centralized leadership will be set up, it said, adding that national security crises-related information must be published in a timely manner.

Chinese citizens are obliged to report anything that undermines national security, and protect national secrets in line with the Constitution and laws, it read. (Xinhua) ■



A SWAT team practice shooting during an anti-terror drill in East China's Shanghai on September 14, 2011. *Fan Jun*

China's legal system

China's legal system covers laws that fall under seven categories and three different levels. The seven categories are the Constitution and Constitution-related, civil and commercial, administrative, economic, social, and criminal laws and the law on lawsuit and non-lawsuit procedures. The three different levels are State laws, administrative regulations and local statutes.

By March 2008, the NPC and its Standing Committee had promulgated more than 229 laws currently in force, the State Council had issued over 600 administrative regulations currently in force, local people's congresses and their standing committees had enacted over 7,000 local statutes currently in force, and the people's congresses of national autonomous areas had enacted over 600 regulations concerning autonomy and local needs. A socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics and centered on the Constitution has taken shape. China now has laws governing the basic, important aspects of its political, economic, cultural and social life.

Concerning the Constitution and Constitution-related laws, in addition to having adopted the current Constitution and its four amendments, China has also enacted the Electoral Law, Law on Deputies to the NPC and to Local People's Congresses, and a number of organic laws for State organs, Legislative Law, the Supervision Law and other laws related to State organs. China has also enacted laws concerning systems for regional ethnic autonomy, special administrative regions and primary-level mass self-governance: principally the Law on the Autonomy of Ethnic Minority Regions, the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the Organic Law of Villagers' Committees and the Organic Law of Urban Neighborhood Committees.

With regard to civil and commercial law, China has enacted laws concerning property and personal relations between individual entities with equal standing in society. These principally include the General Principles of Civil Law, the Contract Law, the Guarantee Law, the Auction Law, the Trademark Law, the Patent Law, the Copyright Law, the Marriage Law, the Inheritance Law, and the Adoption Law. China also enacted laws concerning commercial relations between individual entities with equal standing in society: principally the Company Law, the Partnership Law, the Law on Single Investor Enterprises, the Securities Law, the Insurance Law, the Negotiable Instruments Law, the Commercial Banking Law, the Maritime law and the Trust Law.

Concerning administrative law, China has enacted laws concerning State administration: principally the Regulations on Administrative Penalties Concerning Law Enforcement, the Administrative Punishment Law, the Administrative Licensing Law, the National Defense Law, the Government Procurement Law, the Education Law, the Law on Scientific

and Technological Progress, the Law on Preventing and Controlling Communicable Diseases and the Environmental Protection Law. China has also enacted laws related to oversight of administrative activities: mainly the Law on Administrative Supervision and the Law on Administrative Reconsideration.

With regard to economic law, China has enacted laws concerning macro-economic controls: principally the Budget Law, the Audit Law, the Law on the People's Bank of China, the Price Law, the Personal Income Tax Law, and the Law on Tax Collection and Management. China has enacted laws for maintaining market order: principally the Law on Product Quality and the Advertising Law. China has enacted laws for opening wider to the outside world: principally the Law on Joint Ventures with Chinese and Foreign Investment, the Law on Sino-Foreign Contract Joint Ventures, the Law on Wholly Foreign-Invested Enterprises, and the Foreign Trade Law. China has enacted laws to promote industrial development:

principally the Agriculture Law, the Highway Law, the Civil Aviation Law, and the Electric Power Law. China has enacted laws for protecting and rationally developing natural resources: principally the Forestry Law, the Grassland Law, the Water Law, the Mineral Resources Law, and the Law on Land Management. China has also enacted laws for standardizing economic activities: principally the Metrology Law, the Statistics Law and the Surveying Law.

Concerning social law, China has enacted laws concerning labor relations and safeguarding workers: principally the Labor Law, the Trade Union Law and the Law on Mining Safety. China has also enacted laws protecting special groups in society: principally the Law on Security for the Disabled, the Law Protecting Minors, the Law Safeguarding the Rights and Interests of Women and the Law Safeguarding the Rights and Interests of the Elderly.

With regard to criminal law, China has enacted the Criminal Law and adopted more than 10 related supplementary decisions, amendments and legal interpretations to standardize definitions of crimes, assignment of criminal responsibility and determination of punishment.

Concerning lawsuit and non-lawsuit procedures, China has enacted laws to standardize procedures for lawsuits and other legal actions: principally the Criminal Procedures Law, the Civil Procedures Law, the Administrative Procedures Law, the Law on Special Procedures for Maritime Lawsuits, the Extradition Law, and the Arbitration Law.

To adapt to new changes brought about by the development of the market economy, all-round social progress and China's entry into the WTO, China will continue to enact new laws and amend the laws currently in force to create a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics. (NPC)



CFP



The 15th meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee conducts special inquiry into vocational education after inspection on June 30. Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee Zhang Dejiang presides over the meeting. *Du Yang*

China learns to love vocational education

China's vocational education system is now the largest in the world, with nearly 30 million students, according to a report presented to the top legislature.

While acknowledging some achievements, the report by Zhang Dejiang on June 29, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, pointed out many problems the system faces, including poor public recognition and fluctuating funding.

Betting on the underdog

The report, a result of the NPC Standing Committee's first survey of the vocational education, highlights the poor public perception of vocational education as one of the principal impediments to its development.

It is a widely accepted practice that universities cream off the best students, and after the big players have satisfied their hunger for new admissions, vocational colleges pick up the scraps.

When it comes to finding a job, vocational graduates are often excluded from applying for top vacancies. The report said that while more than 90 percent of them will secure jobs, salaries for most are far from decent. Statistics from Jiangsu Province show that in 2014, vocational school alumni were paid about 1,900 yuan (about \$300) per month on average, 40 percent of the average for all workers.

Promotion prospects are no less grim. "This year's intake do not need to worry about jobs because some State-owned enterprises have already reserved vacancies for them," said Jing Baoxian, Party chief of a vocational school specializing in railway equipment. "But their lives will be spent on the production lines, with little hope of being promoted to management."

The report suggested honoring skilled technical workers and stated that technicians' salaries should be increased. It also proposed new regulations to ensure fairness for vocational students in the job market.

Key to manufacturing renaissance

Wu Jiang, vice chairman of the China Talent Research

Society, described vocational education as a weak link in the national education system.

"To upgrade industrial structure, China needs a large number of skilled technical workers," he said. There are about 157 million people with technical skills in China. Some 43 million of them are skilled workers, only accounting 5 percent of all employees. Wu believes vocational education is crucial to the "Made in China 2025" plan to reform the manufacturing sector and change the reputation of China's manufactured goods.

"Made in China 2025" lays out strategies for switching from low-end manufacturing to more value-added production, with domestic manufacturers expected to make technological breakthroughs in a number of emerging industries, from numerical control tools and robotics to aerospace equipment and new energy vehicles.

Growth is remarkable, not desirable

China has about 13,300 vocational schools and colleges. In 2014, there were about 18 million students in secondary vocational schools compared with 12.7 million in 1996. The number of students enrolled at vocational colleges stood at



10 million last year, compared to 1.23 million in 1996.

Along with the increasing number of students, investment in vocational education has expanded in the past 19 years. According to the report, annual spending rose from 114 billion yuan (then about \$14.5 billion) in 2006 to 345 billion yuan (about \$57 billion) in 2013, an increase of 17 percent per year, still short of government expectations.

A project initiated in 2009 to exempt some students at secondary vocational schools from tuition fees has benefited 34.6 million people. In the 19 years since the law on vocational schools and colleges was introduced, more than 200 million people have participated in evaluations of vocational skills, with about 160 million obtaining certificates.

Among those who earned certificates, about 1.47 million were as senior technicians, the most skilled workers, and some 6 million were as technicians.

Since 2006, vocational education in rural, poverty-stricken or ethnic minority areas has greatly improved. More than 40 million people from rural areas received vocational training in the past decade.

Training for the disabled was also included in the vocational education plan. In the northwestern province of Gansu alone, the government has set up 31 training centers for the group in the past five years, with 21,000 people having studied at the centers.

From March to May this year, Zhang has held seminars with headmasters, teachers and human resources officials at about 70 institutions, training centers and enterprises on how to improve teaching, the first time the NPC Standing Committee had organized such an event. Problems unearthed included unstable levels of investment and lack of experienced teachers.

The State Council, China's cabinet, wants vocational colleges to account for more than half of all institutions of higher education, but according to Minister of Education Yuan Guiren, the number is closer to 46 percent.

The ministry plans to change the picture by turning some universities and colleges into application-oriented technical institutions, and encouraging more enterprises to run vocational institutions. (Xinhua) ■

The 15th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) holds a joint group session to discuss an inspection report on vocational education on June 30. Du Yang



First law enforcement inspection of the year, headed by Chairman Zhang Dejiang

From April 12 to 15, Chairman Zhang Dejiang headed a group conducting law enforcement inspection in Kaifeng, Xuchang and Zhengzhou, which was the first law enforcement task for NPC Standing Committee in 2015.

Chairman Zhang had conversations with students in the vocational schools of medical technician, agriculture, mechanical electronics, rail transit, etc., encouraging them to achieve success in their own sectors. While visiting Yutong Group Co., Ltd. and Xuji Group Co., Ltd., he stressed that it was beneficial for the companies and schools to train students together, which improved students' skills as well as facilitated the development of both corporation and vocational education.

Henan is a province of large population. In the Talent Service Centre, Chairman Zhang talked to both employers and applicants, pointing out that Henan enjoyed a leading position in vocational education so that it was important for Henan to improve the expertise of its human resources and make greater achievement both in the quantity and quality of talents.

'Skill is of greater use than wealth'

From April 25 to 27, Chairman Zhang headed a group conducting law enforcement inspection tour in Chongqing. He said, "we need to find out the key issues regarding vocational education and corresponding solutions so as to ensure better enforcement of the Law on Vocational Education."

As a former leader of Chongqing (secretary of CPC Chongqing Municipal Committee), he visited Chongqing industrial and commercial school and asked about the curriculum and students' employment while watching students attending training classes.

"As the old saying goes, 'skill is of greater use than wealth'", he pointed out that technicians are indispensable to socialist modernization when talking to students. "The skills you learned from vocational school will benefit your entire life".

Zhang said that high-quality skilled talents are strategic resources of the nation as well as an important pillar to urban industrial development. There is not only big regional disparity but also imbalance between urban and rural areas in Chongqing where big cities, large villages, and mountain areas coexist. Therefore, vocational education is a crucial breakthrough in terms of narrowing those disparities.



Zhang Dejiang (C), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) and a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, visits a production plant of Weichai (Chongqing) Automotive Co., Ltd in Chongqing, Southwest China, April 26. *Gao Jie*

Zhang Dejiang (C) communicates with students at a technology and economy institute in Xuchang, Central China's Henan Province, April 14. *Ma Zhancheng*



Zhang Dejiang (C) chats with students applying for jobs in Zhengzhou, capital of Central China's Henan Province, April 13. *Ma Zhancheng*



Zhang Dejiang (2nd L) visits Chongqing Lixin Vocational Education Center in Chongqing on April 27. *Gao Jie*

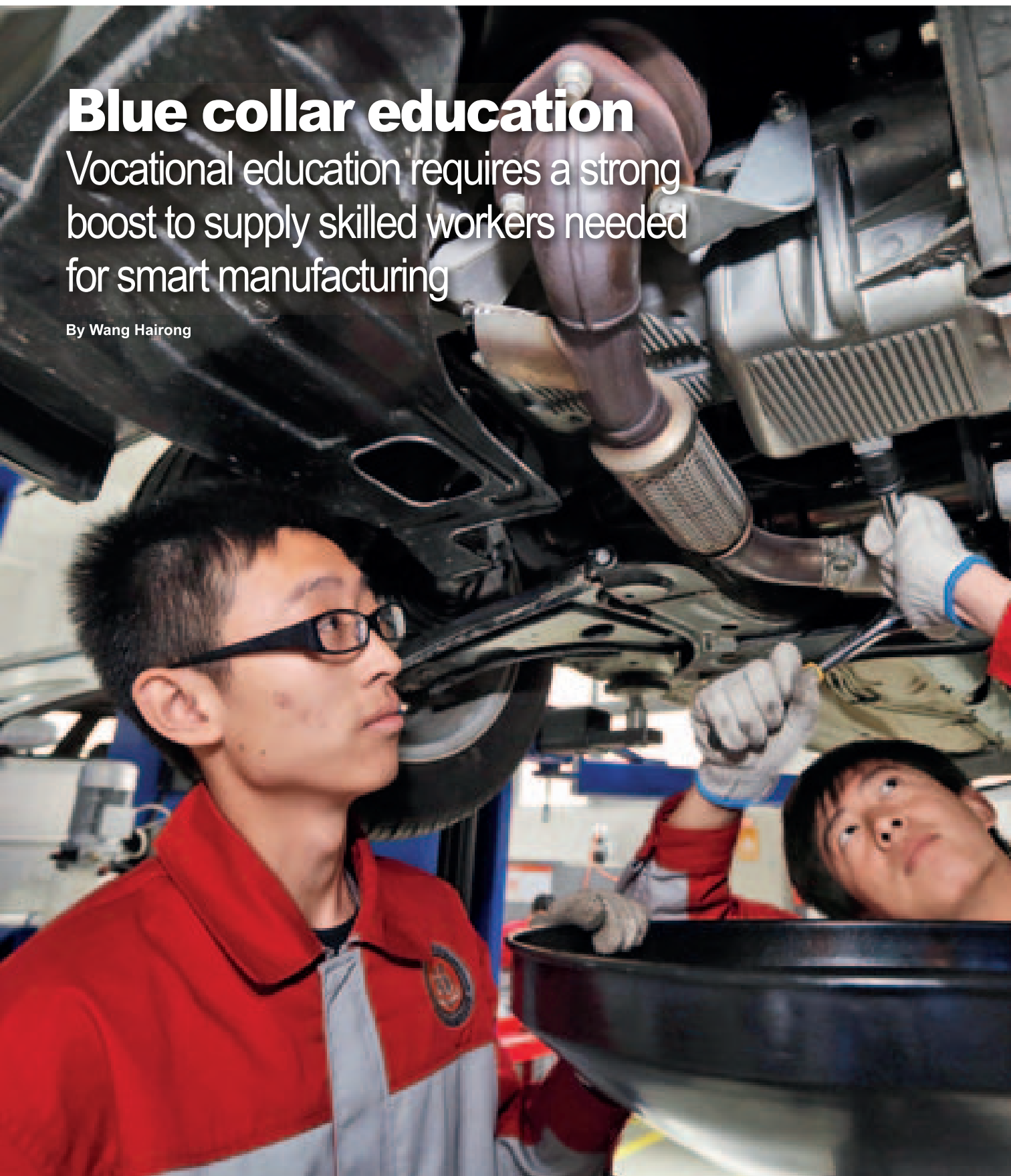
Zhang Dejiang (front, 2nd L) visits Chongqing industrial and commercial school in Chongqing, Southwest China, April 26. *Gao Jie*



Blue collar education

Vocational education requires a strong boost to supply skilled workers needed for smart manufacturing

By Wang Hairong





Students from Beijing Vocational College of Transportation are practicing changing engine oil on May 10. *Shen Bohan*



The first Tianhua Trophy Tea Ceremony Contest of Suzhou city is being held by Dushu Lake on June 20, 2012. The students of Suzhou Polytechnic Institute of Agriculture are displaying "tea leaves putting", one step of the tea ceremony. *Li Kexiang*

The 2015 National Vocational Students Skills Competition will be held in Tianjin in early July. The month-long event was held in various venues across the country and had tens of thousands of individuals participating.

One contender, 18-year-old Li Mingyang, a second-year student from the Guizhou Machinery Industry School in southwest China's Guizhou Province, drew media attention for carrying President Xi Jinping's blessing to the competition.

When President Xi visited his school on June 17 to learn about the development of vocational education, Li made a delicate aluminum alloy chessboard with numerically controlled machinery tools. He chiseled the words "Chinese Dream" into the board and populated it with several chessmen.

During the visit, Xi said that vocational education is an important part of the country's education system and urged governments at all levels to strive for its continued improvement.

Growing demand

China has the largest vocational education system in the world. Currently, the country has more than 13,300 vocational schools, enrolling a total of nearly 30 million students, according to a report recently released by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), the national legislature, after a group of NPC deputies inspected the implementation of the Vocational Education Law. The law has been enforced since 1996 to promote the development of vocational education and improve the quality of the labor force.

The report said that every year, vocational schools produce nearly 10 million graduates, and over the years, they have trained more than 200 million people.

It revealed that from 1996 to 2014, enrollment in secondary vocational schools grew from 12.68 million to 18.03 million, while that in higher vocational schools rose from 1.23



A student displays dough-modeling skill in the Achievements Exhibition of China Vocational Education of 2011 on June 25. *Li Xiang*



The contestants of National Vocational Schools Skill Contest take part in the competition of network design conducted for the team of Secondary Vocational Schools on June 26, 2013. *Zhai Jianlan*

million to 10.07 million.

Currently, China is bent on upgrading its manufacturing by integrating it with emerging technologies such as big data application, cloud computing, the Internet of Things and 3D printing.

In May, the State Council, China's cabinet, unveiled a national plan dubbed "Made in China 2025", which aims to transform China from a manufacturing giant into a world manufacturing power in the coming decade.

According to the blueprint, priority will be given to 10 key sectors such as new information technology, numerical control tools and robotics, aerospace equipment, ocean engineering equipment and hi-tech ships, railway equipment, energy conservation and new-energy vehicles, power equipment, new materials, biological medicine and medical devices, and agricultural machinery.

To realize the transformation, China urgently needs a large number of skilled workers and higher-quality labor force, said Lu Wei, a member of the NPC Standing Committee.

Zhang Xinghui, president of Tianjin Sino-German Vocational Technical College, said that in the past, farmers-turned-workers could be put on jobs after receiving simple training, whereas now, smart and digitalized manufacturing needs skilled workers trained in vocational schools.

Li Dengping, deputy general manager of Akita Gear Co. Ltd. in southwest China's Chongqing, said that once his company imported some computer numerical control machine tools and a cutting-edge grinding machine so as to produce more higher-end products, yet its workers did not possess adequate skills to operate them, which led to inconsistent product quality.

This March, in a job fair held in Baoshan District in Shanghai, 20 employers offered 340 vacancies, but most of the skilled positions received few applications, reported Shanghai-based news portal Eastday.com.

"Without skilled workers, the machine tools will lay idle, and the company will suffer loss," said Teng Kewu, a senior executive from Shanghai Shenlong Enterprise Group. The company is one of China's leading producers of cleaning machines and air compressors. Teng said that 80 percent of the employees in his company are skilled workers.

Getting ready

While meeting the heads of nearly 200 vocational schools participating in the 2015 National Vocational Students Skills Competition, Vice Minister of Education Lu Xin asked, "Is China's vocational education ready for the 'Made in China 2025' program?"

At present, graduates from vocational schools usually have a solid mastering of basic skills, said Zhang Wenming, a referee serving in the competition. Nonetheless, they are still not resourceful and creative enough to ride the trend of digitalized and smart manufacturing.

Zhang Lunjie, a professor at the Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University in south China's Guangdong Province, said that during a survey of the numerical control programs available in China's vocational schools, he found that their curriculums and teaching devices are largely outdated.

In recent years, however, the government has paid increasing attention to vocational education.

At a national work conference on vocational education in June 2014, President Xi said that vocational education must be valued because it is an important path through which young people can achieve success and could boost employment and entrepreneurship as well as foster technical skills.

Last year, the Ministry of Education, together with five other central government departments, issued a plan for building a modern vocational education system, which proposed to increase the total number of students at vocational education institutions to 38.3 million by 2020.

The plan also included a chart depicting the basic structure of China's education system. According to it, graduates of secondary vocational schools can enter post-secondary vocational schools, or applied-skills-oriented rather than research-oriented undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs.

In March 2014, Vice Minister Lu unveiled a plan to turn more than 600 regular academic-oriented undergraduate universities, or about half of the country's total, into applied-skills-oriented ones.

That decision was made because of the coexistence of the difficulty for college graduates to find white collar jobs and for employers to find skilled blue collar workers, which suggests that China's education system should be adjusted to meet job market demand, Lu explained.

Various levels of government have increased funding for vocational education. A modern apprenticeship system has also been piloted to promote cooperation between vocational

schools and enterprises in training skilled workers meeting market needs.

Meanwhile, some provinces such as Jilin, Anhui and Hubei are experimenting with a variety of incentive measures for teachers at vocational school, including granting professorship to high-caliber faculty members.

Overcoming prejudice

In China, university degrees carry prestige whereas vocational school students are often looked down upon as those with low academic performance. Usually, students enter vocational schools because they failed to get admitted into high schools or universities.

This prejudice also leads to parents and teachers to discourage students with good academic performances from applying to vocational schools.

Minister of Education Yuan Guiren said that vocational students should not be deprived of the path to universities; nonetheless, he said that vocational education should be employment-oriented.

According to Yin Weimin, Minister of Human Resources and Social Security, efforts should be stepped up to advocate the benefits of labor, and measures should be taken to improve the evaluation system of skilled workers so that they can obtain equal career opportunities as engineers and technicians. (Beijing Review) ■



On June 11, 2014, in the skill training guest room at Vocational Education Center of Yiyang County, Henan Province, the students participate in a peculiar contest—making beds. There are many funny ways to throw sheets and make beds. CFP



Pearl of the Orient: Hong Kong CFP

Against the wishes of the majority of Hong Kong people

Hong Kong legislative council on June 18 vetoed a motion of the proposed universal suffrage for selection of the region's next chief executive.

A total of 28 lawmakers of the legislative council (LegCo) voted against the motion, which failed to reach the two-thirds majority in the 70-member chamber.

It means that in 2017 the fifth chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) will be selected by the election committee as before.

Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying said at a press conference after the veto that 28 LegCo members voted against the wishes of the majority of Hong Kong people.

"I, the Hong Kong government and millions of Hong Kong people are naturally disappointed," said the Chief Executive.

For the past 20 months, the central government, Hong Kong government and the whole community have put in great deal of time and effort to reach a consensus on Hong Kong's constitutional development, Leung added.

Leung said the electoral reform conformed to the HKSAR Basic Law and the decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. It is the best arrangement according to the situation of Hong Kong.

Various public polls showed that a majority of Hong Kong citizens were in favor of universal suffrage and approved of the electoral reforms.

"It is time for the community to move on, and in the coming two years, the Hong Kong government will focus on economic development and people's livelihood issues," said Leung. "The civil service will continue to serve the public with devotion and professionalism."

The Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council on June 18 said the result ran counter to the mainstream opinion of Hong Kong society and is not an outcome the central government is willing to see.

"A handful of Hong Kong legislators voted against the motion out of their personal interests, hindering the democratic development in Hong Kong and blowing an important opportunity for Hong Kong to realize the election by universal suffrage, a result they should be held responsible for," the statement of the Office said.

It added that "we fully acknowledge and support the remarks by Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying and appreciate the efforts of the Hong Kong administration and people from all walks of life in promoting universal suffrage."



The Office further pledged to continue the “one country, two systems” policy, and “Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong” with a high degree of autonomy.

It also pledged to support the SAR government and chief executive, and to support the SAR government in a “lawful” and “step-wise” democratic development till the universal suffrage is realized.

The statement said, the central government ardently hoped that all social sectors of Hong Kong could unite under the leadership of the SAR government and chief executive, and concentrate on developing economy, improving people’s lives and maintaining social harmony, so as to keep Hong Kong prosperous and stable in the long run.

According to a statement issued by the General Office of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC), a small number of lawmakers at the SAR LegCo had stubbornly chosen to oppose China’s central government in dire disregard of Hong Kong citizens’ high aspirations for universal suffrage.

They have “denigrated decisions made by the central authorities, spared no efforts in blocking the universal suffrage motion, and reduced Hong Kong’s democratic development to a standstill.”

“They stood in the way of Hong Kong’s democratic development and undermined Hong Kong’s prosperity and stability for their own personal gains,” it continued.

The statement said the NPC decision was in line with China’s Constitution and the Hong Kong SAR’s Basic Law, and was made after taking into consideration the report by the SAR’s chief executive, public opinions from all walks of life in the Asian financial center, as well as current and future realities of the Hong Kong society.

The statement was referring to an NPC decision last year that Hong Kong voters could elect a new leader in the 2017

chief executive election, but candidates must first be picked by a 1,200-member nominating committee.

“Although the universal suffrage motion was not passed at the Legislative Council this time, the direction towards universal suffrage and the legal principles laid down in the decision of the NPC Standing Committee, must continue to be upheld in future efforts to pursue universal suffrage,” the statement read.

“The decision shall continue to serve as the constitutional ground for Hong Kong in the future as it enforces universal suffrage in the chief executive election, and its legal force is unquestionable,” it read.

“We are disappointed at the veto as are majority of Hong Kong citizens”, read a statement from the Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government in Hong Kong released following the veto.

The central government, the SAR government and Hong Kong people have worked tirelessly to promote democracy and universal suffrage over the years. The mainstream public opinion in Hong Kong are for the motion to pass, so as to make a historic step forward in Hong Kong’s democratic journey, the statement said.

However, a small number of legislators vetoed the motion, against most citizens’ will, costing Hong Kong citizens a valuable chance to realize “one person, one vote” in 2017 SAR chief election, the liaison office said, asserting “those who vetoed have to bear historical responsibility,” it said.

Nevertheless, the liaison office expressed confidence in Hong Kong’s prosperity and stability under the “one country, two systems”.

The liaison office also called for Hong Kong citizens to put aside political bickering, and to pool their efforts in developing economy, improving people’s lives, and promoting social stability, for the sake of Hong Kong’s future. (Xinhua) ■



CFP

Members of the Drafting Committee recall the legislative process of the Basic Law of Hong Kong SAR

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the promulgation of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. It took legislators 4 years and 8 months to draft the law from July 1985 to April 1990. Six members of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Basic Law Drafting Committee (BLDC) were interviewed by our correspondent recently, telling stories of the drafting process.

Gathering of social elites

As the Sino-British Joint Declaration came into force in 1985, Hong Kong entered a transitional period before reunification. "The most urgent task is to legalize relevant policies under the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems'", recalled Wang Hanbin, former vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China (NPC) and Vice-Chairman of BLDC.

In accordance with the decision made by the third plenary session of the 6th NPC and appointment of the 11th Plenary Session of the 6th NPC Standing Committee, BLDC was established on July 1, 1985. While serving as Secretary-General of the Standing Committee of NPC and Chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission, Wang was appointed as Vice-Chairman of BLDC.

The Drafting Committee was composed of 59 members, of whom 23 were from Hong Kong and 36 others from the Chinese mainland. Among 36 members, 15 were heads of relevant departments such as Zhou Nan and Lu Ping, 10 were celebrities from various social sectors such as Hu Sheng and Qian Weichang, and the rest 11, including Xiao Weiyun and Xu Chongde, were from legal community. Hong Kong members such as Pao Yue-Kong, Li Ka-shing, Louis Cha, etc. were from different social circles, apart from members of the Executive and Legislative Council as well as Judge of Hong Kong Court in their individual capacities.

Peter Kwong, Archbishop of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (Anglican Church), who was appointed to represent religious sector, recalled his meeting with mainland members, "I was deeply impressed by the knowledge, wisdom and good manners of the members from the Chinese mainland who paid close attention to the ideas of Hong Kong members".

After deciding on the working rules and structure of the Basic Law, BLDC established 5 sub-groups, i.e. groups on the Relationship Between the Central Authorities and the HKSAR; Fundamental Rights and Duties of Residents; the Political Structure; the Economy; and Education, Science, Technology, Culture, Sports and Religion, each group focusing on one area of discussion.

Li Yumin, former vice-governor of People's Bank of China, one of the 14 members of the Economic Group which

had two conveners including Yong Longgui from mainland and Wong Po-yan from Hong Kong, said “the group was composed of economists from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong commercial celebrities that were both professional and highly representative”.

Meticulous wording

Despite the work of the sub-groups, an Overall Working Group chaired by Pao Yue-Kong and Hu Sheng was established to modify and revise each article. In April 1988, the draft was released to solicit opinions in Hong Kong and other regions of China, which took as long as 5 months. Later, the Drafting Committee modified the draft based on opinions collected.

Wang Hanbin said that all the members expressed their ideas with a candid attitude, exchanged views on controversial issues and finally achieved consensus through democratic consultation.

Lau Wong-fat, 79 years old now, was former chairman of Tuen Mun District Council, only member from New Territories. According to him, all the members, with highly responsible attitude, paid close attention to every single article and its wording which went through repeated discussion.

“Take Article 40 for example, in order to better understand the situation of New Territories residents, a research group was organized to visit New Territories and listen to the concerns and aspirations of the local residents. As a result, it was prescribed by Article 40 that ‘the legitimate rights and interests of the inhabitants of New Territories are protected by Hong Kong Special Administrative Region’, which ensures the original lifestyle of the local residents and reflects the fact that the drafting process gave full respect to history as well as reality”.

Maria Tam Wai-chu, a Hong Kong deputy of NPC and experienced lawyer, keeps a notebook she used when she was a member of the Drafting Committee, with pages of records of detailed discussion on issues concerning garrison in Hong Kong such as funding and field provider, functions and jurisdiction, etc.

“There were a great number of differences and disputes at first. After repeated consultation and research, every article, every single word and even the punctuation was nailed down through repeated discussion”, she said.

Complete transparency and high level of democracy

During the first plenary session of BLDC, members agreed on the necessity of establishing a Basic Law Consultative Committee (BLCC) that served as an important channel for Hong Kong public to keep in touch with the Drafting Committee and to propose suggestions.

Tam Yiu-chung, member of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong and former chairman of Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB), was the youngest member of the Drafting Committee. As a representative of labor community in Hong Kong, he was engaged in the organization of the Consultative Committee. According to

him, more than 200 Hong Kong representatives from different levels participated in the work of the Consultative Committee which improved the publicity of the Basic Law through various forms, collecting a great amount of information concerning the Basic Law. Besides, mainland members met with the Consultative Committee in Hong Kong frequently, visiting grass-root citizens and listening to their voices.

Two large-scale consultative campaigns were launched during the drafting process. “Over half of the 100 revisions of the draft came from suggestions proposed by Hong Kong people through the Consultative Committee”, said Wang Hanbin.

“Thanks to the transparency of the drafting process and thorough deliberation on each article, which leads to consensus of Hong Kong public and accommodation of both national interests and interests of all social sectors of Hong Kong, the promulgation of the Basic Law was welcomed extensively in Hong Kong”, said Tam Yiu-chung.

A secret ballot was conducted to vote on every article of the Basic Law (Draft) in the 8th plenary session of BLDC in January 1989. “It was prescribed that the articles, appendix and relevant materials of the Basic Law must be approved by over 2/3 members of the Drafting Committee”, said Wang Hanbin.

It is still fresh in Peter Kwong’s memory that how “permanent residents of Hong Kong” was defined. “After thorough discussion, it was decided that Hong Kong overseas can keep their identity as permanent residents of Hong Kong in accordance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which reflects the special treatment of Hong Kong people”, he said.

Maria Tam Wai-chu said frankly, “although it is highly controversial on the electoral method of the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, the ‘Nominating Committee’ was originally proposed by Hong Kong members.”

Thirty years have passed while memory stays. The members of the Drafting Committee we interviewed are enormously proud of their participation in the fundamental and legislative work of Hong Kong, with all the details of the drafting process still vivid in their mind.

90-year old Wang Hanbin said, “the drafting of Basic Law is a glorious and historically unprecedented mission accomplished with joint efforts and close cooperation between mainland and Hong Kong members”. (Xinhua)



The first plenary session of the Drafting Committee of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China convenes on July 1, 1985 at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Wang Xinqing

Heading for stable growth

Improved economic structure and greater benefits for the people usher in a new direction for China's economy

By Deng Yaqing



China's GDP growth leveled off at 7 percent in the first half of this year, with an array of optimistic signs, such as better structure, improved growth quality, faster-than-expected job creation and accelerated growth of residents' income, boding well for the ongoing reform.

To stabilize economic growth, the Chinese Government unveiled a number of policies and measures, ranging from launching key infrastructure projects to remolding the investment and financing system, from lowering the reserve requirement ratios and interest rates to promoting tax cuts,

from encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship to initiating the Made in China 2025 strategy. "They have begun to take effect, and the national economy is undergoing positive changes," said Sheng Laiyun, spokesman for the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

As a matter of fact, some key indicators have stood firm and even shown an upward trend. Total retail sales of consumer goods grew 10.6 percent in June after adjusting for inflation, 0.4 percentage points faster than that in May; exports scored a positive growth of 2.1 percent in June after experiencing a slump in April and May, according to data from the NBS.



The largest propylene and propane rectifying tower in Asia is hoisted smoothly in Zhongjing Petrochemical Science Park of Jiangyin Chemical Industry Park in late June in Fuqing, Fujian Province. *Yang enuo*

Quality growth

“At present, new growth points are still not powerful enough to completely replace the position of traditional engines, which now are losing their dynamic,” Sheng said. He added that the fragile recovery of the global economy added to the downward pressures on the Chinese economy.

“However, the chances are the economy will perform better in the second half of the year,” said Sheng, who believes it isn’t a question that China will achieve its end-of-year goal of 7 percent.

China is shifting from a manufacturing- and investment-oriented economy to a service- and consumption-led economy.



Farmers from Houmiao village in Shandong Province harvest wheat. *Sen Lin*

Substantial progress has been made in the optimization of economic structure. In terms of industrial structure, added value of the service sector made up 49.5 percent of the GDP in the first half of 2015, an increase of 2.1 percentage points from the same period of the previous year.

In terms of domestic demand, consumption contributed 60 percent to the GDP growth, 5.7 percentage points higher than that in the same period of last year.

These changes indicate that China is shifting from a manufacturing- and investment-oriented economy to a service- and consumption-led economy, which is in accordance with the target of its economic restructuring, said Zhu Baoliang, an expert from the State Information Center (SIC).

Improvement was also made in the quality of economic growth. Energy consumption per unit of the GDP fell 5.9 percent year on year, outpacing that in the first quarter by 0.3 percentage points.

The vitality of private economy was further unleashed with more administrative procedures being simplified and power delegated to lower levels of government, said Sheng. In the first half, the industrial value-added output of the non-public economy grew 8.1 percent, 1.8 percentage points faster than the industrial average level, and private fixed assets investment rose by 12.5 percent after adjusting for inflation, accounting for 65.1 percent of total investment.

New industries, new types of businesses and new products have grown by leaps and bounds. Hi-tech industries still maintained a double-digit growth in value-added output, 5 percentage points higher than the industrial average level. In terms of new types of businesses, online retail sales hit 1.65 trillion yuan (\$265.65 billion), a year-on-year rise of 39.1



The construction site of a PPP (public-private partnership) project in Nanchang of Jiangxi Province on February 8 *Song Zhenping*

New industries, new types of businesses and new products have grown by leaps and bounds.

percent. Moreover, some new products, such as robots, new energy cars and railway locomotives, experienced fast growth in output.

Livelihood boosted

The gear shift of China's economy doesn't necessarily mean people's livelihood will be affected. In the first half of 2015, the per-capita disposable income of urban residents totaled 10,931 yuan (\$1,760), scoring a growth of 7.6 percent in real terms, outstripping the GDP growth. "It, to some extent, reflects structural adjustments and measures targeted at enhancing people's living standards have yielded some results," Cao Heping, a professor from the School of Economics of Peking University, told China News Service.

In recent years, the service industry has witnessed leapfrog expansion, which has provided many employment opportunities and well-paid jobs. The rise of minimum wage in many areas also helps boost the earnings of the low-income population, said Cao.

Meanwhile, the consumer price index (CPI) increased 1.3

percent in the first half, 0.1 percentage point higher than that in the first quarter, well within the whole-year control target of 3 percent.

In some sense, it was a result of a domestic economic slowdown, weak demand and price fall of major international commodities, said Cao, noting that the low price level means people can purchase more goods with the same amount of money.

Buoyant residents' income in combination with well controlled price level indicates that the economic stability has been strengthened and people's well-being been better secured, said Fan Jianping, chief economist of the SIC.

Aside from that, employment was better than expected. In the first half of the year, a total of 7.18 million urban jobs were created, accomplishing 71.8 percent of the full-year target, with the unemployment rate standing at roughly 5.1 percent, according to statistics from the NBS. Behind the propitious employment figures is the rapid development of the producer services industries, said Cao.

Under great downward pressures and amidst the profound adjustment of industrial structure, stable employment is a result of the government's endeavor to promote innovation and entrepreneurship and will ensure social stability, argued Cao.

Good prospects

The unfinished urbanization and industrialization along with the upgrade of consumption structure will continue to provide a growth impetus, and the efficacy of the newly re-

leased policies and measures will be further displayed in days to come, said Sheng.

The public-private partnership project library established by the National Development and Reform Commission in May has recruited 1,043 projects, with total investment amounting to 1.97 trillion yuan (\$317.17 billion), and the capital approved in May alone exceeded 250 billion yuan (\$40.25 billion). "It takes time for an approved project to be rendered into real investment and productivity," Sheng noted.

"Monetary and fiscal policies, as well as measures to revitalize the property market have not been fully exploited. Therefore, they will continue to fuel the economy in the second half year," said Zhu, who predicted investment, consumption and exports will perform better and play a stronger role in securing a 7-percent growth in the second half.

However, downward risks still persist. Further efforts should be made to stabilize the capital market, tackle overcapacity, bring down financing costs, push forward fiscal reforms and tax reforms as well as financial and State-owned enterprise reforms, and give full play to policies targeted at adjusting supply and demand, said Zhu.

Zhang Jun, head of the information department at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, noted international factors such as the likely interest rate hike by the U.S. Federal Reserve and Greece's debt problem, as well as domestic factors like the volatile stock market and the deleveraging of enterprises may undermine the upward trend.

"In mid- and long-term, it's still an uphill battle for China to rebalance its economy. In the bottoming out process, uncertainties will rise. The government needs to prevent partial risks from evolving into regional or systematic risks," said Zhang.

Huang Yiping, a professor from the National School of Development of Peking University, argued the prospective rebound of China's economy depends on whether new mainstay industries could come into being through innovation, transformation and upgrades.

"Though the emerging growth engines are not strong enough to bolster the economy, these new industries, products and forms of business represent a hopeful direction for future development," said Huang. (Beijing Review) ■



Workers clear up packages of small commodities ready for export customs clearance at Yiwu Cross-Border E-commerce Supervision Center in Zhejiang Province on June 3. Liu Zheng



The photo shows cars in the Motor Production Base of Sichuan Automobile Group on June 15 in Mianyang, Sichuan Province. Xue Yubin

Major Macroeconomic Indicators in H 1

- The consumer price index (CPI), a main gauge of inflation, rose 1.3 percent. The producer price index (PPI), which measures inflation at the wholesale level, contracted 4.6 percent.

- Foreign trade decreased 6.9 percent to 11.53 trillion yuan (\$1.86 trillion). Exports increased 0.9 percent to 6.57 trillion yuan (\$1.06 trillion), while imports dropped 15.5 percent to 4.96 trillion yuan (\$798.56 billion).

- Value-added output of industrial enterprises above a designated size—principal business revenue of more than 20 million yuan (\$3.15 million) a year—grew 6.3 percent.

- Fixed assets investment totaled 23.71 trillion yuan (\$3.82 trillion), up 12.5 percent after adjusting for inflation.

- Investment in the property sector reached 4.4 trillion yuan (\$708.4 billion), up 5.7 percent after adjusting for inflation.

- Retail sales of consumer goods totaled 14.16 trillion yuan (\$2.28 trillion), up 10.5 percent after adjusting for inflation. Online retail sales of commodities amounted to 1.38 trillion yuan (\$222.18 billion), up 38.6 percent and accounting for 9.7 percent of total retail sales.

- The per-capita disposable income of urban residents stood at 15,699 yuan (\$2,528), up 6.7 percent after adjusting for inflation.

- The per-capita cash income of rural residents stood at 5,554 yuan (\$894), up 8.3 percent after adjusting for inflation.

- New yuan-denominated loans amounted to 6.56 trillion yuan (\$1.06 trillion), 537.1 billion yuan (\$86.47 billion) more than the same period last year.

- As of the end of June, M2, a broad measure of money supply that covers cash in circulation and all deposits, reached 133.34 trillion yuan (\$21.47 trillion), up 11.8 percent.

- Total social financing, a measure of funds raised by entities in the real economy and a broad measure of liquidity in the economy in general, totaled 8.81 trillion yuan (\$1.42 trillion).

(Source: National Bureau of Statistics, all growth rates are year-on-year)

Arken Imirbaki: Ethnic unity a lifeline

By Xia Lina



Arken Imirbaki, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee

It is easy to tell from his face that he is a Uyghur, white skin, light brown hair and gray-blue eyes. However, he is the one who speaks best Mandarin Chinese among the NPC Vice-Chairpersons coming from ethnic minority areas. Being intellectually sharp and good in logical thinking, he is also a man of hospitality, generosity and interpreted understanding about Chinese cultures.

Grow-up in ethnic unity

Arken Imirbaki was born in an ordinary family and his father served as the first head of Heping county, Aksu prefecture in 1949. "I was born in New China, and grew up under the CPC leadership. Ethnic unity deeply impressed me all the way through my childhood," he said.

His father started working in the Party Committee of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in 1956. At that time, he

was 3 years old and attended the nursery affiliated to the Party Committee. There were children from different ethnic groups in the nursery and most of them from Han. So did the teacher who taught them singing, reading and drawing. "Although we come from different ethnic groups, we are one family."

In 1960, he started his first year in school. The teachers and students in the class were Han people except two students from Uyghur. There were many schools set up for ethnic minorities. Most of the local officials could not understand Mandarin Chinese and needed translation. "My parents told me to learn Mandarin Chinese because you were not able to do something if you didn't understand it. I was one of the first group of students asking for attending Mandarin Chinese-teaching schools, from the primary to the high school, then to the university. The teachers cared for us very much. When I wrote a good article, the teacher would praise me by saying that classmates from Uyghur are all good at writing and the Han students need to work even harder and learn from them. My Han classmates helped me a lot both in study and in daily life. When I fell sick, the teachers and classmates would go all the way to find the Muslim food for me. Too impressive to forget in my life."

In 1971, he graduated from high school and was recommended to work and live in a production team of Dongfeng commune in Urumqi. He was good at doing farm work and earned the most in the team. The following year, he was recommended to work in a ceramic factory of Urumqi where he did the toughest job all the time. He used to work in a kiln burning the potteries and because he worked so hard that he was recommended by the factory to study in the Northwest College of Light Industry for three years. "I learned Mandarin Chinese when I was a child and it helped me quite a lot in the school life and career later on. It is lifelong beneficial."

Brotherhood of students from Uyghur and Han

It is always touching when he tells stories about his Han friends and their brotherhood. During his internship in Tangshan, Hebei Province in 1976, an enormous earthquake shocked. "It was rather devastating and tragic. Only in a few seconds, a city of prosperity and tranquility was flattened to ruin. Transportation, water, electricity and communication were all suspended. At that time, only a dozen classmates survived and didn't eat anything for more than one day. One classmate dug out a bun in the steamer buried in the ruin of



A team to inspect the enforcement of the law on vocational education, led by Arken Imirbaki (C), vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, check the implementation and enforcement of Vocational Education Law from March 26 to 30 in Jiangsu Province. Gao Yong

'Although we come from different ethnic groups, we are one family,' said Arken Imirbaki.

the collapsed canteen. It was life-saving but there was only one. Everyone would like to give it to others. I was the only one who was not Han, and my classmates finally gave the bun to me, but I didn't think I should be the one to have it and gave it to another classmate who was still buried in the ruin and waited for being rescued. We always say that a friend in need is a friend indeed. That classmate is now in Shaanxi Province and I am not sure whether that small bun helped or not, but he was encouraged at a moment of life and death. There were 28 in our class and 16 died in the earthquake, so did 6 teachers. Later I was sent by the school to clean up the scene. I dug the bodies out of the ruin, put them into plastic bags, pulled them to the designated area, buried them, set a cement tablet for each and carved their names in it. It's lasting memory. Maybe we can truly feel the fragility and mean-

ing of life when experienced ourselves. In 2006, I invited my classmates who survived the earthquake to Xi'an to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the earthquake. All of the 12 survived came, some with their children. We spent three days together, talking about everything. In 2012, I invited them again to Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. We are almost 60 years old and it is less possible for us to meet each other when we get older. I will forever remember our friendship and we are the brothers and sisters of each other."

Care and support from colleagues

In his CV, some important part of his experience is hidden. In middle 1980s, he was recommended to further his study in Hong Kong. He was one of the first officials of the Xinjiang appointed a temporary post in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, later on to former Soviet Union working as the manager for four years in a China-Soviet Union joint venture. Then he came back and served as assistant mayor of Urumqi during which he studied in Kennesaw State University in the United States. He got training in University of Toronto, Canada, as well as in the Party School of the CPC Central Committee and Chinese Academy of Governance, etc.

“I was a worker in the very beginning, then studied in university. After graduation, I came back to be a worker, a technician, a director of the factory and then to work in the economic affairs department of the government. It is the Party that gives me opportunities to success. For example, before studying in Hong Kong, I was one of the two qualified applicants. My competitor graduated from an elite university and if we both took the examination, I would probably fail. However he chose to give up and then I got the chance.”

“Another example. I was sent to work as assistant director of Nanjing Economic and Trade Commission for one year. The director was quite senior and experienced. He let me do in my own way and also told me how to improve. He encouraged me to do more, think more and made me an exception to attend the Party meeting. Three months later, he gave me the power to approve the technological reform projects. On each reported items, I read and made instructions before he did so. Sometimes he agreed with me and if not, he would modify it and tell me why. With his help, I found myself more competent in doing the job. After one-year working in Nanjing, I wrote an article concluding the experience and put up propositions and suggestions about the reform needed to be done in Urumqi. The report was submitted to the meeting of Standing Committee of Urumqi Party Committee and I was asked to deliver a speech in front of thousands of officials about the good experience of Nanjing carrying out reform and what Urumqi should do for its own next step. I also mentioned how my colleagues of Han helped me and how warm I felt as an official from ethnic minority. It is fair to say that every progress I made all along my career is impossible without the care and help from my colleagues.”

Five years working in Xinjiang

He majored in economic management for university study and was involved in economic affairs after graduation. Only starting from 2008 when he served as chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, he was also involved in various areas including politics, economy, culture and legal affairs.

“The five-year experience of working in the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is the most unforgettable part of my memory, with both challenges and friendship. I was lucky to have a good team working with me, bearing responsibility with me, finding way out of problems with me. We were united, harmonious, pragmatic and innovative-thinking. Every day and every moment of that time is memorable to me.”

“At that time, most of the members of the newly-elected Standing Committee of Regional People's Congress were newcomers, meaning that everyone needs to change the role to have a good start. We discussed a lot about in what way the people's congress can do to stick to the CPC leadership, take the interests of the whole into consideration, and go parallel with the core tasks of the Party so as to give full play to the people's congress.”

“For example, the Party Committee of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region issued a policy on building houses for good living and prosperous animal husbandry industry. To carry out the policy, the people's congress helps in financing, and establishing four demonstration areas in Fuhai county,

Ethnic unity is real, not only about slogan. People of all ethnic groups should cherish the unity and stability just like protecting our own eyes and lives.

Tacheng county, Hetian county and Yecheng county. We helped 165 households of farmers and herdsmen to build houses with separate living areas of human being and animals. We also helped standardize the construction of two local engineer projects. The Party Committee of the Region made decisions to accelerate the preparation so as to accomplish soon. The people's congress set up 7 inspection teams which were led by members of the Standing Committee, carrying out comprehensive supervision and pushing the construction of key projects in 14 cities, especially newly started ones. We analyzed the problems during the process of construction and put up targeted suggestions. When Zhang Chunxian took the position of Secretary of Party Committee of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, he brought about brand new outlook like Xinjiang Spirit, Xinjiang Efficiency and Xinjiang Capability. The people's congress is not only in charge of legislation and supervision, but also handling many tough issues in the process of reform. Take resource-using as an example, the Party Committee of the Region decided to put it into auction and let market competition have the final say instead of allocating the resources free of charge previously. The people's congress has done a lot of coordination and preparation to make it happen. In fact, it was a breakthrough for the mindset and conception of the whole Region.”

Talking about the violent terrorist incident happened in Xinjiang, he said that “It is proved by the fact that only when we harshly cracked down the terrorists can we have stability and have the initiative in fighting against the enemies. The conscienceless terrorists deserve no mercy at all.”

“The ethnic separatist forces came into being long time ago in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. It presented major danger towards stability of the area and the fighting between justice and evil had never stopped. As impacted by the complicated elements both in the country and abroad, the three forces (ethnic separatism, religious extremism, and international terrorism) and illegal religious activities become more rampant, with more frequent violent terrorist incidents happening, posing real threat to the stability of the Region. We need to bear in mind that the fight against separatism and terrorism is a lasting, complicated and severe one. We should always be prepared and keenly aware that social stability is of utmost importance for the Region. In the recent years, we made related rules and regulations based on the local situation, providing legal guarantee for fighting against three forces. We enacted Regulation on Ethnic Unity Education which is the very first one in the country. We made decision to severely crack down violent terrorist crime and mobilize forces of all aspects to fight against it. We enacted Regulation on Religion which made the religious activities more specifically regulated. We promptly revised Regulation



Arken Imirbaki, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, meets Overseas Chinese Delegation attending the National Day activities on September 28, 2014. Jia Wenwu

on Border Management to strengthen border control and enhance regional stability.”

He emphasized that in Xinjiang, people of various ethnic groups love the country, love the Party and love Xinjiang. Only a handful of them are involved in ethnic separatist and violent terrorist activities. Although it is difficult to eradicate them in a short period of time, they doom to fail one day. It is the concept of unity, stability, reform and development which become the mainstream of the new era. Anybody who wants to put Xinjiang into chaos is like an ant shaking a tree, which is out of the question.

Following the instructions of the Party

Talking about being elected as Vice-Chairman of the 12th NPC Standing Committee, he said that he never thinks about coming to work in Beijing. “I found that I need to learn too much things here because members of the Standing Committee are all elites and experts in their own areas. Their professional capability and deep insight urges me to learn more and work harder. Working in NPC is like standing on a higher platform and looking from a different angle. Previously what I thought was only about Xinjiang, but now I need to bear in mind the whole country. It is about honor, and what’s more, the responsibility. So I often ask myself how to do a better job, and better assume responsibility. I always remember what General Secretary Xi Jinping and Chairman Zhang Dejiang said, which gives me an even stronger sense of responsibility. Never let the Party Central Committee down and never let the Xinjiang people down.”

“The work I did as Vice-Chairman of the 12th NPC Standing Committee is mainly about overseas Chinese affairs. Those Chinese living in other countries are huge resources for us to achieve the Chinese Dream, so that we try our best

to protect their rights and interests, encourage them to tell the stories of China, promote the Chinese spirit and spread voices of China.”

During the interview, he emphasized again and again that since the 18th Party Congress, the Party Central Committee stressed that Party members especially the leaders should strictly follow the political discipline and rules which test the loyalty of Party members. The standard for leaders should be higher and stricter. “As a Vice-Chairman of the 12th NPC Standing Committee from ethnic minority, I need to speak out for anti-separatism and anti-religious-extremism, to stand firm safeguarding national safety and ethnic unity. We should do as what we say, being loyal, clean and reliable at any time.

Ethnic unity is the lifeline for all ethnic groups

He always attached great importance to ethnic unity, which can be seen in his speeches in the past years, talking about the benefit of unity and stability while condemning separatism and turbulence. Dealing with ethnic affairs is all about unity, and the stability of Xinjiang is still all about unity.

“At present, the momentum of ethnic relationship in the Region is good, and there is only a handful of those who carried out separatist activities. They don’t and can’t stand for any ethnic group at large, on the contrary, they are the enemies of various ethnic groups and they can never destroy the harmony and shake confidence of the whole family of different ethnic groups. It was, is and will always be the truth.”

“Ethnic unity is real, not only about slogan. People of all ethnic groups should cherish the unity and stability just like protecting our own eyes and lives. There should be more words and deeds upholding unity and stability, converging tiny effort into great positive influence. We do so not because others tell us to do, but from the bottom of our hearts. As a Chinese, we belong to one nation, one culture and work together towards building socialism with Chinese characteristics. As ethnic minorities, we can’t live without the Han, and vice versa. Our destinies are intertwined and our hearts connected.”

“The life of water drops prolongs when they become a part of the sea. This is what a Uygur proverb tells about the feeling of their real life. People in this region has benefited a lot from the western development strategy, the opening up towards the west, the one-to-one aid from better developed regions of the country, the Silk Road economic belt, the first and the second central work conferences on Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The achievement of the nation has brought about benefit to people of various ethnic groups in Xinjiang, while the great Chinese Dream instilled infinite vitality into the further and better development of the Region. I believe that there will be even brighter future in Xinjiang, socially developed and ethnically united.” ■

Legislation on Celestial Burial initiated in Tibet

By Qin Yazhou and Li Hualing



Colorful religion banners flying over the high plateau CNSphoto

With over a thousand of years' history, Celestial Burial, a burial ritual with Tibetan unique characteristics, has been followed by most Tibetan till now. For its religious and mysterious nature, Celestial Burial is always an eye-catcher. In recent years, however, there have emerged some difficulties on the management of Celestial Burial related affairs. It is becoming more and more urgent to enact relevant laws and regulations.

The hopeful first code on Celestial Burial, Regulation of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the Administration of Celestial Burial, is now in the legislative process. It is widely held that prohibiting watching Celestial Burial by outsiders and respecting the burial ritual from a legislative perspective should be applauded. In the meantime however, modern burial practices should be promoted in Tibet out of the consideration of reducing the economic burden and choosing the burial method freely for ordinary Tibetan.

'Leaving Celestial Burial platforms alone'

Early this year, the bill to enact Regulation of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the Administration of Celestial Burial was deliberated and passed by the third plenary session of the 10th People's Congress of Tibet Autonomous Region. The code could include rules on the ritual, the management of Celestial Burial platforms, the protection of the surrounding area, and the identification of Celestial Burial masters, etc.

According to Sangzhu, chairman of the working commission on deputies, personnel and voting affairs of the Tibet People's Congress, the draft code will be submitted to the committee in charge of ethnic affairs for the first round of deliberation, and the results be submitted to the standing

committee of the Tibet People's Congress. "For the first time, Tibet will manage Celestial Burial affairs in a legal way. It demonstrates the respect and protection of the Tibetan unique burial ritual with over a thousand of years", said Sangzhu.

On January 13, the news that the People's Congress of Tibet Autonomous Region had deliberated and passed the resolution to enact the code was reported by Xinhua News Agency, which was posted by over a hundred of Internet media. Netizens delivered remarks to applaud the proposed rule to prohibit behaviors such as watching, filming, and reporting Celestial Burial. Some netizens said that only the master, monks and the male relatives who carry the corpse are allowed on the scene by the burial ritual. If outsiders appeared, it would interrupt the samsara of the departed. "Visitors are welcome to Tibet and enjoy the view. At the same time please don't watch Celestial Burial and leave ritual platforms alone".

'Celestial Burial tour', a practice difficult to be prohibited

In the summer of 2014, the Tourism Administration of Tibet Autonomous Region paid an inspection to the local tourism market. Those travel agencies that posted "Celestial Burial tour" in hotels were suspended and downgraded, and some guides' certificate were revoked.

Peeping, stealthily photographing and even posting the pictures of Celestial Burial, however, are not effectively stopped. Without legal binding, some travel agencies and individuals turn "Celestial Burial tour" underground. The correspondent searches "Tibetan Celestial Burial" in Baidu and finds over 37,000 pictures and over 730,000 pages. In Sina Weibo, the search results are over 500,000.

If a visitor takes photos in Tibet, surely he will photograph

living Buddhas and monks, worshipers, Marnyi stones, Celestial Burial platforms and vultures, snow mountains and glaciers, Tibetan operas, and also clouds, said by an observer. The correspondent is curious about what relationship between a photographer and its target when filming touches religious and cultural differences. On such an occasion the target might be like the prey to the camera. It should be human to human rather than a hunter to the hunted. Unfortunately, a lot of people take their cameras as a weapon and see other people as their prey, taking photos as they wish.

The correspondent encountered such “filming violence” on quite a number of occasions. In October, 2013, we accompanied a team to Shigatse. Out of Saja Temple, a woman in her 70s kowtowed to the hall of the temple. Those “filming experts” got excited and took pictures crazily. The woman stumbled to rise, hiding behind a furnace with hands covering her face. Such “filming experts” took out some money and flashed. Finally, the woman’s granddaughter approached and booed them off.

Modern transport brings tourists to Tibet. Such “violent filming” is becoming more and more commonplace. According to Mr Suolang, a professional Tibetan photographer, the aged and the children shall not be filmed in Tibet. Also, Celestial Burial sites shall not be watched and filmed.

An Aged Tibetan thinks his life is coming to an end. He is not willing to leave anything to the world for the good of his samsara. For a child less than one year old, being taken a picture is considered to steal his soul. Celestial Burial is a holy ritual to send the soul of the departed to the heaven. “In Tibet, please respect our religion and tradition when taking photos,” said Mr Suolang.

Choosing the burial method freely

As early as 1985, Tibet had issued rules on the management of Celestial Burial and prohibited watching and filming by outsiders. In 2005 and 2013 respectively, the local government issued two new rules on the management of Celestial Burial.

In recent years, with the formation of the transport network in Tibet, domestic and foreign visitors increase annually. At the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region, there existed only one airport connecting Lhasa and the outside world. Nowadays Tibet has 5 civilian airports, 48 domestic and international flights leading to 29 cities including Beijing, Chengdu, Hong Kong, Kathmandu, etc. In 2014, Tibet receives 15 million visitors, an increase of over 20 percent.

“With more and more visitors coming, there are more and more people who love the local traditions. But many people don’t understand Tibetan traditions and habits, some of their behavior and remarks hurt the feeling of Tibetans. I feel very sad when seeing such behavior”, said Mr Suolang.

A survey conducted by the local government in 2014 shows that there are 1,638 Celestial Burial platforms and 1,093 Celestial Burial masters. There has been 555 Celestial Burial platforms abandoned in the whole region excluding Changdu.

According to Deqingwangmu, chairman of the committee on ethical and religious affairs of the Tibet People’s Political Consultative Conference, some platforms are abandoned for a number of reasons, including the change of the surrounding environment and the decrease of the number of Celestial

Burial masters because of their low social status, etc.

“The fact that masters get decreased and platforms abandoned is to an extent the result of social and economic advancement. The legislation may respect the ritual, but it shouldn’t run counter to the time. It shouldn’t try to restore the abandoned platforms and force those who had quit as masters to continue”, according to Bi Hua, a Tibetan researcher.

In 1999, the Lhasa Xishan Funeral Parlor was put into use. The statistics show that the cremation number of Xishan Funeral Parlor grew annually from 2001 to 2005. The number has kept steady since 2006. Among the cremated, the Han nationality accounts for 74 percent, the Tibetan 25 percent, other minorities 1 percent.

According to Sun Junshan, deputy chief of the Department of Civil Affairs of the Tibet Autonomous Region, people choose their burial method according to their own wishes. By the statistics from Xishan Funeral Parlor, modern burial method has been accepted gradually by the local Tibetans.

Change of burial concept

According to Bi Hua, the cases that some Tibetans guide visitors to celestial platforms and take photos for economic returns has been increasing, so are the photos of Celestial Burial on the Internet. Legislation is needed to curb such behavior, and at the same time, those photos and films on the internet should be cleaned.

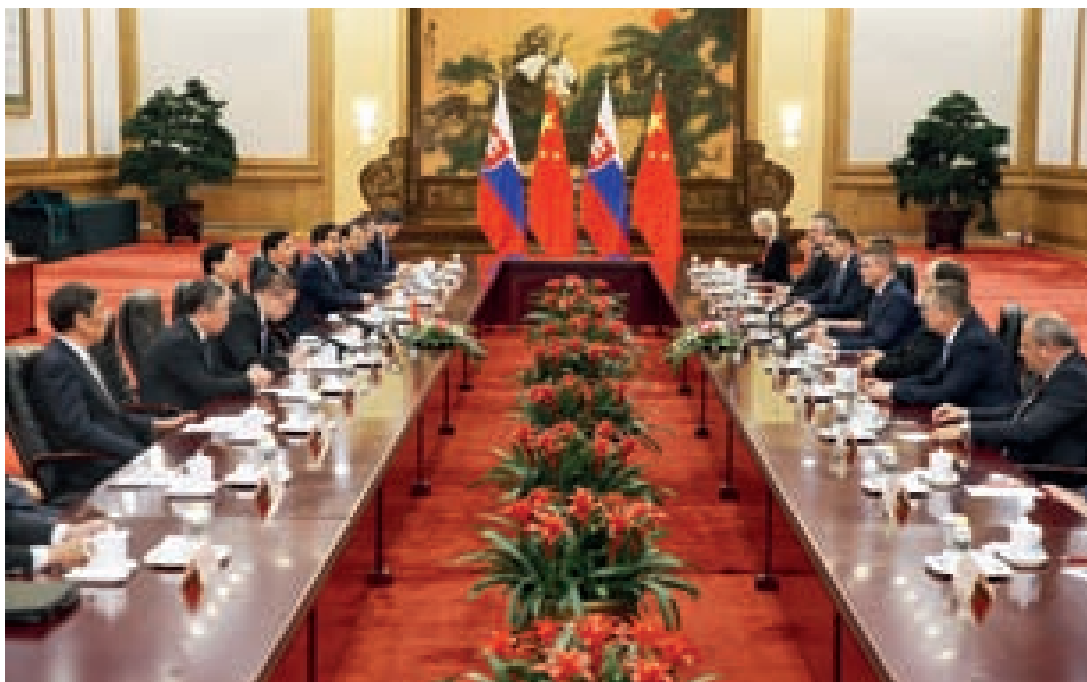
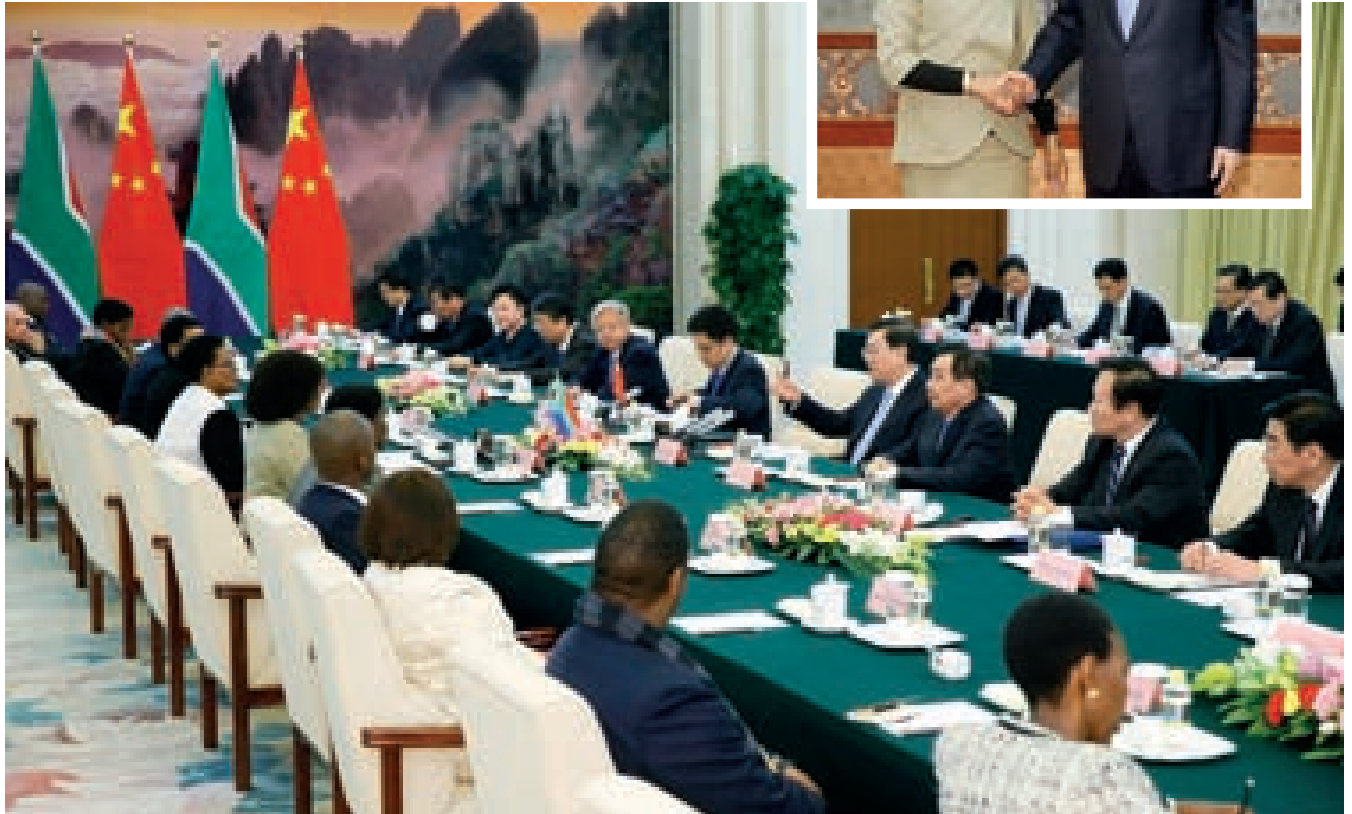
Some officials of the Department of Civil Affairs of the Tibet Autonomous Region and Tibetan experts hold that the proposed legislation should clearly prohibit “Celestial Burial tour”, set the red line for those Celestial Burial sites and erect warning posts. For those entities and individuals who organize “Celestial Burial tour”, intrude Celestial Burial sites and take photos, the penalty rules should be further specified.

The Temporary Regulation on the Management of Celestial Burial issued in 2005 stipulates that Celestial Burial is protected by the law. It is prohibited to watch, photograph, film, record the burial ritual and it is also prohibited to publish words, pictures and reports on papers, magazines, broadcasting, films and Internet. It points out that “if an entity or an individual violates the regulation and causing severe consequences the people’s government and the public security administration shall give penalty”, but the regulation doesn’t specify how to give a penalty.

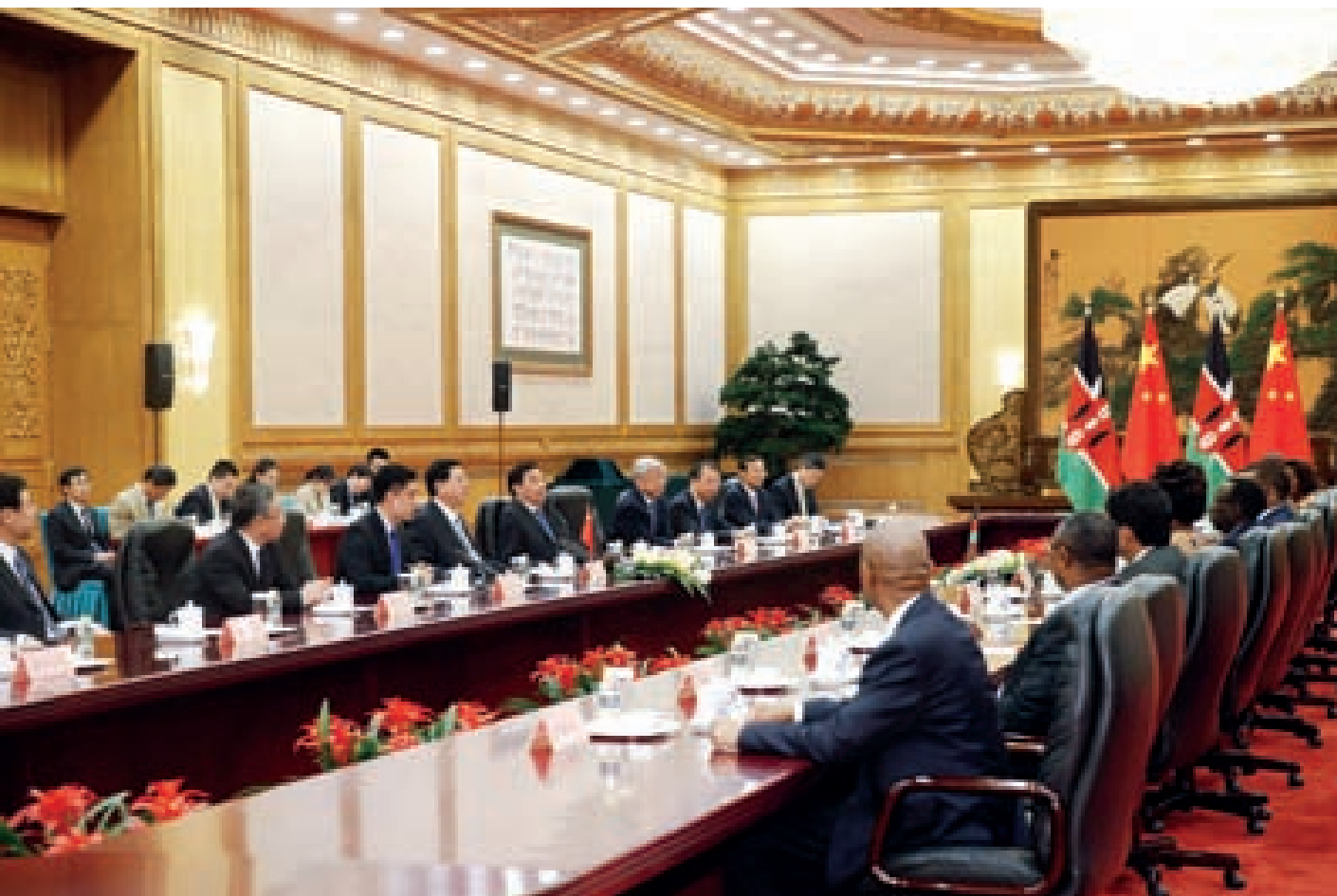
It is held that the annual decrease of Celestial Burial platforms and masters is an inevitable trend. Since cremation is promoted nationally, Tibet should keep up with the times and promote the change of the burial concept of local people.

According to Deqingwangmu, Tibetans of different ranks adopted different burial methods under the influence of religion and feudal hierarchy ideas. In different regions in Tibet, the burial methods are also different. In the past, only the high-ranking monks are entitled to cremation ritual in many Tibetan places. With the establishment of funeral parlors in Lhasa and Nyingchi, some Tibetans begin to accept cremation. Considering most Tibetans are Buddhist believers, it may be a good idea that eminent monks be invited to convey the concept of cremation to the rural people. (Outlook Weekly) ■

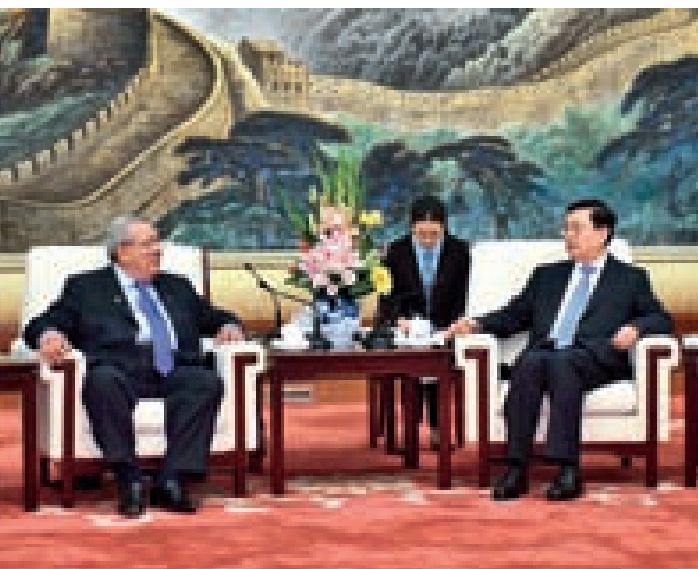
Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, holds talks with South African National Assembly Speaker Baleka Mbete in Beijing on April 7. They preside over the third meeting of the regular exchange mechanism between the NPC and South Africa's National Assembly. *Du Yang*



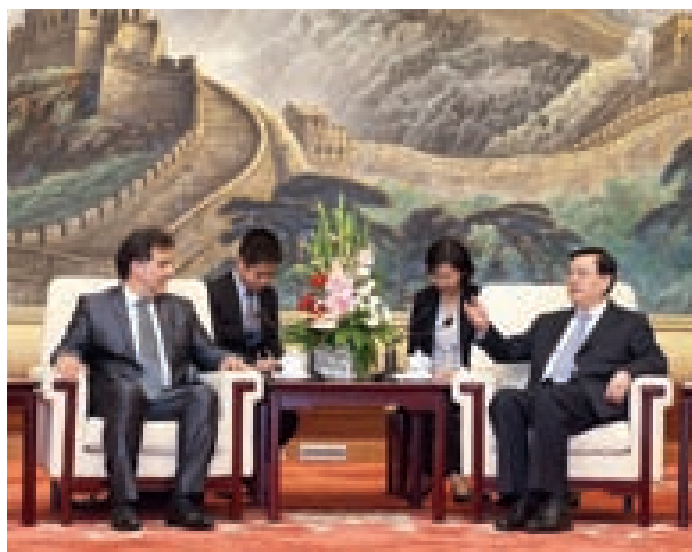
Zhang Dejiang (4th L), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, holds talks with Peter Pellegrini (4th R), Slovakia's Parliament Speaker in Beijing on May 25. *Du Yang*



Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), holds talks with Kenyan National Assembly Speaker Muturi in Beijing on May 18. *Du Yang*



Zhang Dejiang (R), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), meets with Jordanian Senate President Abdul Raoof Rawabdeh in Beijing on May 28. *Li Tao*



Zhang Dejiang (R), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), meets with Mitja Bervar, president of Slovenia's upper house National Council, in Beijing, June 19. *Sheng Jiapeng*

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CHINA AN

a city with long history

