

# NPC



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# TRUE DEMOCRACY: PEOPLE ARE MASTERS OF THEIR COUNTRY

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# China: Democracy That Works

The State Council Information Office of  
the People's Republic of China





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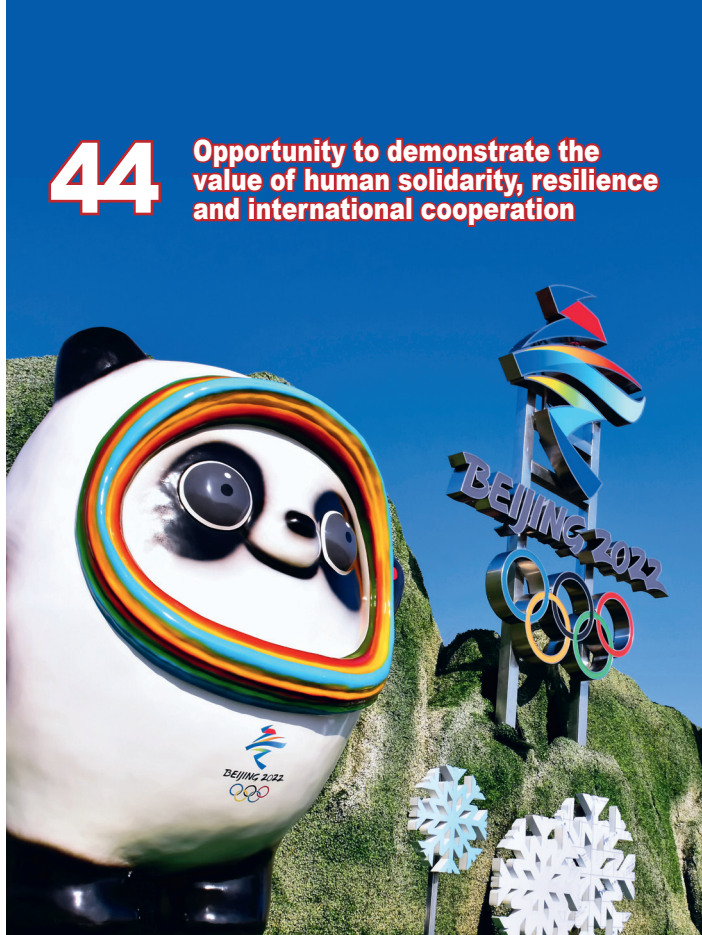
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# True democracy: people are masters of their country



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, addresses a central conference on work related to people's congresses, held from October 13 to 14, 2021, in Beijing, capital of China. *Li Xueren*

## Enhancing whole-process people's democracy

President Xi Jinping has underlined upholding and improving the people's congress system and continuously enhancing whole-process people's democracy.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks while addressing a central conference on work related to people's congresses, held from October 13 to 14, 2021 in Beijing.

The people's congress system, made by Chinese people under the CPC leadership, is a great creation in the history of political systems as well as a brand new system of great significance in the political history of both China and the world, Xi said.

The people's congress system has provided an important institutional guarantee for Chinese people, led by the CPC, to create the miracles of fast economic growth and long-term social stability over the past 60 years, particularly over the four decades of reform and opening-up, Xi said.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPC Central Committee has continued to innovate the theories and practice of the system of people's congresses, he said.

Noting that institutional advantage is vital for a country to seize its strategic initiative, Xi said both history and reality show that a country will be stable if it has a steady system, and a country will be strong if it has a sound system.

He stressed efforts to fully enforce the Constitution and safeguard its authority and sanctity, and to improve the Chinese socialist system of laws so that good laws are in place to promote development and ensure good governance.

He also stressed that people's congresses should properly and effectively exercise their power of oversight in accordance with the law, and deputies to the people's congresses should fully exercise their duties.

While the people's congresses should enhance self-building, the overall leadership over the people's congresses by the Party should also be enhanced, Xi said.

## True democracy: people are masters of their country

How is democracy defined? What makes a system democratic or not? Is China's political system democratic? President Xi Jinping addressed these questions at the conference. His answers offer insight into how democracy works in the country.

In a democratic political system, people should administer national, social, economic, and cultural affairs in accordance with the law, various sectors of society should participate effectively in national political affairs, and state decision-making should be rational and democratic, noted Xi.

"Democracy is not an ornament to be used for decoration; it is to be used to solve the problems that the people want to solve," he stressed.

China's application of democratic principles follows an approach Xi has termed "whole-process people's democracy." The concept was put forward in November 2019, during a visit by Xi to a civic center in Shanghai.

Earlier the same year, Xi had visited residents of a tra-

ditional "hutong" courtyard community in central Beijing and joined them for a "courtyard meeting hall" session. The "courtyard meeting hall" provides a platform for residents to discuss and debate public affairs. Residents' discussions that time focused on the renovation and preservation of the traditional architecture and heritage.

"When the residents enjoy the right to discuss and decide their affairs, they will have a stronger sense of belonging and being masters, and community governance and service will be more accurate and meticulous," Xi noted after talking with the hutong residents.

Whether a country is a democracy or not depends on whether its people are really the masters of the country. If the people are awakened only for voting but enter a dormant period soon after, if they are given a song and dance during campaigning but have no say after the election, or if they are favored during canvassing but are left out in the cold after the election, such a democracy is not a true democracy, Xi said at the conference. (Xinhua) ■

## Highlights of Xi Jinping's latest remarks on democracy

A central conference on work related to people's congresses was held from October 13 to 14 in Beijing.

President Xi Jinping underlined upholding and improving the people's congress system and continuously enhancing whole-process people's democracy while addressing the event.

The following are some highlights of his remarks:

- Democracy, a shared value of humanity, is a key tenet unswervingly upheld by the CPC and the Chinese people.
- Democracy is not an ornament to be used for decoration; it is to be used to solve the problems that the people want to solve.
- Whether a country is a democracy or not depends on whether its people are really the masters of the country.
- If the people are awakened only for voting but enter a dormant period soon after, if they are given a song and dance during campaigning but have no say after the election, or if they are favored during canvassing but are left out in the cold after the election, such a democracy is not a true democracy.
- It is in itself undemocratic to use a single yardstick to measure the rich and varied political systems and examine the diverse political civilizations of humanity from a monotonous perspective.



The Fourth Session of the 13th National People's Congress opens at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5 2021. Zhang Ling

# Whole-process democracy takes root across China

**O**n the third floor of the Gubei Civic Center in Shanghai's Hongqiao Subdistrict, a small group of residents are discussing how to use smart technologies to make senior citizens' life more convenient.

In another hall at the center, a meeting is being held to collect opinions from the public on adding new infrastructure to one of the subdistrict's commercial streets. Residents discuss the new infrastructure that is needed, what the standard for the new infrastructure should be and how the projects should

be implemented.

Such practices of democratic consultation and decision-making have become the norm in Hongqiao Subdistrict. Since a Legislation Opinion Collection Station was established at the center seven years ago, the center has collected public opinions on 55 draft laws and provided 1,056 suggestions to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), the top legislature, 92 of which have been accepted.

In November 2019, President Xi Jinping inspected the



## Chinese socialist democracy takes two important forms: In one, the people exercise their right to vote in elections; and in the other, people undertake extensive deliberations before major decisions are made.

center, where he said, “People’s democracy is a type of whole-process democracy.” This was the first time the concept was publicly put forward.

China’s socialist whole-process people’s democracy can be understood as “from the people, to the people, with the people, for the people,” said Xu Wenhong, a research fellow with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. It covers the whole process of election, decision-making, management and supervision, in order to meet people’s needs and solve people’s real problems, Xu said.

Given China’s huge population and its complex structure, to protect the rights and interests of people from all walks of life, the country should have a real people-centric political system, said Liu Dongchao, a professor with the Party School of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee.

Chinese socialist democracy takes two important forms: In one, the people exercise their right to vote in elections; and in the other, people undertake extensive deliberations before major decisions are made, said Li Junru, former Vice President of the Party School. In China, these two forms are complementary, and they constitute the institutional features and strengths of Chinese socialist democracy, he said.

“The essence of the people’s democracy is that people get to discuss their own affairs to reach the greatest common ground based on the wishes and needs of the entire society,” Xi once said in February 2019 at a “courtyard meeting hall” where community members could discuss and decide their own affairs.

“Without democracy, there would be no socialism, socialist modernization, or national rejuvenation,” Xi said.

### Effective and reflective

With whole-process democracy, people’s interests are protected through extensive and effective multilateral and multi-level consultations in various aspects of social life.

“The public should be empowered to participate in the legislative process,” said Hu Yu’ang, Secretary of the Party Work Committee of Hongqiao Subdistrict and Director of the legislative outreach office of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee in Hongqiao. The station has collected opinions from local communities and enterprises, and the NPC Standing Committee’s Legislative Affairs Commission has also visited the station to listen to legislation suggestions.

“The Anti-Domestic Violence Law was the first law on which we solicited opinions, and the Civil Code is the law for

which we collected the largest number of suggestions,” said Ling Yan, Deputy Director of the legislative outreach office of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee in Hongqiao. The laws are displayed at the station and local residents feel proud of themselves when they see the legal documents based on their suggestions. Those whose suggestions have been taken include high school students, retired workers in their 80s and academics.

The station has become a window for people from foreign countries to learn about China’s democracy. So far, it has received 30 overseas delegations. In June 2021, the International Department of the CPC Central Committee had invited the ambassadors of over 40 countries to visit the station. Chile’s Ambassador to China Luis Schmidt Montes said when visiting the station, “All people can express their opinions and participate in the law-making process. This is an excellent democratic decision-making system, which is important for the community and the country.”

In addition to state affairs, the public also have their say in the everyday matters that concern them. Hu said the station not only solicits suggestions on legislation, but also provides a space for residents to participate in community affairs. The concept of whole-process democracy has been applied to the subdistrict’s community management. For instance, when installing elevators in old compounds, the station has collected opinions from the public so as to satisfy the public’s demands to the largest extent.

In September 2021, the station was designated as a research and practice base for whole-process democracy by the Shanghai Municipal People’s Congress. The new designation aims to see the station become a channel for learning about and understanding the socialist democratic political system with Chinese characteristics.

Hu said the base was established to further explore whole-process democratic decision-making and consultation under the leadership of the Party, and form an atmosphere of solving problems through public consultation to increase people’s awareness of the concept of whole-process democracy.

On the day when the base was established, a meeting took place to discuss the installation of the elevators in some of the old compounds in the area. Representatives from the compounds, Hongqiao Subdistrict Office, property management enterprises and the company undertaking the elevator installation project together discussed problems such as how to balance the interests of residents living on upper and lower floors and long-term maintenance plans for the elevators after they are installed.

The suggestions made at the meeting were then submitted to the Shanghai Municipal Government, which has established a public opinion solicitation system to address people’s concerns and fill the gap in government policies.

“Hongqiao Subdistrict will continue to enrich the concept of whole-process democracy through its practices and work to become a window for telling the stories of socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics,” Hu said.

### Representing the people

In addition to legislation opinion collection stations at

community levels, NPC deputies, representing the interests and will of the people, participate in legislation and act as a bridge to the people.

The NPC is the highest state organ of power. The NPC and its standing committee exercise the legislative power of the state. In addition to the national one, there are also local people's congresses that perform duties such as deciding on local economic, cultural and public service development plans.

The system of people's congresses is an important institutional vehicle for realizing whole-process people's democracy in China, Xi said in October 2021 at a central conference on work related to people's congresses.

In Beijing, the Standing Committee of the Beijing Municipal People's Congress has carried out a series of activities in recent years to apply the concept of whole-process democracy to legislative processes, giving more play to the role of deputies.

In formulating regulations on both garbage sorting and property management, the standing committee has organized people's deputies to visit local communities to collect residents' opinions about the draft regulations.

In just over one month in 2019, over 12,000 deputies had collected opinions from over 240,000 residents, community workers, property management staff members and sanitary workers.

Topics such as appropriate fines for violations to garbage sorting rules and restrictions on the use of packaging were discussed by local residents and people's deputies.

The practice of deputies soliciting opinions from the public has later been applied to the formulation and enforcement of a number of other regulations, including the regulation on preventing food waste, and has become established as a replicable model.

## Chinese lawmakers raise 487 proposals to annual legislative session

Deputies to the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) had submitted 487 proposals as of March 8, 2021, the deadline for proposal submissions at the fifth session of the 13th NPC, said the secretariat of the session.

The secretariat said it had also received around 8,000 suggestions, criticisms, and comments from the NPC deputies.

The majority of the proposals were about speeding up legislation on energy, the digital economy, pre-school education, elderly care, and protecting women's rights and interests.

National lawmakers also made suggestions about promoting rural revitalization, boosting the sound development of the digital economy, and fighting against abducting and trafficking women and children, among others. (Xinhua)

## People have been deeply involved in the legislative process and the legislation has not only spoken for the people, but also been dominated by the people.

Deputies are not only participants in the making of laws and regulations, but should also be involved in the supervision of the enforcement of these laws. From July to October 2020, 13,000 deputies at different levels had supervised the enforcement of the regulation on garbage sorting and the regulation on property management in over 5,000 residential compounds and more than 3,000 villages.

Supervision of the enforcement of these laws by people's deputies is an important part of whole-process democracy. It is a way to ensure the laws are enforced so as to improve the degree of public satisfaction with enforcement efforts.

In recent years, Beijing has upheld the people-centered approach and established a system for swiftly responding to people's concerns expressed through the 12345 resident service hotline and its online platform.

Deputies talked face-to-face with residents living near their homes to solicit their opinions. In June 2021, six deputies sat together with nearly 20 residents to discuss a draft regulation on swiftly responding to people's concerns and solving their problems. Residents had provided useful suggestions for the legislation.

Moreover, the standing committee also invited residents who had dialed the hotline to take part in a meeting to provide feedback on whether their problems had been solved and whether their expectations had been met.

Wei Jiawen was one of the residents invited to the seminar. She was given a list of questions before the seminar, including on her suggestions for improvements, and on whether she would be willing to accept mediation if a problem couldn't be solved immediately. She asked her relatives and friends the questions and expressed their opinions at the seminar.

Yi Ran, a deputy to the Beijing Municipal People's Congress, made a PowerPoint presentation of the draft regulation, explained it to residents in his community and listened to their suggestions.

The Haidian District People's Congress compiled opinions on the draft regulation collected by people's deputies and sent it to the deputies to the Beijing Municipal People's Congress.

As not only residents, but enterprises too, may express their concerns through the hotline, the deputies are able to collect wide-ranging opinions.

On September 24, 2021, the regulation on swiftly responding to people's concerns and solving their problems was passed at the 33rd session of the 15th Standing Committee of the Beijing Municipal People's Congress.

By soliciting public opinions, the legislation has been able to reflect people's will. People have been deeply involved in the legislative process and the legislation has not only spoken for the people, but also been dominated by the people. ■

# Concept of democracy in China's white paper

China released a white paper on December 4, 2021 expounding on the concept and practice of its democracy.

The following are some quotable quotes from the white paper titled "China: Democracy That Works."

-- Democracy is a common value of humanity and an ideal that has always been cherished by the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people.

-- Democracy is a concrete phenomenon that is constantly evolving.

-- Rooted in history, culture and tradition, it takes diverse forms and develops along the paths chosen by different peoples based on their exploration and innovation.

-- The best way to evaluate whether a country's political system is democratic and efficient is to observe whether the succession of its leaders is orderly and in line with the law, whether all the people can manage state and social affairs and economic and cultural undertakings in conformity with legal provisions, whether the public can express their requirements without hindrance, whether all sectors can efficiently participate in the country's political affairs, whether national decision-making can be conducted in a rational and democratic way, whether people of high caliber in all fields can be part of the national leadership and administrative systems through fair competition, whether the governing party is in charge of state affairs in accordance with the Constitution and the law, and whether the exercise of power can be kept under effective restraint and supervision.

-- Democracy is not a decorative ornament, but an instrument for addressing the issues that concern the people.

-- Whether a country is democratic depends on whether its people are truly the masters of the country; whether the people have the right to vote, and more importantly, the right to participate extensively; whether they have been given verbal promises in elections, and more importantly, how many of these promises are fulfilled after elections; whether there are set political procedures and rules in state systems and laws, and more importantly, whether these systems and laws are truly enforced; whether the rules and procedures for the exercise of power are democratic, and more importantly, whether the exercise of power is genuinely subject to public scrutiny and checks.

-- Democracy is the right of the people in every country, rather than the prerogative of a few nations.

-- Whether a country is democratic should be judged by its people, not dictated by a handful of outsiders.

-- Whether a country is democratic should be acknowledged by the international community, not arbitrarily decided by a few self-appointed judges.

-- Assessing the myriad political systems in the world against a single yardstick and examining diverse political structures in monochrome are in themselves undemocratic.

-- In the richly diverse world, democracy comes in many forms. China's democracy is thriving alongside those of other countries in the garden of civilizations. China stands ready to contribute its experience and strength to global political progress through cooperation and mutual learning. (Xinhua) ■

## Related:

Full Text: China: Democracy That Works

[http://www.news.cn/english/2021-12/04/c\\_1310351231.htm](http://www.news.cn/english/2021-12/04/c_1310351231.htm)

# Best suits China's development: our democracy guarantees all people's right to happy life



Villagers in Qianxibian Village of Jinhua City, Zhejiang Province exercise their democratic right to elect village cadres on November 26, 2020.



As the country marks the 100th year of the founding of the Communist Party of China last year, let us take a look at the history of the Party and China's democracy. During his inspection tour in Shanghai in November 2019, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said that people's democracy followed by China is "whole-process democracy" and in line with socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics.

The amendments to the National People's Congress Organization Law and the National People's Congress Rules of Procedure were adopted at the Fourth Session of the 13th National People's Congress in March 2021. And whole-process democracy was written into both the amendments, showing that Chinese-style democracy has been advancing in a whole-process democratic direction.

Democracy in China has developed according to the country's national conditions, drawing on historical lessons and the experiences of other countries. Whole-process democracy is a new form of democracy that the Chinese people found best suited their national conditions.

First, whole-process democracy transcends Western-style democracy in that the latter represents only the rights and interests of a small number of people, especially the upper class. By contrast, whole-process democracy is geared toward safeguarding the rights and interests of all the Chinese people, thus making it truly representational in nature.

A typical example of such representation is that the deputies to the NPC and members of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee are selected from all over the country, covering various industries, ethnic groups, social groups and regions. The NPC is the highest organ of State power in China and the CPPCC National Committee is the highest political advisory body which promotes multi-party cooperation and political consultation.

Second, an important characteristic of Western-style democracy is that it becomes highly representational during elections, but once the elections are over, democratic practices start declining. In comparison, whole-process democracy tries to integrate democracy into the whole process of public life, including the electoral, decision-making, management, supervision and consultation processes, all of which are different but combine to form an integral chain.

Third, whole-process democracy has greater authenticity, as it promotes diverse consultation activities, which are conducted by the people at the community level, and community-level opinions are directly transmitted to the top legislature and executive organs. Also, deliberations and discussions are held before major decisions are made.

Fourth, whole-process democracy is more efficient than other forms of democracy. All forms of democracy have an instrumental aspect that safeguards public interests and public services, and the level of efficiency with which it provides those services is closely related to the design and organization of democratic institutions.

Whole-process democracy is aimed at improving the operational efficiency and results of those services and thus guarantees the people a better life. It also focuses on protecting some details and dispensable links to improve work efficiency, and tries to play as big a role as possible in decision-making and other important areas to realize better outcomes.



The election staff of Xinfeng Village, Jintang Town, Dinghai District, Zhoushan City, Zhejiang Province talk with local residents working in their fields to ensure every person participates in the election on December 13, 2021.

The basis of whole-process democracy is the democratic system formed under the leadership of the CPC during the war years and the 28 years after the founding of the People's Republic of China. But its operational achievements have been mainly formed through repeated practice and long-term explorations after the launch of reform and opening-up. As such, deliberative democracy is an important part of whole-process democracy.

Way back in the 1980s, the 13th National Congress of the CPC put forward the idea of "establishing a system of social consultation and dialogue". And in 2017, the 19th National Congress of the CPC proposed to "give play to the important role of socialist consultative democracy". After more than 30 years of exploration, deliberative democracy, as an important part of Chinese-style democracy, has gained a solid institutional recognition in Chinese society. It has played an active role at all levels of society, and helped the country make great democratic achievements in multiple fields.

The core concept and specific design of a democratic system should be in line with the national conditions of a country, in order to facilitate the progress of the entire society and improve the well-being of the people. And whole-process democracy is very much in line with China's national conditions.

Given China's huge population and complex population structure, to protect the rights and interests of people from all

walks of life, the country should have a real people-centered political system while carrying out extensive and effective multilateral and multi-level consultations to find the common denominator so as to ensure people's interests are fully protected. And whole-process democracy does exactly that.

China's political system has developed from the Chinese people's long struggle, and multi-party cooperation system is one of its basic features. And whole-process democracy is a form of democracy that emerged thanks to the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, fits in with China's political system and is being successfully practiced in China, and continues to develop along with socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Many critics regard China's annual national "two sessions" as a key window into Chinese democracy. That is true, but the operation of Chinese democracy does not stop at the "window." Handling the proposals demonstrates that Chinese authorities see taking concrete actions to solve the problems of the people as a top priority.

By late January, all 9,180 suggestions submitted by NPC deputies to the 2021 annual NPC session in 2020 had been handled, with feedback provided. Various departments of the State Council adopted approximately 3,700 pieces of advice from NPC deputies and political advisors and subsequently introduced some 1,500 related policy measures.

By listening to suggestions and recommendations and ac-

in ideological confrontation or exporting its social system abroad.

If there is a message that China wants to send through its democratic undertakings, it is the country's firm determination to protect the lives, health, rights and interests of the people. It is time to better understand the essence of Chinese democracy and its significance to the progress of human society.

China's State Council Information Office on December 4, 2021 released a white paper titled "China: Democracy That Works," which expounded on the values, history, institutional frameworks, practices, and achievements of China's democracy.

China's democracy, according to experts and observers from multiple countries, has guaranteed all people's right to a happy life and promoted the country's rapid development.

"The Chinese democratic system mainly focuses on whether the people have the right to govern their country, whether the people's needs are met, and whether the people have a sense of fulfillment and happiness," Kin Phea, director-general of the International Relations Institute at the Royal Academy of Cambodia, told Xinhua.

"That's why it gains the great support of the Chinese people from all walks of life," he pointed out.

Hamed Vafaei, director of the Center for Asian Studies at the University of Tehran, said that there is no standard democracy in the world, and that people in each country should find their own development and democratic model.

The Chinese people, Vafaei noted, have chosen their own path, and China's development in various fields, as well as achievements in poverty reduction, have all demonstrated the high quality of China's democracy.

Bambang Suryono, chairman of Asia Innovation Study Center, an Indonesian think tank, said that a good democracy is one that has been built according to actual conditions of the country and that also works for the benefit of the people.

China's democracy has made remarkable achievements in poverty reduction, health care, education, and other areas, Suryono continued, while calling it a democracy that serves its people.

Mehmet Enes Beser, director of the Bosphorus Center for Asian Studies in Turkey, stressed that China has always put people's lives first during the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting that China's democracy has been put into practice well.

Some Western countries, by contrast, failed to take active and timely actions when the pandemic broke out, showing that "democracy" was only an empty campaign slogan for them, Beser added. (Xinhua) ■



People of Xumao Village in Zouping City, east China's Shandong Province, fill out ballots in private booths, guided by community election staff, on April 17, 2021. March 2022.

# Understanding China requires understanding of CPC



President Xi Jinping said on December 2, 2021 that to understand China today, one must learn to understand the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Xi made the remarks when delivering a speech via video at the opening ceremony of the 2021 Understanding China Conference (Guangzhou) in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province.

The world is experiencing changes unseen in a century which, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, have

brought the world into a period of fluidity and transformation, Xi said in the speech.

It is all the more important for us to exchange views, have more interactions and cooperation, and contribute our wisdom and strengths to a joint response to global challenges at such a juncture, he noted.

“As I have pointed out, ‘To understand China today, one must learn to understand the CPC,’” Xi said.

Noting the year of 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of





Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers a speech via video at the opening ceremony of the 2021 Understanding China Conference (Guangzhou), in Beijing, capital of China, on December 2, 2021. *Liu Bin*



On December 2021, the second volume of the “Understanding China” series was released in Guangzhou. *Lu Hanxin*

**The CPC will always be a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development and a defender of the international order.**

the founding of the CPC, Xi said that the CPC has rallied and led the Chinese people in making unremitting efforts that have fundamentally changed the future and destiny of the Chinese people and exerted a profound impact on the course of world history over the past century.

In November 2021, the sixth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee was successfully concluded with the adoption of the Resolution on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century, he

said, adding that going forward, the CPC will draw strength from history, forge ahead for a better future, stay true to its founding mission, and rally and lead the Chinese people on a new journey toward building a modern socialist country.

The Party will always put the people first, commit to its fundamental purpose of wholeheartedly serving the people, follow a people-centered philosophy of development, promote well-rounded human development and common prosperity for all, and better meet the Chinese people’s aspiration for a better life, Xi said, adding that the CPC will unwaveringly follow the path of peaceful development and opening-up to the world, work for a community with a shared future for mankind, and promote humanity’s common values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom.

“The CPC will always be a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development and a defender of the international order, and strive to make new and greater contributions to the progress of human civilization and to world peace and development,” Xi said. (Xinhua) ■

# CPC's mission and contributions: how does the Party realize its ideals?

**T**he Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee released a document titled “The CPC: Its Mission and Contributions” at a press conference in Beijing, capital of China, Aug. 26, 2021.

It reviews the struggles, sacrifices and efforts made by the CPC and by the Chinese people under its leadership over the past hundred years in the only direction to one goal – the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The document develops into five chapters, including “Serving the People Wholeheartedly”, “Realizing the Ideals of the Party”, “Robust Leadership and Strong Governance”, “Maintaining Vigor and Vitality” and “Contributing to World Peace and Development”.

In its second chapter the document pointed out that a distinctive attribute of the CPC is struggle, which it has never given up since the Party was founded a hundred years ago. “These hundred years have seen the Party fight on, guided by Marxism, and buttressed by firm convictions, an enterprising spirit, and unyielding determination,” it stated.

The ideals of the Party are illustrated in four aspects in this chapter:

## 1. Upholding Marxism

- Inscribing Marxism on its own banner. Marxism reveals the universal laws of the natural world, human society, and the human mind, pointing the direction for humanity and human civilization to progress. The communist and socialist ideals expounded in Marxism tally with Chinese cultural values such as a people-centered orientation, harmony, and unity in diversity.

- Using Marxism as a powerful ideological weapon to seek the truth, understand the world and its laws, and transform it, rather than applying rigid dogma. Respecting reality and combining with the people are the characteristics and strengths of the CPC.

**On its centennial journey, the CPC has tempered its character with the courage to vanquish formidable enemies, defuse risks, and overcome challenges.**

## 2. Firm Ideals and Convictions

- Rising through adversity and failures. In the years of revolutionary war, the CPC was repeatedly confronted with difficulties and setbacks, to the extent that its very survival was threatened.

- Fighting in both favorable and unfavorable circumstances. After securing victory in its military campaigns, the CPC maintained its fighting spirit and strove to avoid complacency. After becoming the governing party of China, it continued to remain modest and prudent, never arrogant or impetuous.

- Being firmly grounded while aiming high for the future. Every generation of Party members has fulfilled its respective missions and kept pressing forward. The ideals of communism can only be realized by the Party based on fully developed and highly advanced socialism.

- Forging a fighting spirit in hard work and working hard to keep that spirit. Carrying forward its founding spirit, the CPC has fought hard and persevered. It has developed a set of inspiring principles which are manifested in the ranks of its revolutionary martyrs defiant in the face of death, its hard-working heroes, and its selfless and devoted models.

## 3. Breaking New Ground

- Recognizing the prevailing trends in the world, seizing and making the most of historic opportunities. There is an essential logic to the progress of human history. Over the past hundred years, the CPC has developed with this logic and kept pace with the trends of the times, constantly adjusting its strategies and policies in accordance with changing circumstances.

- Following an independent path. To carry out revolution, reconstruction and reform in a poor and backward country with a large population, it is fundamental to choose the right path.

- Emancipating the mind, seeking truth from facts and moving forward with unrelenting courage. In all of its endeavors in revolution, reconstruction and reform, the CPC has always proceeded from reality rather than placing its faith in books or established authority. It has constantly explored new paths, free from hidebound restrictions and prescriptive models.

- Understanding, grasping and following the laws of development. The ability to grasp and follow the objective laws of development is an important skill for a progressive Marxist



The Museum of the CPC opened in Beijing on July 2021. The museum is a site devoted to permanent and comprehensive exhibitions of the Party's history. *Chen Yehua*

party. The CPC has continued to expand its understanding of governance by a communist party, the development of socialism, and the evolution of human society, and to apply them in practice as a guide for action.

## 4. Defusing Risks and Overcoming Challenges

- The Party is always ready to protect against potential dangers even in times of peace. Founded in years of trial and tribulation and maturing in adversity, the CPC always keeps in mind the ancient wisdom that “One should be mindful of potential danger in times of peace, the risk of downfall in times of rise, and potential chaos in times of

stability.”

- The Party meets major risks and challenges head-on. It never hesitates in taking resolute action to address risks and challenges that threaten its position as the governing party, or endanger the stability of state power, the core interests of the country, the fundamental interests of the people, or the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

On its centennial journey, the CPC has tempered its character with the courage to vanquish formidable enemies, defuse risks, and overcome challenges. This has become the Party's defining quality. All of its achievements are the results of the hard work of generations of Party members, and the base on which the cause will continue to prosper. The success of the Party in the past equips it to face the future with full confidence. ■



An aerial view of the Yu Village of Tianhuangping Town in Anji County in Huzhou City, east China's Zhejiang Province, July 28, 2020. *Huang Zongzhi*

# Green is gold: Xi Jinping leads China's green action, toward people-nature harmony

**R**esponding to climate change is the common cause of all humanity, Xi has said, adding that it should not be a bargaining chip for geopolitics, a target for attacking other countries, or an excuse for trade barriers.

President Xi has been paying close attention to ecological and environmental issues. While actively championing global actions to fight climate change, he underscores the issue as a long-term strategy vital to his country's modernization and its people's well-being.

## Green is gold

At the beginning of the 1990s, Yucun, an idyllic mountain village in China's eastern Anji County, Zhejiang Province, decided to end poverty by tapping the potential of its natural resources.

## President Xi has been paying close attention to ecological and environmental issues.

By mining for limestone and manufacturing cement, Yucun became one of China's richest villages with an annual revenue of more than 3 million yuan (460,000 US dollars).

However, it was not long before the villagers found it a Faustian bargain. Their hometown turned into a real eyesore with its pitted land, turbid rivers and dust haze.

Yucun was not the only village in Zhejiang that had seen its eco-system degrading. To address the ever deteriorating problem, the province committed itself to building an "ecological province" in 2003.

Within three years, Yucun shut down three limestone

quarries and a cement factory, which accounted for 95 percent of its annual income, causing much fear amongst the villagers.

A heated debate emerged about the relationship between economic development and environmental protection -- a relationship that was inevitably rocky during industrialization across the world.

In 2005, Xi, then secretary of the Zhejiang Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China, visited Yucun. He assured the villagers that their move to close those factories was "wise."

"Mountains and rivers green are mountains of silver and gold," he said at the village's simple and humble meeting room.

Nine days later, in a commentary carried by Zhejiang Daily, Xi, using the pen-name "Zhe Xin," called for pursuing harmony between man and nature as well as harmony between the economy and society, in order to have clear water and green mountains along with "mountains of silver and gold."

If we look back, in 1985, when serving as Party chief of Zhengding County in north China's Hebei Province, Xi directed the formulation of the local economic and social development plan which included this remark: "(We) would rather not be affluent than allow pollutants." At the time, China's decades-long economic take-off had just started, and sustainable development was yet to become the go-to option for most countries.

As Xi gained more experience serving the country and the people, his hallmark green development speeches later included, "We want both GDP and green GDP," and what has become a maxim in China, "Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets."

"We owe so much to the ecological environment. If we don't do a solid green work from now on, we will pay a higher price in the future," said Xi during his first inspection trip out of Beijing in December 2012, less than a month after he was elected general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee.

Xi's ideas about ecological progress were nurtured and developed during his work in various posts from the county level to the national level, taking into account domestic and global issues, according to Yang Kaizhong, director of a research institute on Xi's thought concerning ecological progress under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

The "two mountains" concept, later developed into Xi's thought on ecological civilization, has encouraged numerous Chinese cities and villages to pursue high-quality and sustainable growth through protecting the environment and developing green industries.

"As the world's biggest ruling party, the CPC is exploring a development pattern that balances economic development and environmental protection, which may provide a model for other developing countries," he said.

When Xi returned to Yucun 15 years later during an inspection tour in Zhejiang in March 2020, the village has transformed into a place featuring buildings with traditional white walls and black tiles, colorful flower fields and exquisite lotus ponds. The villagers made much more money than in the past thanks to a tourism boom.

Over the past five years, under the guidance of Xi's thought concerning ecological progress, China has made historic

achievements in environmental development, said Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu.

Between 2016 and 2020, China managed to significantly reduce its number of days with heavy air pollution, according to the ministry. The safety of drinking water was guaranteed. Black and odorous water bodies were generally eliminated in cities.

In 2018, China for the first time incorporated ecological advancement into its Constitution.

The path of green development is correct, Xi said.

The path, wrote the United Nations Environment Programme in a report, "is beyond and does away with traditional development patterns and models, guiding the transformation of the production methods and the lifestyle of the entire society."

## A green blueprint

A blueprint for the country's social and economic development over the next five to 15 years, adopted in March 2021, demands the all-round green transformation of social and economic development and the construction of a Beautiful China.

Zhang Yongsheng, director of the CASS institute of ecological civilization, said that China has completely abandoned the traditional development model of "pollution before treatment," and that ecological environment protection is becoming a new driving force for economic development.

As Xi once said, the development model of "killing the hens for eggs" and "draining the lake for fish" has reached a dead end. The future will be illuminated by eco-friendly development that is in accordance with the rules of nature.

China has taken the global lead in both the vision for and the practice of harmonious coexistence between people and nature, and has become a pathfinder for, contributor to and leader of better green development, said Zhang at a seminar on Xi Thought concerning ecological progress.

"China is the number one provider of environment technology in the world" and an important provider of solar energy, said Erik Solheim, former executive director of the UN Environment Programme, adding the country is also leading



Yao Zuyuan (first from the right) and his families are planting trees in Hanzhong, Shaanxi Province on July 13, 2019. Yao's family has been dedicated to forestation in Qinling mountain range for five generations over the past seven decades. *Tao Ming*

the world in areas such as electric vehicles, wind energy and hydrogen.

Xi pledged that China will strive to peak carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 -- a much shorter time span than many developed countries would spend.

China has taken the initiative to do that, instead of doing it passively, said Xi, adding that actions speak louder than words.

During the 2021-2025 period, the trading of carbon emissions, which has been piloted in seven provinces and cities and covers over 20 industries, is expected to see a wider range of participants, as more industries and trading entities will be encouraged to join the carbon market.

The country was also planning to put in place a special law on climate change as it accelerates its formulation of top-level design and industry-specific policies to further clarify its roadmap toward carbon neutrality.

The country was drawing up an action plan to peak carbon emissions by 2030 while working on specific plans for various industries and sectors including power, steel, petrochemicals and transportation, said Jin Xiandong, spokesperson for the National Development and Reform Commission.

Plans to develop low-carbon technologies and build up China's carbon sink capacity were also being studied, Jin added.

China's commitment to reaching net-zero carbon no later than 2060 is one of its most important moves since the beginning of reform and opening-up in the late 1970s, said Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank President Jin Liqun.

"When China is committed to doing something, it will just do it," said the bank's chief at the International Finance Forum 2021 Spring Meetings in Beijing on May 29.

## Climate agenda in Diplomacy

Xi also proposed the signature concept of "two mountains" when addressing the global audience at the Climate Ambition Summit held online at the end of 2020.

He was calling for pursuing a new approach to climate governance that highlights green recovery in a year when the world was going through not only a COVID-19 pandemic and its economic fallout but also one of the three warmest years on record.

On his diplomatic agenda, Xi again stressed the importance of upholding multilateralism, unity and cooperation to tackle climate change.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2021 held in China's tropical island of Hainan, Xi urged Asian countries to strengthen cooperation on green infrastructure, green energy and green finance, and to make green a defining feature of Belt and Road cooperation.

In earlier April 2021, at a video summit held with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Xi called on the European Union (EU) to work together with China to strengthen the China-EU green partnership.

In 2020, 2021, Xi has held six phone talks with the French president, in four of which they compared notes on strengthening coordination and cooperation on tackling climate change.

## China, as the world's largest developing country, will complete the world's most dramatic reduction in carbon emission intensity, and realize carbon neutrality from carbon peaking in the shortest time in global history.

China and European countries have been working closely on the global fight against climate change after the former US President Donald Trump's administration abandoned the Paris Agreement.

Biden has decided to return his country to the landmark global deal on climate change, which was agreed on by almost every country in the world in 2015 after lengthy negotiations in the French capital.

## Developing on promise

At present, the international landscape is evolving more rapidly and COVID-19 is triggering deep reflections on the relationship between man and nature, Xi said, opening his speech at the Climate Ambition Summit.

His country had been seeking to use the pandemic as a springboard into a greener and more resilient future.

Addressing the general debate of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2020, the Chinese president announced that China aims to have CO2 emissions peak before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060.

If successful, according to the Climate Action Tracker, it would lower global warming projections by around 0.2 degrees to 0.3 degrees Celsius.

While environmentalists welcomed the Chinese pledge as a "game-changer" for the climate and a move that could encourage other countries to act faster, some raised doubts about the viability of the targets given that China is an emerging economy still heavily reliant on coal, and asked for concrete action plans.

In its 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), a key policy document that will heavily influence the nation's economic development in the next decade and beyond, Beijing outlined in March 2021 that energy consumption per unit of gross domestic product (GDP) and carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP will be reduced by 13.5 percent and 18 percent over the period, respectively.

Furthermore, an action plan for hitting the peak of carbon emissions by 2030 was unveiled in 2021.

"China, as the world's largest developing country, will complete the world's most dramatic reduction in carbon emission intensity, and realize carbon neutrality from carbon peaking in the shortest time in global history," Xi said at the China-France-Germany video summit.

The low-carbon commitment, it is estimated, requires China to make the transition from reaching its carbon peak to realizing carbon neutrality within 30 years, compared with the 60 years taken by most developed countries.

The task is extremely challenging, Xi said, but China will deliver on its promise. (Xinhua) ■



# Xi concept on ecology helps guide the world

Lucid waters' idea becomes role model for balancing economy, environment

"China has done a lot of very important work on environmental issues to realize this ambition, and that's positive leadership the world can take inspiration from,"

Dechen Tsering, United Nations Environment Program regional director and representative for Asia and the Pacific, said the balance between economic development and protection of ecosystems is not easy to achieve, but the aspiration of the "ecological civilization" that Xi advocates is to accomplish exactly this.

Photo taken on May 26, 2021 shows the mega dual-powered container ship which is delivered to French maritime transport company CMA CGM Group on the same day, manufactured by China's Jiangnan Shipyard in east China's Shanghai's Ding Ting

Tsering said. “Especially at a time when we are dealing with environmental issues on all fronts from climate change to pollution to biodiversity loss we need countries like China to ... lead the international community in striking strong agreements that protect nature.”

As a significant part of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, Xi’s vision on building an ecological civilization calls for putting conservation and protection first to ensure the harmony between human and nature, and sticking to innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development. It also regards a sound environment as the most inclusive benefit to people’s well-being.

When President Xi returned to Yucun during an inspection tour of Zhejiang province in March 2021, he again underlined the fundamental importance of ecological conservation in the country’s sustainable development. He said that “the environment itself means the economy. If you protect the environment, you will receive rewards from the environment”.

Under the guidance of Xi’s Thought on ecological civilization, China has started to conduct central environmental inspections and has carried out guidelines to control air, water and soil pollution, published its own plans to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is implementing a national plan to tackle climate change.

Speaking at a national conference on environmental protection in May 2018, Xi said that with the Chinese economy transitioning from high-speed growth to high-quality development, the building of ecological civilization has entered a critical period a period that requires more quality ecological goods to meet people’s ever-growing demand for a beautiful environment and at a time when China is capable of ad-



A community worker explains the knowledge of garbage sorting to the volunteers in a residential community in Luquan District, Shijiazhuang City, north China’s Hebei Province, on April 21, 2021. Yang ShiYao



Photo taken on April 26, 2021 shows Changyao Mountain covered buildings that had been illegally constructed in a well-noted protected area along Dianchi Lake in Kunming, southwest China’s Yunnan Province. Xinhua





## Xi's vision on building an ecological civilization calls for putting conservation and protection first to ensure the harmony between human and nature, and sticking to innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development.

dressing prominent environmental issues.

Tsering said that the Secretariat of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development has sought UNEP's input on China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25). "UNEP has worked closely with China to achieve ecological protection," she said.

"Our recommendations focus on building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic, which means increasing sustainable infrastructure, fostering sustainable consumption and production, greening supply chains, improving access to green finance and tackling climate change and air pollution."

China has said it considers the climate change fight strategically important for high-quality sustainable development at the forefront of building a community with a shared future for mankind. Policies and actions it already has taken

have achieved remarkable results. China's GDP in 2019 more than quadrupled that in 2005, while carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP were reduced by 48.1 percent from 2005, equivalent to a reduction of about 5.62 billion metric tons.

### Capacity for leadership

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has commended China's efforts in fighting climate change, saying China has shown a clear capacity for climate leadership.

"In the past five years, China has deployed more solar and wind capacity than any other country. More than 50 percent of electric vehicles in the world are sold in China. China also makes 99 percent of the world's electric buses," the UN chief said in a video speech at an event organized by the Tsinghua University on July 23, 2021.

"Like COVID-19, climate change respects no borders. By seizing the mantle of leadership, China can help protect all people who share this planet," Guterres said.

While striving to strike a balance, the country should be deeply involved in global environmental governance, guide cooperation on climate change issues and work with others to come up with a worldwide solution for environmental protection and sustainable development, according to Xi's vision on ecological civilization.

"UNEP welcomes China's support for multilateralism and China's positive role in global environmental governance and regional cooperation," Tsering said, adding that by signing and ratifying the most important modern environmental treaties, China sets an example.

The UNEP official mentioned many treaties and agreements in which China plays an active part, including the UN Paris climate agreement, the Montreal Protocol, the Basel and Stockholm conventions, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

She also praised China's support for other regional environmental cooperation programs, such as environmental cooperation between China and the Association of South-east Asian Nations, China-Japan-Republic of Korea environmental cooperation and Lancang-Mekong subregional cooperation.

Initiated by Xi, the Belt and Road Initiative International Green Development Coalition was established in 2020 to promote cooperation and concerted action for green development on the Belt and Road, to integrate sustainable development into the BRI, and to help BRI participating countries to realize the UN Sustainable Development Goals on development and environment. More than 130 Chinese and international organizations have joined in the coalition, including UNEP.

Tsering called international cooperation vital. "A global challenge requires global efforts. That's why multilateralism is the only choice. No one country can do it alone."

China and UNEP can continue to work together to promote "Green Governance" principles and practices by sharing knowledge and through South-South cooperation, Tsering said. "This is urgent as many countries are trying to quickly develop response and recovery strategies for COVID-19," she added. (China Daily) ■



By Jiang Zhuqing, Lu Yan

# Inspections vital to China's ecological protection

“In recent years, China’s express delivery, takeaway and other relevant industries have developed rapidly, and the amount of packaging waste has also increased accordingly. People have expressed concerns to us. What steps will be taken to solve this problem?” Tan Lin, a member of the National People’s Congress (NPC)’s Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee, came up with the question at an inquiry session on October 22, 2021, where lawmakers voice for the people and hear official responses from relevant authorities.

In response, Ma Junsheng, director of the State Post Bureau, said that the current development mode of express delivery business is still relatively extensive, and in the next step, conscientiously implement the solid waste law, e-commerce law, etc., and further strengthen the green manage-

ment of express packaging.

Law enforcement and legal publicity should be further strengthened to encourage joint efforts by society to control pollution and protect the environment, at a symposium in Xi’an, Shaanxi Province, in April 2021, China’s top legislator Li Zhanshu said. On multiple occasions, Li has called for fully implementing the Law on Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Waste across the country. During the inspection in Xi’an, he learned about the safe disposal and recycling of industrial waste slag, and handling of construction and household waste during a law enforcement inspection in Xi’an.

Through continuous law enforcement inspections, Chinese lawmakers have reminded authorities and businesses not to lose momentum in pollution control, as a result of a national campaign for ecological protection since ecological civiliza-



Saihan Ba National Forest Park. *Mou Yu*



Aerial photo taken on April 9, 2021 shows a construction site of pollution abatement on the deserted pyrite mine field in Fenghuang Village, Kazi Town, Baihe County, northwest Shaanxi Province. *Shao Rui*

tion was listed along with economic, political, cultural and social progress as one of the five goals in the country's overall development plan at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2012.

## Solid waste control

In 2018, 2019 and 2020, headed by Li, who is a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, law enforcement inspection teams conducted law enforcement inspections of air pollution prevention and control law, water pollution prevention and control law, soil pollution prevention and control law, to 31 provinces (municipalities and regions) to promote the CPC Central Committee's major concepts on ecological protection.

In 2021, the top legislature has dispatched teams of lawmakers to inspect the enforcement of the Law on Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Waste in eight provincial-level regions across the country, Xinhua News Agency reported. The law was enacted in 1995 and underwent a thorough revision in 2020.

Moreover, the NPC Standing Committee also entrusted local legislatures in 23 other provincial-level areas with law-enforcement inspections from April to September in 2020. The top legislature reviewed a report on the annual environmental situation and the work of fighting pollution in accordance with the law.

At the symposium held in Xi'an on April 12, 2021, the top legislator said after years of unremitting efforts, China has made great progress in the prevention and control of solid waste pollution. The collection, processing and utilization capacity of solid waste have been significantly improved.

During the 13th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) period, the country had accumulated various resources for comprehensive utilization of 13 billion tons of solid waste, with a comprehensive utilization rate increase by 5 percentage points, he noted.

Meanwhile, the increment and stock of solid waste have remained high for a long time, with the production of about 3.3 billion tons of industrial solid waste every year, which is increasing year by year. Over the years, the total amount of industrial solid waste has exceeded 60 billion tons, covering an area of more than 2 million hectares; Construction waste and agricultural solid waste are also billions of tons or even tens of billions of tons in scale, Li added.

In fighting against solid waste pollution, we need to implement Xi Jinping's thought of ecological civilization and his instructions on the prevention and control of solid waste pollution, strictly and comprehensively implement the prevention and control of environmental pollution by solid waste and continue to push forward the management of hazardous waste, said the top legislator.



A beautiful lake in Gerze County of Ali Prefecture, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, shows different colors in different seasons and different time of a day. *Xinhua*

“The concept of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development should be implemented, with improving growth, quality and efficiency at its core,” President Xi Jinping, also General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, said in a group discussion with lawmakers during the annual session of the NPC on March 10, 2017.

Lucid waters and lush mountains are as valuable as gold and silver, said Xi, who also called for the development of ecological civilization through the rule of law, with backbone regulations to be established as soon as possible.

## For the good of people

Ecological civilization is regarded as an important element of China's national rejuvenation, and it is also of huge importance to the world given the role of China, which was the most populous nation and the second-largest economy in the world.

Leading the world in new and renewable energy, China is undergoing a revolution in energy production and consump-

tion, with plans to raise the ratio of non-fossil energy usage in total consumption to about 14.3 percent in 2021, up from 13.3 percent in 2020, and to about 20 percent by 2030, the *Xinhua* reported.

The country has pledged to cut its carbon emissions per unit of GDP by 60 to 65 percent from 2005 levels by 2030, said the report.

From August 23 to 26, 2020, Li led the law enforcement inspection team to Jiangsu and Shandong provinces to oversee the implementation of the Law on the Prevention and Control of Soil Pollution.

Lawmakers went to the farmland, enterprises, parks and construction sites in Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province and Rizhao, Weihai and Jinan, Shandong Province to inspect the pollution prevention and control of agricultural and construction land, soil sampling and monitoring, comprehensive land use, pollutant emission of enterprises and the implementation of responsibilities.

At the same time, seminars and law enforcement inspection forums were held to solicit advice and suggestions, so as

to help defend the pure land.

Li stressed the need to thoroughly study and implement President Xi's thought of ecological civilization and the CPC Central Committee's decision, implement the Law of Prevention and Control of Soil Pollution in an all-round and effective way, adhere to the principle of giving priority to prevention, and do well in controlling and repairing soil risks.

On August 23, 2020, Li and the inspection team inspected the rice fields of the Lianyungang Economic Development Zone to examine the safe use of contaminated farmland.

After a detailed investigation of the soil contamination of agricultural land, the Lianyungang Economic Development Zone confirmed the safe use of arable land totaling 929.32 mu, and the main pollutant is lead. Through cooperation with the Nanjing Soil Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the city has adopted an implementation plan for the safe use of contaminated arable land.

"Where does this lead mainly come from? Can the rice meet the edible standard after adopting foliar barrier control and other technologies? Is there a strict control class of land?" asked Li on the spot.

## The concept of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development should be implemented, with improving growth, quality and efficiency at its core.

Xiao Jianbo, head of Jiuyuefeng family farm, pours rice seeds into a seedling raising devise in Yongji County, Jilin City, northeast China's Jilin Province, April 13, 2021. *Zhang Nan*



"Lead pollution mainly comes from enterprise emissions and seawater irrigation accumulation; After testing, the quality of rice has met the edible standard; There is no strict control class land," answered local officials from Lianyungang.

The safety of agricultural land, especially arable land, is directly related to the quality and safety of agricultural products and the safety and health of hundreds of millions of people. Strengthening soil pollution prevention and environmental protection on agricultural land is an important reflection of adhering to the people as the center, Li stressed.

"To figure out the causes of soil contamination on agricultural land, the right control, repair and prevention according to the law, to ensure the safe use and reassurance to grow crops," he added.

On August 25, 2021, Li and members of the inspection team arrived at Changjiazhuang Village in Jinan.

"What is the level of contamination in the arable land here? What are the pollutants? What prevention and control measures have been taken?" Li asked.

There is a total of 1,600 mu of arable land at Changjiazhuang, which is mainly planted with corn and wheat. Among them, 521.87 mu of arable land is used safely, and the rest is in the priority protection category. The main pollutant of the arable land is cadmium caused by perennial irrigation, local officials said.

There used to be a chemical plant along with the upstream of the Xiaoqing River, a source of agricultural water for arable land, which has been discharging polluted water illegally for many years, causing the river water to exceed heavy metal standards. At present, this chemical plant has been shut down.

In order to ensure the safety of arable land, the village has adopted effective measures to absorb heavy metals. After testing, the quality of the crops met the national standards for food safety, local officials said.

The pollution of the arable land in Changjiazhuang was not formed in one day, but accumulated over the years. In addition to the use of measures mentioned above, it is now necessary to control the rural garbage and sewage, not arbitrarily piled up and discharged, otherwise it will cause new pollution, Li noted. At the same time, pesticides, fertilizer inputs to gradually reduce the amount of toxic and harmful substances should also be handled.

On the following day, Li hosted a forum on law enforcement inspection in Jinan. Jiangsu and Shandong provinces have conscientiously implemented the soil pollution prevention and control law and soil environmental quality is generally stable, the trend of increasing pollution is being curbed. To fully and effectively implement the soil pollution prevention and control law, more effective measures must be taken, Li said.

Besides solid waste and soil pollution control, law enforcement inspections have been playing a part in water and air pollution control. During these inspections, lawmakers perform their duties in accordance with the law and identify the prominent environmental problems that obstruct the implementation of the law and harm the interests of the public. While listening to voices from the primary level onsite, they explore effective working methods to improve the quality and efficiency of the inspection.

(Xinhua contributed to the story) ■



Vice chairman of the Constitution and Law Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) Xu Hui (C, front) and Xu Anbiao, vice chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, conduct research on legislation of the Law on Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Waste (draft amendment) from December 1 to 2, 2019 in Wenzhou City, east China's Zhejiang Province. Ge Yiping, chairman of Wenzhou Municipal People's Congress participated in the research.

## Green endeavors: legislators have been working on ecological protection in various areas

**S**eniors in Yangxian County in Hanzhong of Shaanxi Province, regard the crested ibis as a symbol of good luck and longevity. Thanks to decades of efforts such as natural habitat protection and artificial breeding, these auspicious birds, once almost extinct, are enjoying renewed survival in the county near the Qin-

ling Mountains, an area extremely rich in biodiversity.

The mountains are home to 3,800 species of plants and 530 species of animals, including the giant panda, the snub-nosed monkey, the takin, the crested ibis and the black stork. In addition, it has abundant mineral resources, such as molybdenum, nickel and limestone.

The Chinese Government has placed great importance on the ecological protection of the Qinling Mountains. Laws and regulations have been formulated to protect its ecological environment, special agencies have been established and input from governments at all levels is increasing. By the end of 2021, 176 varieties of plants and 120 animals had been placed on national or provincial-level key protection lists, while more than 510 protection units had been built, including national parks, natural reserves, drinking water source reserves, scenic spots, geological parks, wetland parks and cultural protection units.

Protecting the ecological environment has been high on the agenda of Chinese legislators, even more so with the current legislature--the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) and its standing committee which were elected over four years ago. According to Dou Shuhua, vice-chairman of the NPC's Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee, legal efforts have been strengthened on ecological protection of areas including wetlands, national parks, wildlife, the Yellow River and the Antarctic.

## Relentless work

China places great importance on ecological conservation, and its environmental protection has gone through a historic turnaround, Chinese top legislator Li Zhanshu said in July. Li, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, made the remarks while addressing the opening of the Eco Forum Global Annual Conference 2021 held in southwest China's Guizhou Province.

China has made resource conservation and environmental protection a basic state policy and sustainable development a national strategy, Li said.

Among the efforts, protecting wild animals caught the public's attention, especially after the trading and eating of wild animals was once suspected of being related to the spread of the novel coronavirus. In 2020, the NPC Standing Committee adopted a decision on thoroughly banning the illegal trading of wildlife and eliminating the consumption of wild animals. The move aimed to safeguard biological and ecological security and effectively prevent major public health risks, among other things.

Given that a comprehensive revision of China's law on the protection of wildlife takes time, it was both necessary and urgent for the NPC Standing Committee to adopt an urgent special decision during the critical moment of epidemic prevention and control, said Zang Tiewei, a spokesperson for the NPC's Legislative Affairs Commission (LAC). By enforcing a complete ban on the consumption of wild animals and a severe crackdown on illegal wildlife trade before relevant laws could be amended, the decision provides a legal shield against the virus and protects people's safety and health.

The decision stipulates that the consumption of terrestrial wild animals of important ecological, scientific and social value that are under state protection, as well as other terrestrial wild animals, including those that are bred or reared in captivity, shall be prohibited.

The hunting, trading and transportation of terrestrial

wild animals that naturally grow and breed in the wild for the purpose of consumption shall also be banned. It also says that illegal consumption and trade of wildlife shall be severely punished.

Wildlife protection cannot succeed if their habitats are not protected. At the beginning of 2021, Chinese lawmakers deliberated a draft law on wetlands protection, the country's first national legislation on conserving its lakes and swamps. In January 2021, a draft law on wetlands protection was submitted to the NPC Standing Committee for first review.

In strengthening the management of wetlands, the draft stipulates that a national catalog of important wetlands shall be compiled by forestry and grassland authorities and other related departments of the State Council, while provincial-level governments shall compile catalogs of important wetlands within their own jurisdiction.

The draft prohibits any organization or individual from destroying the habitat of birds and aquatic life in wetlands. Those breaching the law may be fined up to 1 million yuan (\$154,525) or face criminal penalties if their violations constitute crimes, according to the draft.

In addition to the law on wetlands protection, 12 environmental protection laws have been drafted or revised from 2018 to 2020, along with enforcement inspections for laws on the prevention and control of air, water and soil pollution, Dou said, adding that "What we want is to win a critical battle against pollution by advancing the rule of law."

Highlighting the importance of pollution control, the NPC Standing Committee planned to draft and amend laws on environmental assessments. Dou said the Standing Committee will inspect the enforcement of the revised Law on Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Waste to promote waste sorting, prohibit the importation of waste and improve the disposal of medical, agricultural and hazardous refuse.

Making and revising laws on environment-related industries will remain a top priority in China's legislative work agenda to provide more legal support for green development, according to Xu Anbiao, deputy head of the NPC Standing Committee's LAC.

Laws on resource utilization, such as those regarding minerals, grasslands and fisheries also need to be revised, Xu said, adding "our goal is to protect the environment through increasingly powerful legislative measures, making our nation a desirable place to live in."

The NPC Standing Committee was also considering strengthening reviews of environment-related normative documents such as judicial interpretations and administrative regulations to make sure they do not contradict the Constitution or national laws, according to Xu. In addition, legislators will conduct more research on compiling environment-related laws into a code to further improve the quality of legislation, he added.

## Solving challenges

Despite constant legislative efforts on ecological protection, there are still deficiencies in the implementation of the law, Dou said. For example, one of the prominent issues is

the lack of scientific, technological and capital support.

“China’s basic research projects on ecological and environmental protection are relatively weak, and research on the causes of pollution and treatment needs to be strengthened,” Dou explained. Moreover, current treatment and repair technologies are not yet efficient, safe and cost-effective. Eco-environmental protection funds are mostly provided by government at all levels, while a diversified investment model with various resources of investment has yet to be established.

In addition, the inspection found out that there is still room for improvements concerning some standards, such as the emissions standards for air and odor pollutants. Some standards are not coordinated or are even contradictory. In some places or regions, the standards and plans required by law have not been fully implemented.

Meanwhile, the majority of the people lack law awareness and the ability protect the ecological environment through legal means.

In this regard, Dou said that the NPC should enhance its supervisory effectiveness. For example, the NPC Standing Committee has taken some effective measures in recent years to track and monitor the execution of environmental laws by listening to and reviewing feedback reports.

From 2018 to 2020, the Standing Committee has explored various ways of inspecting law enforcement. For instance, by combining open and secret, as well as regular and random investigations, it has examined over 170 organizations and programs on the law enforcement of air, water and soil pollution control, among others. Wrongdoings and illegal activities were exposed to the public.

Moreover, experts were invited to assess the environ-

## Supervision can serve as motivation and as strong push in promoting legislation and law enforcement.

mental law enforcement status quo, producing appraisal reports for future work reference.

“Supervision can serve as motivation and as strong push in promoting legislation and law enforcement,” Dou said.

NPC deputies have been making suggestions in specific fields based on their area of expertise. Zhao Wanping, Vice President of Anhui Academy of Agricultural Sciences, said that technical challenges and lack of standards for the treatment of conventional air pollutant emissions reduction have led to the emissions of a large number of unconventional pollutants, which is a critical cause of smog. He suggested that by improving technical measures to collect exhaust gas, water vapor and waste heat, industrial enterprises can achieve multiple benefits in energy- and water-conservation, smog and carbon reduction.

Dang Yongfu, head of the Engineering Technology Center of Cultivated Land Quality Protection in Henan Province, has been promoting ecological agriculture for years. “Fine control and systematic treatment of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and other substances input can greatly reduce farming costs and pollution emissions in agricultural production, further improving the rural ecology and environment, and maintaining clear waters, green mountains and rural scenery,” he said. (Edited by Lu Yan) ■



Aerial photo taken on April 8, 2022 shows the scenery of a planting base of selenium-rich rice in Longkou Village of Dahua Yao Autonomous County, south China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Zhang Ailin





Fishery law enforcement ships sail on the Wuhan section of the Yangtze River, Hubei Province, on December 31, 2020. Key areas of the Yangtze River entered a 10-year fishing ban period starting from January 1, 2021. *Cheng Min*

# Running Lifelines

## China steps up basin legislation of major rivers

**S**tretching over 6,300 km, the Yangtze River is the longest river in China and the third longest in the world after the Nile in Africa and the Amazon in South America.

Boasting rich biodiversity, and mineral and water resources, it is regarded as the mother river of the Chinese nation and one of the cradles of Chinese civilization.

On March 1, 2021, the Yangtze River Protection Law of the People's Republic of China took effect. It stipulates ex-

plicitly all the legal aspects of ecological protection of the river and development along the Yangtze River Basin. "Mountains and rivers green are mountains of silver and gold." The dialectical words, also known as the "two mountains" concept in Chinese, are a key component of Xi Jinping's thought on ecological progress, and have become a catchword among government officials, entrepreneurs and farmers as well across China, especially in an effort to help the country's longest waterway recover from dwindling aquatic resources and

degrading biodiversity.

“We should protect the eco-environment with the strictest regulations and laws,” President Xi said.

## Protecting the Yangtze River

Pursuing the harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature and the “two mountains” concept were among the six principles that Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, highlighted at the National Conference on Eco-environmental Protection in May 2018. “Humanity and nature are a community of life,” he said.

“We should protect the eco-environment as we protect our eyes, and cherish it as we cherish our own lives,” Xi said.

Rapid economic development along the Yangtze has posed challenges to its ecology. Problems such as overfishing, water pollution and soil erosion have all affected the river and the population along its basin, leading to intense calls for conservation efforts.

At a symposium Xi chaired on comprehensively advancing the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt in November 2020, he called for efforts to write a new chapter in prioritizing ecological conservation and boosting green development, and draw a new painting featuring harmony between nature, the people and the cities.

In late December 2020, the National People’s Congress (NPC), the country’s top legislature, adopted a law on Yangtze River conservation. With 96 provisions in nine chapters, it is the country’s first legislation on a specific river basin and is formulated to strengthen the protection and restoration of its ecological environment, facilitate the effective and rational use of resources, safeguard ecological security, ensure harmony between humans and nature, and achieve sustainable development.

It also establishes a national coordination mechanism for protection efforts, bans chemical plants from being built within one kilometer of the river and restricts sand mining along the riverbank.

Fishing for productive purposes is banned in the aquatic life conservation areas of the basin, as well as productive fishing for natural resources in key Yangtze waters including the main river, major tributaries and lakes, and designated estuary areas within the time limit prescribed by the state.

“The implementation of this law means we’re placing greater importance in the health of the river and its environmental protection. This is the way green, eco-friendly development should go,” said Wang Fengchun, deputy director of the NPC’s Legislation Department Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee.

For the economic and social development of the basin, efforts will be made to promote well-coordinated environmental conservation and avoid excessive development, while prioritizing the ecology, according to the law.

Top legislator Li Zhanshu urged authorities to prioritize the conservation and restoration of the ecological environment of the basin, and manage and regulate construction and projects along the river according to the law.



Aerial photo shows the Poyang Lake converter station in Fuzhou, Jiangxi Province, on June 18, 2021. The  $\pm 800\text{KV}$  UHVDC transmission project from Yazhong in Sichuan Province to Poyang Lake is officially put into operation on June 21, 2021, further expanding the power capacity to support regional green development. *Xinhua*

However, the protection law is not intended to interfere development, but instead to change the existing unreasonable and “non-green” development model, said Du Qun, deputy director of the Research Institute of Environmental Law of Wuhan University. He explained that the law forces us to upgrade the development model. Du also noted that the law promotes green development, which underscores the need to balance environmental protection and economic growth.

Lu Zhongmei, director of the academic board of the Supreme People’s Court’s Judicial Research Center of Environment and Resources, said the national legislation to protect the Yangtze River reflects a profound change in China’s outlook on development. The law will make a difference for future generations and the future of the Chinese nation.

The systematic protection and the restoration of the ecological environment along the Yangtze will set a good example for rivers in urgent need of stronger protection, she said.

## Protecting the Yellow River

An old saying goes, “When the Yellow River is harnessed,



**The systematic protection and the restoration of the ecological environment along the Yangtze will set a good example for rivers in urgent need of stronger protection.**



Various natural landscapes of magnificence in spring are seen along the Inner Mongolia section of the Yellow River. Peng Yuan

China will enjoy tranquility.” Deemed as another cradle of Chinese civilization, the Yellow River Basin, one of the most important ecological barriers and economic zones of China, has seen remarkable improvements in its ecological environment in recent years.

The Yellow River originates in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and runs through the Loess Plateau. Flowing 5,464 km through nine provincial-level regions, it is China’s second longest river, supplying water to 12 percent of China’s population and irrigating 15 percent of the country’s arable land.

For provinces and regions upstream of the river, ecological protection is among their top priorities.

“The national strategy for ecological conservation and high-quality development of the Yellow River Basin is important for national rejuvenation and sustainable development,” said Li, adding that ecological conservation and restoration should be highlighted in the new law to improve the fragile ecosystem of the Yellow River.

Li called for accelerated legislation to advance ecological conservation and high-quality development in the Yellow River Basin. A member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the NPC’s Standing Committee, Li made the remarks while presiding over a symposium on Yellow River legislation in Xi’an, capital of northwest China’s Shaanxi Province, in April 2021.

The legislation should emphasize a plan to develop functional zones along the basin and delimit ecological red lines, he said.

It should also provide legislative support to establish the strictest institutional statutes for the protection and utilization of water resources, as well as the most rigorous rules for environmental regulation and water pollution prevention and control, Li said.

The new law should stress the construction of a comprehensive flood control and disaster mitigation system, and a system to monitor and provide early warnings for environment-related emergencies, he added.

Li also underlined the law’s role in enhancing the preservation and inheritance of Yellow River culture.

Environmental violations must be seriously dealt with according to law, and offenders must pay the due price, said vice premier Han Zheng, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and head of the leading group on promoting eco-conservation and high-quality development in the Yellow River Basin. He called for tailored measures to improve mechanisms for better protection efforts.

In late April 2021, a draft protection law of the Yellow River was released by the Ministry of Water Resources for public comment. The draft was formulated after many modifications based on research in regions along the basin, as well as special research and expert consultation.

The draft is divided into 11 chapters and 114 clauses. It points out that the areas along the main stream, tributaries and lakes of the Yellow River, including Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Henan and Shandong provinces, and Ningxia Hui and Inner Mongolia autonomous regions, are all covered by the protection law.

(Edited by Lu Yan) ■

# For one goal

## Regional efforts on ecological legislation yield fruits

By Lu Yan

**T**hree provincial regulations went into effect on July 1, 2021 regarding the environmental and ecological protection of the Chishui River area, which was adopted by the legislatures of Guizhou, Yunnan and Sichuan provinces as a unified legal standard.

It was the country's first joint legislation on local watershed as well as an innovation in local lawmaking, according to Ou Lin, an official with the Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.



Chishui River.

## Joint work

The joint legislation on the Chishui River, one of the Yangtze River's tributaries, is an implementation of the Yangtze River Protection Law, which took effect on March 1, 2021. "It can help solve a longstanding problem in cross-provincial legislation for river basins," Ou said, recognizing achievements in the ecological compensation mechanism of the three provinces in recent years, but adding that "difficulties in governing the Chishui River Basin still exist, since protective measures and law enforcement standards are different in each province, making it necessary to unify such standards to promote joint protection."

To reach this goal, the legislatures in the three provinces decided to start developing joint legislation in 2020. "We worked together to research Yangtze River protection and consulted with each other several times," said Yang Jun, deputy director of the Legislative Affairs Commission with the Sichuan Provincial People's Congress Standing Committee. After several rounds of exchanges, the provincial legislatures adopted the regulations in May 2021.

The Chishui, which is 436.5 km long and extends across Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou in southwest China, is famous as an eco-river with many endemic fish and an important ecological security barrier in the upper reaches of the Yangtze.

The regulations on the protection of the Chishui area are one example of regional legislators making concerted efforts to achieve the same legislative goals and enhance each other's work.

In January 2020, China implemented a full fishing moratorium in more than 300 conservation areas in the Yangtze River Basin, which was expanded to a 10-year moratorium for all natural waterways in the country's longest river, including its major tributaries and lakes, in January last year.

According to the law, joint work will be carried out by State Council agricultural and rural affairs authorities, other related State Council departments and provincial-level governments in the regions along the Yangtze to strengthen the enforcement.

The new law adds "designated areas of the Yangtze estuary" to the moratorium. Fishing for productive purposes is banned in the conservation areas for aquatic life in the Yangtze basin, and within the time limit prescribed by the State, productive fishing for natural fishery resources is banned in key Yangtze waters, including its main river, major tributaries and lakes, and designated estuary areas.

Governments at or above the county level along the river are required to adopt compensation policies for fishermen moving ashore, guide them in finding new jobs and ensure social security services.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, hundreds of thousands of fishermen relinquished their nets in 10 provincial-level regions along the river, as local governments provided them with social security services and helped them move ashore to find new jobs.

Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei authorities provided another example of how concerted regional legal efforts make a difference. To further improve air quality, they intensified efforts to prevent and control air pollution, while simultaneously implementing tougher regulations against air pollution



People from the legislatures of Guizhou, Yunnan and Sichuan provinces conduct a research on drafting provincial regulations on environmental and ecological protection of the Chishui River Basin in Zhenxiang County of Yunnan Province and Xishui County of Guizhou Province, from April 19 to 20. *Lyu Yue*



The second joint meeting, attended by Secretaries-general of the Standing Committee of Provincial People's Congress from Guizhou, Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, is held on the theme of the legislation on environmental and ecological protection of the Chishui River Basin, in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, on April 9, 2021. *Sun Xinzhi*

**For more than three years, regional governments have developed their individual efforts on protecting the environment according to their own specific conditions.**

in May 2020. The regulations marked the first cross-region legislative effort to improve air quality in China.

## Cradle of 'two mountains' theory

Huzhou, in the northern part of Zhejiang Province, has long been known as the cradle of China's "two mountains" theory which says that clear waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, comparable to the gold and silver mountains of legend.

Like other Chinese cities, Huzhou considers ecological protection the most important factor in everything from the formulation of strategy planning and urban and rural overall planning to special planning in infrastructure, industrial development and population control. By enhancing its legis-

lation and law supervision, Huzhou has improved and will continue to boost the ecological environment.

Huzhou promoted the water campaign in tackling five water issues: water pollution, flood control, drainage in waterlogged areas, water supply and conservation. It also succeeded in the reduction of air pollution, the green transformation of industrial companies and mine governance.

Specifically, regulations on ecological protection were launched in recent years, including regulations on city appearance and sanitation management, the prohibition of fireworks sales, and air pollution prevention and control.

“Since the introduction of the regulation on banning fireworks sales, we have seen a decline in the average concentration of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, an improvement in air quality and fewer fire accidents,” said Wang Wuliang, head of the Commission of Legislative Affairs of the Huzhou Municipal People’s Congress.

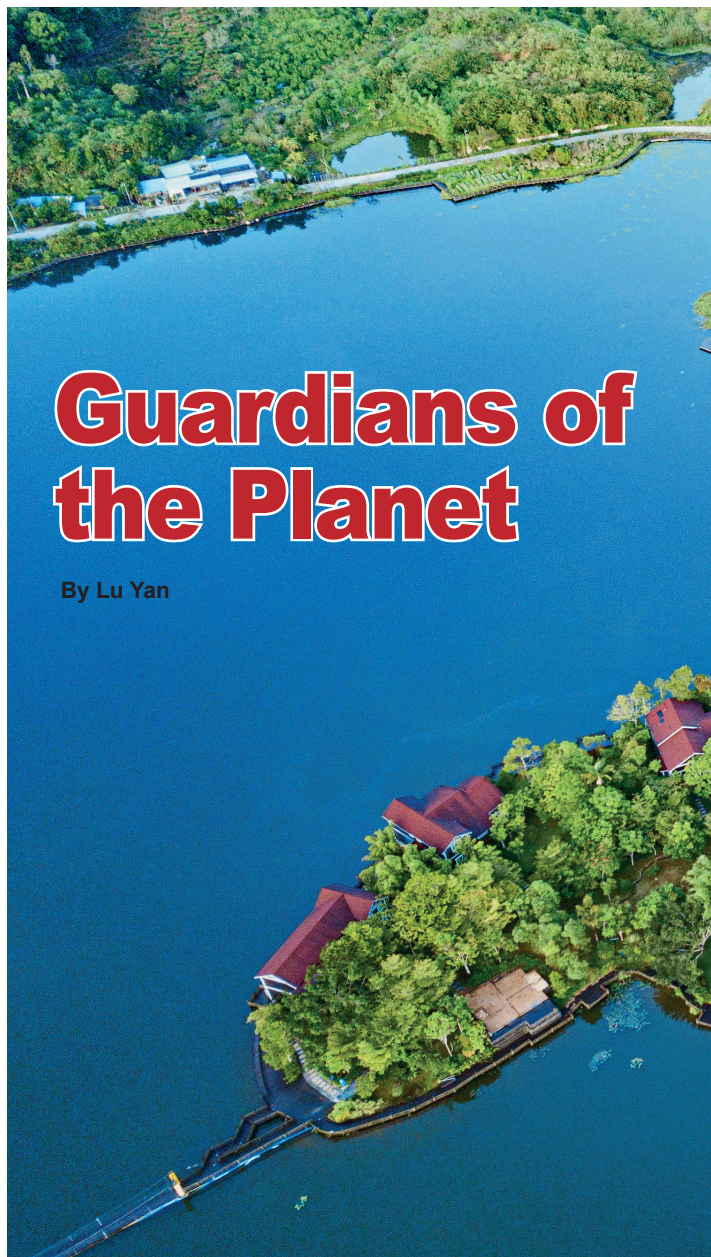
Huzhou is also promoting ecological culture as it explores projects such as a mulberry fish pond and an irrigation engineering system (Lou Gang Wei Tian) on a regional basis. It established the China Academy of Ecological Civilization and the Zhejiang Cadre Institute of Ecological Civilization, and set August 15 as the annual Huzhou Ecological Civilization Day. During that time, deputies of people’s congresses at all levels will go to schools, communities, homes and factories to disseminate the concept of an ecological civilization and relevant legal knowledge, in an effort to raise the ecological awareness of the entire society.

## Local efforts

For more than three years, regional governments have developed their individual efforts on protecting the environment according to their own specific conditions.

The Standing Committee of Heilongjiang Provincial People’s Congress has strictly implemented decisions and plans of the Communist Party of China Central Committee on fighting pollution. For several years, the law enforcement inspection team has communicated face-to-face with deputies of people’s congresses at all levels, frontline staff, experts and scholars, and others through over 100 symposiums. After listening to reports from hundreds of departments and individuals, and looking at how different companies and projects enforce environmental laws and regulations, the committee made legislative improvements. Once problems are spotted, solutions and improvement will be proposed.

Similarly, the Standing Committee of Jinan Municipal People’s Congress in Shandong Province has been working on solving people’s concerns regarding pollution. For example, Xiaoqinghe River, a vital city river, was polluted by factory sewage and domestic wastewater. To make the river clear again, the local people’s congress standing committee analyzed reports from residents and conducted a thorough investigation, both openly and secretly, on the sources of the pollution. They came up with a long list of root causes such as insufficient sewage treatment capacity and years of no desilting. The investigation group also went to other cities to learn from their experience in battling river pollution. Through all these efforts, the Xiaoqinghe River regained its clear and natural origins. ■



# Guardians of the Planet

By Lu Yan

## Soil Doctor

Dang Yongfu, a 55-year-old native of Henan Province, has made decades-long efforts to treat soil degradation caused by the overuse of fertilizers and herbicides. This has helped save tens of billions in economic losses for farmers in Henan, Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces, and Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous regions, among other provinces in China.

As chief technician with Henan Yuandong Bio-engineering Co., Ltd., Dang was elected a National People’s Congress (NPC) deputy in 2018. He was among the NPC deputies who formulated a law that took effect in January 2019. “The purpose of my proposals and suggestions to the



Aerial photo taken on September 4, 2020 shows the scenery of a lake in Jianfengling nature reserve at Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park in south China's Hainan Province. *Pu Xiaoxu*

## Strengthening environmental protection has been a focus of many deputies.

NPC sessions is to highlight accurate and legal pollution control to promote the continuous improvement of environmental quality,” said Dang, who is also head of the Engineering Technology Center of Cultivated Land Quality Protection in Henan.

China has long faced the problem of fertilizer overuse. “We have more than 40 million tons of chemical fertilizers

absorbed into the soil every year, which also pollute bodies of water after permeation,” Dang said.

He noted that China cannot secure its food supply without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. However, farmers overuse the chemicals for fear of a drop in production, which on the contrary has led to the decline in the fertility and productive capacity of the soil.

In 2008, Dang developed carbon adsorption polyglutamic acid fertilizer reduction technology. For two consecutive years, farmers in Shufu County in northwest China’s Xinjiang applied the technology and achieved an 8.2-percent increase in wheat production, while using 20 percent less fertilizer, according to a local village official.

After years of efforts, more and more farmers have been



Above: Desertified land can be seen everywhere before a large-scale anti-desertification campaign in Youyu County, north China's Shanxi Province. Below: A photo taken on July 13, 2021 shows the beautiful scenery in Youwei Town, Youyu County, north China's Shanxi Province. *Xinhua*

convinced to reduce fertilizer to protect soil. In May 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs adopted Dang's suggestion and issued a chemical fertilizer reduction standard to speed up the quantitative assessment of chemical fertilizers permeated in the soil.

"With living standards constantly improving, the Chinese people should shift the focus from securing enough food to getting healthier food," Dang said. "If I want to eat a healthy diet, I must first treat the farmland well."

Dang suggested during NPC session in 2021 that farmer's endowment insurance be linked with their grain contribution. "Farmers play an indispensable role in protecting cultivated land. As a result, their contributions should be closely connected to their return," he said.

## Industrial Internet+Eco Protection

NPC deputy Liu Huaiping, 40, deputy head of the China

Association of Environmental Protection Industry, has been focusing on how the Industrial Internet of Things can empower ecological environmental protection.

"The interoperability of environmental data is not interoperable and isolated islands of information are major problems in current ecological environment management and control," Liu said. He believes that with the help of new-generation information technologies such as big data, cloud computing, 5G, blockchain and artificial intelligence, various resources can be dynamically optimized and integrated, so as to assist in making decision on environmental issues, enhancing comprehensive environmental governance capability and the digital capability of environmental management and control.

"At present, the technology supporting data interconnection and intercommunication is mature, and the government should accelerate the pilot program to promote the investment and construction of the industrial Internet in the field



of ecological environment,” Liu suggested during Two Sessions in 2021.

He also stressed the importance of cultivating high-caliber personnel in environmental enterprises. Currently, many companies have made heavy investment in environmental protection facilities that requires skilled management and operation personnel. But currently, the number of professionals is far from enough.

As the chairman of a technology company on environmental industry, Liu has been promoting environment governance and digital technology. For example, in terms of studying the causes of smog, atmospheric data can be collected through the Internet of Things, so that more accurate data is available for pollution control, while the infrastructure for cloud monitoring of PM2.5 particles could be deployed at a large scale.

Liu also believes that innovation is key to China’s environmental protection industries, and the government and business circles should enhance cooperation in this regard. “I’m glad to see that the government has already made major gestures in supporting green finance, energy conservation and environmental protection industries, clean production industries and clean energy industries,” he said.

Specializing in building materials and machinery, Liu has participated in several national environmental protection projects and owns more than 10 invention patents. He led his team in breakthroughs on developing ultra-low emission technologies in building materials and machinery. The environmental protection equipment they developed was well received in the market.

## Sand Tamer

Shi Guangyin, 70, born in Shaanxi Province, is a pioneer in China’s desert control efforts. He has led the way in greening north China by planting tens of millions of different trees and bushes over the past 38 years.

Born into a farmer’s family in Dingbian County, Yulin, Shi remembers that as a child, he moved with his family nine times due to the frequent sandstorms, never quite winning the battle. In 1984, the government introduced a policy allowing individuals to manage woods, barren mountains and deserts in order to encourage afforestation and improve the environment. Shi quit his job as head of a farm and contracted 2 square km of the desert with six other households and founded the first farmers’ sand control company in China.

From the start, Shi faced a severe fund shortage. In the first year, he had to sell his livestock and take loans from rural credit cooperatives to raise 120,000 yuan (\$16,880) to buy saplings. Luckily, there was ample rain that year and 85 percent of the trees he planted survived. But that didn’t mean his afforestation efforts were smooth sailing from there. His saplings were then damaged by sandstorms, but he resorted to new planting techniques and ultimately made it work. After three decades of trial and error, the once barren desert has been turned into a forest. Birds, foxes, badgers and pheasants have made their first appearance in the new oasis.

Shi believes that sand control efforts must be combined

with efforts to protect clear waters and lush mountains. “The cooperation between businesses and rural households needs to be advanced further and technologies must be adopted to consolidate poverty alleviation achievements. We need high-quality afforestation in the future,” he said.

## Voice of the people

NPC deputies, or lawmakers, are elected by people’s congresses in the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities under the direct jurisdiction of the Central Government. The election of deputies from Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions and Taiwan follow separate rules. The armed forces select their own deputies.

The deputies submit motions and suggestions at the annual NPC session covering a wide gamut of topics, from science and technological development to education, public health and social affairs. Subsequently, new policies are issued incorporating many of their inputs.

Strengthening environmental protection has been a focus of many deputies like Dang, Liu and Shi. It is also among the key points of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035, as China drives the way forward in building an ecologically friendly society.

“I am an ordinary member of society. I pay attention to the people’s hardships, analyze the causes of these problems and make people’s voices heard,” said Han Deyun, a lawyer and NPC deputy from southwest China’s Chongqing Municipality.

Han made a suggestion during NPC session in 2021 on improving the urban living environment. He pointed out that the direct light from LED screens on buildings with promotional banners can cause serious light pollution, thus must be reduced.

Wang Zhenli, a lawyer and NPC deputy from Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, suggested that the hot tourist destination Guilin in Guangxi should continue to speed up the legislation of ecological and environmental protection to preserve its landscape. In the meantime, historical and cultural protection should not be ignored.

According to official data, the Ministry of Ecological Environment adopted approximately 150 suggestions from NPC deputies in 2020, resulting in the introduction of nearly 60 policy measures.

Since the NPC deputy position is part-time, the law requires deputies to attend training programs and take part in inspections of law enforcement and surveys on important or urgent issues. They are also invited to observe bi-monthly legislative sessions of the NPC Standing Committee.

For instance, in July 2021, an inspection group, including several NPC deputies, went to Sanya in Hainan Province to conduct a special research and inspection on local implementation of the Law on the Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Wastes, which was recently revised in 2020. While commenting on the achievements of the tourist city’s law enforcement, the group also offered specific suggestions on kitchen waste disposal at restaurants and the eco-friendly cleaning of sheets at hotels. ■

# Legislation Digest

## NPC adopts anti-organized crime law

On Dec. 24, 2021, Chinese lawmakers voted to adopt an anti-organized crime law in order to strengthen the work of combating and rooting out organized crime in line with the rule of law.

The law, to take effect on May 1, 2022, was approved at a session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

The law includes provisions on the criteria for identifying various types of "soft violence", such as organized disturbing, pestering and assembling a crowd to cause an uproar for illegal profits or illegal impacts, as well as the responsibilities of regulators in various industries.

An improved long-term mechanism to prevent and control organized crime within industries will be established, according to the law, which also calls for strengthened oversight and management of industries and fields where organized crime is liable to occur.

To better prevent organized crimes against minors, the law also stipulates that schools have a responsibility to prevent and report such activity, while related departments should conduct anti-organized crime publicity and education aimed at minors.

It adds that organized crime activities involving minors will face heavier criminal penalties in accordance with laws. (Xinhua)

## NPC adopts new law on family education promotion

Chinese lawmakers on Oct. 23 2021 voted to adopt a new law on family education promotion at a session of the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

The law stipulates that parents or other guardians of minors shall be responsible for family education, while the state, schools and society provide guidance, support and services for family education.

In response to the country's drive to ease academic workload of young students, the law requires local governments at or above the county level to take steps to reduce the burden of excessive homework and off-campus tutoring in compulsory education.

The law bans parents from placing an excessive academic burden on their children, stating the guardians of minors should appropriately organize children's time for study, rest, recreation and physical exercise.

Parents are also required to play their part in preventing their children from being addicted to the internet.

Pinning high hopes on their children, a large number of Chinese parents would bend over backward to help their kids succeed. They are willing to fork out 200 yuan (about 31 US dollars) or more for a 45-minute tutoring class to help children score high in tests.

Weighed down by workload, Chinese students are facing increasing incidence of myopia, more sleep deprivation and poor fitness that worry many.

To address growing concerns over children's growth, China has initiated an education overhaul across the country.

A set of guidelines issued in July 2021 called on schools to recalibrate homework assignments, improve classroom teaching and develop after-class services to meet students' individualized demands.

At the same time, the document strengthened regulations regarding off-campus institutions, stopping approval of new off-campus, curriculum subject-tutoring institutions for students receiving compulsory education. (Xinhua)

## NPC revises law to boost sci-tech innovation

Chinese lawmakers on December 24, 2021 voted to adopt a law revision to further advance innovation in science and technology.

Lawmakers approved the revision to the Law on Progress of Science and Technology at a session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, which started on December 20, 2021.

The revised law encourages sci-tech research and development, to support the goal of peaking carbon dioxide emissions and achieving carbon neutrality.

It also demands establishing and improving a sound laboratory system led by national laboratories, with national key laboratories as supporting forces.

Awards in the sci-tech fields, including the country's top science and technology award, have been enshrined in the newly revised law, which highlights national support for institutions of higher education in developing basic research, as well as cultivating talents in the area.

In terms of advancing regional sci-tech innovation, the law calls on all localities to leverage regional advantages to choose a development path with regional characteristics.

It also stipulates that governments at all levels, enterprises and institutions should improve the mechanism for training, assessing and motivating female scientists, care for female sci-tech workers during their nursing period, as well as encourage and support female sci-tech workers to play a greater role in sci-tech progress.

The newly revised law will take effect from Jan. 1, 2022. (Xinhua)



## NPC draft law vows fight against telecom, online fraud

A draft law on anti-telecom and online fraud has been submitted to the ongoing session of the National People's Congress Standing Committee for the first reading on October 19, 2021

The draft proposes real-name registration and login in telecom and internet service and calls for strengthening punishment against illegal selling, renting, and lending of telecom, Internet of Things, financial and online accounts.

Chinese police have busted 27,000 gangs involved in SIM card or bank card fraud and punished 450,000 suspects during a nationwide campaign since October 2020.

The State Council should establish a joint mechanism to coordinate the fight against telecom and online fraud, the draft states, urging relevant departments to work closely across multiple fields and regions to effectively prevent such crimes.

The draft law stipulates the responsibilities of different departments, enterprises, and local governments in combating telecom and online fraud. It strengthens the building of a joint work mechanism, which will motivate the whole society to prevent and fight against such crimes, said Peng Xinlin, deputy secretary-general of the Chinese Association of Criminal Law.

Public security organs should work with financial institutions and payment service providers to stop victims from making payments to the suspects' accounts, freeze funds related to the fraudulent activities, and retrieve the money, according to the draft law.

The Ministry of Public Security issued 96,000 early warnings on average each day last year, preventing a total of 12.6 million people from falling victim to telecom and online fraud. Also, in 2021, Chinese police have intercepted 1.22 billion fraudulent calls and 1.41 billion fraudulent short messages, averting a collective financial loss of 277 billion yuan (about 43 billion US dollars).

It also urges diplomatic and police authorities to promote international cooperation in combating cross-border telecom and online frauds.

Chinese law enforcement authorities had cracked 262,000 telecom and online fraud cases from January to September 2021 and arrested 373,000 suspects in these cases, up 41.1 percent and 116.4 percent year on year, respectively. (Xinhua)

## Law to comprehensively protect women's rights

The top legislature of China was reviewing the draft amendment to the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests from December 20 to December 24 2021. The amendment defines "discrimination against women", strengthens protection of women's personality rights and interests, and bans any subjugation of women, by nonviolent as well as physical abuse.

The amendment focuses on problems related to women's rights and interests protection that have become apparent over the past nearly 30 years since the law was last revised.

The not-clear-enough definition of the "discrimination against women" in the law has been a big obstacle to the protection of women's rights and interests.

The draft amendment proposes to eliminate all forms of discrimination and prohibits gender-based rejection and restriction of women enjoying and exercising their legal rights and interests. If adopted, that will close a loophole in the law.

Statistics of the Women's Studies Institute of China show that 86.6 percent of female college students have suffered from employment discrimination.

It is necessary for the draft amendment to prohibit employers from reserving posts for men only or saying that men are preferred, inquiring about female job-hunters' marital and maternity status and intentions, or making marriage and childbirth restrictions a condition for women's job contracts.

It also requires gender equality reporting to be a conventional practice for enterprises.

It is worth noting that the revised draft also clarifies what constitutes sexual harassment. All verbal expressions and physical behaviors having sexual meanings and connotations, or displaying and transmitting information that has obvious sexual meaning are regarded as sexual harassment.

This is undoubtedly conducive to the targeted crackdown on violations of women's rights and interests by making the law more pertinent to its due role.

The aforementioned amendments reflect people's calls for better protection of women's rights and interests, and responds to the needs of the times.

The judicial and law-enforcement departments should take the amendment of the law as an opportunity to raise the public's awareness of women's rights and interests and to better promote gender equality in the society. (China Daily)

# Opportunity to demonstrate the value of human solidarity, resilience and international cooperation

**A**s the Beijing Winter Olympic Truce Resolution was adopted by the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly on December 2, 2021, the Games was recognized as an opportunity to demonstrate the value of human solidarity, resilience and international cooperation.

Sport was recognized as a tool to bring the world together to overcome the epidemic, achieve peace, and promote dialogue and reconciliation.

With Winter Olympic and Paralympic test events for Beijing 2022 in full swing, calls for a diplomatic boycott and threats of not sending athletes to Beijing 2022 by some western politicians do not change the fact that the Games will be a gathering of the world's winter sports athletes.

The Olympic Games has never been about the politicians but rather athletes. As the Olympic Charter has noted, the Olympic Movement "reaches its peak with the bringing together of the world's athletes at the great sports festival, the Olympic Games."



VCG

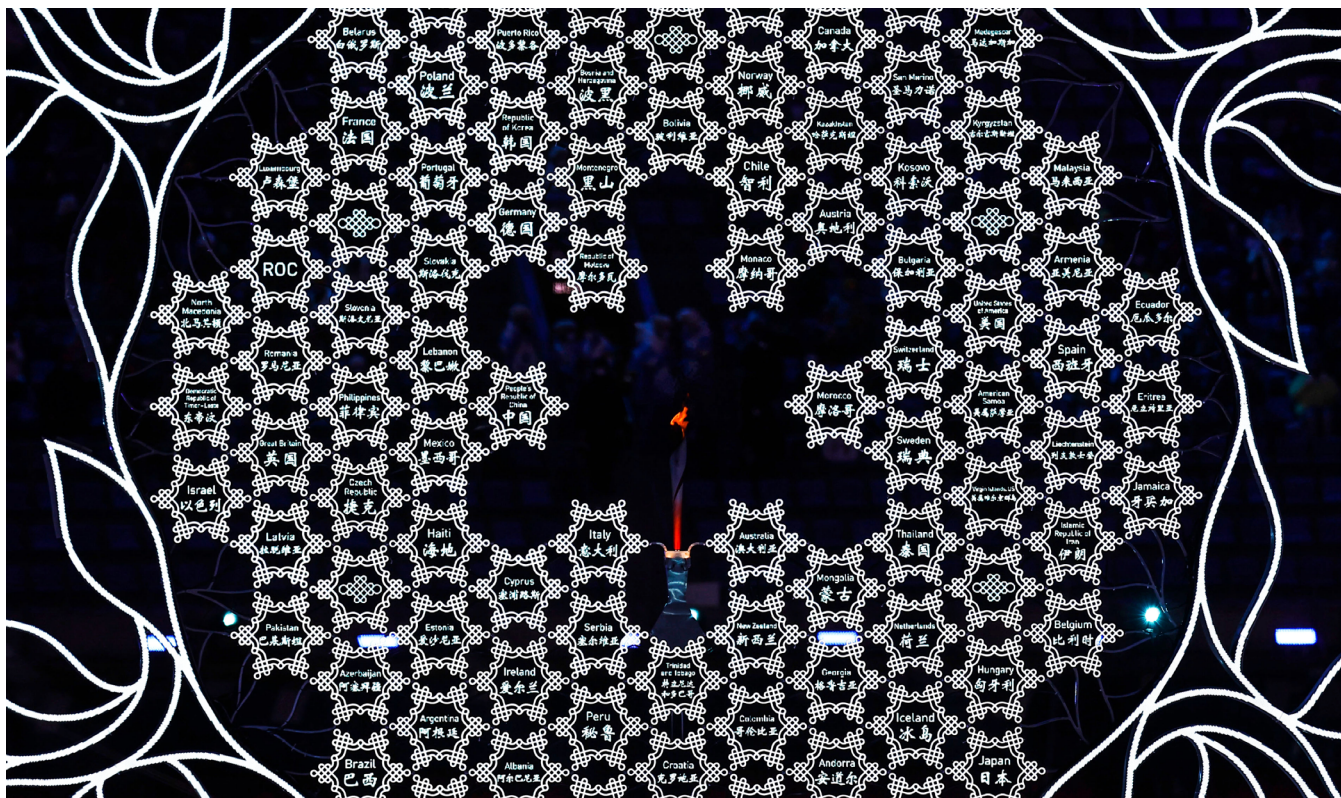


Photo taken on February 4, 2022 shows a cauldron holding the Olympic flame during the opening ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games at the National Stadium in Beijing, capital of China. *Ding Xu*

President of the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) Stanislav Pozdnyakov echoed that thought. “I would like to note that the Olympic movement is not a part of the global political system,” he said. “We believe that sports must be distanced as much as possible from complicated political issues.”

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said that a successful and splendid Olympic Games requires the concerted efforts of the big Winter Olympic family, and is not dependent on whether a handful of countries’ government officials will attend or not.

It is the voice of the athletes that should be heard, respected and accepted when talking about the Olympics.

According to Beijing 2022 organizers, National Olympic Committees (NOCs) from the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and some European countries had submitted 14,206 registration applications as of November 17, 2021, including 1,528 applications from the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee alone.

In the meantime, athletes were sending out the same message with their actions and words: nothing can stop their aspirations for the Olympic Games.

Two-time Olympic gold medalist Alpine skier Mikaela Shiffrin said athletes should not have to sacrifice a pivotal moment in their careers for political reasons.

“The Olympics is big, and it’s something that you shoot for, and you don’t want to miss it,” the 26-year-old American said, explaining that the Beijing Winter Olympics “can actually bring hope to the world at a very difficult time.”

After the test runs for bobsleigh and skeleton between Oc-

## China has honored its solemn promise to present the world with a streamlined, safe and splendid Games.

tober 5 and 27, German skeleton athlete and 2018 Olympic silver medalist Jaqueline Lolling said the track invokes “pure motivation and inspires you to compete at the highest level.”

German bobsleigh head coach Rene Spies called the venue “architecturally outstanding” as it is “smoothly embedded in the landscape.”

“Everything was perfectly organized,” Spies added, calling the trip to China ahead of several European Cup events a success.

Bree Walker of Australia, who was set to make her Olympic debut in the newly-introduced women’s monobob, or individual bobsledding, had also tested at the Yanqing National Sliding Center and commended the venue as “world class.”

“If the facilities are anything to go off, I think these are going to be a spectacular Olympics,” Walker added. “It’s going to be anyone’s game here in February.”

Madagascar-born Alpine ski racer Mialitiana Clerc, the first Malagasy woman to compete at the Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, designed her Olympic competition suit for Beijing 2022 with the motivation to “inspire all Africans and



The official slogan for the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games is unveiled on September 17, 2021 during a ceremony at Beijing's Capital Museum. Ju Huanzong

inspire my followers.”

The modern Olympic Games has always been one of the driving forces for peace and mutual understanding amid crises. Therefore, as the world still faces severe challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, people should

cherish the opportunity to gather around and practise the Olympic motto of “Together.”

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova made clear that Russia opposes the politicization of Beijing 2022. “We wish China the same success, not to succumb to provocative statements, but to organize everything in the name of sports and peace, on behalf of athletes and sports fans.”

Enkhbat Badar-Ugan, secretary-general of the Mongolian National Olympic Committee, believes “it is wrong to boycott the Olympics in any way.”

In the face of a diplomatic boycott, preparations for Beijing 2022 had not been affected, but had proceeded smoothly into their final stages. From October 5 to December 31, 2021, 10 international events, three international training weeks and two domestic test events were being held at eight competition venues in the three competition zones of Beijing, Yanqing and Zhangjiakou, while the torch were held in the three zones from February 2 to 4, 2022.

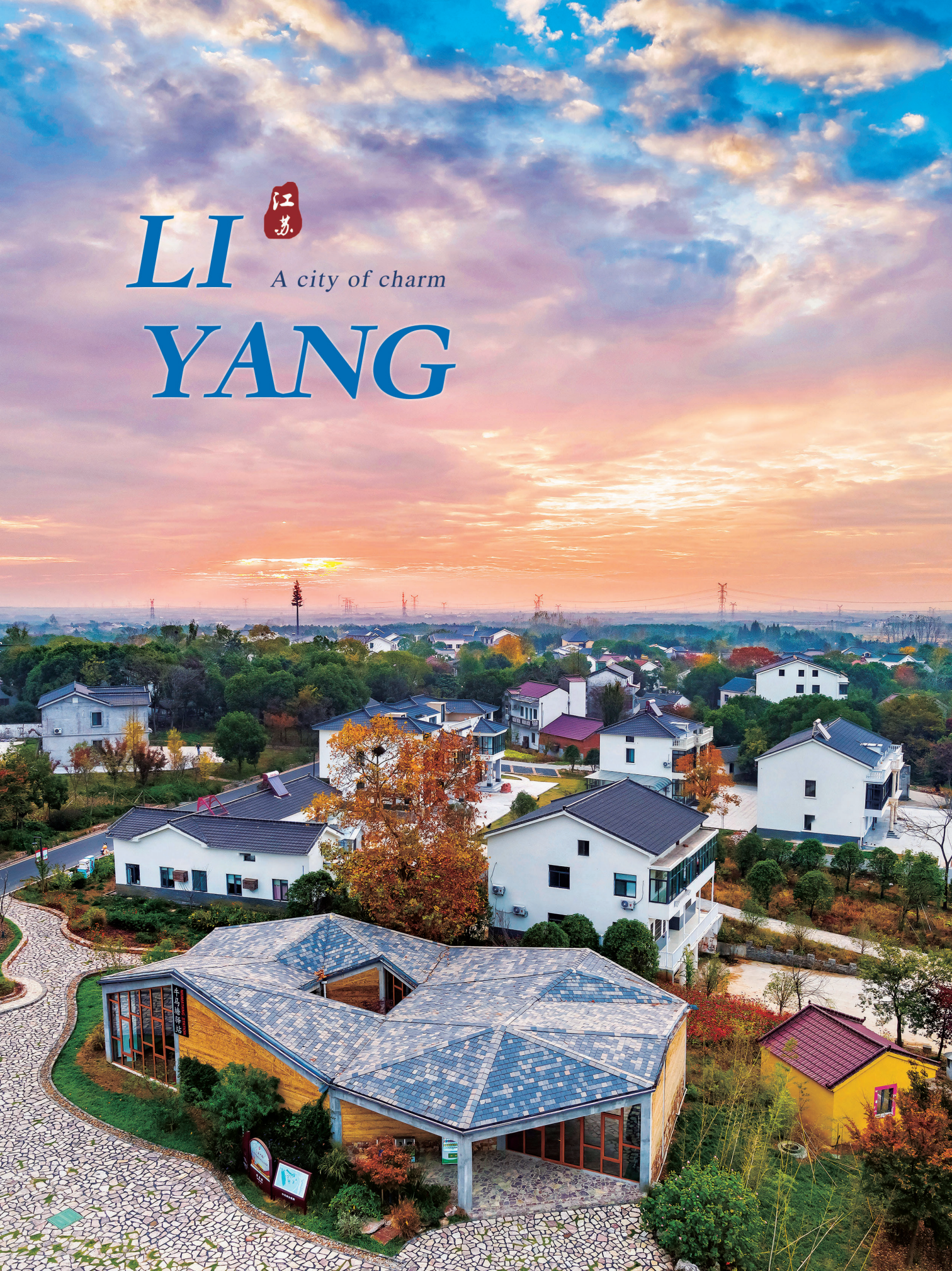
In 63 days, the Olympic flame were lit again at the opening ceremony of Beijing 2022, bringing together hope, courage, peace and solidarity from around the world under the Olympic flag. China once again realize its solemn commitment to the world. (Xinhua) ■




The opening ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games is held on February 4, 2022, at the National Stadium in Beijing, capital of China. Li Ziheng

The Winter Olympic village. Li Ziheng





**LI**  *A city of charm*  
**YANG**