

President Xi Jinping delivers a New Year's speech on December 31, 2020, in Beijing. *Ju Peng*



President Xi Jinping delivered a New Year speech to ring in 2021

“2020 was an extraordinary year. Facing the sudden coronavirus pandemic, we put people and their lives first to interpret the great love among humans. With solidarity and resilience, we wrote the epic of our fight against the pandemic.”

“From medical workers to the people’s army, from scientific researchers to community workers, from volunteers to those who built the projects, from seniors to youths born after the 1990s and 2000s, numerous people fulfilled their missions at the cost of their lives and protected humanity with sincere love.

They pooled their drops of strength into tremendous power and built an iron wall to safeguard lives. Many figures marched ahead without hesitation, many relays were accomplished hand in hand, many scenes showed touching moments, all these vividly illustrate the great spirit of fighting against the pandemic.

Greatness is forged in the ordinary. Heroes come from the people. Every person is remarkable! ”

“The 13th Five-Year Plan has been accomplished in full. The 14th Five-Year Plan is being comprehensively formulated. We are accelerating the pace to set up a new pattern for development, and are deeply implementing high-quality development.

Everywhere were vibrant scenes of confident, resilient people making the most of every minute. In 2020, China made the historic achievement of establishing a moderately prosperous society in all respects and achieved decisive success in eradicating extreme poverty.”

“We launched the final assault on the fortress of entrenched rural poverty, and cracked this “hardest nut.”

Through 8 years, under the current standard, China has eradicated extreme poverty for the nearly 100 million rural people affected, and all the 832 impoverished counties have shaken off poverty.”





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Liu Tingting



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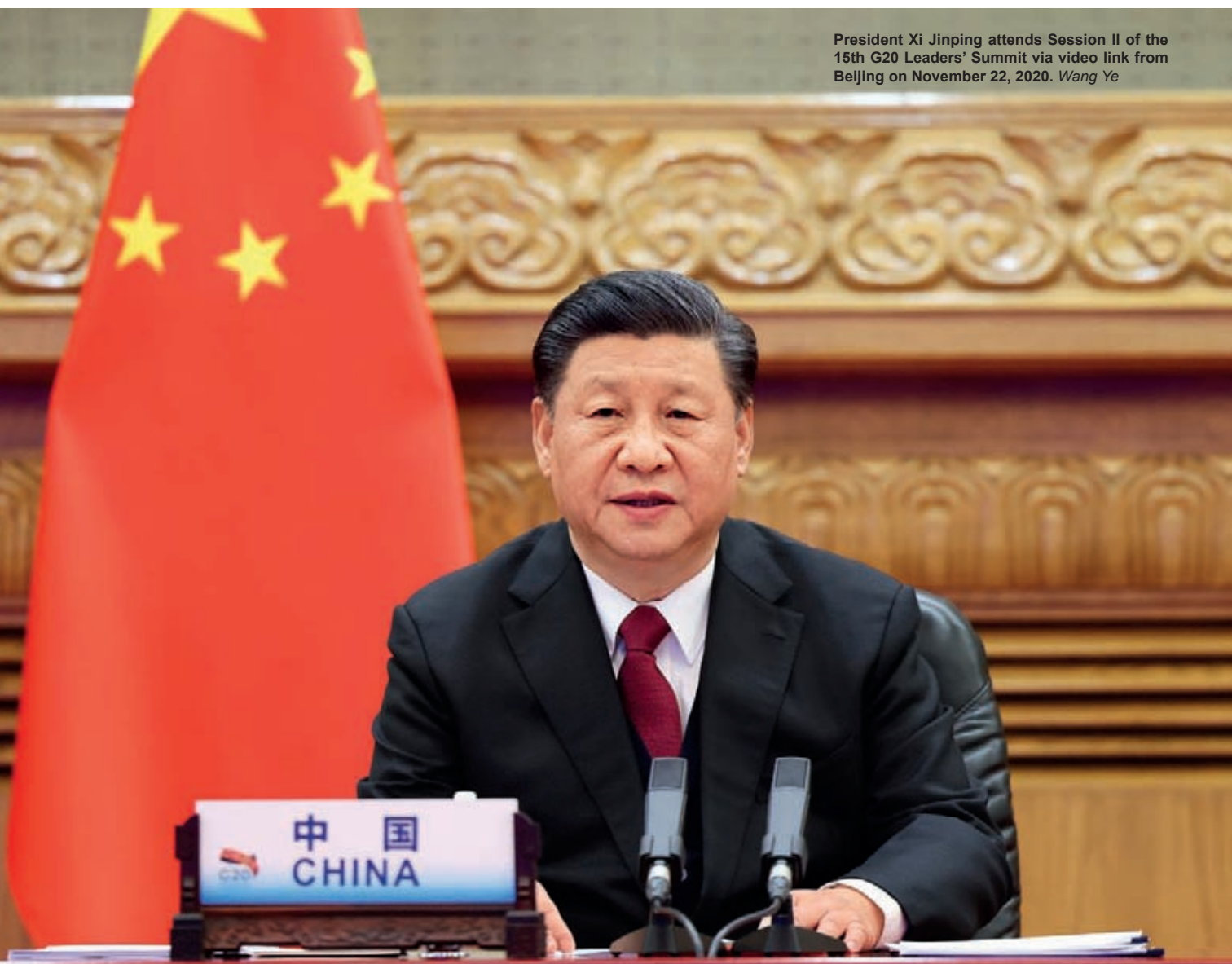
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President Xi Jinping attends Session II of the 15th G20 Leaders' Summit via video link from Beijing on November 22, 2020. Wang Ye



Together, let us fight COVID-19 and create a better future

Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At Session I of the 15th G20 Leaders' Summit
Beijing, 21 November 2020

Your Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud,
Dear Colleagues,

I wish to begin by expressing heartfelt thanks to the Saudi Presidency and especially Your Majesty King Salman for the tremendous efforts in hosting this summit.

This outgoing year, humanity has experienced the most serious global pandemic in a century. Over one million people have lost their lives. The world economy is in recession. Societies and livelihoods are taking a big hit. The impact of COVID-19 is even worse than that of the 2008 global financial crisis.

The G20 has taken swift actions in the wake of COVID-19. At the Extraordinary Summit earlier this year, we agreed to step up cooperation to fight the pandemic. We agreed to advance the R&D of medicines and vaccines, maintain economic and financial stability, keep the industrial and supply chains open, and ease the debt burden of developing countries. These measures have given the world confidence and charted the course for international cooperation against the virus. In this global battle, the G20 has once again played an important and, indeed, irreplaceable role.

As we speak, the pandemic is still wreaking havoc across the world, and some countries face the threat of a second wave of infections. To contain the virus, stabilize the economy and protect livelihood remains a long and arduous journey for all countries. In the meantime, the international architecture is evolving at a faster pace. Rising unilateralism and protectionism are causing disruptions to global industrial and supply chains. While containing the virus on an ongoing basis, we must also stabilize and restore economic growth. For the G20, I believe more efforts are needed in the following areas:

First, build a global firewall against COVID-19. We must first put the disease under control at home and, on that basis, strengthen exchanges and cooperation to help countries in need. Several G20 members have made progress in vaccine R&D and production. We should speed up action and support the WHO in mobilizing and consolidating resources and distributing vaccines fairly and efficiently. China actively supports and participates in international cooperation on COVID-19 vaccines. We have joined the COVAX facility and stand ready to step up cooperation with other countries on the R&D, production and distribution of vaccines. We will honor our commitment of giving assistance and support to other developing countries, and work to make vaccines a global public good accessible and affordable to people around the world.

Second, ensure the smooth functioning of the global economy. While containing the virus, we need to restore the secure and smooth operation of global industrial and supply chains. We need to reduce tariffs and barriers, and explore the liberalization of trade of key medical supplies. We need to further harmonize policies and standards and establish “fast tracks” to facilitate the orderly flow of personnel. China has proposed a global mechanism on the mutual recognition of health certificates based on nucleic acid test results in the form of internationally accepted QR codes. We hope more countries will join this mechanism. We also support the G20 in carrying out institutionalized cooperation and building global cooperation networks to facilitate the flow of personnel and goods.

Third, harness the role of the digital economy. COVID-19 has fueled the boom of new technologies, new business forms and new platforms such as 5G, artificial intelligence (AI) and smart cities, and accelerated the development of a contact-free economy like online shopping, online education and telemedicine. All this opens new pathways for economic growth. We ought to adapt to change and turn crisis into opportunity. We may deepen structural reform and cultivate new growth drivers through scientific and technological innovation and digital transformation. We could foster an enabling environment for the development of the digital economy, enhance data security cooperation, strengthen the digital infrastructure, and level the playing field for high-tech companies from all countries. Meanwhile, we need to address the challenges posed by the digital economy to employment, taxation and vulnerable groups, and seek to bridge the digital divide.

Fourth, pursue more inclusive development. We should keep our support for developing countries and help them overcome the hardships caused by the pandemic. In spite of its own difficulties, China has fully implemented the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and put off debt repayment totaling over US\$1.3 billion. China supports the decision on DSSI extension and will continue to work with other

China stands ready to pursue peaceful coexistence and common development with all countries. We may bridge differences through dialogue, resolve disputes through negotiation, and make a joint effort for world peace and development.

parties for its full implementation. Meanwhile, China will increase the level of debt suspension and relief for countries facing particular difficulties and encourage its financial institutions to provide new financing support on a voluntary basis and according to market principles. We should help women walk out of the shadow of the pandemic, address their special needs, and implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. China has proposed the convening of another Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in 2025 to contribute to women's development in the post-COVID era. It is also vital that we take the challenge of food security seriously and support the UN in holding the Food Systems Summit next year. In this connection, China proposes the holding of an international conference on food loss and waste in due course, and welcomes the active participation of G20 members and relevant international organizations.

Colleagues,
The grave challenge of COVID-19 has exposed the defi-

ciencies of global governance. The international community has a keen interest in the post-COVID international order and global governance as well as the future role for the G20. In my view, the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits should guide our way forward. We should uphold multilateralism, pursue openness and inclusiveness, promote mutually beneficial cooperation and keep pace with the times. The G20 ought to play a bigger role in this process.

First, we need to strengthen the UN-centered international system. The UN is the core institution for addressing international affairs through cooperation. All countries should firmly support the UN's authority and standing, follow the purposes and principles of its Charter, and uphold the international order underpinned by international law. We support the UN in more effectively building global consensus, mobilizing global resources and coordinating global actions. We support a bigger role of the UN in promoting world peace and development.

Second, we need to improve the governance architecture for economic globalization. We should firmly safeguard the rules-based multilateral trading system that is transparent, nondiscriminatory, open and inclusive, and support the re-

When COVID-19 is over, our world will rise from the pandemic and emerge even stronger.

form of the WTO to enhance its effectiveness and authority. We should promote free trade, oppose unilateralism and protectionism, uphold fair competition, and protect the development rights, interests and space of developing countries. We should continue the reform of the international financial system, conclude the IMF's 16th General Quota Review on schedule, expand the role of the Special Drawing Rights, buttress the global financial safety net, and raise the representation and voice of developing countries. We should also address the challenges to economic globalization head-on, and make it more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all.

Third, we need to promote the sound development of the digital economy. To address countries' concerns on data security, the digital divide, personal privacy and ethics, we should adopt people-centered and facts-based policies to encourage innovation and build trust. We should support the UN's leadership role in this field, and work together to foster an open, fair, just and nondiscriminatory environment for building the digital economy. Recently, China launched the Global Initiative on Data Security. We may work on that basis and join other parties for discussing and formulating rules on global digital governance. China supports increased dialogue on AI, and proposes a meeting on this in due course to advance the G20 AI Principles and set the course for the healthy development of AI globally. The G20 also needs to discuss developing the standards and principles for central bank digital currencies with an open and accommodating attitude, and properly handle all types

of risks and challenges while pushing collectively for the development of the international monetary system.

Fourth, we need to build up capacities for tackling global challenges. The most pressing task of the moment is to shore up the global public health system and contain COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. We need to enhance the role of the WHO, improve pandemic preparedness and response, forge a strong shield for human health and safety, and build a global community of health for all. We need to scale up international cooperation on ecology and environment to protect the planet Earth, our only homeland. We need to further curtail the production and use of non-essential, disposable plastic goods. COP26 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, both to be held next year, may serve as opportunities for forging broader consensus and stronger synergy in building a clean and beautiful world where man and nature coexist in harmony. China calls for a complete ban on illegal trade of wildlife and for stronger exchanges and cooperation on the protection of wild fauna and flora.

Colleagues,

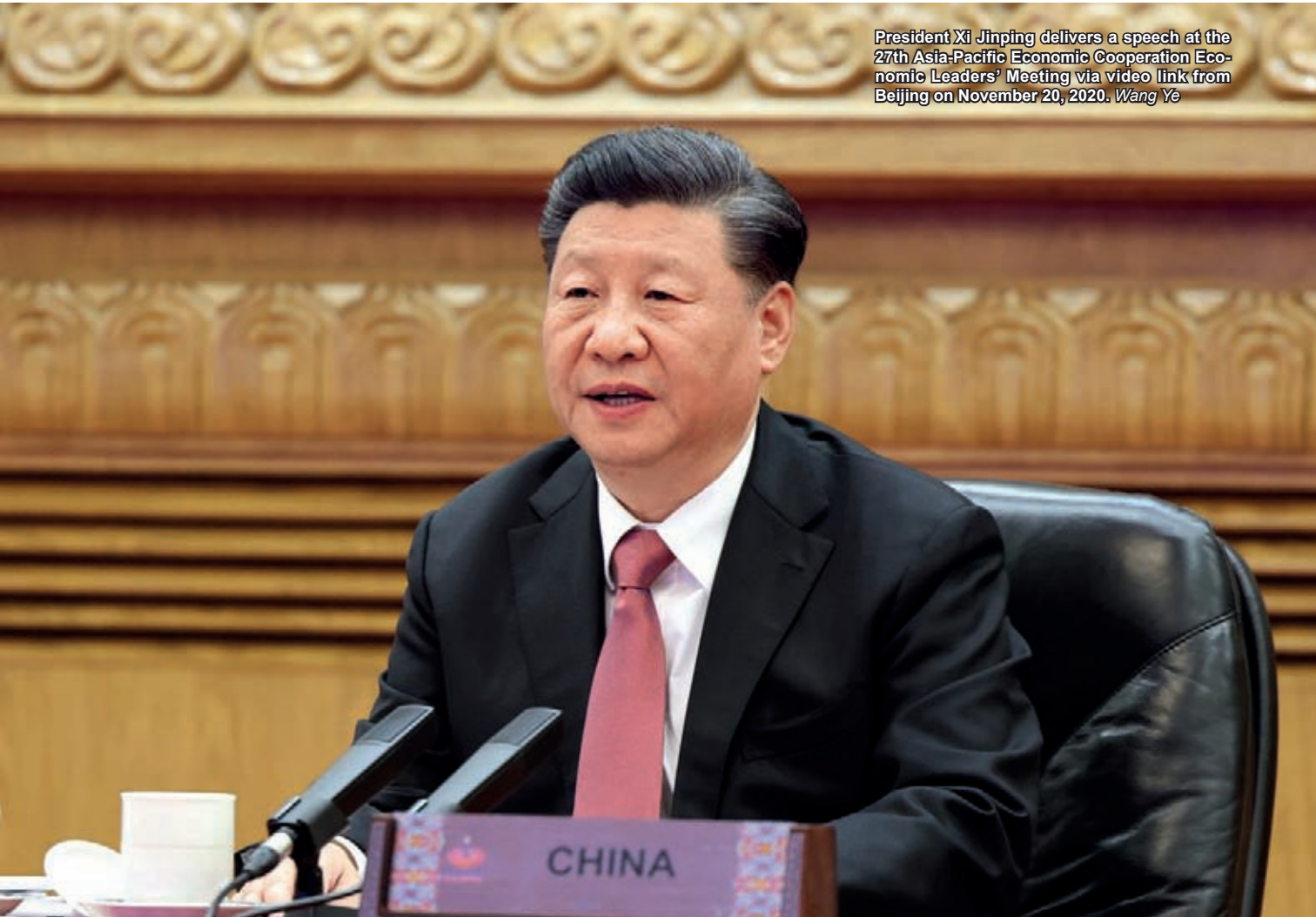
Building on its major strategic gains in fighting COVID-19, China has made steady strides in economic development. The recently concluded Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee adopted recommendations for formulating China's 14th five-year plan. The plenum underscored that China will finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects within the set time frame, and will embark on a new journey next year toward fully building a modern socialist country. Based on a scientific analysis of the new stage of China's development, we will stay committed to the new development philosophy, and actively foster a new development paradigm with domestic circulation as the mainstay and domestic and international circulations reinforcing each other. This new development paradigm is by no means a closed-door policy. Instead, it urges efforts on both the supply and demand sides to ensure unimpeded flow in production, distribution, exchange and consumption. While making the Chinese economy more resilient and competitive, it also aims to build a new system of open economy of higher standards. This will create more opportunities for the world to benefit from China's high-quality development.

China will always be a builder of global peace, a contributor to global development and a defender of international order. On the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, China stands ready to pursue peaceful coexistence and common development with all countries. We may bridge differences through dialogue, resolve disputes through negotiation, and make a joint effort for world peace and development.

Colleagues,

As a Chinese poem reads, "Past a fallen ship, one thousand sail onward; for a sick tree, ten thousand thrive by spring." I believe that when COVID-19 is over, our world will rise from the pandemic and emerge even stronger. In that spirit, let us join hands to deliver a better life for our people and build a community with a shared future for mankind. ■

President Xi Jinping delivers a speech at the 27th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting via video link from Beijing on November 20, 2020. Wang Ye



Working together for an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future

Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At the 27th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting
Beijing, 20 November 2020

The Right Honorable Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin,

Dear Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to join you via video link. I wish to thank Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin and the Malaysian government for hosting the meeting.

The past 30-plus years since the inception of APEC has seen rapid evolution of the international landscape and profound transformation of global governance. It has also witnessed a sea change in the Asia-Pacific region.

Over the past three decades and more, APEC cooperation has kept deepening and made substantial progress on many fronts. Guided by the Bogor Goals, we have steadily enhanced regional economic integration. We have advanced trade and investment liberalization and facilitation in tandem with economic and technical cooperation, with a view to realizing mutual complementarity and balanced development of the “two wheels” of APEC cooperation. We have advocated open regionalism and developed an APEC approach of voluntarism, consensus-building, flexibility, pragmatism and incremental progress. Over the years, the Asia-Pacific has weathered two financial crises and lifted over one billion people out of poverty. It has become a leading and most dynamic powerhouse of the global economy, playing an active role in building an open world economy, upholding the multilateral trading system, and spearheading economic globalization.

Three decades on, both the world and the Asia-Pacific are experiencing profound changes, a process further accelerated by COVID-19. The world economy is in the doldrums. Economic globalization is encountering headwinds. Unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise. Balancing equity and efficiency, growth and distribution, and technology and employment is getting more difficult. The wealth gap remains a common sight. The global governance system faces new challenges. For the first time in decades, the Asia-Pacific as a whole registered negative economic growth. Protecting people's health and reviving the economy are two formidable tasks we have to take on. Where should Asia-Pacific cooperation be heading? The answer bears on the development of our region, the well-being of our people, and the future of the world at large.

One priority on this year's APEC agenda is to unveil the post-2020 vision, a pathway toward our goal of building an Asia-Pacific community. This should be taken as a new starting point for us to begin another phase in Asia-Pacific cooperation, sustain the strong momentum of development in our region, and embrace a future of shared prosperity. Together, we can build an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future featuring openness and inclusiveness, innovation-driven growth, greater connectivity, and mutually beneficial cooperation.

First, we need to stay open and inclusive. The world economy is like the Pacific Ocean around us — It admits water from various rivers, and connects different parts of the world. As such, it has acquired a vast magnitude and enormous vitality. The approach of pursuing cooperation as equals and resolving differences with mutual respect is what essentially makes economic development and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific possible. Throughout the years, APEC

has committed itself to deepening regional economic integration and made significant progress in implementing the Bogor Goals. It has also played an important role in steering the evolution of the multilateral trading system. Yet it must be noted that free and open trade and investment cannot be achieved overnight. It is important that the Asia-Pacific should remain the bellwether in safeguarding peace and stability, upholding multilateralism, and fostering an open world economy. We must stay as determined as ever to support the multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core, promote free and open trade and investment, and make economic globalization more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all. Continued efforts are needed to press ahead with regional economic integration for the early realization of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP). China welcomes the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and will favorably consider joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

As we continue to work on free and open trade, we should pay no less attention to economic and technical cooperation. We need to further implement the APEC Strategy for Strengthening Quality Growth and the Action Agenda on Advancing Inclusion, and accommodate the concerns of developing members. We need to address in particular the special needs of women and some other communities, and support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Such efforts will contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth. China will host a seminar on advancing economic inclusion through trade and investment to look for suggestions on how trade and investment policies could deliver broader benefits to people. China looks forward to working with all parties to follow up on those suggestions.

Second, we need to pursue innovation-driven growth. The digital economy represents the future direction of global development, while innovation has fueled the economic takeoff of the Asia-Pacific. We need to proactively seize the opportunities of our times and fully harness our region's abundant human resources, solid technological foundation, and enormous market potential to gain a new competitive edge and open up new possibilities for the betterment of our people's lives. The APEC Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap should be implemented in full to spur the dissemination and application of new technologies, strengthen digital infrastructure, and close the digital divide. We need to improve economic governance and foster an open, fair, equitable and non-discriminatory environment for businesses. This year, China has conducted an APEC case study on smart cities, which we hope will contribute to the formulation of guidelines on smart cities and offer an example for innovative urban development across the region. China calls for experience sharing among APEC members on how to control COVID-19 and achieve economic recovery with digital technologies. China also calls for improving the doing-digital-business environment, energizing market players, and tapping the potential of the digital economy. Such efforts will bring fresh impetus to economic recovery in our region. Next year, China will host a workshop on digital technology-enabled poverty alleviation, in a bid to unleash

China will build a new system of open economy of higher standards and create a more attractive investment and business environment.

the role of digital technologies in eradicating poverty in our region.

Third, we need to enhance connectivity. Connectivity is a vital basis of regional economic integration and an essential underpinning for interconnected development of the world. The ongoing pandemic further highlights the importance of connectivity. We need to continue to implement the APEC Connectivity Blueprint to facilitate the smooth, safe and orderly flow of people, goods, capital and data and achieve a seamlessly connected Asia-Pacific. China has opened “fast tracks” with fellow APEC members like Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore to facilitate the movement of people during the pandemic, and more will be done to complete a network of such arrangements. In this connection, it is important to promote the mutual recognition of the COVID-related health information of international travelers. China is ready to take active and well-thought-out steps with all other parties to set up “green lanes”, which will help make customs clearance more efficient, unclog bottlenecks, and reconnect disrupted links. We may also promote the creation of international cooperation platforms on industrial and supply chains to ensure the safe and smooth operation of industrial and supply chains in our region and beyond. We need to pursue greater complementarity among the development plans and connectivity initiatives of different parties to forge a bigger synergy. On China’s part, we hope to work with all partners in high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, which we believe will set up a bigger platform for connectivity in the Asia-Pacific and inject a stronger impetus into the economy of our region and the wider world.

Fourth, we need to promote mutually beneficial cooperation. The Asia-Pacific economies have a high degree of mutual complementarity and enjoy deeply intertwined interests. Our economic cooperation has never been a zero-sum political game in which one gains at the expense of the other. Rather, our cooperation has provided us with a development platform to ensure what we each do can be mutually reinforcing and beneficial to all. There is a Malay proverb that goes, “bukit sama didaki, lurah sama dituruni”, which means to climb the hill together and go down the ravine together. It aptly captures the spirit of our Asia-Pacific family. COVID-19 serves as another reminder that only solidarity and cooperation can enable us to prevail over challenges. We need to deepen the Asia-Pacific partnership featuring mutual trust, inclusiveness and mutually beneficial cooperation and follow the approach of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. We need to keep raising the level and scope of our regional cooperation to achieve shared prosperity for the whole region. It is import-

ant that we advance practical cooperation on the basis of consensus, properly manage differences and disagreements, and keep Asia-Pacific cooperation in the right direction to ensure APEC’s sound development in the long run.

At this very moment, fighting COVID-19 is the most pressing task for us all. We must step up research and development of vaccines and related exchanges, and work harder to make the vaccines a global public good to improve their accessibility and affordability in developing countries. For that purpose, China has joined the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX). We support APEC in strengthening policy exchanges and capacity building in the areas of public health and MSMEs. China has made a telemedicine initiative to give people in poor and remote areas access to timely and quality medical services. We hope these efforts will contribute to anti-epidemic cooperation and economic recovery.

China highly values the role of APEC. We will continue to support the organization’s development, and with our roots deep in the Asia-Pacific, we will continue to serve its development and prosperity.

Colleagues,

This year, the Chinese people have exerted strenuous efforts to score a major strategic achievement in controlling COVID-19. Working with other countries in these trying times, China has contributed its wisdom and resources to the global fight against the coronavirus. It has shared with various parties full experience on containment and treatment and done its best to assist other countries and international organizations. All these are among the concrete actions we have taken toward building a global community of health for all. At the same time, we have coordinated COVID-19 control with economic and social development at home, and scaled up macro policy response so that the Chinese economy could stabilize, pick up, and steadily upgrade. In the first three quarters of this year, China’s GDP grew by 0.7 percent, on course to register positive growth for the whole year. It is also worth noting that by the end of this year, we will have lifted out of poverty all rural residents living below the current poverty line.

The recently concluded Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee adopted recommendations for formulating China’s 14th five-year plan. The plenum underscored that China will finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects within the set time frame, and will embark on a new journey next year toward fully building a modern socialist country. Based on a scientific analysis of the new stage of China’s development, we will stay committed to the new development philosophy, and actively foster a new development paradigm with domestic circulation as the mainstay and domestic and international circulations reinforcing each other. China will build a new system of open economy of higher standards and create a more attractive investment and business environment.

To conclude, China is ready to work with all other parties in the Asia-Pacific to build and share a brighter future of peace and prosperity for our region and get ever closer to the goal of a community with a shared future for mankind.

I thank you all. ■



President Xi Jinping attends the 12th BRICS summit via video link from Beijing on November 17, 2020, where he delivered an important speech. *Ding Lin*

Fighting COVID-19 in solidarity and advancing BRICS cooperation through concerted efforts

Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At the 12th BRICS Summit
Beijing, 17 November 2020



Your Excellency President Vladimir Putin,
Your Excellency Prime Minister Narendra Modi,
Your Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa,
Your Excellency President Jair Bolsonaro,

I wish to begin by thanking President Putin and the Russian government for their thoughtful organization of this BRICS Summit. Right now, the world is caught between a pandemic of the century and momentous changes never seen in the last one hundred years. The international landscape keeps evolving in profound ways. At such a critical moment, we are meeting to discuss our joint response to COVID-19 and draw a blueprint for the future of BRICS. The meeting has thus taken on a special significance.

Around the world, COVID-19 is posing a grave threat to people's life and well-being. The global public health system is facing a severe test. Human society is going through the most serious pandemic in the past century. International trade and investment have shrunk considerably. The flow of goods and personnel has been impeded. Factors for uncertainty and instability are numerous. The world economy is witnessing the worst recession since the Great Depression in the 1930s. Unilateralism, protectionism and acts of bullying are becoming rampant, and the deficit in governance, trust, development and peace is widening instead of narrowing.

Despite all this, we remain convinced that the theme of

What is important is that we put people's life and health first, mobilize all resources and do everything we can to protect people's safety and well-being.

our times, peace and development, has not changed, and that the trend toward multipolarity and economic globalization cannot be turned around. We must keep people's welfare close to heart and pursue the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind. Through concrete actions, we will contribute our share to making the world a better place for everyone.

First, we need to uphold multilateralism, and safeguard peace and stability in our world. History teaches us that multilateralism, equity and justice can keep war and conflict at bay, while unilateralism and power politics will inflate dispute and confrontation. Flouting rules and laws, treading the path of unilateralism and bullying, and withdrawing from international organizations and agreements run counter to the will of the general public and trample on the legitimate rights and dignity of all nations.

Facing the choice between multilateralism and unilateralism, and between justice and hegemony, we BRICS countries must stand up for equity and justice in the world. We must hold high the banner of multilateralism, and defend the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We must endeavor to safeguard the UN-centered international system and the international order underpinned by international law. It is important that countries rise above ideology and respect each other's choices of social system, economic model and development path consistent with their national conditions. We need to champion the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. We need to work through consultation and negotiation to address differences. We need to oppose interference in others' internal affairs, as well as unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction. With concerted efforts, we will foster a peaceful and stable environment for development.

Second, we need to enhance solidarity and coordination, and come together to meet the COVID-19 challenge. The coronavirus is still causing havoc in many places and waves of infection are resurging. Securing a worldwide victory against the pandemic remains an uphill journey. Nearly one year into the battle, many countries have gained important experience on COVID-19 containment and made encouraging progress in drugs and vaccine research and development (R&D). Our fight over the past year proves that as long as we stand in unity and follow science, we can control the spread of the virus and offset its impact.

What is important is that we put people's life and health first, mobilize all resources and do everything we can to protect people's safety and well-being. It is important to step up international coordination and response, and share information and epidemic control experience to stop the virus in its tracks. It is important that we support WHO's crucial leadership role in this endeavor. As we speak, Chinese companies are working with their Russian and Brazilian partners on phase-III clinical trials of vaccines, and we are prepared to

have cooperation with South Africa and India as well. China has joined the COVAX facility, a platform on which we will share vaccines with other countries, developing countries in particular. We will actively consider providing vaccines to BRICS countries where there is a need. To support the development of the BRICS Vaccine R&D Center, China has designated its own national center. We will work with other BRICS countries both online and offline to advance collective vaccine research and trials, set up plants, authorize production and recognize each other's standards. I propose that we convene a BRICS symposium on traditional medicine to explore its role in coronavirus prevention and treatment. This may well boost the global arsenal against COVID-19.

What has happened shows that acts of politicization, stigmatization, blame-shifting and scapegoating only serve to disrupt overall global cooperation against the virus. We need to overcome division with unity, replace bias with reason and stamp out the "political virus". In this way, we will pool the maximum global synergy to beat the virus.

Third, we need to pursue openness and innovation, and promote global economic recovery. The IMF predicts that the world economy will shrink by 4.4 percent this year, and that emerging markets and developing countries will experience negative growth for the first time in 60 years. To stabilize the economy while controlling the pandemic is the pressing task facing all countries. Under the precondition that safety is ensured, we must actively pursue economic recovery and seek to carry out economic and social activities in an orderly way as we fight the virus on an ongoing basis. We need to strengthen macroeconomic policy coordination, follow through on the initiative on facilitating cross-border flow of people and goods, and keep industrial and supply chains safe and open to better enable the resumption of business activities and economic recovery.

The practice of using the pandemic to pursue "de-globalization" or clamor for "economic decoupling" and "parallel systems" will end up hurting one's own interests and the common interests of all. Under the current situation, we need to stand firm for building an open world economy. We need to uphold the multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core and reject abuse of the "national security" concept for protectionist purposes. We need to leverage the new business forms and models triggered by the pandemic, strengthen cooperation on scientific and technological innovation, and nurture an open, fair, equitable and nondiscriminatory business environment to bring about common development of higher quality and stronger resilience.

China will work with other parties to flesh out the BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution at a faster pace. We will open in Xiamen, Fujian Province a BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution innovation center to advance cooperation on policy coordination, personnel training and project development, and we welcome the active participation of fellow BRICS countries. Not long ago, China launched a Global Initiative on Data Security, which aims to jointly foster a peaceful, secure, open, cooperative and orderly cyberspace to enable sound growth of the digital economy. We look forward to support from our fellow BRICS countries.

Fourth, we need to prioritize people's livelihood, and promote sustainable global development. Development holds the master key to all problems. All our efforts, from clearing

the impact of COVID-19 and getting back to a normal life, to ending conflicts and humanitarian crises, ultimately depend on people-centered development. According to World Bank forecast, global per capita income might drop 3.6 percent this year, and some 88 million to 115 million people might be pushed into extreme poverty due to the pandemic.

COVID-19 is a challenge we have to face head-on. We need to call on the international community to place the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the heart of international development cooperation. Poverty eradication must be made a primary goal, and more resources must be channeled to poverty reduction, education, health and infrastructure development. We need to support the UN's coordinating role and foster global development partnerships that are more equal and balanced, so that the fruits of development will spread to more developing countries and the needs of underprivileged groups will be better addressed.

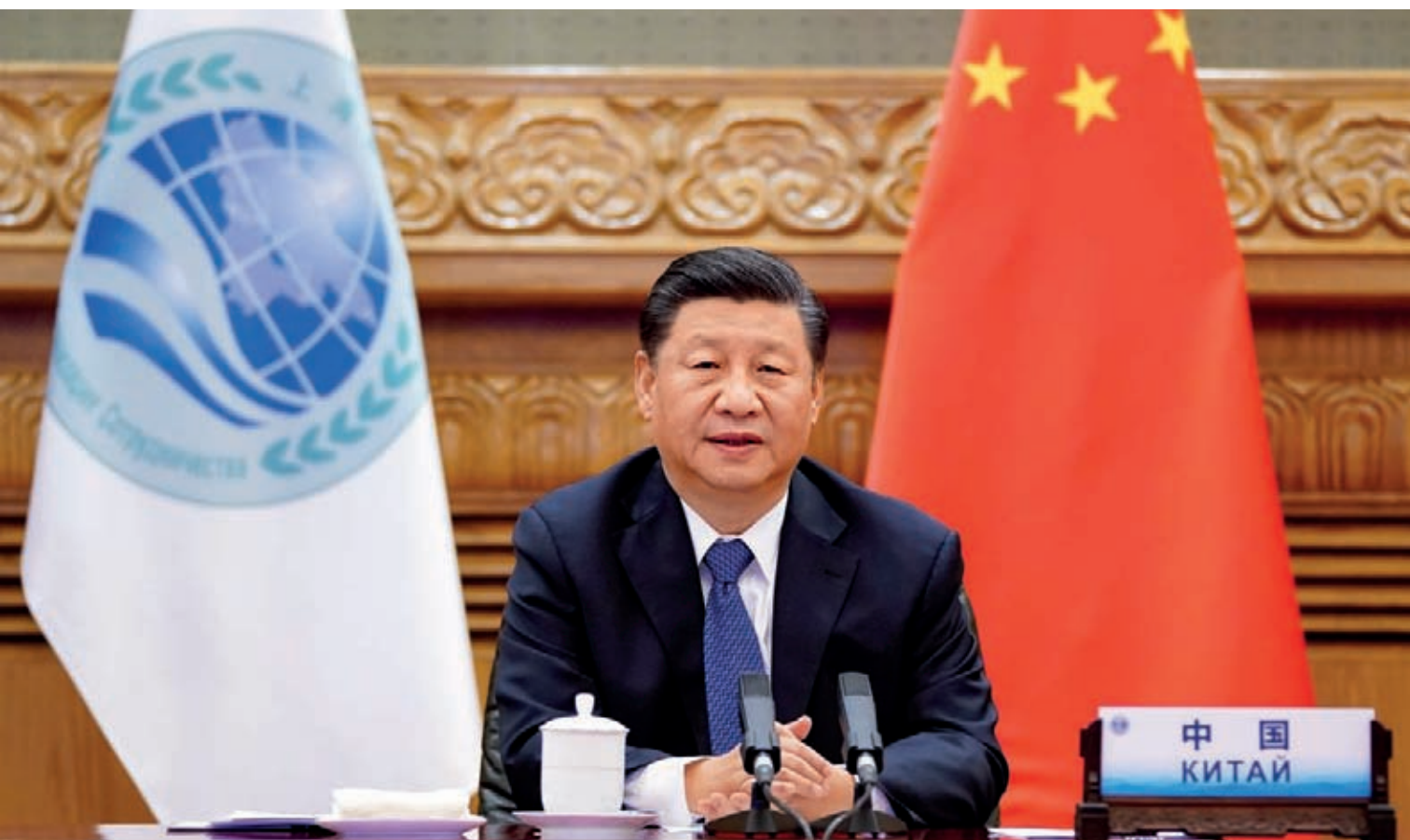
Fifth, we need to pursue green and low-carbon development, and strive for harmony between man and nature. Global warming will not stop due to COVID-19. To tackle climate change, we must never relax our efforts. We need to implement the Paris Agreement in good faith, stick to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and provide more help to developing countries, particularly the small island developing states. China is prepared to take on international responsibilities befitting its level of development, and will continue to make extraordinary efforts to address climate change. Recently, I announced at the UN China's initiative to scale up its nationally determined contributions and adopt more forceful policies and measures to strive to peak carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. You can count on China to keep its promise.

Colleagues,

The recently concluded Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee adopted recommendations for formulating China's 14th five-year plan. The plenum underscored that China will finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects within the set time frame, and will embark on a new journey next year toward fully building a modern socialist country. Based on a scientific analysis of the new stage of China's development, we will stay committed to the new development philosophy, and actively foster a new development paradigm with domestic circulation as the mainstay and domestic and international circulations reinforcing each other. We will redouble efforts to expand domestic demand, deepen reform across the board and promote innovation in science and technology to add impetus to China's economic growth. China will not shut its door of opening-up; it will embrace the world with more open arms. China will be more vigorous in integrating with the global market and will take greater initiative in deepening international cooperation. In so doing, China will create more opportunities and space for global recovery and growth.

All of us are indeed passengers in the same boat. When the wind is strong and the tides are high, we must be even more focused on our direction. We must keep pace and work as a team to break the waves and navigate steadily toward a brighter future.

Thank you. ■



President Xi Jinping attends the 20th meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization via video link from Beijing on November 10, 2020. *Li Xueren*

Carrying forward the Shanghai Spirit and deepening solidarity and collaboration for a stronger community with a shared future

Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At the 20th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of
The Shanghai Cooperation Organization
Beijing, 10 November 2020

Your Excellency President Vladimir Putin,
Dear Colleagues,

Let me begin by thanking President Putin and Russia for the thoughtful organization of this meeting. During its presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Russia has earnestly performed its duties and advanced the SCO's sound development despite the impact of COVID-19. China highly commends Russia for its contribution.

Since its founding, the SCO has traveled an extraordinary journey. It has stood the test of time and become a major constructive force in the Eurasian region and global affairs. Committed to the Shanghai Spirit, SCO members have enhanced cooperation in the political, economic, security, people-to-people and cultural fields, setting an example for a new type of international relations that features mutual respect, equity, justice and win-win cooperation. In the face of COVID-19, we have backed each other up to tide over the difficulties together. Such solidarity has injected positive energy into both the SCO's steady development and international cooperation against the coronavirus.

Colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated shifts in the international landscape. The world is entering a period of turbulence and transformation. The international community now faces a major test with choices to be made between multilateralism and unilateralism, openness and seclusion, cooperation and confrontation. "What is going on with the world?" "What shall we do about it?" — These are the questions awaiting answers from the people of our time.

Ancient Chinese teachings tell us that "men of insight see the trend, while men of wisdom ride it". Humanity lives in a global village where the interests and destinies of all countries are intertwined. People across the world increasingly yearn for a better life. The trend toward peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit is unstoppable. History has proven and will continue to prove that good-neighborliness will prevail over a beggar-thy-neighbor approach, mutually beneficial cooperation will replace zero-sum game, and multilateralism will win over unilateralism.

In the current circumstances, the SCO is required to carry forward the Shanghai Spirit and deepen solidarity and collaboration. Together, we will contribute more to the stability and development of countries in the region and take more steps toward building a community with a shared future for mankind.

First, we need to step up anti-epidemic cooperation and build a community of health for us all. Right now, COVID-19 is still presenting an ongoing threat. To fight the virus that respects no borders, we must take up the most powerful weapon of solidarity and cooperation, and rise up to the most imperative task of saving people's lives.

We need to strengthen our joint response to COVID-19, support each other's containment efforts, and uphold regional and global public health security. We need to support the World Health Organization's crucial leadership role, oppose attempts to politicize the pandemic or mislabel the coronavirus, and jointly resist any "political virus". We need to put the SCO's health cooperation mechanisms into full use, and deepen exchanges and cooperation in epidemic monitoring, scientific research, and disease control and treatment. China

China cannot be separated from the world in achieving development, and the world also needs China for prosperity.

proposes that hotline contacts be created between SCO members' centers for disease control (CDCs) for timely updates on cross-border transmission of communicable diseases. The unique value and important role of traditional medicine has been highlighted in the battle against COVID-19, and we need to continue to hold the SCO Forum on Traditional Medicine to deepen exchanges and mutual learning in this field. Vaccines play a vital role in defeating the virus. China has joined the COVAX facility, and will actively consider SCO countries' need for vaccines to help protect people's safety and health in our countries.

Second, we need to safeguard security and stability and build a community of security for us all. Security and stability are the number one precondition for a country's development, and thus concern the core interests of all countries. We need to act on the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, address all forms of threats and challenges effectively, and foster a sound security environment in our region.

We need to firmly support countries concerned in their law-based efforts to steadily advance major domestic political agenda, firmly support countries in safeguarding political security and social stability, and firmly oppose interference by external forces in the domestic affairs of SCO members under whatever pretexts. We need to deepen solidarity and mutual trust, and resolve disputes and differences through dialogue and consultation, in order to cement the political foundation for SCO development. It is important that we forestall terrorist, separatist and extremist attempts to exploit the pandemic for disruption, curb the proliferation of drugs, crack down on Internet-based propagation of extremist ideology, and deepen SCO members' law-enforcement cooperation. It is important that we uphold bio-security, data security and outer-space security, and engage in active communication and dialogue in this field. China has launched the Global Initiative on Data Security, which aims to galvanize efforts to shape a peaceful, secure, open, cooperative and orderly cyberspace. We welcome the participation of all parties in this Initiative. The situation in Afghanistan involves the security and stability in the wider region. We need to make good use of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group to help the country realize peace and reconstruction.

Third, we need to deepen practical cooperation and build a community of development for us all. True development is development for all and good development is sustainable. We need to be guided by the vision of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development and open up more opportunities for practical cooperation to facilitate economic recovery and betterment of people's lives.

We need to forge greater synergy of the Belt and Road Initiative with national development strategies as well as region-wide cooperation initiatives such as the Eurasian Eco-

conomic Union. We need to enhance connectivity and further integrate our industrial, supply and value chains for unimpeded economic circulation in the region. We need to facilitate reopening of economic activities through the “fast track” that steps up mobility of people and the “green lane” that quickens the flow of goods. We need to foster an open, fair and nondiscriminatory business environment for each other’s companies, and expand mutual investment among us. We need to seize opportunities from the new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation to step up cooperation in digital economy, e-commerce, artificial intelligence and smart cities. Next year, China will host a China-SCO forum on the digital economy industry in Chongqing, which will provide a platform for innovation cooperation among parties. We need to put the people first, and implement more joint projects that deliver real benefits to them. China supports setting up an SCO joint working group on poverty reduction and stands ready to share our good experience with other parties.

Fourth, we need to nourish people-to-people amity and build a community of cultural exchanges for us all. Each civilization is distinct and none is superior to others. We need to promote mutual learning between our civilizations and enhance good-neighborliness and friendship between our countries. This allows us to enhance public support for the SCO’s long-term development.

We may use various forms of communication to make the SCO’s achievements more widely known and win stronger public support for the SCO vision of cooperation. We may support the Organization’s exchanges and cooperation in education, culture, sports, media and women’s welfare, and institute an all-round, multi-channel structure of deeper cooperation. China will host an SCO non-governmental friendship forum next year, and will continue to hold SCO Youth Campus events, to which 600 young people will be invited in the coming three years, to deepen mutual understanding among the younger generation and bring them closer together.

We may better coordinate the SCO’s cooperation agenda with the necessity for a long-term fight against COVID-19. We may employ new working methods and flexible cooperation forms and keep the relevant mechanisms running effectively. The SCO Secretariat and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure need to play their coordinating role, and SCO members need to give stronger support to the work of the Permanent Bodies.

Colleagues,

Seventy-five years ago, our forefathers won the world anti-fascist war and founded the United Nations (UN), thus writing a new chapter in human history. Drawing lessons



Guests pose for a photo at a presentation of commemorative postage envelopes dedicated to strengthening the Shanghai spirit and the united fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, with signatures from 17 ambassadors from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization family of countries, in Beijing on June 15, 2020. *Li He*

from the past, we need to act to champion multilateralism, improve global governance and uphold the international order. We need to follow the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and build a world where global affairs are discussed by all, the governance system built by all, and development fruits shared by all.

The SCO needs to expand its network of partnerships and conduct extensive cooperation with observers, dialogue partners, the UN and other international organizations. It should play a more active role in international and regional affairs, and stay committed to building an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity.

Colleagues,

China cannot be separated from the world in achieving development, and the world also needs China for prosperity. Now, China is speeding up efforts to foster a new development paradigm with domestic circulation as the mainstay and domestic and international circulations reinforcing each other. New mechanisms are being put in place to build an open economy of a higher standard. China will remain committed to a win-win strategy of opening-up. It will seek development impetus from the world and contribute more to the world with its own development. We welcome all parties to capitalize on China’s development opportunity and make active endeavors to deepen cooperation with China.

China congratulates President Emomali Rahmon on taking over the chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of State, and will give full support to Tajikistan during its presidency. Next year, we will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the SCO. Let us hold high the banner of the Shanghai Spirit, forge ahead with strong cooperation, strive for the better development of our Organization, and build an even closer community with a shared future for us all.

Thank you. ■

Xi's 'cloud diplomacy' helps world emerge from pandemic with enhanced solidarity

In a year eclipsed by the onslaught of the coronavirus outbreak, the world witnessed glimmers of hope in China's unremitting efforts to rally global consensus on the COVID-19 response and chart a course for future public health emergency response.

In the face of an unprecedented global crisis, President Xi Jinping engaged in intensive high-level diplomacy, sharing China's experiences to resolve global challenges with world leaders.

In 2020, Xi conducted 80 phone calls with foreign leaders and heads of international organizations, and attended 22 major diplomatic events in the form of "cloud diplomacy" through innovative virtual platforms.

The president's diplomatic engagements have helped build consensus on the global fight against COVID-19 and pointed the way forward for China's foreign policy, said China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Building synergy

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc across the world. As of December 26 2020, the virus had infected more than 79 million people and claimed more than 1.7 million lives worldwide, with cases continuing to surge.

At this crucial time, when the world urgently needs its leading players to rise up to the challenge and act with swiftness, Xi said the most powerful weapons for defeating the virus are solidarity and cooperation.

In various international platforms, including the World Health Assembly, the G20 Leaders' Summit and United Nations high-level meetings, Xi called on countries to step up exchanges on epidemic monitoring, scientific research, and disease control and treatment, while opposing attempts to politicize the pandemic.

With a strong sense of responsibility, China proposed building a community of health for all and launched the largest global humanitarian campaign since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

According to its Foreign Ministry, China had provided assistance to more than 150 countries and 10 international organizations, sent 36 medical teams to 34 countries, and offered other countries more than 200 billion masks, 2 billion personal protective suits and 800 million testing kits by the end of 2020.

China also joined COVAX, a global initiative backed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and promised to make

the country's COVID-19 vaccines a "global public good" once available, in a bid to ensure vaccine accessibility and affordability to developing countries.

In the face of the invisible virus, no one is safe until everyone is safe, said Ruan Zongze, Executive Vice President of the China Institute of International Studies, noting that Xi has pointed out the right antidote to uprooting the virus and has shed light on the future direction for international anti-pandemic efforts.

China had taken concrete actions to assist other nations in need. Construction of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention headquarters began in 2020; war-torn Iraq now has its most advanced CT scanners for case confirmation; and Laos is equipped with an advanced laboratory to improve nucleic acid testing capacity in the country.

"One thing that we would ask is unity at the national level and solidarity at the global level. More than ever, the human race should stand together to defeat this virus," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, echoing China's views.

Propelling economic recovery

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has dealt a heavy blow to the world economy and added to instability and uncertainty, the overwhelming trend for countries to move toward openness and cooperation remains unchanged, Xi said.

As China's economy has gradually reopened, the country took innovative approaches to establish "fast tracks" and "green lanes" to ensure a smooth flow of personnel and goods, and keep industrial and supply chains stable and open.

With containment protocols in place, China hosted a series of scheduled global trade events, including the 2020 China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing, the third China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai and the 17th China-ASEAN Expo in Nanning, among others.

"This demonstrated China's sincere desire to share its market opportunities with the world to tide over difficulties," said Chen Fengying, a researcher at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations.

With a population of 1.4 billion and a middle-income group that exceeds 400 million, the huge China market is the most promising in the world.

"Our aim is to turn the Chinese market into a market for the world, a market shared by all and a market accessible to



The signing ceremony for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement is held in the form of video conference in Vietnam's capital Hanoi on November 15, 2020. VNA via Xinhua

all. In this way, we will be able to bring more positive energy to the global community,” Xi said during his keynote speech at the CIIE opening ceremony via video.

In its latest Economic Outlook report, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development predicted that China will be the only major economy to record positive performance in 2020 with a growth of 1.8 percent. (China’s National Bureau of Statistics said on January 18 that China’s economy grew 2.3 percent year on year in 2020.)

China is expected to play the role of a “locomotive” powering global recovery in the post-pandemic era, said Rudolf Minsch, chief economist at the Swiss business federation Economiesuisse.

Proposing a “self-revolution” for post-pandemic development, Xi has called for innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development. China aims to reach a peak in its carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060.

“People can make full use of a green transition as a new economic driver, which also adds decent jobs and boosts sustainable growth,” said Li Zheng, Executive Vice President of the Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development, Tsinghua University.

Multilateralism: the right choice

While the world was caught up in headwinds and setbacks in global governance, Xi made clear China’s stance of upholding multilateralism at various international events through-

out the year and shared China’s thoughts on reform of global governance and the safeguarding of world peace and stability.

“The baton of history has been passed to our generation, and we must make the right choice, a choice worthy of the people’s trust and of our times,” Xi said at the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly in September, 2020.

Calling on countries to stay true to multilateralism, Xi said global governance should be based on the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits.

“To put into practice the principle of multilateralism, we must act, not just talk,” he stressed.

Xi also announced at the UN meeting a series of major Chinese initiatives and measures, such as providing \$50 million to the China-FAO South-South Cooperation Trust Fund (Phase III), extending the Peace and Development Trust Fund between the UN and China by five years after it expires in 2025, and donating another \$10 million to UN Women in the coming five years, among others.

Facing one of the most severe public health challenges in recent history, countries around the world have come to realize that they share a common future and must join hands in building a community of health for all.

Actions to achieve Xi’s vision of a community with a shared future for humanity are well underway.

As Foreign Minister Wang emphasized, if all countries truly come together and forge ahead side by side, the world will emerge from the pandemic more prosperous, and humanity will embrace a better future. (Xinhua) ■

‘People first’ in year full of challenges

2020 is such a special year for everyone. In China, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the efforts to end absolute poverty and other endeavors remain fresh in people’s memories of the year.

“Putting people first”, a core idea of President Xi Jinping’s governance philosophy, has been the bedrock underpinning China’s success in various fronts.



Fighting COVID-19

President Xi Jinping greets residents in quarantine in Wuhan of central China’s Hubei Province during a visit on March 10 to inspect coronavirus prevention and control measures in the city, which was the epicenter of the outbreak. *Xie Huanchi*

Aerial photo shows medical workers walking to and from isolation wards at Huoshenshan Hospital in Wuhan, Central China’s Hubei Province, on February 4, 2020. *Xiao Yijiu*





Poverty alleviation

Photo collage shows villagers who were registered as impoverished households in over 20 cities and counties of Northeast China's Heilongjiang Province between July and October 2020, smiling as they benefit from poverty alleviation efforts. *Xinhua*



High-quality economic development

President Xi Jinping views Shenzhen Special Economic Zone from Lianhuashan Park in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, in south China on October 14, 2020. *Ju Peng*

Aerial photo shows the Atlantis resort in Sanya, South China's Hainan Province, on April 4, 2020. *Zhang Liyun*



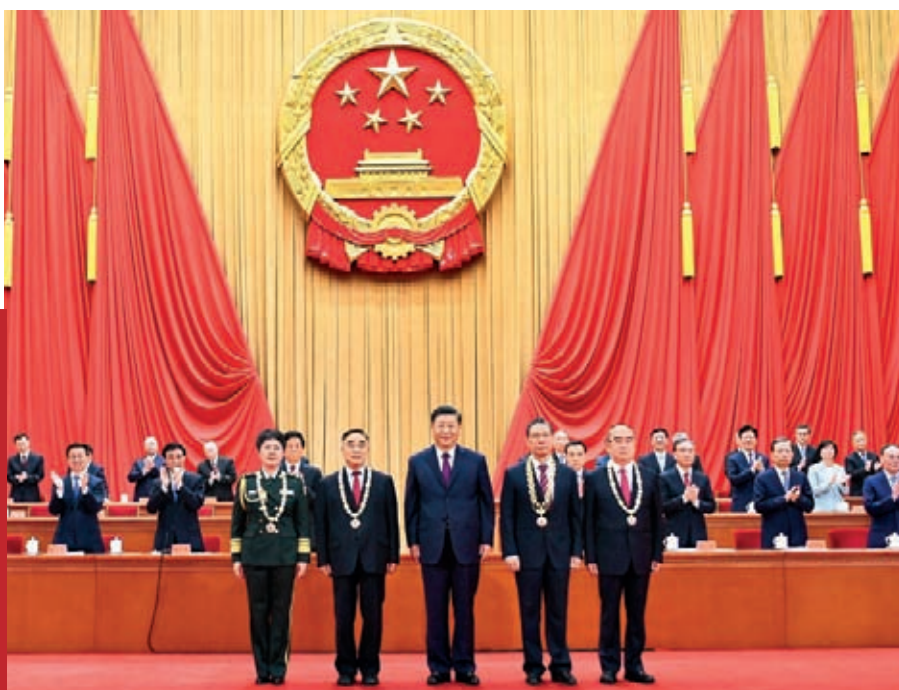


Inspection and research

President Xi Jinping talks with residents during a visit to an ecological and cultural park in the Yangzhou Sanwan Scenic Area of Jiangsu Province in east China on November 13, 2020. *Xie Huanchi*

Honoring power of the people

President Xi Jinping poses with the recipient of the Medal of the Republic Zhong Nanshan (second right, front) and recipients of the national honorary title The People's Hero Zhang Boli (second left, front), Zhang Dingyu (first right, front) and Chen Wei (first left, front), after presenting the medals at a meeting commending role models in the country's fight against the COVID-19 epidemic at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on September 8, 2020. *Xie Huanchi*





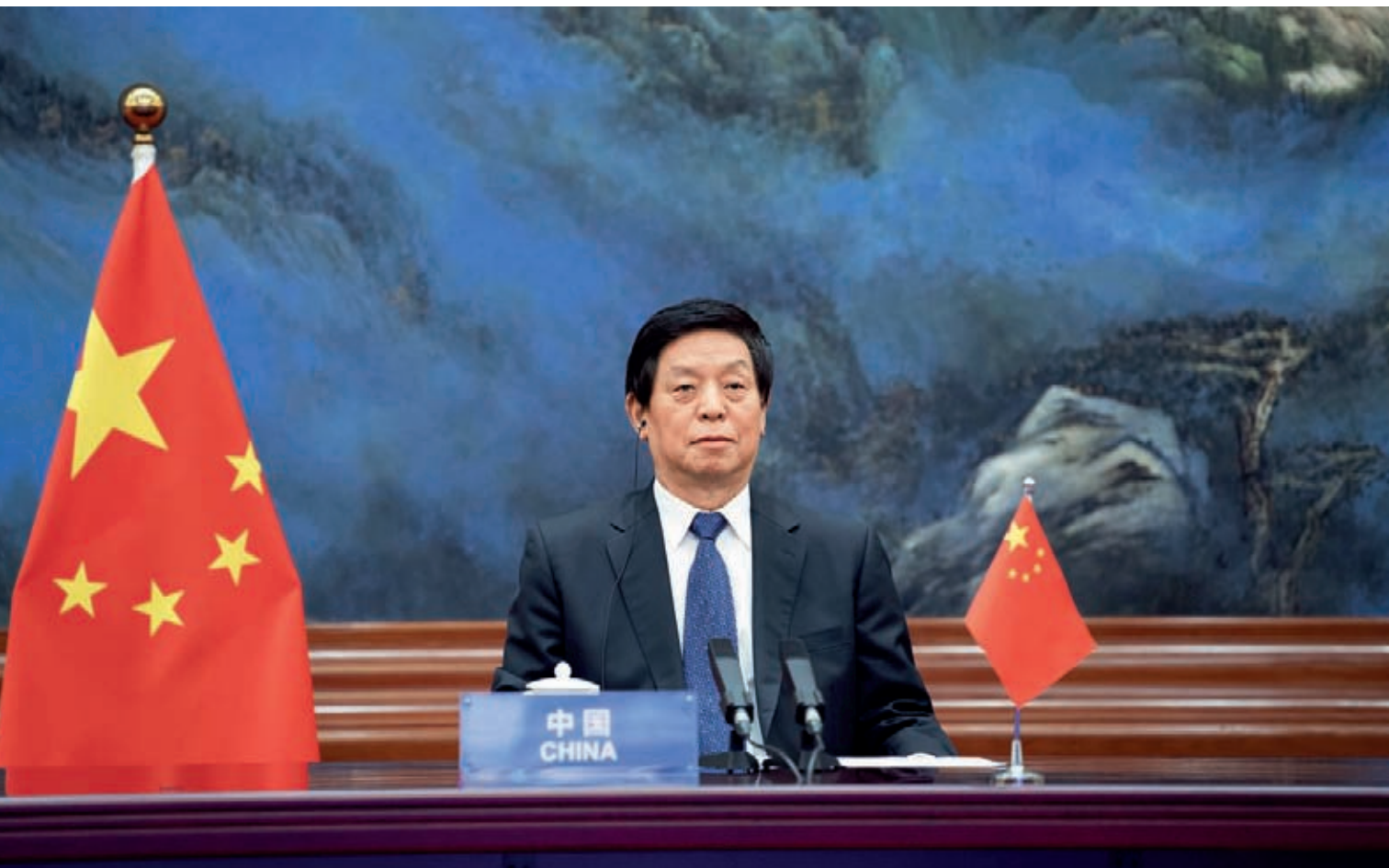
Inaugurating 14th Five-year Plan

The Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee presides over the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee in Beijing on October 26-29, 2020. *Yin Bogu*



“Xiplomacy” lead the way

President Xi Jinping and leaders and representatives from other member economies of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) pose for a group photo as they launch the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 via video link on November 20, 2020. *Li Xiang*



Li Zhanshu, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, attends the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament via video link from Beijing on August 19, 2020. *Li Tao*

Communication on the cloud

By Sun Mengshuang and Lu Yan

The East Hall on the second floor of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing was brightly lit at 8 pm on August 19, 2020.

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, waved via video to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, then President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Gabriela Cuevas Barron and more than 130 parliamentary leaders from 113 countries attending the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

This was the first time Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee took part in an international conference via video link. Leaders from all over the world gathered on the cloud to take part in dialogue and build consensus on the overall theme of parliamentary leadership for more effective multi-lateralism that delivers peace and sustainable development

for the people and the planet.

Amid the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the NPC Standing Committee actively promoted exchanges and cooperation with foreign parliaments through "cloud diplomacy," outlining its initiatives in an effort to contribute its share to the development of international relations, to promote transformation in the global governance system, maintain world peace and stability, as well as safeguarding national interests.

A global fight

Through these platforms, Li and others have introduced China's successful practices in combating the epidemic and shared its experience in epidemic prevention and control and the resumption of production.

At the parliamentary conference, Li delivered a speech titled, *Work Together to Defeat COVID-19 and Build a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity*, where he said that President Xi Jinping has been personally directing China's response efforts. President Xi had called for adhering to the people-first approach since nothing matters more than human life and stressed that China will stop at nothing to protect its people's life and health.

In the face of the COVID-19 virus, China swiftly took the most comprehensive, rigorous and thorough measures, mobilized the whole nation and established collective and society-wide mechanisms to fight it.

"China has acted with openness, transparency and responsibility. We provided information to the World Health Organization (WHO) and relevant countries in a timely fashion. We released the genome sequence at the earliest possible time. We shared control and treatment experience with the world without reservation. We have done everything in our power to support and assist countries in need," Li added.

Several epidemic prevention and control measures taken by China were included in the declaration adopted by the speakers of parliament and the IPU president, including forging a global community with a shared future for humanity, a people-centered approach, solidarity and cooperation and the principles of peaceful coexistence.

Then IPU President Cuevas Barron said she believes that China has done well in the global fight against COVID-19, and that the concept of "building a community with a shared future for humanity" has pointed the way for all countries in fighting the pandemic.

Deepening cooperation

At the Sixth BRICS Parliamentary Forum under the theme *BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth: Parliamentary Dimension*, held on October 27, 2020, Li presented several practical experiences on fighting against COVID-19, building economic recovery and countering the negative consequences of the pandemic.

"First, legislative bodies should strengthen cooperation in the field of public health and provide legal protection for epidemic prevention and control. Second, we should strengthen cooperation in the fight against coronavirus infection, exchange information and best practices, and work on the development of new vaccines. Third, it is necessary to provide support to the WHO and to the WTO (World Trade Or-

ganization) to promote trade and mutual investment (during/post COVID-19)," Li said.

He also called for more openness, innovation and development, and urged the legislative bodies to firmly safeguard the multilateral trading system from the perspective of the rule of law. He also stressed the need to firmly uphold the authority of international law and deepen parliamentary cooperation within the framework of BRICS.

BRICS parliamentarians should take responsibility for stabilizing their respective countries' economies to accelerate global economic recovery, he added.

Meanwhile, on November 2, 2020, Li put forward suggestions aimed at boosting cooperation between the legislatures of China and Russia at the opening ceremony of the Sixth Meeting of the Inter-parliamentary Commission on Cooperation between the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and the NPC of China, which he attended via video from Beijing.

Li noted that the commission is an important platform for implementing consensus between the two heads of state, as well as playing an important role in optimizing the legal environment for bilateral cooperation and consolidating the public opinion foundation of bilateral ties.

"The NPC is willing to work with the Russian Federal Council and the State Duma to push forward the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, making due contributions in achieving respective development and revitalization goals, dealing with risks and challenges together, jointly safeguarding world peace and promoting the building of a community with a shared future for humanity," he said.

At the opening ceremony of the 11th meeting of the parliamentary exchange mechanism between legislative bodies



Li Zhanshu, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, attends the 6th BRICS Parliamentary Forum via video link from the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on October 27, 2020. Pang Xinglei

of China and France held on December 16, 2020, Li said the two legislatures should enrich and expand exchanges and cooperation between their friendship groups, share the story of bilateral friendship as well as promote dialogue and exchanges between NPC deputies and French National Assembly members in specialized fields such as science and technology, education, culture, health and youth and women.

The two sides should jointly safeguard the international system with the UN as the core, the international order based on international law and the multilateral trading system with the rules of the WTO as the cornerstone, along with strengthening communication and coordination, Li said.

Richard Ferrand, President of the French National Assembly, said that France-China relations are of crucial importance, adding that the National Assembly is willing to play a positive role, strengthen cooperation under the exchanges mechanism and contribute to the long-term, stable and healthy development of France-China relations.

Sharing experience

In 2020, the NPC held 44 bilateral meetings and other exchange activities with relevant national parliaments via video and attended 26 online international conferences, where members of the NPC Standing Committee shared their views and exchanged ideas with their foreign counterparts on various issues.

On green development, Cheng Lifeng, vice chairman of the NPC Environment and Resources Protection Conservation Committee, said during the 11th meeting between China and France, that in recent years, the NPC has promoted the strengthening of legislation related to climate change as an important task and has carried out a great deal of law enforcement and supervision work to accelerate green development and to build a clean, low-carbon, safe and efficient energy system.

On digital technology, Liu Xiuwen, vice chairman of the Budgetary Commission of the NPC Standing Committee,

said that the global economy is undergoing a digital transformation, with the most urgent task being to formulate global rules for data security that can be accepted by all parties. To this end, China proposed the Global Initiative on Data Security at the International Seminar on Global Digital Governance in September 2020.

In the field of national security, Li Fei, chairman of the NPC Constitution and Law Committee, said that the NPC and its Standing Committee place great importance on legislation for safeguarding national security, carrying out systematic planning and formulating corresponding national security laws to provide adequate legal guarantees for building a complete national security system.

In terms of deepening parliamentary cooperation, Zhang Zhijun, vice chairman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee, said that China and Russia shoulder the special mission of maintaining world peace and security and promoting human development and progress. A strong and vibrant China-Russia relationship is of major strategic significance for building a new type of international relations, promoting the building of a community with a shared future for humanity, and maintaining regional and world peace and security.

He also said that the development of China-EU relations has brought tangible benefits to both sides and has played an important role in maintaining world peace and promoting common development. China and France should vigorously promote the concept and principles of multilateralism in the international arena, build a solid international framework for multilateralism and enhance the attractiveness and influence of the concept of multilateralism through concrete actions.

Leonid Slutsky, a chairman of State Duma Committee on International Affairs, suggested that China and Russia should strengthen coordination within the mechanisms of the UN and its Security Council, the BRICS mechanism and other multilateral frameworks, to maintain international and regional peace and stability. ■



Wang Chen, vice chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, presides over the Sixth Meeting of the China-Russia Committee for Parliamentary Cooperation via video from Beijing on November 2, 2020. Xu Lin



Chen Zhu (center), vice-chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, speaks at the 11th meeting of the parliamentary exchange mechanism between legislative bodies of China and France via video link from Beijing on December 16, 2020. Xu Lin



Law passed to promote conservation of Yangtze River

By Zhang Meijuan

Aerial photo shows a highway stretching across the water in Xingshan County of Central China's Hubei Province on December 18, 2016. In recent years, Hubei has made great efforts in ecological remediation, environmental protection and green development to build an important ecological barrier in the area along the Yangtze River. *Xiao Yijiu*

A Yangtze River conservation law was passed on December 26, 2020 after a third reading during the 24th Session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC). As the country's first legislation on a specific river basin, the landmark law will go into effect on March 1, 2021, with the aim of enhancing the basin's ecological conservation, ensuring harmonious coexistence between people and nature, and maintaining sustainable development.

The law comes as China steps up its efforts to promote the green development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. With 96 provisions spanning nine chapters, the law covers planning and control, resource protection, water pollution treatment, ecological restoration and conservation, green development, support and oversight, and legal liabilities and penalties in association with the conservation of the "mother river." The law provides that the economic and social development in the basin shall prioritize the ecology and environment based on the principle of "promoting well-coordinated

Prioritizing the ecology and environment based on the principle of "promoting well-coordinated environmental conservation and avoiding excessive development."

environmental conservation and avoiding excessive development."

Since the Yangtze River stretches over 60,000 km running through 19 provincial-level divisions, conservation actions were not always conducted in a coordinated manner among different regions. The protection of a river that spans across West, Central and East China requires concerted efforts, calling for synergy between local governments in the basin.

Thus, a national mechanism shall be established to guide and coordinate the Yangtze's protection work according to

the law. The mechanism will review and deliberate major policies and plans for conservation, coordinate trans-regional and departmental issues, and supervise and inspect the implementation of conservation measures. The legislation states that the State Council and provincial-level governments in the basin will be responsible for the implementation of the mechanism and the designated conservation tasks. It is being lauded as a milestone since it is the first law for Yangtze River Basin to pin down the administration by various departments under a coordination mechanism.

A fishing moratorium is included in the new legislation with a blanket ban on fishing for productive purposes in aquatic life conservation areas along the river. The law forbids fishing activities in the river's natural waterways, including its major tributaries, lakes and the newly designated estuaries within the time limit prescribed by the government. On January 1, 2021, a 10-year fishing ban was imposed on key waters along the Yangtze, which is the longest moratorium of the river in history. The ban embodies China's resolution to restore the ecology in the basin.

The draft legislation was first submitted to the NPC Standing Committee for deliberation in December 2019, prior to which, the heavy pollution in the Yangtze had grabbed public attention. The law devotes an entire chapter to stipulating a slew of measures to crack down on water pollution. Since illegal discharge and dumping of waste has been one of the biggest threats to the basin's environment, solid waste dumping, landfill discharging, and landfill stockpiling and disposal in the basin will be forbidden. The legislation also sets requirements for effective control of total phosphorous discharge, sewage collection and treatment capacity improvement in both urban and rural areas.

The conservation law establishes a framework for the basin's ecological restoration, and local legislation is needed for systematic protection and development of the entire Yangtze River Basin.

The law imposes strict limits on the amount of sand that can be mined annually and the number of sand dredgers that is allowed to operate in mining areas. The administrative department of water resources under the State Council and local governments at or above county level will specify the areas where sand mining is banned and moratoriums for such activity, with joint law enforcement operations performed to crack down on illegal sand mining, as per the law.

Furthermore, the legislation states that chemical projects shall be relocated or transformed and specifies penalties for violations.

The conservation law establishes a framework for the basin's ecological restoration, and local legislation is needed for systematic protection and development of the entire Yangtze River Basin. The law requests that the regions in the basin formulate standards and plans in line with local conditions.

The legislation also provides solid legal support for the economic and social development in the basin, blazing a trail for future legislation on specific river basins, said Li Rui, member of the 13th NPC Standing Committee. ■



White cranes flock to Poyang Lake, Asia's largest winter habitat for migratory birds where hundreds of thousands converge every year, in East China's Jiangxi Province. *Wan Xiang*

IP court established for Hainan Free Trade Port

By Zhang Meijuan

The 24th Session of the Standing Committee of the 13th NPC passed a decision to set up an intellectual property (IP) court in Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP) on December 26, 2020. Formulated to enhance the judicial protection of IP rights and to create a friendly business climate, the decision took effect on January 1, 2021.

As China's fourth IP court after those in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou of Guangdong Province, the IP court in Hainan FTP was inaugurated on December 31, 2020. The new court's jurisdiction will cover IP-related civil, administrative and criminal cases, distinguishing it from the existing three courts that do not hear criminal cases.

Zhou Qiang, president of the Supreme People's Court, explained the decision at the bimonthly session of the Standing Committee. The court, specialized for the handling of IP rights disputes, was envisaged to be an intermediate court, with appeals against its rulings able to be made to the Hainan High People's Court, said Zhou.

According to the decision, the Hainan IP court will have jurisdiction over the following cases: i) first-instance civil and administrative IP cases that are highly specialized and technical in relation to patents, trade secrets, computer software, new plant varieties, layout designs of integrated circuits, and well-known trademark determination and monopoly disputes, among others, in Hainan Province; ii) first-instance civil, administrative, and criminal cases related to IP rights under the jurisdiction of Hainan Province's intermediate people's court except those stipulated in the preceding paragraph; iii) cases of appeals and protests of civil, administrative and criminal judgments and orders about IP by Hainan's primary people's court; and iv) other cases determined by the Supreme People's Court to be under its jurisdiction.

As China's southernmost province, Hainan is at the center of the Asia Pacific economic circle and the gateway for the country's cooperation with Southeast Asian countries. A master plan for the Hainan FTP was released by the Chinese government in June 2020 to draw up the blueprint for the province's development in the next three decades. The plan is for the island to become a globally significant FTP and a new platform for China's opening up featuring trade and investment facilitation. President Xi Jinping provided important instructions on the Hainan FTP in June 2020, requesting



White cranes flock to Poyang Lake, Asia's largest winter habitat for migratory birds where hundreds of thousands of birds converge every year, in east China's Jiangxi Province on January 11, 2018. Lake is Asia's largest wintering habitat for migratory birds. Hundreds of thousands of birds winter here every year. Authorities with all the reserves along Poyang Lake closely monitor the migratory birds to guarantee their safety. *Wan Xiang*

China has made a series of legal arrangements to facilitate the development of the Hainan Free Trade Port.

that the innovation of institutional integration be prioritized.

China has made a series of legal arrangements to facilitate the development of the port. The NPC reviewed a draft law on Hainan FTP, which is currently open for public opinions. The draft legislation covers trade and investment facilitation, the tax system, environmental protection and industrial development, among other things. Hainan Provincial People's Congress has deliberated on and passed 10 regulations on cracking down on smuggling and on the protection of the Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park, and is now studying regulations which aim at promoting fair competition and bankruptcy.

The decision was released as Hainan was witnessing an increasing number of IP disputes with the establishment and development of the FTP. Zhou revealed that Hainan courts heard 989 IP cases from January to June 2020 and an estimated 4,000 cases will be heard in 2021.

The establishment of the Hainan IP court is a necessary step to achieving the goals laid out in the master plan for the Hainan FTP. It will improve Hainan's judicial system, provide better legal protection for IP rights in the FTP and expanding the port's influence, according to Zhou. ■



A judge gave her verdict at the people's court of Minhang District in Shanghai, East China on November 29, 2019. *Xinhua*

Amendment to China's Criminal Law adopted

By Zhang Meijuan

The 24th Session of the Standing Committee of the 13th NPC voted to adopt Amendment XI to the Criminal Law on December 26, 2020 after a third deliberation. The Amendment will take effect on March 1, 2021.

Spanning 48 articles, the Amendment covers criminal liability age, public safety, IP infringements, food and drugs, financial crimes, the environment and public health, among others.

Aimed to further protect people's life and property and attend to people's needs and requests, the Amendment comes in the heels of a series of events in recent years that provoked heated public discussion, including juvenile delinquency, identity theft for college admission and irregularities in financial markets. A salient feature of the Amendment is its response to new issues arising from social development that are of major concern.

The minimum age of criminal liability is lowered from 14 to 12 years old, according to the Amendment. Children between 12 and 14 will assume criminal liability if they commit intentional homicide or intentionally cause injury to another person, resulting in the death of the person; or by resorting to especially cruel means, cause severe injury to a person

China has the full confidence and capability to win the battle against the virus with concerted efforts.

that reduces the person to unmitigated disability. However, the approval of the Supreme People's Procuratorate after examination is needed as a prerequisite for such prosecution. In the past, juvenile delinquents received very mild punishments in accordance with the existing Criminal Law. However, after several horrible crimes committed by juveniles in recent years, the law caused considerable controversy. Thus, the new legislation is a positive response to the public demand.

Against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Amendment incorporates provisions on crimes of obstructing the prevention and control of epidemics. A person selling or transporting goods contaminated by or likely to be contaminated by pathogens of infectious diseases in epidemic areas without conducting any disinfection treatment will be sentenced to imprisonment or criminal detention. The Amendment also provides that people who catch, purchase, transport and sell precious, endangered or terrestrial wildlife which are not on the protected wildlife species list, but are beneficial or of important economic or scientific value will face penalties.

The Amendment highlights public security as well. People who intentionally throw objects from high altitudes causing serious consequences will be sentenced to a fixed-term imprisonment of not more than one year, criminal detention, public surveillance and/or be fined. Moreover, people who endanger public safety by attacking drivers or grabbing the controls of moving public vehicle will receive penalties.

In addition, the Amendment increases IP rights infringement penalties. People who use a registered trademark on the same kind of goods or services without the permission of the owner, knowingly sell counterfeit trademark goods, or manufacture counterfeit trademark products may be sentenced to a maximum imprisonment of 10 years if the circumstances are particularly serious. Copyright infringers in profit-making schemes will be sentenced to three to 10 years when the amount of illegal gains is large or there are other particularly serious circumstances, according to the Amendment.

Prior to its release, the draft Amendment XI was submitted to the 22nd and 23rd sessions of the NPC Standing Committee. The two drafts were posted on the NPC's official website, soliciting a total of 146,035 public opinions, while 67,610 people posted comments on the drafts. This involvement shows the close attention the public paid to the Amendment.

The existing Criminal Law is fit for China's current social and economic development stage and is sufficient for preventing and punishing crimes. However, revisions are needed from time to time in accordance with novel developments and public demand, said Li Ning, vice chairman of Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee. ■

Law on public health emergency response expected

China's National People's Congress is expected to consider laws in 2021 on public health emergency response, family education, stamp duty and futures, among others, said a spokesperson on December 21, 2020.

Lawmakers will also deliberate on revisions to the anti-monopoly law, as well as laws concerning issues such as the prevention and control of infectious diseases, education and the progress of science and technology, said Yue Zhongming, spokesperson for the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee.

The legislative work plan for next year has been approved



Passengers at the Beijing Railway Station on June 18, 2020. The station carried out strict measures to prevent and control the spread of the epidemic following an upgrade of COVID-19 emergency response from Level III to Level II in the capital. *Chen Zhonghao*

in principle by the Council of Chairpersons of the NPC Standing Committee, said Yue.

In 2020, the NPC and its Standing Committee enacted eight laws, revised nine, and adopted 10 decisions on legal issues and other areas of major concerns. (Xinhua) ■

Personal data protection to be strengthened

To address challenges posed by big data, the NPC will put in place legislation to secure the protection of personal information and regulate the use of facial recognition technology, a spokesperson said on December 21, 2020.

A draft law on the protection of personal information was submitted to the NPC Standing Committee for deliberation in October 2020 and has since been made public to solicit opinions, Yue Zhongming, spokesperson for the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, told a press conference.

"The draft emphasizes the fact that personal information should be processed in a lawful and legitimate manner with a clear and reasonable purpose, and its use should be limited to the minimum extent possible to achieve that purpose," Yue said.

The protection of sensitive personal information, includ-



Students learn about Internet security at a primary school in Shijiazhuang of Hebei Province in North China on September 14, 2020. *Wang Xiao*

ing biometrics such as the face, was also highlighted in the draft, according to the spokesperson.

"Data processors can only process sensitive personal information when they have specific purposes and sufficient necessity," Yue said, noting that they should carry out risk assessments beforehand.

Warning against new challenges to personal information protection due to the application and development of new technologies such as facial recognition, Yue said the Legislative Affairs Commission will listen to opinions from various parties and conduct in-depth research into relevant issues. (Xinhua) ■

National People's Congress: 2020 year in review

Under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) studied and implemented Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law and Xi's important ideas on upholding and improving the people's congress system in 2020. The NPC fulfilled our law-based duties by rising up to challenges and seeking improvement, while keeping in mind the overall work of the Party and the country.

In the eventful year of 2020, we convened one NPC meeting, nine Standing Committee meetings and 34 Chairman's meetings, deliberated on 53 draft laws and decisions and passed 30 of them. We heard and deliberated on 30 oversight reports, inspected the enforcement of six laws and one decision, and conducted two special inquiries and six research operations. Advances were also made in normative document recording and reviewing. Some 158 Standing Committee members made direct contacts with 442 NPC deputies, while NPC deputies sat in on Standing Committee meetings 175 times. In total, 506 bills and 9,180 suggestions from deputies were handled. We also conducted 46 video calls with foreign congresses. In 2020, we marched forward in the face of hardship and undertook our work promptly and steadily.

In 2021, the NPC will stay true to our original aspiration and keep our mission in mind. We will strive to break new ground in our work and live up to people's expectations in the new year.







For the health of all

By Lu Yan and Sun Mengshuang

A worker organizes medical waste containers in Wuhan of Hubei Province in Central China on March 24, 2020. *Fei Maohua*

Public health legislation was one of the top priorities in 2020 for the National People's Congress (NPC) and its Standing Committee amid the nationwide fight against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, gave instruction on multiple occasions on the speeding up of the establishment of a public health law and regulation system to better protect people's health.

Putting people's lives, health and safety first, the NPC and its Standing Committee took swift actions to enact and amend laws in an effort to provide legal guidance for the nation's fight against the epidemic.

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, stressed on various occasions that the NPC should play a leading role in legislative work and build a comprehensive law framework for the prevention and control of major public health risks.

Facing the challenge posed by COVID-19, the NPC Stand-

ing Committee, China's top legislature, focused on public health legislation and took step by step actions. As a result, the public health legal system gradually improved in 2020. The NPC Standing Committee formulated and revised five laws, including a new Biosecurity Law, which was adopted in October 2020.

In addition, a draft revision to the Animal Epidemic Prevention Law and the amendment of the Wildlife Protection Law were deliberated. By the end of 2021, the NPC and its Standing Committee will have completed the formulation and revision of 17 laws relating to public health.

Clear plans

The 17th Session of the 13th NPC Standing Committee, held in Beijing on April 26-29, 2020, deliberated and passed a report on strengthening the work of public health legal protection legislation and revision submitted by the NPC Standing Committee's Legislative Affairs Commission. The report made clear the timetable and roadmap for the construction

of a public health legal system, outlining “the legislative blueprint” for the public health sector. It marked the first time for the NPC Standing Committee to listen to the whole legislation process of a specialized field, namely the public health.

The report noted that the epidemic has exposed several loopholes concerning public health legislation. Some laws and regulations are even contradictory, making revision necessary and also leaving room for improvement. Thus, a special work plan must be created to guide and promote the legislative revisions so as to actively respond to social concerns.

The report specifically stated that the NPC Standing Committee will formulate or revise more than 30 laws, covering areas such as epidemic prevention and control, biosecurity, emergency management and medical security.

It also said that the principle of the legislative work is giving top priority to people’s lives and health. The work should be based on national conditions and reality, while each step must be carefully and systematically planned and carried out. In addition, the work as a whole should be long-term oriented and target fundamental problems.

On biosecurity

One of the important parts of the work plan was the passing of the Biosecurity Law. The law underwent three deliberations in March, April and October 2020, stipulating that biosecurity is a key component of national security and therefore, a holistic approach to national security should be adopted.

The law provides for the establishment of 11 basic systems for biosecurity risk prevention and control, such as risk monitoring and early warning, risk investigation and assessment, and information sharing.

It also has provisions on the prevention of and response to specific biosecurity risks, including major emerging infectious diseases, epidemics and sudden outbreaks, along with biotechnology research, development and application. The law will go into effect on April 15, 2021, and is the first basic law in China in the field of biosecurity.

On animal epidemic prevention

Strengthening animal epidemic prevention means strengthening public health at the source. Steady progress has been made in the revision of the Animal Epidemic Prevention Law first passed in 1997. Last year, the draft amendment was put on the table for the first and second readings at regular sessions of the NPC Standing Committee.

On January 20, a draft revision to the law was discussed by Chinese lawmakers during the 25th Session of the 13th NPC Standing Committee in Beijing. Legislators had a consensus that it was imperative to amend the law. Two days later, the draft was passed.

The revision improved animal epidemic prevention policies, the epidemic prevention accountability system, the institutional system and the regulatory system, among others. For instance, it adds harmless treatment of dead animals and diseased animal products; defines greater responsibilities for relevant businesses and government departments; and increases the provision of giving insurance, subsidies, pensions and allowances to epidemic prevention personnel.

Strengthening animal epidemic prevention means strengthening public health at the source.

Before drafting the revision, the NPC Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee worked with relevant government departments to gather opinions from animal health workers, business owners and experts in the sector, as well as legislators and relevant authorities.

On wildlife protection

During the 22nd Session of the 13th NPC Standing Committee in October 2020, a draft revision to the Wildlife Protection Law was reviewed.

The law was passed in 1988 and has been revised several times. The 2020 draft revision stresses the control and protection of wild animals at different levels, as well as completely banning the consumption of wildlife and adding stronger punishment for illegal acts. It includes the investigation, monitoring and evaluation of wild animal epidemic disease and its spread.

It highlights the importance of establishing a monitoring system of wild animal epidemic sources and diseases. If wild animals are found to be infected or suspected of being infected, or may cause animal to human transmission, relevant practitioners must promptly report to the wildlife protection department, which must then notify relevant departments in time. The revised draft prohibits online trading platforms, commodity exchange markets, dining locations and others from trading, consuming or using wild animals and their products.

Currently, the scope of wildlife protection only includes national and local key protection targets, as well as terrestrial wildlife with important ecological, scientific and social value. The draft adds protection of other terrestrial wildlife, as well as the prohibition or restriction of the capture and mass killing of these animals.

“Other terrestrial wild animals that were previously not under legal protection are also an important part of the ecosystem,” said Yang Zhaoxia, director of the Ecological Law Research Center of the Beijing Forestry University (BFU).

He used earthworms as an example. Some people use a machine to electrocute earthworms for profit, leading to the large-scale death of earthworms in some areas. Although earthworms are not included in the protection list, they have important ecological functions.

The revised draft also proposes that the country strengthen its capacity to build wildlife shelters and rescues. Shi Kun, professor at the Wildlife Institute of BFU, said that in recent years, the public is paying more attention to wild animals, leading to more spontaneous rescue attempts, which in turn has led to higher demand for shelters and rescue facilities. These facilities should be appropriately expanded in accordance with actual needs. The lack of professional and technical personnel, rescue tools, equipment and medicines should also be properly addressed.

In 2020, teams of lawmakers were sent across the country to inspect the enforcement of the Wildlife Protection Law in eight provincial-level regions. The inspection focused on such aspects as the implementation of eliminating the bad habit of eating wild animals, the practice of banning and cracking down on wildlife trade, the protection of wildlife habitats and the improvement of legal awareness among the public.

In addition to sending inspection teams, the NPC Standing Committee entrusted local people's congress standing committees in the rest of the country to inspect the enforcement of the law within their jurisdictions. ■

Putting people's lives, health and safety first, the NPC and its Standing Committee took swift actions to enact and amend laws in an effort to provide legal guidance for the nation's fight against the epidemic.



Major tasks in public health law enactment and revision

Part I: Seventeen laws to be enacted or revised in 2020-2021

Decision on a Complete Ban of Illegal Wildlife Trade and the Elimination of the Unhealthy Habit of Indiscriminate Wild Animal Meat Consumption for the Protection of Human Life and Health (Adopted)

Draft Revision to the Law on Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Waste (Adopted)

Biosecurity Law (Adopted)

Draft Revision to the Animal Epidemic Prevention Law (Under deliberation)

Draft Revision to the Wildlife Protection Law (Under deliberation)

Animal Husbandry Law (Revision) (To be submitted for deliberation)

Social Assistance Law (Enactment) (To be submitted for deliberation)

Law on Penalties for Administration of Public Security (Revision) (To be submitted for deliberation)

Law on Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases (Revision) (To be submitted for deliberation)

Emergency Response Law (Revision) (To be submitted for deliberation)

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Part II: Thirteen laws to be enacted or revised in a coordinated and timely manner

Laws to improve the national public health emergency management system:

Laws in relation to public health: the basic healthcare and health promotion law, the traditional Chinese medicine law, the drug administration law, the vaccine administration law, the blood donation law, the law on the prevention and control of occupational diseases, the mental health law, and the law on maternal and infant health care, among others.

Laws in relation to animals and plants and to animal-derived food safety: the fisheries law and the food safety law, among others.

Laws in relation to epidemic prevention and control: the Red Cross society law, the charity law and the law on donations for public welfare, among others.



Part III: Other laws that need to be enacted or revised

To enhance reform and build up the system in the public health domain, new laws may need to be enacted, relevant laws revised and new legislative projects proposed for which deliberations will be scheduled in a timely manner if they are needed by practice and conditions are ripe.

Zhang Meijuan, Liu Tingting

Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law guides law-based governance in China

The first central conference on work related to overall law-based governance in the history of the Communist Party of China (CPC) on November 16-17, 2020, marked the establishment of Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law and its status as the guiding thought for law-based governance in China.

Created in the course of law-based governance promoted by the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core after the Party's 18th National Congress in 2012, the thought answers major questions concerning why and how law-based governance should be advanced and represents the latest achievements in adapting Marxist theories on the rule of law to the Chinese context.

Under its guidance, the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics is enjoying vibrant development and has laid a solid foundation in the pursuit of national rejuvenation.

Timeline

The CPC has always placed great importance on ensuring that China's governance is based on law.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC Central Committee has specifically put forward the promotion of overall law-based governance, which was incorporated into the four-pronged comprehensive strategy for the country's development.

In addition, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in 2014 adopted a decision to advance the rule of law.

After the 19th CPC National Congress in 2017, the CPC Central Committee established its Commission for Overall Law-based Governance and made major decisions on promoting law-based governance in all fields. Historic changes and achievements have since then been made in developing the socialist rule of law in China.

Implications

In his speech at the November conference, Xi set forth requisites for current and future work on law-based governance in China. Known as the "11 upholds" in Chinese, they embody rich implications of Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law:

- Upholding Party leadership on overall law-based governance
 - Taking a people-centered approach
 - Staying on the path of the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics
 - Adhering to constitution-based governance
 - Promoting the modernization of China's governance system and capacity along the path of the rule of law
 - Adhering to a system of the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics

- Pursuing coordinated progress in law-based governance, law-based exercise of state power and law-based government administration, and promoting the integrated development of the rule of law for the country, the government and society

- Ensuring sound legislation, strict law enforcement, impartial administration of justice and the observance of the law by everyone

- Taking a coordinated approach to promoting the rule of law at home and in matters involving foreign parties

- Fostering a high-quality team of professionals with both integrity and ability in legal work

- Ensuring that leading officials at various levels faithfully implement major decisions and plans put forth by the CPC Central Committee on overall law-based governance

Contribution

In formulating the theoretical system of the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics, Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law represents a marked progress in the system of values with Chinese characteristics, contributing Chinese wisdom to the world for advancing the rule of law.

As the world undergoes momentous changes unseen in a century, China is in a critical period for realizing national rejuvenation and forging ahead with all-out efforts to build a modern socialist country.

To provide a solid guarantee of the rule of law in this cause, it is imperative to uphold Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law as the guiding thought for law-based governance, stay on the path of the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics and promote the modernization of the governance system and capacity along the path of the rule of law. (Xinhua)



Deng Xing, a judge of the People's Court of Gongshan County, carries the national emblem on his back as he walks with his colleagues across a bridge on the Nujiang River to provide legal services for local residents in Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture of Yunnan Province in southwest China on August 30, 2019. *Jiang Wenya*

Top legislature plays key role in supervision in new era

By Jiang Zhuqing

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with General Secretary Xi Jinping at the core has always attached great importance to the construction of ecological civilization, holding that it is crucial to China's sustainable development and to the well-being of hundreds of millions of people.

"People's congresses at all levels and their standing committees should prioritize the construction of ecological civilization and conduct law enforcement inspections while regularly listening to reports delivered by the governments at corresponding levels," Xi stressed, while attending the National Conference on Ecological and Environmental Protection in May 2018.

The Standing Committee of National People's Congress (NPC), has always underlined the importance of law enforcement inspections, which are crucial for promoting the effective implementation of laws and the construction of a country governed by the rule of law.

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the 13th NPC Standing Committee, stated that through law enforcement inspections, "We can better promote the implementation of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, especially his idea of ecological civilization construction, which plays a leading role in socialist economic, political, cultural and social construction."

Since 2013, the NPC and its Standing Committee has enacted or revised more than 20 environment-related laws and bills, including the Environmental Protection Law, along with air, water and soil pollution prevention and control laws, according to Xinhua News Agency.

The 13th NPC has organized a series of law enforcement inspections on air, water and soil pollution from 2018 to 2020 in a move to tighten supervision over environmental protection and speed up the construction of ecological civilization.

Since the NPC's inspections are different from ordinary working checks, "we must abide by all legal provisions while carrying out inspections," Li said. The NPC Standing Committee's law enforcement inspection teams, headed by Li, had visited 78 cities in 22 provinces over the past three years.

"Regarding the quality of the environment, ordinary people have the most direct and strongest feelings," said Li during an inspection tour to Central China's Henan Province on the enforcement of the Air Pollution Prevention and Control Law in May 2018. "They (the people) have the final say in the appraisal of the treatment of environmental pollution."

Lawmakers visited the homes of villagers in Henan and listened to their opinions on air pollution control as well as



Li Zhanshu (first left), chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee and member of the Political Bureau of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, inspects sewage discharge in Southwest China's Sichuan Province on April 10, 2019. Yan Yan

feedback on the replacement of coal for electricity in heating. Statistics showed that 245 days in 2020, or over 67 percent, recorded excellent air quality in the province, 63 more than in 2015.

In total, 84 lawmakers participated in the nationwide probes, during which "we inspected 362 projects on the spot, held 74 symposiums, listened to reports from 233 departments and entrusted the standing committees of the provincial people's congresses to conduct self-examinations in all 31 provinces," said Gao Hucheng, a deputy head of the inspection teams and chairman of the 13th NPC Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee.

The quality of air, water and soil concerns everyone's health and safety. During their inspections, lawmakers organized a number of symposiums to listen to the opinions of local lawmakers, company employees, environmental experts, villagers and frontier workers.

During the inspections, people's congresses at provincial, city and county levels mobilized and dispatched deputies to participate in the supervision.

NPC deputies also pushed for rectification of the prob-

lems found in inspections. The top legislature will strengthen efforts to better supervise environmental protection by conducting more law enforcement inspections and closely following the rectification progress, Xinhua reported.

“I live in Tumoteyou Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, which suffered from severe air pollution due to the burning of corn stalks every fall. We had tried various means to contain the pollution, but the effects were limited,” said Lyu Zhiqiang, a local lawmaker in Baotou, which administers the banner.

After the implementation of the Air Pollution Prevention and Control Law, the banner introduced five large-scale enterprises to process cornstalks, while some households purchased machines to turn cornstalks into feed for oxen and sheep, the lawmaker said, adding that air quality in pastoral areas has since been greatly improved.

In May 2019, an inspection team led by vice-chairman of the NPC Standing Committee Wang Chen visited Hebei Province to check up on water pollution prevention.

Although sewage-treatment plants were built in almost every county in Hebei, some of these plants were overloaded, while some cities and townships failed to separate rain water from sewage due to backward drainage systems. In some other areas, the quality of reclaimed water didn't meet the discharge standard, which has been continually raised to protect the environment.

According to China's Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law, local governments are required to monitor the quality of drinking water and publicize the monitoring results at least once a quarter.

After conducting nationwide law enforcement inspections, lawmakers raised a total of 44 questions on air, 19 questions on water and 19 questions on soil pollution prevention.

NPC deputies pointed out that some administrative and judiciary departments retarded or neglected problems on handling pollution, while some local governments and enterprises were denounced by inspections teams.

In August 2020, Li presided over a seminar in Shandong Province to listen to suggestions and solutions from experts on the implementation of the Soil Pollution Prevention and Control Law.

Moreover, during tours, inspection teams conducted secret investigations and random spot checks, issued questionnaires and introduced third-party assessment to promote the full and effective implementation of ecological and environmental protection laws and regulations.

The teams invited more than 230 experts from the Chinese Academy of Engineering and other institutions to evaluate the implementation of the laws on air, water and soil pollution prevention and control, resulting in a nearly 200,000-word assessment report, said Cheng Lifeng, a member of the inspection teams.

By borrowing the “third-party brain” to provide technical support and professional reference for law enforcement, the NPC's supervision work was greatly enhanced on the scientific, professional and authoritative level, said Cheng, also a vice chairman of the 13th NPC Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee.

The inspection teams transferred some of the problems they found to local authorities for rectification or reported them to central authorities for further advices according to

relevant laws.

Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) officials told NPC magazine that they approved of the hard work of the inspection teams. The inspection teams did thorough and in-depth investigations on the enforcement of the three laws, identified major problems and causes, and recommended solutions and policies, which are conducive to the control of pollution and the improvement of the ecological environment,

In addition, they said all nine indicators set in the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016–20) on ecological environment protection have been over-fulfilled, laying a solid foundation for the overall construction of a well-off society.

Statistics showed that the proportion of the number of good air quality days in cities at prefecture level and above climbed to 85 percent. The proportion of bodies of water that reached or surpassed Category 3 was 80.1 percent, while the people's sense of achievement, happiness and security of a beautiful environment was greatly improved.

By the end of October 2020, about 620 million tons of crude steel production capacity in China had been transformed or was being transformed to ultra-low emissions. In addition, the Ministry of Finance issued a total of 49.3 billion yuan as special funds by 2020 to assist for the transformation of energy used for winter heating in the northern region to environmentally friendly energy.

Meanwhile, the number of urban air quality monitoring sites increased to 1,734 around the nation. Since June 2018, a total of 193,000 air-related environmental issues have been handled by relevant departments. In July 2020, China adopted the National VI standards for light vehicles, capping motor vehicles emissions further.

Regarding the prevention and control of water pollution, the proportion of state-controlled sections with excellent water quality (at or better than Category 3) in the Yangtze River Basin was 95.9 percent from January to September 2020. By the end of August 2020, there were 2,912, or 3.6 percent, remaining black-smelling bodies of water in cities at or above the national level. By the end of October 2020, a total of 9,861 water protected areas had been demarcated.

Currently, water quality monitoring information for 902 centralized drinking water sources is released monthly in 337 cities. Almost all the provincial-level and above industrial parks with centralized sewage treatment facilities have been completed. The Ministry of Transport and MEE have promulgated the Measures for the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution of Inner-River Ships Below 400 Tons to further control the discharge of water pollutants from ships.

In the area of soil pollution prevention and control, MEE held training courses on soil pollution risk control and restoration in Huzhou of Zhejiang Province and Shaoguan of Guangdong Province in September and November 2020, respectively. It issued the Accounting Method for the Safe Utilization Rate of Contaminated Arable Land at the Provincial Level in 2020 and the Accounting Method for the Safe Utilization Rate of Contaminated Land in 2020 to curb the risk of pollution of agricultural and construction land. The central government will launch the second round of central ecological environment protection inspections, check the implementation of the Soil Pollution Prevention and Control Law, and push local governments and enterprises to strictly implement pollution prevention and control measures. ■

Local people's congresses in action

Regulation on traditional Chinese medicine goes into effect in Heilongjiang

The 21st Session of the Standing Committee of the 13th Heilongjiang Provincial People's Congress passed a regulation on traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) on October 22, 2020, which took effect on January 1, 2021. The regulation prescribes details about protection of TCM ingredients, industrial development, talent training and support system, among others, with particular focus on the government's role in TCM industrial management and development. In addition, the regulation specifies measures to be taken for TCM industrial integration and ingredient distribution. The adoption of the regulation provides legal guidance for TCM development in Heilongjiang, marking a milestone in TCM development.

Shanghai passes public health emergencies management regulation

A regulation on public health emergencies management was put into implementation in Shanghai on November 1, 2020. It was adopted at the 26th Session of the Standing Committee of the 15th Shanghai Municipal People's Congress on October 27, 2020. Drawing on best practices from measures taken to curb COVID-19, the regulation allows the city to prepare and act in case of similar public health crises. Comprising 10 chapters and 85 articles, the regulation covers public health governance, disease prevention and emergency contingency, monitoring and warning, emergency response, medical treatment and support measures. It is a testament to Shanghai's efforts to meet General Secretary Xi Jinping's requirement on improving law-based epidemic prevention and control.

Gansu drafts rules to guarantee safety in primary and secondary schools

The 19th Session of the Standing Committee of the 13th Gansu Provincial People's Congress heard and deliberated on the Gansu Provincial People's Government's report on a draft regulation on safety in primary and secondary schools. The regulation was drafted in line with the Civil Code, Education Law and Law on the Protection of Minors, as well as other laws. Prevention of campus violence and bullying is incorporated into the regulation with clear stipulations on the responsibilities of different parties, procedures for dealing with school violence and bullying, and behaviors that constitute a disruption of the investigation into such incidents. The regulation aims to involve the government, the school, the student's family and the public in school violence and bullying prevention. It also touches upon infectious disease prevention and student mental health.

Shaanxi undertakes investigation and researches on Wei River Basin protection regulation

The Standing Committee of the Shaanxi Provincial People's Congress undertook legislative investigation and research in the cities of Xi'an and Weinan for the revision of the Regulations of Shaanxi Province on Protection of the Wei River Basin. The team inspected several sites along the Wei River to examine the dyke construction progress, the floodplain treatment and ecological conservation, and also held meetings to solicit opinions and suggestions. Jiang Feng, a deputy Secretary of the Leading Party Members' Group of the Standing Committee pointed out the importance of the revision and called for efforts to amend the regulation based on science and forward planning to provide solid legal support for the ecological conservation and high-quality development of the Wei River Basin.

Special inquiry conducted on employment promotion in Qinghai

A special inquiry was conducted on employment promotion at the joint group meeting of the 21st Session of the Standing Committee of the Qinghai Provincial People's Congress on September 24, 2020. Provincial officials answered questions concerning policy improvement, resource allocation optimization and public services in relation to employment promotion and the employment of key groups. The Social Development Affairs Committee will follow up with relevant departments on issues discussed at the meeting and will work with them to promote the implementation of the Employment Promotion Law and boost employment in Qinghai.

Legislators inspect Anti-Unfair Competition Law enforcement in Guizhou

The National People's Congress launched a round of inspections of the enforcement of the Anti-Unfair Competition Law on September 11, 2020. Entrusted by the NPC Standing Committee, the Standing Committee of Guizhou Provincial People's Congress conducted inspections in Guiyang City and Qiannan Buyei and Miao Autonomous Prefecture. The inspection team visited local enterprises to learn about their product research and development, sales, patents and intellectual property, and whether they have suffered from unfair competition. The team gave instructions on how to tackle unfair competition in business operation. It called for joint efforts from different governmental departments to crack down on unfair competition and create a level playing field to advance the real economy.

Shandong makes post-legislation appraisal of property management regulation

The Standing Committee of the Shandong Provincial People's Congress conducted investigation and research in the city of Jinan as part of the post-legislation appraisal of a regulation concerning property management on November 5, 2020. The research team visited multiple neighborhoods and Shandong Electric Power Company. Meetings were convened to discuss regulation implementation, as well as power supply and distribution facility management in residential communities. Wang Liang, deputy secretary of the Leading Party Members' Group of the Standing Committee underlined the significance of the regulation since it is in every home owner's interest. The post-legislation appraisal is aimed at examining the regulation implementation, identifying problems and amending the regulation if necessary, in an effort to promote social fairness and people's well-being.

Tibet legislature expresses indignation and opposition to US law

The Standing Committee of Tibet Autonomous Regional People's Congress released a statement on December 30, 2020, expressing its strong indignation and firm opposition to the passing of the US so-called "Tibet Policy and Support Act."

The legislation grossly interferes in China's internal affairs and gravely violates the fundamental principles of international laws and basic norms governing international relations, said the statement.

The US law maliciously distorts Tibet's social development, makes groundless accusations, denigrates China's ethnic and religious policies, and interferes in the normal reincarnation procedure of living Buddhas under the pretext of human rights and religion, the statement continued.

"The real purpose of the law is to undermine Tibet's prosperity and stability," said the statement. (Xinhua)

New development plan

By Wang Hairong



Photo shows a village and its surrounding landscape in Nyingchi of Tibet Autonomous Region in southwest China on January 28, 2021. Zhan Yan

Since China will soon become a moderately prosperous society, what does it plan to do beyond that? The question was addressed at the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) held in Beijing on October 26-29, 2020, when the Party leadership mapped out a new blueprint for the coming five years and set goals for the decade thereafter.

In the last four decades or so, the CPC Central Committee has usually held five to seven plenary sessions during the five-year interlude between two CPC national congresses, including one focusing on proposals for the next five-year plan on national economic and social development.

The 2020 plenary session was historic. It was held at a time when China is about to enter a new development stage in the process of national rejuvenation, Wang Xiaohui, Executive Deputy Director of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, said at a press conference on October 30.

Meanwhile, the world is undergoing radical changes, such as the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and growing anti-globalization trends, he added.

The next five-year plan will be the first after China achieves its first centenary goal of the completion of building

a moderately prosperous society in all respects by the time the CPC celebrates its centenary in 2021. It will also mark the beginning of a period when the country will be striving to realize basic national modernization by 2035, followed by its second centenary goal of becoming a modern socialist country by 2049, the centenary of the the founding of People's Republic of China. By the middle of this century, the country will become a prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful society.

The most important outcome of the plenary session was the adoption of the proposals for formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) and long-range objectives through 2035.

The meeting stressed the overall leadership of the Party. During the 14th Five-Year Plan period and beyond, China's development will face an extremely complex international situation, with risks and challenges, Jiang Jinqun, Director of the Policy Research Office of the CPC Central Committee, said. Hence, it is even more important to uphold and strengthen the Party's overall leadership, he said.

New priorities

An outstanding feature of the proposals is that they ad-



An 83-year-old Party member speaks to residents about the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in Shijiazhuang of Hebei Province in North China on December 22, 2020. *Wang Xiao*



A legal aid volunteer (left) talks to locals on the outcome of the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in Changxing County of Zhejiang Province on December 18, 2020. *Xu Yi*

dress the principal contradiction facing Chinese society and put forward a series of strategic and innovative measures, Wang said. According to the report to the 19th CPC National Congress in 2017, the principle contradiction is between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing need for a better life.

In the document, the CPC Central Committee redefines the Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy, a guiding principle for national governance introduced in 2014, to making comprehensive moves to build a modern socialist country in an all-round way, deepen reform, advance the law-based governance and strengthen Party self-discipline. Previously, the first of the four components was to complete building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

Understanding the new development stage, concept and pattern is important in understanding the proposals, Han Wenxiu, Deputy Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Financial and Economic Affairs, said.

In addition, the goals to be achieved by 2035 were set, including enhancing comprehensive national strength and increasing per-capita GDP to the level of moderately developed countries.

The new development concept, namely promoting innova-

tive, coordinated, green, open and inclusive development, is emphasized, along with safe development.

Moreover, the document underlines the importance of following a dual circulation development pattern, where the domestic and foreign markets boost each other with the domestic market as the mainstay. It is a strategic choice to raise the level of China's economic development, as well as to forge new advantages in global economic cooperation and competition, President Xi Jinping, also General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, said in an explanatory speech on the proposals.

Promoting high-quality development, deepening supply-side structural reform, and pursuing scientific and technological self-reliance are also essential to the modernization drive.

To forestall and defuse various kinds of risks and to proactively address challenges brought about by external changes, Xi said China needs to focus on taking care of its own affairs and improving the quality of development.

According to Han, there are three aspects that are particularly important: reform, opening up and innovation.

Wang Zhigang, Minister of Science and Technology, said the country will strengthen independent innovation capa-

bilities and share its own scientific achievements on the one hand, and learn from other countries' experiences on the other hand.

People first

The main objectives of China's economic and social development during the 14th Five-Year Plan period are to make new achievements in economic development, take new steps in reform and opening up, enhance social etiquette and civility, further promote ecological progress, and improve people's livelihood and the efficiency of national governance, according to the proposals.

In particular, China is set to achieve common prosperity by 2035. Common prosperity is the shared aspiration of the people and the fundamental purpose of economic and social development, Xi said.

Key measures for improving the quality of life were raised. Ning Jizhe, Vice Minister of the National Development and Reform Commission, said that in the next five years, the government will further boost employment and improve employment support for vulnerable groups, increase the income of urban and rural residents through multiple channels and keep residents' income growth synchronized with economic expansion.

In the past few years, China's resident income has continued to grow. From 2016 to 2019, annual per-capita disposable income increased by 6.5 percent on average; the income gap between urban and rural residents gradually narrowed; and the middle-income group increased from 100 million in 2010 to more than 400 million in 2019.

To mitigate the impact of COVID-19, the government has taken measures to increase income and expand consumption, leading to gradual economic recovery, Ning said.

The country will build a sound education system, promote mass cultural activities, and push forward the national fitness campaign and the Healthy China Initiative, he said. The national fitness campaign promotes development of both recreational and competitive sports and the Healthy China Initiative is focused on disease prevention, chronic disease

China has the full confidence and capability to win the battle against the virus with concerted efforts.

management and high-quality medical treatment.

Strategies to cope with population aging will be implemented, while a fair, uniform and sustainable multi-level social security system covering all people will be established, he said.

Inclusive process

The CPC central leadership places great importance on the proposals, which were formulated under the leadership of Xi. In addition, related research started at the end of 2019, Han said.

A drafting group headed by Xi was set up in March 2020. From late July to late September, Xi hosted symposiums to hear the opinions of entrepreneurs, economists, scientists, community-level representatives and experts in such fields as education, culture, health and sports.

The general public and various social sectors were also encouraged to make comments and suggestions. From August 16 to 29, 2020, opinions were solicited on the Internet and netizens left more than 1 million messages.

The drafting group studied the comments and suggestions, held discussions and revised the proposals many times.

The proposals were drafted in light of the domestic and international situation and the Party's original mission of striving for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the happiness of its people, and in adherence to a people-centered development philosophy, Han said.

The document will serve as a guide for action on economic and social development in the next five years and beyond, he added. (Beijing Review) ■



Ice and snow decorations are seen on a train on the Beijing-Zhangjiakou high-speed railway line on September 26, 2020. Zhang Chenlin



A volunteer speaks with residents about the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in Changxing County of Zhejiang Province on December 18, 2020. Xu Yi



Aerial photo shows a village in Laguo Township of Butuo County in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Southwest China's Sichuan Province on June 24, 2020. Wang Xi

From poverty alleviation to rural vitalization, China ushers in new stage of rural development

Building on a major victory in poverty alleviation, China is ready for a new stage in agricultural and rural development. The country is shifting its rural work focus to all-round rural vitalization.

Chinese President Xi Jinping stressed that solving issues related to agriculture, rural areas and farmers is the top priority for the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Xi, also General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, made his remarks at the two-day annual central rural work conference, which closed in Beijing on December 29.

A historic shift

Efforts must be made to promote the efficiency and quality of the agricultural sector, make rural areas suitable to live and work in, and ensure that farmers are affluent and well-off, he told the meeting.

With China at a historical juncture of marching toward its second centenary goal, the task of consolidating and extending the achievements of poverty alleviation, pushing forward all-round rural vitalization and accelerating the modernization of the agricultural sector and rural areas is a major issue



Tourists enjoy a traditional cultural exhibition at a pedestrian zone in Guangzhou of Guangdong Province in South China on December 26, 2020. *Liu Dawei*



A craft person makes a guzheng, a traditional Chinese musical instrument, in Yuncheng County of Shandong Province in East China on December 25, 2020. *Guo Xulei*



A villager walks on a newly-built iron chain bridge in Wuying, a remote village inhabited by the Miao ethnic group on the border between South China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Southwest Guizhou Province on December 25, 2020. *Huang Xiaobang*

Solving issues related to agriculture, rural areas and farmers is the top priority for the Communist Party of China, Xi said.

essential to the overall situation that deserves the high attention of the whole Party, Xi noted.

Consolidating the foundation for agriculture and rural areas, along with work related to farmers is “the ballast” for the country to tackle changing situations and open up new prospects, he said.

After a victory in poverty alleviation is won, China should push forward the rural vitalization in an all-around way as “a historic shift” in the focus in its work concerning agriculture, rural areas and farmers, Xi stressed.

The CPC Central Committee has decided to set a five-year transition period for counties that have shaken off poverty, and gradually shift the policy focus toward comprehensively promoting rural vitalization, Xi said.

Efforts should be made to ensure food security and strengthen food production year by year, he said, emphasizing that the country must retain a “red line” of a minimum 1.8 billion mu (120 million hectares) of arable land.

Xi underscored the better use and conservation of black soil and the speeding up of breakthroughs in core and key agricultural technologies. He also called for the promotion of supply-side structural reform in the agricultural sector.

More vigorous measures

Xi stressed the need to strengthen top-level design, adopt more vigorous measures and pool more strength to advance rural vitalization, a task no less challenging than poverty alleviation.

To that end, seven measures will be applied, namely speeding up rural industry development to bring farmers more benefits; improving intellectual and cultural qualities of farmers; preventing and controlling pollution in rural areas; accelerating reform in key fields in rural areas; prioritizing rural infrastructure facility construction; facilitating integrated urban-rural development to achieve tangible results; and strengthening and improving rural governance.

The conference was chaired by Premier Li Keqiang, who is also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee. Other Chinese leaders present at the meeting included Li Zhanshu, Wang Yang, Wang Huning, Zhao Leji and Han Zheng.

Xi's speech elaborated on the importance of promoting rural vitalization and speeding up the modernization of agriculture and rural areas in an all-round way, Premier Li said.

Vice Premier Hu Chunhua, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, emphasized the effective transition from consolidating poverty alleviation outcomes to achieving rural vitalization.

The meeting also discussed a draft document on comprehensively advancing rural vitalization and accelerating the modernization of agriculture and rural areas. (Xinhua) ■

The 4th Session of the 13th NPC will be held **on March 5**

Back to March schedule, China's "two sessions" point to future with confidence

The 13th National People's Congress (NPC) will hold its fourth annual session in Beijing on March 5, 2021, according to a decision made by the NPC Standing Committee on December 26, 2020.

The suggested agenda of the annual session includes reviewing the government work report and examining the draft 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035.

The session is expected to examine the report on the implementation of the annual plan on national economic and social development for 2020, and the draft plan on national economic and social development for 2021, and examine the report on the implementation of the central and local budgets for 2020, and the draft central and local budgets for 2021.

According to the decision, legislators are also expected to review draft amendments to the organic law of the NPC and the NPC's procedural rules, as well as the work reports of the NPC Standing Committee, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate.(Xinhua)



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