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lasting peace and common prosperity**
Combating climate change – China on the way

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NPC Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo meets Nancy Pelosi, speaker of US House of Representatives, on September 9, 2009. Zhong Sheng

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Combating climate change – China on the way



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General Editorial
Office Address: 23 Xijiaominxiang, Xicheng District Beijing 100805, P.R.China
Tel: (86-10)6309-8540
(86-10)8308-4419
E-mail: zgrd@npc.gov.cn

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Build a harmonious world with lasting peace and common prosperity

—NPC Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo's visit to the US, Cuba and the Bahamas

By Ren Daxin

Top Chinese legislator Wu Bangguo concluded his 12-day visit to the United States, Cuba and the Bahamas on September 12. During the trip, Wu met with people from all walks of life, including government officials, party members, parliament leaders and business representatives. The visit has attracted extensive attention from major media. News agencies such as Xinhua, The Associated Press and Agence France-Presse published a large amount of reports, calling it as an important diplomatic event between China and the three nations against the backdrop of profound changes in international politics and an unclear recovery of the world economy. The trip is widely viewed as an event to help improve relations between China and the three countries and strengthened their cooperation.

Enhancing mutual trust and promoting bilateral ties

Thirty years have passed since China and the US established diplomatic relations. Three decades of development has fostered



Wu Bangguo (left), chairman of the 11th NPC Standing Committee, meets US Vice President Joe Biden at the White House on September 10, 2009. *Ma Zhancheng*

China-US ties into one of the most important, vigorous bilateral relations with great potentials. In April 2009, Chinese President Hu Jintao met with his US counterpart Barack Obama. During their meeting, both sides agreed to build a positive, cooperative and comprehensive relationship in 21st century. Both sides agreed to establish Sino-US strategic and economic dialogue mechanism, pointing out a new direction for the development for China-US ties. In May, US House speaker Nancy Pelosi visited China. Wu is the first NPC Standing Committee

Chairman to visit the US in 20 years, opening a new page in China-US relations.

In Washington, Wu held intensive meetings with US leaders, including President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi and other political figures. During the meetings, Wu pointed out that China is the largest developing country, and the US is the largest developed country. Although there are divergences between the two countries, but common interests outweigh these divergences. Wu said that the two sides should view and develop their bilateral relations from a strategic and long-term perspective and

Wu Bangguo, chairman of the 11th NPC Standing Committee, waves hands towards a big audience at the airport in Phoenix of Arizona on September 6, 2009. At the invitation of US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Wu paid a goodwill visit to the US. *Pang Xinglei*





NPC Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo visits Fidel Castro (right), first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, in Havana, capital of Cuba on September 3, 2009. *Pang Xinglei*

in the spirit of mutual respect, seeking common ground while reserving differences and win-win cooperation.

Wu added that the two countries should respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, respect the system and development path of each other's own choice, respect each other's core interests and major concerns and expand converging interests through candid dialogue and patient communications.

In response, President Obama said he is pleased to witness a series of strategic interactions and enhanced cooperation between the two countries in the past several months. A strong US-China strategic partnership is not only in the interests of the two countries but also of the world at large. He added that the US is ready to work with China to further promote bilateral relations.

On September 1, Wu attended a dinner party hosted by some friendly US organizations. Addressing at the party, Wu emphasized the importance of development to China, and the importance of China's development to the world. He pointed out that neither can China develop without the world, nor can the world achieve stability and prosperity without China. Wu stressed that China is committed to peaceful development. The top legislator said that due to different cultural and social background, different nations may hold different views on certain matters. But this should not become obstacles for cooperations between the two countries, nor should it become an excuse to intervene in other's internal affairs. Wu stressed that China is against the practice of using difference in perception as an excuse and freedom of religion and speech as a cover to support separatist forces for "Tai-

wan independence", "Tibet independence" and other separatist agendas and meddle in China's internal affairs. Respecting each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and respecting and accommodating each other's core interests constitute the political foundation for China to establish and develop relations with other countries and international organizations. He said this is something that will never change.

Like China, Cuba is a socialist country too, which is also the first Latin American country to establish diplomatic relationship with China. The two countries and their peoples have all along supported each other and offered mutual understanding. During his visit to Cuba, Wu met with First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba Fidel Castro and Raul Castro, second secretary of the Party's Central Committee and president of the Cuban Council of State. Wu said that China highly values its friendly and cooperative relations with Cuba. China is satisfied with the current status of development of their relations, and is fully confident in the broad prospects for future bilateral cooperation. Cuban leaders said the Cuban government and its people treasure the Cuban-Chinese friendship and will further its efforts for bilateral cooperation in a bid to pass on the friendship from generation to generation.

Bahamas is located in the north of the Caribbean Sea. It covers an area of 14,000 square kilometers, with a population of 335,000. However, as a regional financial center, Bahamas is a typical Caribbean nation. In meeting with Bahamas leaders, Wu pointed out that China has always advocated the democratization in international relations, respected diversity of the world politics. He said countries, despite big or small, rich or poor, strong or weak, are equal members of the international community. Although conditions vary greatly between China and Bahamas, both are developing countries. Wu said China and Bahamas share common views on a broad range of issues. It serves the interests of both countries and their peoples to further enhance cooperation.

Bahamas leaders said Wu is the first high-level official from China to visit Bahamas since the two countries established diplomatic relations 12 years ago. Government officials and parliament leaders from Bahamas consider the visit as a milestone in China's relations with Caribbean countries.

Working together for a new round of world economic growth

The ongoing global financial crisis that broke out last year has had a huge impact on the world. The United States, Cuba and Bahamas are no exception. During his talks with leaders of the three nations and business representatives, Wu reiterated that

both sides should boost confidence to tackle the current financial crisis and facilitate the recovery of the world economy. His proposals on furthering cooperation of mutual benefits were well received by his hosts.

During his US tour, Wu said that the basic pattern that the two countries, with their economies complementary to each other, remains unchanged despite international financial crisis. The bilateral economic and trade cooperation enjoys great potential. Second, the economic stimulus plans implemented by China and US have created new business opportunities. Third, the economic restructuring strategies of China and the US will open up new areas of cooperation. Both sides can foster new areas of economic and trade cooperation, especially in the economic and technological fields and businesses. They may range from low carbon economy, renewable energy, clean energy, clean coal, carbon capture and storage to smart grid, efficient buildings and new energy vehicles.

Officials and business representatives responded warmly to Chairman Wu's penetrating analysis and pragmatic suggestions. They agreed that China's development has not only provided new opportunities for trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, but also helped world economic recover. They expressed their will to further enhance communication and contact with China and its enterprises, focusing on technological and economic cooperation.

During his visit, Wu attended the China-US Trade and Economic Forum. Attending the forum were more than 200 government officials and business representatives from both countries. The two sides signed 41 agreements and contracts on investment and economic and technological cooperation worth of US\$12.38 billion, involving such areas as new energy and materials, communications, electronics, machinery and tourism.

In Cuba and Bahamas, Wu said developing countries should have a greater representation and a bigger say in dealing with the global financial crisis and reforming the global financial system. He also held discussions with leaders from both countries on how to tackle development potentials, expand cooperation.

Enhancing cooperation and dealing with climate change

Climate change is a common challenge facing all societies. To solve the problem takes joint efforts from all countries. This has become a consensus during Chairman Wu's visit.

Wu briefed China's stance, policies and achievements in tackling climate change. He said China, as a responsible nation, thinks highly of the question of climate change. The country has listed energy saving and environmental protection as basic

State policies. He stressed that China upholds the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It will participate actively in global efforts in dealing with climate change. Leaders from the three countries give full credit to China's stance. US officials said China and the US have made great achievements in tackling climate change, and there is a great prospect for further cooperation. The US would enhance cooperation on low carbon economy in accordance with the US-China 10-Year Energy and Environment Cooperation Framework.

Keeping close contact and make inter-parliamentary co-op play a constructive role in bilateral ties

Parliament plays an important role in the US, Cuba and Bahamas. To promote the relations between the NPC and parliaments of the three countries is one of the most important tasks of Wu's visit. During his trip, Wu held discussions with leaders of the three parliaments, sub-committees, party leaders and parliament members. He stressed that inter-parliamentary cooperation would play a constructive role in advancing healthy, stable inter-governmental relations.

Over the past few years, the NPC has established regular exchange mechanism. It has held 10 meetings with US House of Representatives, four meetings with the Senate. This has promoted multi-level exchanges between sub-committees and institutes. In 2009, the exchange visits between leaders of both parliaments marked a new era in inter-parliamentary exchanges. Chairman Wu pointed out that the two sides should keep up with the good trend, keep close contacts concentrating on promoting bilateral ties, and enhance regular exchanges. Leaders from the US Congress expressed their will to further promote inter-parliamentary exchanges and cooperation, further promote regular exchange mechanism, and make contribution to the development between China and the US.

In Cuba and Bahamas, Wu said he is satisfied with the progress made between the NPC and parliaments from the two countries. He hopes his visit would bring inter-parliamentary relations to a new level, and enhance exchanges on promoting supervision of legislation, economic development, as well as improving people's livelihood.

From the edge of the Caribbean Sea to the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, from island country to American continent, in more than 10 days, Wu traveled 35,000 miles. His trip has promoted mutual trust, strengthened confidence and helped create a harmonious world with lasting peace and common prosperity.

It has been a pragmatic, efficient, fruitful, significant and successful visit. ■



Sheng Huaren, vice-chairman and secretary-general of the 10th NPC Standing Committee.

Regular meeting mechanism enriches Sino-US parliament ties

On the eve of NPC Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo's official visit to the United States, Sheng Huaren, vice chairman and secretary-general of the 10th NPC Standing Committee, accepted an interview in Beijing and said the exchange mechanism set up between China's NPC and the US Congress which consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives, has played a positive role in promoting the stable and long-term Sino-US bilateral relations.

Sheng first introduced the establishment of regular meeting mechanism between parliaments. He said, "Sino-US relations have become one of the most vital bilateral relations in the world, while the

parliament relations have played an irreplaceable and unique role in China's overall diplomacy. The regular meeting mechanism was established during the tenure of the 9th National People's Congress. In July 2003, the US Senate approved a bill of setting up a regular meeting mechanism with China's NPC. In November that year, Theodore Stevens, President pro tempore of US Senate paid an unofficial visit to China. Dispatched by the NPC Standing Committee, I met him in Shanghai to reach consensus with him regarding the establishment of the mechanism.

"After returning to Beijing, I wrote a report to leaders of NPC Standing Committee, who agreed to establish a regular meet-

ing mechanism between China and US. After that, I was designated as the chairman of the Chinese side, Jiang Enzhu, chairman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee, as the executive chairman and Hu Kangsheng, vice chairman of the NPC Law Committee and Lu Congmin, vice chairman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee, as the executive vice chairman.

"Shortly after the New Year's Day in 2004, I was invited to visit Hawaii and discussed further details with the co-chairs of the US side, Stevens and Inouye, about the mechanism in its form, content and meeting system. After the meeting, a memorandum of understanding was signed by the two sides. At a reception for signing the MOU, each side gave a toast. In my speech, I extolled Stevens and Inouye for their historical contribution in promoting the establishment of regular meeting between China's NPC and the US Senate. I jotted down my toast on a piece of hotel letter paper by myself. Stevens expressed his thanks to my heart-warming speech and wondered if he could keep my manuscript as a precious and permanent memorial. I agreed and promised to send him a clear copy afterward. But he insisted to keep the original draft. In a friendly and harmonious atmosphere, the establishment of the regular meeting mechanism between Chinese NPC and the US Senate came into being."

Turning to the features of the regular meeting mechanism, Sheng summarized as the following:

"First, it is a high profile mechanism. The US side was co-chaired by President pro tempore of US Senate Stevens and senior Senator Inouye while the chairmen of Chinese side included a Vice Chairman of NPC Standing Committee and the executive chairman and vice chairmen of special commissions. That was unprecedented.

"Second, regular exchanges arranged. Regular meetings are held once a year and alternatively in each other's country.

Hawaii witnesses the annual chairmen-meeting in early January, discussing each year's themes, time, location and participants, which serves as a preparation for the formal meeting in July or August.

“Third, tackling issues concerned by both. Hot topics discussed range from the assessment of Sino-US relations and its future development, Taiwan question and Tibet-related issues to environmental protection, climate changes, tapping of new energy and possible collaborations in this regard, intellectual property protection as well as other major global and regional issues. The purpose is to enhance mutual understanding, to narrow differences and reach consensus on some major issues.

“Fourth, vigorously supported by leaders from both countries and support from all aspects. When the meetings held in China, Chinese President, Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee and other State leaders would meet the US delegation; while in the United States, the US President and Vice President also met with the Chinese delegation. Consequently, that enables both sides to conduct communications and exchanges at higher levels.

“Moreover, the meeting mechanism propelled the all-round and multi-level exchanges between special committees, friendly groups, congressional aides under parliament, which made the exchanges between the two parliaments more widespread, penetrating and dynamic.”

Sheng Huaren concluded his interview by saying that the regular meeting mechanism is showing great momentum of development. Both sides expected the mechanism could serve the relations for a long term and not to be interrupted by changes of parliament leadership. In the new historical era, Sheng said, he sincerely hopes that the mechanism will be more comprehensive and enriched in content by the close exchanges between the two parliaments and further promote bilateral relations in a healthy and steady way. ■

The purpose is to enhance mutual understanding, narrow differences and reach consensus on some major issues.



US Co-Chairmen Theodore Stevens (first from right, front row) and the Senator Inouye (Front Row, second from right) attend the third regular meeting between China's NPC and the US Senate on August 9, 2006.



Inouye (third from left), Sheng Huaren (second from right), Jiang Enzhu (third from right) and Lu Congmin (first from left) attend the third regular meeting between China's NPC and the US Senate.



Lu Congmin, vice chairman of the 10th National People's Congress Foreign Affairs Committee

A milestone trip in China-US parliamentary exchanges

—An interview with Lu Congmin, vice-chairman of NPC Foreign Affairs Committee, on NPC Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo's visit to the US

By Xu Yan

Reporter: US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited China in May 2009. Three months later, Wu Bangguo, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress visited the US. Signs are showing a positive development trend in exchanges between top legislatures of the two countries. And some critics say "parliamentary diplomacy" has become a new highlight in Sino-US relationship, what's your take on the matter?

Lu Congmin: Parliamentary exchange is indeed a new highlight in Sino-US relations. I think this is reflected in 5 aspects. First, it enables direct dialogues between top leaders of the two legislatures, featuring high-level exchanges characteristics. Second, parliamentary exchange realizes a dual-track regular exchange mechanism between NPC and the House of Representatives on the one hand, NPC and the US Senate on the other. Third, it opens an all-dimensional

exchange pattern, with administrative body and Foreign Affairs Committee as the main parts, and sub-committees actively participating in comprehensive exchanges. Fourth, it enhances mutual trust, further promotes the parliamentary exchange base on the principle of pragmatic cooperation, and has achieved substantial results. Fifth, the increasing number of participants and diversified exchange forms show that the parliamentary exchange has its great potential.

Reporter: What do you think is the significance of Chairman Wu's visit to the US?

Lu: Chairman Wu Bangguo is the first NPC Standing Committee Chairman to visit the US within 20 years. We have been long expecting this. In my interview with China Central Television, I said this would open a new page in inter-parliamentary relations between China and the US. I can't stress often enough the importance of the visit. It's a milestone. This is an important diplomatic event between China and the United States since Barack Obama and Nancy Pelosi took office. It is also a major move against the backdrop of profound changes in international politics and an unclear recovery of the world economy.

Chairman Wu Bangguo's visit to the US as well as Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to China signifies one common message: both sides attach great importance to Sino-US relations; both countries appreciate the importance of parliamentary exchange in bilateral interactions; both nations share the desire to build a positive, cooperative and comprehensive China-US relationship in the 21st century. One of the most important goals of Chairman Wu Bangguo's visit is to make inter-parliamentary cooperation play a constructive role in advancing healthy and stable bilateral relations.

Reporter: What role does inter-parliamentary exchange play in both countries' diplomacy?

Lu: NPC and US Congress play important roles in each country's domestic politics.

Congress is the top legislative body and one of the power holders in the US. According to the US constitution, the Congress holds the authority to extensive diplomatic actions. According to our observation, the US Congress has a great influence over diplomatic matters. We attach great importance to our relations with US congressmen, in hope that the Congress will help improve China-US relations and not undermine the healthy and stable development of bilateral ties.

Reporter: In the past few years, there have been more frequent contacts between China and US top legislatures. Exchanges have taken on diversified forms. The most eye-catching one would be the regular inter-parliamentary exchange mechanism. Up to date, NPC has held 10 meetings with US House of Representatives, four meetings with the Senate. In your opinion, what else can we bring up to enrich the content of these exchanges?

Lu: Practice in the past few years proves that the existing parliamentary exchange mechanism has become the most direct and effective platform for communications between the two sides and has played a positive role in deepening mutual understanding, building consensus and promoting cooperation. Past experience taught us that the US Congress's attitude toward China is in a grave situation, some of parliament members are not familiar with the country. China should continue focusing on enhancing mutual trust, respect each other's core interests and major concern. With regard to China, we should primarily focus on protecting our sovereignty, safety and maintaining development. At present, we should follow the three guidelines as stressed in Chairman Wu Bangguo's speech in the US: take concerted action with the government, and make detailed

and substantial achievements in handling economic diplomacy in dealing with the US, participate actively in dealing with the impact of global financial crisis, and work vigorously for the rapid development of China's domestic economy.

Reporter: Why has China-US inter-parliamentary exchange attracted so much attention? To what extent would the US Congress and congressmen influence the President's diplomatic authority?

Lu: China-US inter-parliamentary exchange attracted so much attention because first Sino-US relations are very important, and it is standing at a historical point. Second, NPC and the US Congress are two important components in bilateral relations. Now, interactions between the

White House. Whether this will make coordinating US foreign policy easier, we have to wait and see.

Reporter: China and the US share common interests on the strategic level, but due to the lack of support based on common value, and bias in some US congressmen, the Congress may pass unfavorable bills or hostile comments against China. This will have negative impact on bilateral ties. How should China and the US make full use of their advantages to promote bilateral ties and reduce conflicts?

Lu: Generally speaking, Sino-US relation is developing smoothly, but there have been ups and downs. Both sides bear the responsibility to reduce setbacks, avoid rise and fall, keep up

Interactions between the two legislatures are growing stronger and more mature. It has played an irreplaceable role in promoting bilateral ties.

two legislatures are growing stronger and more mature. It has played an irreplaceable role in promoting bilateral ties. The impact that US Congress and congressmen had on the President's diplomatic authority is a complex matter. As observers, it is not hard to find that the Congress and President share the same goal in protecting US value, the country's fundamental interests, and its hegemony in the world.

Theoretically, the Congress has the authority to supervise, but in fact the President often bypass the Congress in his decision-making. Congress' influence on the President varies with political and economic situation as well as balance of power between the two parties. At present, democrats control the House of Representatives, Senate and the

with the good momentum, and prevent it from being damaged. The advantages of Sino-US parliamentary exchange lies in its face-to-face dialogue mechanism. Their talk represents the wills of the grassroots. It bears the characteristic of directness, comprehensiveness, multi-dimension and flexibility. It can provide easier access to government diplomacy, party diplomacy, human diplomacy, and public diplomacy.

Stepping into this year, important visits and communications between the two sides have carried on these advantages and traditions. And they have achieved great results. US attitude toward China remains in a grim situation. We are very concerned about the passive tendency of this attitude. Therefore, we should continue to make



September 9, 2009, NPC Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo meets the US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi. *Zhong Sheng*

one simple truth. That is dialogue is better than conflict. She said she comes to China with friendship, praised China of its achievements in development and participation in international affairs. She said she admires the Chinese people. Human right issue is her lasting topic. She did bring up the subject, but she didn't focus on the matter. She said human right is an issue in Sino-US relations and the US is concerned about it, but she said the US will deal with it in a dialogue manner rather than a conflict manner. Third, the main task for her visit is climate change and energy cooperation. To explore cooperative potentials in facing these common challenges is her top priority. After analyzing her recent activities in Washington, we draw one conclusion: Pelosi comes to talk about issues of great importance and top priority. These issues concern key policies for the Obama administration. They are also the priorities of Pelosi and the Congress. Once she comes to China to seek cooperation, she should talk more about common interests. She understands perfectly about this. The change in her attitudes, or rather the changes in the general picture, reflects a new tendency in the adjustment of US foreign and domestic policies, and its realistic consideration in the global financial crisis. At the same time, it reflects China's uniqueness and special influence on international politics.

full use of all mechanisms and platforms to enhance communication with the US. It is good to iron out our differences, but even if we can't, we should try our best to reduce conflict and diminish its impact.

Reporter: In the end of May, US Speaker Nancy Pelosi started her 8-day tour to China, calling her trip a friendship visit. As the third most powerful figure in the US, Pelosi used to be famous for her anti-China activities, such as meeting with Dalai Lama and threatened to boycott the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Why didn't she bring up the human right issue

during her visit to China? What can we see from the changes in her attitude?

Lu: We give full credit to Pelosi's visit to China and the warm reception she gave to Chairman Wu Bangguo in the US. Miss Pelosi's moves concerning China in the past few years are not secrets, and everyone can have his or her own judgment. Objectively speaking, her behavior changed gradually over her visits to China. Pelosi said being the Speaker is different from being the House Representative. Time has passed and she should not be the same – that is one reason. Second, she finally got to understand

Reporter: With the promotion of China's international status, more and more US congressmen began to realize that for China and the US reconciliation benefits both whereas confrontation benefits neither. The development of Sino-US relations will not only bring benefits to both countries, but also contribute to world peace, stability and development. In 2005, US House of Representatives set up China Group and the US-China working group. To what extent have

these institutions helped in promoting Sino-US ties?

Lu: The establishment of these groups coincided with the regular exchange mechanism between the NPC and the Congress. Although their activities are diversified, their purpose is constructive and they are typical representatives in the Congress. In their words, they provide a platform to communicate with China and to help support the development of Sino-US relations. They are neither pro-China nor anti-China. Since their establishment, these groups have made a great deal of contribution to improving bilateral relations. Between them, the US-China working group, which is led by Larsen and Kirk, seems more active. They've been in China for several times, and they were here not long ago. During the meeting, Chairman Wu Bangguo made positive remarks on their work. Members of this group don't evade their divergence with China, but they are very active and frank in negotiations. They would report back to the Congress about our great concern and what they see in China. They would talk to their colleagues in the Congress, so as to clear up doubts and strengthen mutual trust. They have many concerned issues, but the core one is to what extent will China's growth influence US interests.

Reporter: In recent years, China has invited many US congressmen to the country. Through their visits, more and more congressmen are getting to know the country better. They cleared up their prejudice and misunderstanding. Can you give us more examples on this?

Lu: Those who come to visit China themselves will learn much from their visits and shed a different light on the country. By comparing what they saw in China with the distorting reality that they read in media, they can draw their own conclusion. I said "learn" because many of them don't know China at all.

Many of them take delight in talking

Those who come to visit China themselves will learn much from their visits and shed a different light on the country.

with us, especially those who have been in China before. Their attitude toward the country changed to a certain degree. More of them are holding a positive attitude toward China now. Before visiting China, a congressman said he is not anti-China, but he does have many doubts. After his visit, he said how come China is so different with what I see in the newspapers? China has such a big population. And there is such a huge gap between the rich and the poor. To give equal opportunity to everyone is an inconceivable challenge. But look at what China has achieved! Another congressman said the US should treat China's rise rationally. There is no need to panic. Rather, they should see China's rise as a propelling force to perfect US itself, and increase America's competitiveness. There are more examples like these. So we can see that the increasing number of exchanges is enhancing mutual trust between the two countries.

In fact, there still are mixed attitudes toward China in the Congress. The argument about whether China's rise will benefit the US and the world continues. Few congressmen are willing to study carefully about the facts that China and its leaders passed on to the world. They can't fully understand China's development path and its political systems, let alone China's reasonable request concerning its core interest. These are the roots of their misunderstanding, doubts and criticisms about China. That is why inter-parliamentary exchange shoulders heavy responsibility.

Reporter: Apart from high-level exchange, is there any other exchange mechanism between sub-committees of the two parliaments?

Lu: Exchanges between sub-committees have been carried on for years, and they have proved to be very efficient. Now, as the exchanges have taken on various forms and the content has been expanded. Apart from exchange between Foreign Affairs Committees, more interactions take place between committees in charge of legislature, finance, culture, technology, military, agriculture, environment, energy, enterprise, and judiciary sectors. Besides legislation, topics are focused on how to coordinate with governments of the two countries to diminish divergences, and promote pragmatic cooperation.

Reporter: As an experienced officer in foreign affairs, what are some of your particular feelings in dealing with US congressmen?

Lu: I can sum up my feelings into three points: First, US Congress has a great influence over US policy toward China – make things work, or they can make things worse. There are plenty of cases for the latter. Therefore, making contacts with the Congress is a must. Second, the Congress has its unique functions and a complex structure. Working in depth with the Congress is not an easy task. Among 535 congressmen (435 of them House Representatives, 100 of them Senators), 60 to 70 percent of them have had contacts with us, and only 20 percent of them



NPC Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo and ViceChairman and Secretary-general Li Jianguo, meet the US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Zhong Sheng

have kept close contacts with China. The statistics comes from the congressmen, and it may not be very precise. All in all, few congressmen truly understand China. And the newly-elected barely had any contact with us. Few congressmen hold extreme views about China. Their number may be limited, but their impacts are certainly not neglectable. They have been the troublemakers in Sino-US relations. Third, after 30 years of endless effort, the number of congressmen who would like to come to China, to know China, and promote Sino-US relations is increasing. This has provided us with more opportunities. We never reject a congressman's expressed desire to visit China. And their visits are bringing positive feedbacks.

Every congressman comes to China with a well-prepared list of questions and concerns, and Sino-US trade is always among them. And this has been a headache

for us. The root cause for this is America's interests and protectionism. With regard to US-China trade issue, opinions vary significantly according to different states, different constituencies and different interest groups. More often than not, these differences are more irreconcilable than differences caused by party affiliations. For example, in March 2006, when Senator Schumer visited China, he said frankly that businesses are taking off shore from America to China. As a senator, he sympathizes with those factories that face bankruptcy. So he proposed a 27.5% tax bill on China products. He said he did this because he has to be loyal to his party and his electorates. What he said was very frank and pragmatic. What shall we do? In the end, we decided to tell our side of the story. There are experts in the NPC who are familiar with statistics. We arrange them to talk with Schumer. The result was

very positive. Afterward, Schumer told us that the talks are very beneficiary. He got quite a lot of new information. After intensive meetings, his hostility toward China has decreased. As he returned to the US, he put off voting for the bill. During the meetings, we told US congressmen, they represent their constituencies and we represent ours. We both have our electorates to answer to. Punishment bills will do no good to bilateral ties. Give tit for tat is not going to make anyone's work easier. Both sides should talk rationally, search for the root cause of problems in Sino-US trade. Don't blame it all on the Chinese side. All in all, it's not easy to deal with the Congress, but we have to do it.

Reporter: Have you ever met any congressman who is unsociable or unpleasant to deal with? What would you do?

Lu: My colleague and I all had these similar experiences. There are congressmen who are not easy to social. And there are cases where we had these fierce arguments. They mainly focus on sensitive issues such as Taiwan, Tibet Separatism, East Turkistan Extremism and FalunGong cult. The US Congress often holds hearings on China's human rights and religious issues, and interferes in China's domestic affairs. Every year, when the US State Department releases its Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, or the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom releases its annual International Religious Freedom Report, the Congress always shows its full support and attack China of its human right issue and religious policies. We can't just sit and watch. Once our core interests are at stake, we have to fight back. We use facts and figures to illustrate our ideas. We will make our point clear, and we will talk in a civilized manner.

Since the 9th NPC, I had the honor to witness the development of Sino-US relations. In less than four months, Chairman Wu Bangguo and Speaker Pelosi paid exchange visits to the US and China. This signifies that Sino-US inter-parliamentary exchanges have stepped into a new era. As Chairman Wu Bangguo pointed out in his speech in Washington, both sides should keep up with the good trend, focus on developing bilateral relations as a whole, keep close contacts, enhance regular exchanges, develop friendly contacts between sub-committees and working groups, deepen frank negotiations, expand mutual trust, promote pragmatic cooperation, and make inter-parliamentary exchange a constructive player in promoting a healthy, stable Sino-US relations. ■

(Lu Congmin, former deputy secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee, vice-chairman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee)

The Origin and Establishment of Parliamentary Exchange Mechanism in Sino-US Relations

Years of hard work have been taken to establish a regular parliamentary exchange mechanism between China's NPC and the US Congress which consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. After President Nixon's ice-breaking visit to China in February 1972, Chinese diplomats visited the United States more and more and all the important delegations have visited the United States Congress and, the visit of US congressmen to China is no longer a taboo.

From the 4th National People's Congress, China's NPC, as well as the Institute of Foreign Affairs, began to receive some US congressmen in 1976, 1977 and 1978. Till the 7th NPC, contacts with the United States Congress were increased gradually with the overall status as coming more, going less. The ex-chairman Wan Li's visit in 1989 was a milestone. Till the 8th NPC, contacts were in a significant upward trend in quantity, quality and level when Qiao Shi was the NPC chairman from 1993 to 1998.

The 9th, 10th and 11th NPC (when Li Peng and Wu Bangguo held the post of chairman of the Congress successively), is a period of comprehensive and dynamic development in Sino-US parliamentary exchanges, during which the Chinese side has received the leaders of both houses of the US Congress and several delegations of congressmen and their aides. The regular exchange mechanism, which was set up in October 1999 (in 9th NPC) with the US House of Representatives and with the Senate in January 2004, was a milestone in Sino-US relations. With respect to the US House of Representatives, the successful establishment of the mechanism should be attributed to the then House Speaker, Mr. Hastert, who positively and vigorously promoted it. While the Senate, three friends should be extolled: first, the then Senate President Pro Tempore Stevens; second, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist and third, a senior Democratic Senator Inouye. They actively propelled it in the Senate, reached a broad consensus and finally jointly proposed a bill of establishing a regular exchange mechanism with the China's National People's Congress and made it approved. According to Stevens's proposal, approved by Chairman Wu Bangguo, Sheng Huaren, vice chairman and secretary-general, arrived in Shanghai in advance by the end of November 2003 and reached consensus with the drop-by President Stevens on founding an exchange group. At the invitation of Stevens, Sheng Huaren, as the Chairman of the Chinese exchange group, paid a visit to Hawaii in the New Year's Day of 2004, signed a memorandum of understanding with Stevens and senator Inouye who formally launched this important regular exchange mechanism.

The significance of establishing a mechanism with the US Senate is summarized as following:

First, the US Senate is very selective and sets a strict standard to countries that wish to establish an exchange mechanism. Only the United Kingdom, Canada, Mexico and a few NATO countries has a similar mechanism with the US. Japan, as an ally of the US, did not found the mechanism.

Second, it is the first time and a unique experience for the United States Senate to set up an exchange mechanism with a socialist country led by the Communist Party. Stevens said that it was a breakthrough. In fact, it is not only a breakthrough, but also a pioneering work. Without strategic vision and courage, it is impossible to establish it.

Resolution of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Making Active Responses to Climate Change

(Adopted at the 10th session of the Standing Committee of the 11th National People's Congress on August 27, 2009)



The Standing Committee of the 11th National People's Congress ratifies the Resolution of NPC Standing Committee on Making Active Responses to Climate Change on August 27, 2009.

Ma Zengke

The 10th session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress heard and deliberated the Report of the State Council on Responding to Climate Change. It fully recognized the unremitting efforts as well as the outstanding achievements made by the State Council in responding to climate change, and consented to the future work arrangements as made in the said Report.

It was believed in the session that, since the industrial revolution, the human activities, especially the economic activities during the industrialization process of the developed countries, are a major human factor that caused the climate change. The climate change is an environmental issue, but also a development issue in the final analysis. As our country is in the mid stage of industrialization and the key stage of building a well-off society in all respects, we must, under the requirements of the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, "give prominence to building a resource-conserving, environment-friendly society as a strategy for industrialization and modernization" and "enhance our capacity to respond to climate change and make new contributions to protecting the global climate", steadfastly keep to the path of sustainable development, and take effective policies and measures to actively respond to the climate change by taking into consideration the basic situation of our country and the characteristics of development at this stage. For the aforesaid reasons, a resolution is hereby made as follows:

First, addressing climate change is an important opportunity and challenge facing China's national economic and social development.

To actively respond to climate change concerns the overall economic and social development of China and the immediate interests of the Chinese people. It also has a bearing on human existence and the development of all countries in the world. Over the years, China has attached great importance to the work of addressing climate change. In June 1992, the Chinese Government signed the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the NPC Standing Committee formally ratified the Convention at the end of the same year. The NPC Standing Committee has successively formulated and amended a series of laws relating to climate change, including Energy Conservation Law, Law on Renewable Sources of Energy, Circular Economy

Promotion Law, Cleaner Production Promotion Law, Forestry Law, and Grassland Law. The Outline of the Eleventh Five-year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China approved by the NPC in 2006 set the goals and tasks for China in energy conservation and pollution reduction. The Chinese Government has formulated a national climate change program, clearly outlining the basic principles, specific objectives, key areas of action, as well as policy measures and steps to tackle climate change. The working mechanism for addressing climate change has been improved and a series of actions aimed at tackling climate change implemented, contributing positively to the global endeavor to protect the climate. China, as a developing country with a large population, relatively insufficient resources and a fragile ecological environment, is in the process of industrialization and modernization. It needs to, on one hand, meet the needs of the people through development so as to protect their rights to survival and development. On the other hand, it needs to resolve the long-existing problems such as imbalanced economic structure, extensive growth pattern and low efficiency of resources utilization. To actively respond to climate change is in keeping with the trend of development of the world. It also serves China's domestic needs for realizing sustainable development and presents a historical opportunity for development. To be truly responsible for the long-term development of the Chinese nation and that of whole mankind, it is imperative to further increase awareness of the importance of addressing climate change and make proper responses to climate change based on China's own ability, so as to ensure sound and fast economic and social development of China in the context of new internal and external environment and conditions.

Second, response to climate change must be based on thorough implementation of the Scientific Outlook on Development.

The response to climate change is a complicated systematic project that involves many sectors. It is imperative to thoroughly implement the Scientific Outlook on Development and uphold the basic State policy of conserving resources and protecting the environment. Efforts to tackle climate change must be aimed at improving capability for sustainable development, caucused

on ensuring economic development and supported by scientific and technological advances. It is necessary to speed up transformation of the development mode, cap green house gas emissions and increase the ability to tackle climate change in order to build a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way at a higher level. It is important to take into consideration both the domestic and the international situation, both the immediate and long-term interests, and both economic and social development and ecological soundness under the framework of sustainable development. Policies on climate change should be compatible with other related policies to ensure coordinated progress in all undertakings. Equal importance should be attached to mitigation and adaptation and efforts should be made to enhance energy conservation, increase energy efficiency and improve energy structure. It is important to adhere to the approach of scientific and technological advances and innovation. It is important to promote energy conservation and emissions reduction through economic restructuring and industrial upgrading and to achieve sustainable development by transforming the development mode.

Third, concrete measures must be taken to actively respond to climate change.

Efforts should be made to save energy, cut emissions and cap green house gas emissions. It is imperative to promote wider use of energy-saving technologies and products, improve energy production and consumption structure, encourage and support the use of clean coal technologies, develop hydropower, wind power, solar power, bio-mass power and other sources of renewable energy in an active and scientific manner, and promote the construction of nuclear power plants. Development of the circular economy should be promoted in real earnest to phase out outdated production capacities and products and raise the overall efficiency of the use of resources. Key ecological projects should be implemented to improve carbon sinks. Continued efforts should be made to promote afforestation and develop carbon sink forestry so as to increase forest carbon sinks. Measures should be taken to promote protected farming and ecological development of pastures to increase the carbon sinks of farm land and pastures.

Efforts should be made to enhance the ability of adapting to climate change. It is important to scale up monitoring, early

warning and forecast of extreme weather and climate events and scientifically guard against and respond to the damage of these events and secondary disasters they cause. Efforts should be made to promote infrastructure building of farm land and agricultural restructuring to raise overall agricultural productivity. It is imperative to step up management of water resources and promote the research, development and application of integrated water-saving technologies. Efforts should be redoubled to monitor and protect the ecological system of the sea and coastal belts and enhance the ability of coastal areas to resist maritime disasters.

The supportive and guiding role of science and technology should be given full play. Macro-management, policy guidance, coordination and input should be stepped up to strengthen basic research on climate change and enhance the ability of scientific judgment. Efforts should be made to accelerate the research, development and application of major technologies concerning climate change, particularly those on energy conservation, energy efficiency, clean coal, renewable energy, nuclear energy and low carbon technologies, and to develop carbon capture, storage and utilization technologies. Emphasis should be given to import, assimilation, application and innovation of advanced technologies in related fields.

Efforts should be made to develop a green economy and low-carbon economy in light of national conditions. This is required by China's endeavor to promote energy conservation and emissions reduction and solve the problems relating to resources, energy and the environment. It is also an important step aimed at actively responding to climate change and creating imperative to consider and formulate policy measures to develop a green economy and low-carbon economy, increase green input, encourage green consumption and promote green growth. As the whole world is paying greater attention to the development of a low-carbon economy, it is important to develop low-carbon utilization of carbon-intensive energy and boost the low-carbon industries at a faster pace, institute low-carbon industrial, construction and transportation systems, vigorously promote clean energy vehicles and rail transportation, and create new economic growth points featuring low carbon emissions. It is important to transform the mode of economic development to one of high efficiency, low energy consumption and low emissions so as to provide a new and inexhaustible source that drives China's sustainable economic and social development.

Efforts to address climate change should be included in China's national plan for economic and social development as

a long-term task for achieving sustainable development, and specific goals, tasks and requirements should be clearly identified. A package of economic, scientific, technological, legal and administrative tools should be adopted to enhance the capacity to tackle climate change. Governments at all levels should make corresponding budgetary arrangements to scale up support in this regard. The industry policies, fiscal and taxation policies, financial policies and investment policies should be further improved and an ecological compensation mechanism set up and strengthened in order to put in place a range of policy targets and institutions conducive to tackling climate change.

Forth, the legal framework for addressing climate change must be strengthened.

Efforts to strengthen climate change-related legislation should be incorporated into the legislative agenda for establishing and improving the socialist legal framework with Chinese features. The relevant laws for tackling climate change and protecting the environment should be revised and improved in due time and regulations based on actual conditions should be introduced to provide stronger legal guarantee for addressing climate change. Energy Conservation Law, Law on Renewable Sources of Energy, Circular Economy Promotion Law, Law on Promoting Clean Production, Forest law, Grassland Law and other relevant laws and regulations should be strictly enforced in light of the general requirements of actively tackling climate change to enhance efforts in this regard in accordance with law. Efforts to tackle climate change must be made a major priority of NPC supervision, and supervision and inspection of the implementation of relevant laws must be strengthened to ensure effective enforcement of laws and regulations related to climate change.

Fifth, the awareness and capability of the general public in coping with climate change must be increased.

More efforts should be made to promote and popularize the scientific knowledge and laws and regulations on preserving resources and environment and addressing climate change, and to showcase the measures China has taken to cope with climate

change and the effects they have produced. It is necessary to better educate the public, the youth in particular, about the importance of coping with climate change in order to raise the scientific knowledge of the general public on the issue of climate change and boost awareness in businesses and the general public of the importance of resource conservation. It is imperative to pursue frugality and conservation, to promote a green, low-carbon, healthy and civilized way of life and way of spending, and to encourage all social communities to participate in the campaign on tackling climate change. This will serve to foster a sound social atmosphere for actively addressing climate change and a sound development strategy nationwide to promote production, improve people's lives and better protect the environment.

Sixth, China will continue to actively participate in international cooperation on tackling climate change.

Climate change is one of the most serious challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. It requires a joint response from the international community. The basic framework laid down by the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", and the principle of pursuing sustainable development should be adhered to in the endeavor to tackle climate change. Developed countries should face up to their historical responsibility and their current high per capita emissions, take the lead to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and honor their commitment of making technology transfer and providing financial support to developing countries. Developing countries should take active actions under the framework of sustainable development to tackle climate change. It is important to actively carry out international cooperation at various levels and in various forms, including cooperation between governments and parliaments, and strengthen multilateral exchanges and consultation to increase mutual trust and expand common ground. China will resolutely oppose all forms of trade protectionism practiced under the excuse of climate change. China will continue to play a constructive part in international conferences and negotiations on climate change. It will continue to promote the comprehensive, effective and sustained implementation of the UNFCCC and its Protocol and make further contribution to the global endeavor to protect the climate. ■

Combating climate change – China on the way

By Xie Sufang



According to the United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), "climate change" refers to a change of climate triggered directly or indirectly by human activities, which alter the composition of the global atmosphere. The main reasons for climate change are the overuse of fossil fuels and the emission of greenhouse gases.

Melting icebergs, fierce cyclones, continuous rainstorm, cities frozen into ice within a minute ... all these "natural disasters" depicted in the film "The Day after Tomorrow" sounds horrible for us. We can still console ourselves: these are only stunts in scientific films.

But it is too early to feel relaxed. If human beings continue to damage the natural environment like before, such as releasing greenhouse gases into the air, like the past, the vision in the US film will become true in a near future.

Fortunately we are already aware of the damages brought to the earth we are living in and are taking action to deal with climate change.

Price of development

The IPCC Fourth Assessment Report published in February 2007 showed that the density of carbon dioxide in the air has increased dramatically from 280ppm before the industrial revolution to the 379 ppm in 2005. Due to the continuous increase release of greenhouse gas into the air, the global average surface temperature increased 0.74°C during the past century.

Global warming leads to the frequent occurrence of extreme weather and climate disasters, like the accelerated thawing of iceberg and snow, the ascent of sea level, the un-balanced storage of water, the draught and cyclone in coastal areas. Still we can remember the snow disaster happened in South China in 2008 and the Typhoon Morakot that attacked Southeast China this summer and the lasting draught in North China and flood in the South. All these extreme weather and climate disasters are the outcomes of climate changes.

"Climate change will bring negative effects and even damages on agriculture, forestry, livestock, fishery and other economic and social activities. Even it will hasten the transmission of diseases, threaten the social economic development of the society and the health of human kind," said the Deputy Director General of National Reform and Development Committee Xie Zhenhua. Statistics show that up to 6 pm August 25, Typhoon Morakot has caused 461 people dead, 192 missing with accumulated loss worth of NT\$1.46 million in Taiwan.

Officials from World Health Organization said that every year,

more than 100,000 people died because of world warming; And up to 2030, this number is to increase to 300,000. Moreover, 2.4 percent of diarrhea cases and 2 percent of ague cases are caused by global warming. The reasons behind global warming include not only natural factors but also the artificial factors. According to the IPCC report, more than 90 percent of the reasons of the temperature increase in the past 50 years were related to over emission of greenhouse gases during past 50 years.

Xie said, "Ever since the Industrial Revolution, the emission of greenhouse gases by burning of fossil fuels and the damage of forestry, misuse of land causes the rapid increase of air density and therefore causes the global warming." According to the research report published by the American Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the overall carbon dioxide emission amount is more than 1 trillion tons since 1750, among which the developed countries release more than 80 percent of the total.

IPCC report also forecasts that by the end of 21st century, the global average temperature will increase 2.4-6.4°C. If the international society and governments do not take effective measures to prevent this trend, the temperature will increase 0.2°C annually. If the growth of temperature surpasses 2.5°C, all the regions

in the world, especially for the developing countries, will suffer from negative effects, meteorologists said. If the temperature increases 4°C, the world ecological system will suffer from irreversible damage and harvest destructive disasters.

"Global warming has already produced serious effects to the ecology that human-kind live with and it has become a great threat for human safety. Time is urgent for us to tackle this issue," said Pu Haiqing,

deputy director of NPC Environment Protection and Resource Conservation Committee.

Global responsibilities

"Climate change is threatening humankind just like war," said Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations at a meeting. He took the climate change as disastrous as wars and warned the world its effects on humankind. Far from taking it seriously, the extreme weathers occurred in the different regions of the world made every government aware the threatening effects of climate change clearly. For this reason, the climate change problem is ranked No. 1 among the top 10 world environmental problems.

"Climate change is one of the most serious challenges humankind is facing in the 21st century. All countries should join in the battle," says Wang Guangtao, director general of NPC

"Climate change is threatening human kind just like war."



Xu Dingming, former director general of the Energy Bureau, National Development and Reform Commission, says on the China's Energy Strategy Forum, to save energy and to reduce emission of greenhouse gas and development of new energy industries are crucial for the country's development despite the financial crisis in the world.

Environment Protection and Resource Conservation Committee. Climate change is related to the overall survival and development of humankind. Starting from the 1970s, the international society has taken counter measures and mapped out a series of strategies.

The year of 1979 witnessed the holding of first world climate conference, which called for environmental protections. In 1992, the UN Environment and Development Conference published the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was the first convention on curbing carbon dioxide emission and served as a framework for countries to cooperate in solving the world climate change problems. Up to now, more than 190 nations have already approved the document.

In December 1997, the 3rd Contracting Parties' Conference of UNFCCC signed the Kyoto Protocol, which agreed legally binding the emissions cuts for developed countries. By the year 2012, the main industrial developed countries should reduce

greenhouse gas emissions by 5.2 percent. Among them, the European Union should reduce the emission by 8 percent, the US 7 percent and Japan 6 percent on the basis of that of 1990.

Climate change was listed on the agenda of the Group 8 conferences in 2008 and 2009. Leaders of the eight nations agreed to cooperate with other countries to halve the overall global greenhouse gas emission by 2050; Besides, the developed countries should reduce it by at least 80 percent.

The highly-expected UN climate change conference is to be held in Copenhagen in December. Participating countries may reach a consensus on the new arrangement of combating climate change after the year 2012. It definitely will be a strategic meeting for the world in this field.

Global warming is a world problem, thus all nations bear obligatory responsibilities on reducing greenhouse gas emission. But the responsibilities should not be allocated averagely. So far, the UNFCCC's "common but differentiated responsibilities" principle sets no emission reducing limits for the developing countries, but it demands the developed countries to take certain carbon reduction. In the process of industrialization, the developed countries had released majority of the greenhouse gases. Also, these countries remain to be major greenhouse gases producers per capita.

"Developed countries should follow the framework of Kyoto Protocol to take the leading roles in carbon reduction. At the same time, they should realize their promises in providing support in cash, technologies and capability constructions for developing countries. Under the sustainable development principle, developing countries should also take scientific and reasonable measures to slow down climate change," said Xie Zhenhua, adding that it is the common acknowledgement of the international society, especially those developing countries.

China in action

"Climate change is not only a problem of environment, but also a development issue. But all in all, it's a development issue to be solved through a sustainable way," said President Hu Jintao in several occasions. Under the leadership of President Hu, China is following the sustainable development strategy that balances national economy and social development. Effective results have been achieved so far.

The promotion history of a special team will well indicate the

"Climate change is not only a problem of environment, but also a development issue. But all in all, it's a development issue to be solved through a sustainable way."

efforts China has paid on dealing with climate change. In 1990, the State Council set up the National Climate Change Coordination Team under the Environment Protection and Resources Conservation Commission to participate international negotiations and policies making at home. In 1998, the new National Climate Change Coordination Team was established as the coordinating and discussing organization between different ministries. In 2007, the National Climate Change Leading Team, headed by Premier Wen Jiabao, was set up. The changes of the names reflected the ever-increasing importance of climate change.

Besides, China is one of the first countries that realize the significance of international cooperation in combating climate changes. Back to 1992, the NPC Standing Committee approved the convention after the UNFCCC was published. In 2002, the Kyoto Protocol was also approved by the State Council.

“China follows the principles set by the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol and fulfills its duty and submits the original information on climate change of China,” said Xie Zhenhua. China is the first developing country to make national programs on combating climate change by publishing the “China’s National Climate Change Program” in June 2007.

As a guidance for combating climate change during the 11th Five-Year Plan period (2006-10), China’s National Climate Change Program set the target of cutting energy consumption per unit of GDP by 20 percent and cutting emissions of major pollutants, such as carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide by 10 percent. Xie said that “to realize such a goal means that China will save about 620 million tons of standard coal, or reduce about 1,500 million tons of carbon dioxide during the 11th ‘Five-Year Plan’ period.” The State Council also published a white book – China’s Policies and Actions on Addressing Climate Change in 2008.

Besides, China also promulgated laws on environmental protection, renewable energy and coal as well regulations on energy conservation in construction, which accelerated the related actions China takes to combat climate change effectively.

“Measures have been taken on adjustment of industrial mix, energy structure and afforestation. By the end of 2008, China reduced 49 million tons of carbon dioxide by using methane tanks in rural area,” Xie said. According to the 6th survey of China’s forestry resources (1999-2003), the total reforestation of the nation has reached 540 million hectares, ranked No. 1 in the world.

The efforts and endeavors China has put into the battle against climate change gained applause from all the countries and recognized by the international society. During his visit to China this July, Ban Ki-moon said, “China is taking a leading role in the battles against the climate change. All the efforts China made is worthy of recommendation.” The report of UNEP approved in

June praised China to be a “green economic giant” in Asia.

To combat climate change, we must further implement the scientific development outlook. The recently-closed 10th meeting of the 11th NPC Standing Committee passed the Resolution on Making Active Responses to Climate Change. With a spirit of being highly responsible for the survival and long-term development of mankind, China pledges to boost awareness of combating climate change and set proper policies and measures to win this battle. ■



From July 1, 2008, vehicles, whose weight is below 3.5 tons and whose tail gas emission cannot meet the national III standards, will not be registered, according to a notice released by the National Development and Reform Commission. CFP



China's measures to combat climate change

By Xie Sufang

“The economy of an industrialized society is dominated by high energy-consuming and polluting heavy industries. China is now on the way to industrialization, during which fossil fuel consumption, especially coal-consuming industries, takes and will take a leading role in a comparatively long period.”

As a developing country, China is now free of the international greenhouse gas emission control. But with a spirit of being highly responsible, China sets the target to reduce the energy consumption during its 11th Five-Year Plan: to cut the energy consumption per unit of gross domestic product (GDP) by 20 percent and to increase the proportion of renewable energy to 10 percent, the forest coverage rate to 20 percent by 2010.

Wang Guangtao, chairman of the Environment Protection and Resource Conservation Committee, said, “China is now at the very crucial point of construction of a well-being society. Pressures from economic development, poverty elimination and greenhouse gas emission reduction are facing the nation. To deal with climate change is one of the harshest and most pressing tasks.” The current national conditions require us to seek the balance between economic development and climate protection. We have no experiences from other countries to learn. We have to find a sustainable development road to satisfy the right of survival and development under the present circumstances.

On the 10th meeting of the 11th NPC Standing Committee, participants gave their suggestions and advice on how to combat climate changes and to find a sustainable way of development.

Shifting the industrial pattern

“At present, coal consumption still takes the main part in the energy structure. Therefore, the structural conflicts are still one of the key issues. The development pattern is still extensive and energy utilization efficiency is quite low. The needs for energy consumption keep growing, at the same time, we are facing pressures from greenhouse gas emission control. These are factors that bottleneck China's sustainable development,” said Xie Zhenhua, vice minister of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), during the meeting.

In the past decades, China's construction and development relied heavily on coal-consumption. It was decided by the uneven distribution of energy resources of the world – such an energy structure has inevitably led to greenhouse gas emission.

“In recent decades, the economic development pattern, which runs in a framework of high energy consumption and high pollution, has come to an end. The problems we face now include comparative and absolute shortage of resources, over-tapping of environment and a quickly aging society, requiring us to change growth pattern immediately. Otherwise, a gloomy future may wait us ahead,” Li Shenming, member of the NPC said. He suggested reforming the extensive economic growth pattern

and accelerating development of low-carbon economy.

NPC deputy Xie Kechang proposed that, it is inevitable, that in a rather long period of time, coal will remain the main energy resources for China. It is crucial to realize the efficient and clean use of coal.

With a spirit of being highly responsible, China sets the target to reduce the energy consumption during its 11th Five-Year Plan.

“The use of low carbon energy, including the energy saving and emission reduction, will reduce the carbon emission by 41.8 percent, comparing the use of nuclear energy and renewable energy can only reduce the carbon emission by about 21 percent. I suggest that, while making policies and measures to develop low carbon economy and launch international cooperation, the government should put utmost emphasis on research, development and promotion of low carbon technologies.”

Xu Jianmin, deputy from the Environment Protection and Resource Conservation Committee, echoed that combating climate change also serves an opportunity for us to change the economic growth pattern to realize an economic leap-forward. In Xu’s opinion, the global economy will transfer from an industrial civilization to the ecological civilization within 50-100 years. It will be a huge change for mankind, and definitely will have enormous influence on life.

“If China were not aware of the changes, restricted in the mindset of industrialization, there would be no future. We should catch up the opportunity and realize a sustainable development. Only following an ecological development method, China’s economy can reach a higher point.” Xu said.

On specific actions, NPC deputy Li Wanzhong suggested that the government should think twice on the development of automobile industry and the car consumption. The development of public transportation and bicycles should be encouraged.

Learning to change

When dealing with climate changes, how to reduce the greenhouse gas emission has become a main topic of international negotiations. But how to adapt to a changed climate is often neglected.

The 13th contracting parties of the UNFCCC’s conference adapted the “Bali Roadmap” puts the adaption of climate change and the release of climate change at the same position. The Assessment Report on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation published by the United Nation’s Environment Programme calls all the governments, especially those of the developing countries, to take active measures to adapt to the climate change and take it into their economic development plans.

“The capabilities to adapt to changed climate should be increased,” said deputy Wang Guangtao, adding that requires us to

improve weather forecast level.

“How to improve the scientific and accurate forecast is crucial,” deputy Cheng Jinpei, member of NPC said. He suggested to accelerate comprehensive research and cooperation on the study of climate changes. Though 90 percent people believe that human activities are the major factor that leads to global warming, some still argue that mankind could reduce the harm caused by climate changes through the improvement of prediction.

Ma Qizhi pointed that it is crucial for China, whose population is one fifth of the world, to master the order of the nature in dealing with climate changes. He suggested that “China should enhance climate change and atmospheric circulation supervision studies, improve forecast capability. Preventive measures should be taken in the development of green economy and low carbon economy.”

Adaptation only follows supervision – countermeasures are to take in life and work on the condition that the climate has changed.

Xie Zhenhua said in his Report on China’s Combating Climate Change, “We will make national strategy to adapt to the climate changes, improve the country’s ability in comprehensive assessment.” He said efforts should be made to enhance capabilities in dealing with climate changes especially in the sectors of agriculture, forestry and water resources and in coastal or ecologically vulnerable areas.

Pu Haiqing, deputy director of NPC Environment Protection and Resource Conservation Committee, also urged to strengthen international cooperation.

“Under technology transfer and fund support from developed countries, we will strengthen scientific innovations, improve the capability of combating climate changes.”

Legislative construction

“Legislation on measures combating climate changes should be brought in the framework of socialist legal system. We will implement and adopt laws on climate changes and environmental protection and draft regulations to ensure the successful addressing of climate changes,” said Wang Guangtao.

NPC deputy Zhang Surong thinks highly of NPC’s quick action towards climate changes. He said, “Based on China’s current development, legislation plays an important role in combating climate changes.”

The problems we face now include comparative and absolute shortage of resources, over-tapping of environment and a quickly aging society, requiring us to change growth pattern immediately.

Tackling the following measures, Xie Zhenhua noted that “China should implement the law system of addressing climate changes and draft related regulations. At the same time, works on standards, supervision and evaluation of climate changes as well as measures to adjust the financial, taxation, price policies should also be done. A healthy and comprehensive management system and monitor mechanism is necessary.”

Up to now, China has already introduced many laws and regulations on combating climate changes, such as Environment Protection Law, the Law on Energy Conservation, the Renewable Energy Law, Cleaner Production Promotion Law, Circular Economy Promotion Law, Law on the Coal Industry, Law on Electric Power, Law on Agriculture, Forestry Law, Grassland Law, Law on wild Animal Protection, Land Administration law etc. Besides, China has introduced series of regulations like Regulations on Building Regulations on Natural Protected Area

etc. All the laws and regulations together have effectively accelerated the works on combating climate changes.

“The NPC will actively introduce and adapt laws on climate changes, launch series of actions on law enforcement inspections, give strong support to the nation’s combat against climate changes,” said Wu Bangguo, chairman of the 11th NPC Standing Committee, at the 10th meeting of the 11th NPC Standing Committee.

In the eyes of NPC deputy Bai Jingfu, to raise people’s awareness of energy saving and carbon emission reduction bears equal importance. Besides, he also suggests that knowledges on climate changes should be put into the primary and secondary school textbooks. Universities should deliver related courses among students to foster the awareness of environment protection, he added. ■

Children show off their inventive gadgets on environmental protection at the Century Square in Nanjing Road, Shanghai on June 5, 2009. CFP



Ethnic administration in the history of Xinjiang

By Ai Qilai



At the age of 68, General Zuo Zongtang vowed to take back Ili, which was occupied by Russia. To show his solid determination, Zuo demanded his army to take a coffin for him. *CFP*

Masterminded, instigated and organized by overseas separatists, the July 5 riots in Urumqi as well as the follow-up syringe incidents in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region had produced severely adverse impact on the whole society. Under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council and with the joint efforts of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, the regional CPC Committee and government have taken resolute actions to crack down on violent crimes and maintain social stability.

Nowadays, a series of aftermath measures were systematically carried out, including bringing criminal suspects into justice in accordance with law, educating those misled by separatists' propaganda and curing the innocent injured during the riots.

Xinjiang has been part of China since ancient times. In history, Xinjiang was called Western Regions, which had been inhabited by a number of ethnic groups. The majority of the residents in the region were then called huihu, who originally were nomads living in Mongolian grasslands. Huihu became the main body of the current Uygurs after they moved to Xinjiang and merged with aboriginals.

More than 2,000 years ago, Western Regions had been an inseparable part of the united and multi-ethnic Chinese nation. Started from 60 BC, the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220) established the Office of Governor of the Western Regions in Wulei, a city located between Kuche and Yanqi, to handle the administration affairs of oases in the region. Later, the dynasty also set up the Wuji General to charge military affairs of the Western Regions. Headmen of the oases were appointed by the central government of Han Dynasty.

In Tang Dynasty (618-907), the central government adopted the same multi-tier administrative system of prefecture, sub-prefecture, county, township and li (neighborhood or village) in eastern Xinjiang as in the inland areas. In the areas inhabited by other ethnic groups, the Tang rulers governed through the traditional chiefs and headmen, who were granted civil and military titles but allowed to manage local affairs according to their own customs.

The Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) established in eastern Xinjiang Dargaq (a Mongolian official title, meaning “garrison officer”) and Bexibalik Secretariat to administer local affairs. The other parts of Xinjiang were divided into two Khanates whose heads took orders from the Khan of the royal court and only commanded military in war times, and civilian affairs were in the charge of officials of all levels appointed by the central government.

The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) set up a Hami Garrison Command to administer areas including Hami and Tubo, while other oases, loyal to the central government only in name, acted on their own will and fought each other, which caused a deepened recession in society and economy once recovering in the Yuan Dynasty.

In the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the central government enhanced the administration over Xinjiang through cracking down on the rebels and then reclaimed the whole region. It was highly praised that the then 68-year-old General Zuo Zongtang vowed to take back Ili (which was occupied by Russia). He asked his army to take a coffin for him to show his solid determination of retrieving the lost land. After reunifying the whole Xinjiang region, the central government of the Qing Dynasty set up Ili General and appointed officials at all lev-

els to supervise local military and social affairs. In 1884, the Qing Government formally established a province in the Western Regions and renamed the area as Xinjiang and took a series of administrative measures:

First, to adopt administration according to “local customs.” The Qing Government adopted the system of prefectures and counties in the region north of the Tianshan Mountains inhabited mainly by people of the Han and Hui, and maintained the local “Baeg system” (a Turki term for local officials) for the Uygurs in the Ili region and the region south of the Tianshan Mountains. Even in the latter region, however, the central government reserved the power to make official appointments and removals with the strict separation of religion from politics. It also adopted the system of “Jasak” (a Mongolian term for governor) by conferring the hereditary titles of princes and dukes on Mongolians and the Uygurs in the Hami and Turpan regions.

Second, to carry out discriminatory religion policies. The religious policies in Xinjiang were based on the facts that the Uygurs in southern Xinjiang believed in Islam while the Mongolians in northern Xinjiang in the Yellow Hat Sect of Lamaism. According to the policy, the authorities permitted Islam and free Islamic activities but restricted political and economic privileges and forbade the religious groups taking control of the secular power. The government protected and encouraged the Lamaism by promoting the construction and repair of temples and exempting lamas from all the taxes and labor, offering them various privileges.

Third, to reduce and exempt taxation. The regional government reduced taxes, which lightened the burden of the people in southern Xinjiang and helped maintain social stability and alleviate class and ethnic conflicts. In return, the economy of Xinjiang harvested great growth impetus.

Four, to restrict communications among ethnic groups. In order to prevent ethnic confrontation, the Qing government adopted measures to restrict ethnic communications. The government built a “Han town” for Manchu army and Han people to dwell in, set up business streets for Uygurs and Hans. The government also forbade intermarriage and banned free trade between Hans and Uygurs, which hampered the development of southern Xinjiang.

It has turned out Chinese feudal rulers adopted

History tells us that Xinjiang is an inseparable part of China since ancient times. In Xinjiang, when ethnic problems and relations were handled properly, the regional society and economy would see progress and people’s life improved.

the policy of “exercising administration according to local customs,” which, to some extent, has maintained national unification and promoted development in Xinjiang for 2,000 years.

History tells us that Xinjiang is an inseparable part of China since ancient times. In Xinjiang, when ethnic problems and relations were handled properly, the regional society and economy would see progress and people’s life improved. On the contrary, when the ethnic groups were divided by separatists and ethnic unity destroyed, local economy would be drawn into recession and the public even would suffer loss of lives. ■

Site of the ancient city of Gaochang in Turpan, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. CFP





Hu Jintao, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Chinese President and chairman of the Central Military Commission, goes by car inspecting troops of the Chinese People's Liberation Army that take part in the military parade for celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 2009. *Wang Jianmin*



Party and State leaders Hu Jintao, Jiang Zemin, Wu Bangguo, Wen Jiabao, Jia Qinglin, Li Changchun, Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, He Guoqiang and Zhou Yongkang appear at a grand mass gala to mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China at the Tiananmen Square on October 1, 2009. *Yao Dawei*



Party and State leaders, together with mass of people, join the National Day celebrations. *Li Xiaoguo*



Escorting the national flag, the honor guards of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) march before the PLA troops that take part in the military parade for celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of People's Republic of China on October 1. *Zhang Yu.*



The 60th anniversary of National Day



Women soldiers attend the PLA troops that take part in the military parade for celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of People's Republic of China on October 1. *Yang Lei*

Paraders holding a huge "national flag", a "national emblem" and a banner that reads "Guoqing (national celebration) 1949-2009" walk ahead of other people attending the mass parade to mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. *Yang Lei*



Parachute soldiers in armored vehicles attend the grand military parade for celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of People's Republic of China on October 1. *Li Ying*

A girl parader waves hands to audience. *Wang Lei*



A grand gala is held on October 1 evening to mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. *Ju Peng*



The Great Hall of the People,



an epitome of New China

By Zhang Shuo



Editor's note: This year marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The Great Hall of the People, which stands at west side of the sprawling Tian'anmen Square, witnessed the historic National Day parade. Being one of the most politically-symbolic architectures in Beijing, the building celebrates its 50th birthday as well 30th anniversary of opening to the public. The grand building is hailed as a piece of solid music and a vivid three-dimensional historical book that records the development of New China. The NPC magazine carries an in-depth report on the unique building.

The year of 2009 marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of New China. The Great Hall of the People, one of the most symbolic buildings in China, celebrates its 50th birthday.

Goethe said, “I call architecture frozen music.” The Great Hall of the People is more than that – it symbolizes a condensed China. Each of the 34 Chinese provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and special administrative regions possesses a hall of its own inside the building. It witnessed the happening of the major political affairs since the founding of the New China in 1949. More important, it has weathered all the changes of the nation.

A visible monument of history

Started from October 1958, it only took construction workers more than 10 months to finish constructing the mammoth building, which is 335 meters long and 206 meters wide. On September 9, 1959, Chairman Mao Zedong was invited to inspect the construction. Under Mao’s suggestion, the name of the building was called the Great Hall of the People.

Just like the fate of the nation, the building is closed to outside during the first 20 years since its completion.

From 1959-78, the Great Hall of the People was a venue that only Party and State leaders could use. Just quite a few of ordinary people were organized to have a visit. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), the public were forbidden to access the building, which was heavily guarded. In spring of 1972, the then US President Nixon, who paid a first visit to China, stepped into the Great Hall of the People to hold talks with Premier Zhou Enlai on the normalization of the two countries. In his eyes, the building might look as mysterious as the nation.

In December 1979, the 3rd Plenary Session of 11th CPC Central Committee was held in Jingxi Hotel, which is not far from the Great Hall of the People. Participants of the meeting agreed to make a vital decision that changes the fate of China – to adopt opening up and reform policies.

Two weeks later, the Great Hall of the People opened its door to the public too. In January 1979,

more than 10,000 people entered into the building to hold a grand gala celebrating the Spring Festival. Deng Yingchao, who was a vice-chairwoman of NPC Standing Committee, said to the participants, “The ban on the entry into the Great Hall of the People was abolished. It returns to the People.” On July 15, the Great Hall of the People was officially opened to the society as well as to foreigners.

Gradually, the Great Hall of the People began to realize the gaps. Due to the limitations on technology and materials during the construction as well as years of weathering, the miraculous building suffered from numerous hidden perils in structure, fire control and facilities.

Following a principle that renovations abide by original style, the Great Hall of the People witnessed a large-scale maintenance and repair in early 1990s. Facilities on fire control, electric apparatus, air conditioning system and elevators involving more than 20 projects including the two auditoriums, banquet hall and outer walls got updated. That took about 10 years. After entering the new century, some major areas such as reception hall and guest hall were renovated.

Interestingly, the only hall that was decorated by a ministry changed its name from Plastic Hall to Chemistry Hall to showcase Chinese chemistry achievements after renovation and being equipped with updated facilities. Right after the building was completed, the then Chinese leaders had thought it is a modern concept by using plastic materials to decorate the hall.

With the rising of Chinese economy and its social development, the Great Hall of the People remained as dignified as before and is becoming more and more open and fashionable.

Chinese leaders from Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping to Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, receive foreign guests and expressed China’s voice towards the world. Historical events of the People’s Republic have continuously left visible and touchable seals on the building.

For example, Hong Kong and Macao returned to China at the end of last century. The Great Hall of the People transformed its West Conference Hall into Hong Kong Hall and established Macao Hall on the third floor. The joining of the two halls, which combine Western and Eastern styles, has helped complete the territory of the motherland.

In the year 2005 and 2006, General Secretary

of the CPC Central Committee Hu Jintao and Lien Chan, the honorary chairman of Kuomintang, shook hands twice at the Great Hall of the People to clear away the hatred between the two parties. The orange curtain that opened slowly before their eyes at the hall is regarded as the symbol of cross-Straits exchange.

On August 8, 2008, President Hu Jintao, together with friends from around the world, share the glory and happiness of the opening of the Beijing Olympic Games. The Jiangsu embroidery at the North Grand Hall that depicts the Great Wall won people's great admiration.

That is only part of the whole picture. Statistics indicated that the building has received more than 57 million people from all walks of life since 1979. It also witnesses the decrease of complicated etiquette of welcoming and seeing off from leaders' State visits.

Today more and more state leaders are coming to visit China, but the list of dishes on the State banquet is becoming shorter and shorter.

In October 2009, the building witnessed the celebration of the 60th anniversary of New China. Chinese development stories are taking on at the stage of the building.

The Hall for NPC Standing Committee is becoming crowded, playing an increasing role in China's democracy

There are 400 red chairs at the Hall for NPC Standing Committee on the second floor of the building, which witnessed the development of Chinese democracy since 1988. Today, it is becoming crowded – the number of chairs increased from 135 to 175. NPC Standing Committee not only includes former ministers, governors, non-Communist party members, scientists, educators and artists, but also law experts in their middle age.

The number of deputies in attendance include not only the leaders of standing committees of local people's congresses but also members of subcommittees under the NPC Standing Committee. The NPC deputies in attendance also rose from 10-plus to more than 40.

It witnesses the happening of major political affairs since the founding of New China in 1949. More important, it has weathered all the changes of the nation.



The Grand Auditorium of the Great Hall of the People.

Ma Zengke

The press area also witnesses the growing number of reporters covering the conferences. An urgent issue is there is no place for ordinary people listening to the conferences. According to Chinese laws, the meeting of NPC Standing Committee should be open to the public to enable ordinary people understand the drafting and promulgation procedure of a law.

The public is expecting more red chairs could be placed here to let more people as well as representatives from all walks of life to sit here. Besides, more open space is demanded for reporters to watch independently and freely the progress of democracy.

To look back the history of Hall of NPC Standing Committee, you would find it has changed its venue so many times. The changes of address brought hope and confidence toward it. There is a big label that reads "the Standing Committee of the

National People's Congress of the People of Republic of China" hung at the south gate of the Great Hall. After entering the south gate and at the end of the red carpet, there appears the Hong Kong Hall, which used to be the West Conference Hall, where the NPC Standing Committee held conferences.

At that time due to limited space, reporters and workers had to set up a "special line" into neighboring Plastic Hall to hear the live broadcast of the conferences through a loud speaker.

With the growth of the number of NPC deputies and standardization of legislation, the conference hall is not large enough for increasing audience. After that the conference venue moved to the Round Hall on the second floor. Still the size could not meet the demand of conferences. Finally, it moved to the current hall.

It used to be a lounge of the Hall of Jiangxi. Different from other halls which are square, the lounge seems a bit narrow; after careful designing, it has been equipped with all kinds of equipment, ranging from electric voters to video facilities. By June 2009, the NPC Standing Committee has convened 469 conferences, most of which were held at the hall. Besides, a lion's share of the 229 laws (by February, 2008 when the 32rd meeting of the 10th

NPC Standing Committee) promulgated by the NPC Standing Committee were deliberated here.

During the past decades, the influence of the Conference Hall of the NPC Standing Committee, like a symbol of Chinese democracy, has expanded all the time. More legislation efforts will be made here and more touching stories are expected to happen.

Tangible democracy

Each spring, the "Two Sessions" held at the Great Hall of the People attract people's attention from home and abroad. This year is the 50th anniversary that the hall has served as meeting venue both for NPC and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

After its completion in September 1959, the NPC which is the top legislature of China moved into the Great Hall in March 1960. With a capacity to hold more than 10,000 deputies to convene together, the building witnessed the development of tangible democracy and rule of laws.

First, it boasts the largest electric voting system in the world.

Initially, votes of abandon and opposition during the Two Sessions only accounted a small number, so it was acceptable to let NPC deputies and CPPCC members raising their hands to express their attitude. In April 1989, the NPC Standing Committee made a decision to utilize electric voting system. A joint research group was formed by the information center of the Office of the CPC Central Committee, Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense and the Great Hall of the People. Electronic components were imported and assembled by researchers. After half of a year's research, the electric voting system was put into use in March 1990, which helps increase democracy, transparency and science in policy making.

"It is the largest voting system in the world," said Liu Shuisheng, head of the Administration Bureau of the Great Hall of the People. "After several technological updating, the operation of system proves stable. Such a system not only ensures the accuracy of accounting, but also guarantees NPC deputies to express their opinion independently. It is a technological milestone of the process of Chinese democracy."

The Conference Hall of the NPC Standing Committee



Second, world-level electronic ballot boxes.

Liu remembers clearly that wood ballot boxes were used at first – a number of abacuses were then used to account the votes at the Hall of Jiangsu. It would take abacus master hands at least two hours to conduct the statistics of voting. Recounting was needed if necessary. NPC deputies and CPPCC members had to wait the result at the hall.

“During the general election period, we had to prepare lots of snacks – additional meal was also needed because the meeting had been prolonged due to accounting efforts,” Liu said. Started at 9:00 am in the morning, the conference could not conclude until noon time.

After that, researcher began to design electronic ballot boxes and voters. During its first use at the Banquet Hall of the Great Hall of the People and at a high-level CPC Central Committee meeting, the electronic ballot box system suffered a technological failure. After late leader Deng Xiaoping put into his vote, the box returned it to him immediately.

“It was just an accident,” Liu said. “After continuous efforts, the self-developed voting system works perfectly. In less than 15-20 minutes, the voting result could be displayed on the big screens at the conference hall.”

Third, most advanced briefing and information system in China.

Being the nation’s top legislature, the NPC Standing Committee convenes at the Great Hall of the People every two months, to draft laws, supervise the work of the State Council, the Supreme People’s Court and the Supreme People Procuratorate, to appoint and dismiss of personnel. Group discussions are held to enable members express their opinions. This is an important aspect of Chinese democracy.

“Two workers were assigned to each group to record the speeches of the NPC deputies,” Kan Ke, head of the News Department of the General Office of the NPC Standing Committee said. It was easy to leave out information during the discussion due to a low speed of handwriting. Errors occurred inevitably in a limited period to fulfill modification, printing and typesetting procedures.

To better record the process and deliberation of legislation with an accurate and full picture, the Great Hall of the People has adopted advanced information technology into the conference venue of the NPC Standing Committee.

Besides of the changes of the equipment at the Great Hall of the People, more impressive and admirable are the progress that has been made on the democracy process and rule of law in China.



The Great Hall of the People is equipped with world-class electronic ballot boxes. CFP

Kan noted that the self-deployed briefing and information system is the most advanced at home. Through this innovation, the accuracy, volume and timeliness of conference briefs got improved greatly, which is good for the work of NPC Standing Committee. It has helped the process of legislation become more transparent and enables media and the public to examine the whole situation.

“When paying a visit to the hall, the parliament delegation from the Philippines were surprised by the grand venue and advanced equipment. They said such a situation could not be found elsewhere in the world,” Kan noted.

Having worked for NPC for 22 years, Kan said, “Besides the changes of the equipment at the Great Hall of the People, more impressive and admirable are the progress that has been made on the democracy process and rule of law in China.” ■

Establishment of people's congress standing committees at local level is a historic innovation

Cheng Xiangqing

The 2nd Session of the 5th NPC closes in the Great Hall of the People after fulfilling several important missions on July 1, 1979. Cui Baolin



This year marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of the standing committees at local people's congresses. Three decades ago, deputies attending the 2nd Session of the 5th National People's Congress (NPC) approved the resolution on the Amendments to the Constitution and the Organic Law of Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments on July 1, 1979. The new legislation made it clear that standing committees should be established for local people's congresses at county level and above. Reaffirmed in the 1982 Constitution, the stipulation represents an important progress of regime construction as well as of the people's congress system. In one word, it is a pioneering work.

However, such achievement wasn't made in one day but went through a long and zigzagging process.

Looking back the development of revolutionary regime under the leadership of the Party, representative convention at war times did have executive or standing organs. For example, during the First Chinese Revolutionary Civil War (1924-27), executive committees have been set up for the Farmers' Association; During the Second Chinese Revolutionary Civil War (1927-37), executive committee were also set up for the Congress of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers; During the Chinese Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1937-45), standing committees were established for the councils of border areas; Before and after the founding of the New China (1949), consultative committees were elected as the standing bodies of the people's congresses at provincial and city levels; At county level, standing committees played the function as executive bodies between sessions of people's congresses.

On April 1, 1948, Chairman Mao Zedong addressed in his speech at a cadres meeting of Jinsui (Shanxi and Suiyuan provinces), saying once a congress has been set up, it should subject to local people. All the power must be granted to the

congress as well as the government committee it elected. The government committee was not only the executive organization of the congress but also its standing body. Such a system embodies Karl Marx's theory to establish organs that combine legislature and administration.



Cheng Xiangqing Fan Bin

This system that combines legislature and administration together could not work any more. Therefore, it is necessary for provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions to consider the establishing of standing committees.

When China's first Constitution was drafted in 1954, some people had proposed that standing committees should be set up for the people's congresses at different levels, just like the NPC. But the proposal was turned down and the mechanism combining legislature and administration was kept. When tackling the reasons behind, some said the local people's

congresses have no legislative power and their daily work was not as heavy as the NPC. What's more, it was easy to organize meetings for local with small terrain. Therefore, if the standing body was established for local people's congresses, it will result in "overlapped organization and inconvenience."

Meanwhile, later practice proved that the mechanism that combines "legislature and administration" had loopholes. If we didn't set up an additional standing body of local people's congresses, seemingly the inconvenience caused by organizational overlapping is unavoids. In fact, incomplete mechanism would lead to more inconvenience. A tough problem at that time was how to deal with the situation when there appeared vacancies in the government leaders and courts during the closed sessions of the people's congresses. To address this issue, on Nov. 15, 1955, the NPC Standing Committee passed a resolution, which defines that local people's committees could execute functions which shall be exercised by the standing bodies. The biggest loophole, we can see, is that it brings difficulties for national legislature organs to supervise the national administration agencies and the judicial institutions.

In March of 1957, Peng Zhen, vice chairman and secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee, pointed out "Now we only have people's committees for the people's congresses at levels of province, municipality, autonomous region and county, but have no standing bodies. As a result, there are no executive institutions to oversee governments' work. This system that combines legislature and administration together could not work any more. Therefore, it is necessary for provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions to consider the establishing of standing committees." He further stated that establishment of such a system – setting up standing committees – "will promote the political system and enrich political life of our country."

The 8th National Congress of CPC, which was held in September 1956, concluded that large-scale class struggles had come to an end and that the internal contradictions among the people became the major theme of national political life. It also brought up the guidelines of expanding democracy and improving socialist law. The congress emphasized that State organs should be polished up seriously and systematically so as to strengthen supervision on local governments by people's congresses. On April 8, 1957, in his report *The Communist Party Should Accept Supervision*, Deng Xiaoping pointed that "The Party must be put under supervision and Party members be supervised. The 8th CPC National Congress has accentuated this point. Chairman Mao stressed that there should be a set of statutes to serve this purpose." Under such circumstances and directly led by Peng Zhen, the relevant agencies and organizations of the NPC Standing Committee conducted a special study on how to improve people's congress system. One important proposal in the study report thereafter was to set up the standing committee for local people's congress at county level and above to reinforce the supervision on the government organs.

It includes three aspects as following:

First, to establish standing committees of people's councils at county level and above. Part of functions exercised by the people's congresses should be transferred to the newly established standing committees. Detailed plans were drafted on the functions and power of local legislature organs. For example, provincial and municipal people's congresses and their standing committees were given certain power on legislation.

Second, to better solicit opinions and requests of the masses and to conduct profound and systematic researches on some specific issues, people's congresses at provincial level are allowed to set up special committees; Standing committees of people's congresses at county level are

permitted to set up special groups or to allocate corresponding tasks among committee members.

Third, the NPC Standing Committee was entitled to supervise the work of the standing committees of local people's congresses. The standing committees at national level and at local levels should keep close collaboration.

At the 4th Session of the 1st NPC held in the summer of 1957, some deputies also

One important proposal in the study report thereafter was to set up the standing committee for local people's congress at county level and above to reinforce the supervision on the government organs.

raised that standing committees should be established for the people's congresses at county level and above. For example, Chen Shutong, a well-known patriot and NPC deputy from Zhejiang Province, proposed "NPC Standing Committee Chairman Liu Shaoqi had noted that during the adjournment between sessions of provincial people's congress, the provincial people's committees handle the situation. It's unreasonable to integrate legislature and law enforcement together. Standing committees should be set up at county level and above, though there is no such clause in the Constitution. Will this issue be tackled during the NPC sessions this year or next?"

Meanwhile, one of the main topics of the NPC session that year was to criti-

cize the Bourgeois Rightists. As a result, Chen's proposal to amend the Constitution was neglected. The NPC Standing Committee's plan to consummate people's congress system had become a target under criticism.

In 1965, along with the economy status nationwide was on recovery and things were taking a U-turn for better, democracy system establishment also became a hot topic for a while. As to the construction of people's congress system, the NPC Standing Committee re-proposed the suggestion that the standing committees should be set up for local People's Congresses at county level and above. Two points were considered at that time.

First, to achieve the goal of realizing the Four Modernizations, a goal set during the 1st Session of the 3rd NPC, and to implement the policy of preparing for war and natural disasters, one important measure was to strengthen leadership of local regime. By setting up local standing committees of people's congresses, it would be conducive to absorbing middle-aged cadres who had participated in the revolutionary work before liberation to work for the people's congresses. On the other hand, it helped select excellent young cadres to enrich the administration organs.

Second, because the people's congresses at county level only hold one or two meetings each year, it is hard for them to deal with trivial daily work. The establishment of the standing committees makes it possible to discuss big issues in time and to improve the supervision on the government and judicial departments.

Given such considerations, consensus was reached that the standing committees should be set up at county level and above. Local authorities reacted fervidly – two provinces successively put forward proposals to CPC Central Committee on how to establish standing committees for approval. However, the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) not only aborted the efforts of setting up local standing committees, but also suspended

the normal activities of the people's congresses at all levels for 8 years.

At the 3rd Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee held in December 1978, the Party summed up historical lessons, especially from the Cultural Revolution. The focus of the Party's and nation's work was shifted to economic development. Moreover, the conference stressed to enhance socialist democracy by improving legislation. The people's congress system entered into a brand-new phase. The issue of setting up standing committees of people's congresses at county level and above was raised again.

In February of 1979, the Legislation Committee of the NPC Standing Committee, which was chaired by Peng Zhen,

first put its focus on the amending of the Organic Law of Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments and Electoral Law, which are relevant to State organs.

Two problems emerged when revising Organic Law of Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments: One is whether local standing committees of local people's congresses should be set up; the other is how to handle the "Revolutionary Committee" at all levels founded during the Cultural Revolution. Should it go back to its original name "People's Council" or be renamed to be "People's Government" for all levels? In February 1979, the law office under the Legal Committee of the NPC Standing Committee

solicited opinions on the second version of the amended Organic Law of the Local People's Congress and of Local Revolution Committees.

Feedback and suggestions indicate that most people strongly requested the notorious name of "the Revolutionary Congress" to be changed into "the People's Council" or "the People's Government." Besides, people upheld at large that standing committees of people congresses at provincial level should be set up. Some even suggested that standing committees should be set up for the county level.

There are four reasons to support this advice. First, the standing committees can exercise the functions of power organs when the people's congresses of the same level are not in sessions. They will help avoid the meddling of the administration organs. Second, it can keep regular contact with the representatives of the people's congresses of the same level and bring the deserved role of the representatives into full play. Third, it can supervise the work of the government of the same level. Fourth, it would be good to organize streamlined government organs and improve work style of the governments.

On May 3 of 1979, Peng raised two points during a conversation with other colleagues. First, it is self-contradictory to define the Revolutionary Committee as the standing body of people's congress and meanwhile define it as government. The Revolutionary Committee was the product of the Cultural Revolution and cannot co-exist with the legislation. It is logic to change the name of Revolutionary Committee to People's Council. Second, the establishment of the standing committees of the people's congresses at county level and above served the goal that government



The Standing Committee of Hainan Provincial People's Congress starts operation on February 4, 1993. File photo

workers should be supervised by the people. During the sessions of the people's congress, the standing committee can help supervise the government, the people's court and the people's procuratorate of the same level. The mass of people can make advice and complaints to the standing committee of the local people's congress. The vice presidents of the court, judges and deputy procurators can be nominated or dismissed by the standing committees. It is entitled to do by-election and replacement of the representatives at any time. This is in accordance with the spirit of expanding the democracy and keeping the independency of courts and the procuratorates.

On May 17 of 1979, Peng submitted a report to CPC Central Committee, suggesting to disband revolution committees and to establish standing committees of the local people's congresses. He also raised three options as following:

First, to legalize the mechanism of the revolutionary committee through legitimate procedure, but most people would oppose the measure.

Second, to disband the Revolutionary Committee and resume the People's Council. By doing this, the Revolutionary Committee was annulled nominally but there did no good to the improvement of democracy and socialist legislation.

Third, to set up the standing committees of local people's congresses at county level and above as well as resume People's Council, including resumption of provincial governor, mayor and county magistrate. It is conducive to expanding democracy and improving the socialist legislation. This is a comparably preferable proposal.

Deng Xiaoping, the then Vice Chairman of the Party gave instructions quickly. "I agreed with the third option. Correspondingly, this NPC session should amend only relevant clauses of the Constitution and keep others unchanged," he said. The Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee approved the third option after discussion.

In light of the spirit of the CPC Central Committee, the Legislation Committee of the NPC Standing Committee drafted the amendments to the Organic Law of Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments. The draft of the amendments was submitted to the 8th Meeting of the 5th NPC Standing Committee held in June 1979 for deliberation. Members of the NPC Standing Committee approved the establishment of standing committees of people's congresses at county level

Local people's congresses and their standing committees exercise their power in accordance with the law. It preferably ensures that the people take charge of the state power.

and above. However, some disagreed to change Revolutionary Committee to People's Committee. They suggested it should be called people's government instead. Relevant resolutions got passed during the meeting and then were submitted to the 2nd Session of the 5th NPC for approval. As mentioned at the beginning of the article, the establishment of standing committee of local people's congresses was finally secured in 1979.

Hereafter, in line with the new Organic Law of Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments, standing committees of people's congresses at provincial level were founded from August 1979 to 1980. In 1980, standing committees of the people's congresses at city level were established. From the second half year of

1980 to the end of the 1981, standing committees of the people's congresses were set up in more than 2,700 counties.

The significance of the establishment of the standing committee of the local people's Congresses is as follows.

First, it embodies the division principle of political mechanism reform and thus conducive to the initiatives of the central and the local. As a result, part of over-centralized power of the central is distributed to localities; Especially, some of the legislation power was granted to the provinces and bigger cities. Tens of thousands of local rules and regulations were adopted during the past 30 years, performing a vital role to guarantee the reform, development, stability and harmony.

Secondly, it embodies the spirit of addressing the issues through legislation. It further improved the system of the people's congress. Deng Xiaoping summarized historical experiences and accented that the problems must be solved through legislation. The establishment of standing committees of people's congresses at local levels broke up the traditional bondage of "the legislature and law enforcement as one." Therefore, it strengthens the supervision of the State power organs on administration, judicial and procuratorial organs and improves the restriction mechanism of power execution. Standing committees of the local people's congresses have created many ways of supervision based on practical experiences for many years and proved effective.

The mechanism of the State legislation organs at local levels is improved.

Local people's congresses and their standing committees exercise their power in accordance with the law. It preferably ensures that the people take charge of the state power. Doubtlessly, it plays a significant role in enhancing the work style of the people's congresses and improving the system and socialist political development with Chinese characteristics. ■

(The author is a consultant of the Research Institute of Chinese Constitution)

President Hu calls for efforts to promote growth, balanced development



Chinese President Hu Jintao poses for a group photo with other leaders and participants attending the Group of 20 Financial Summit in Pittsburgh, the United States. President Hu delivered an important speech on September 25, 2009. Yao Dawei

Chinese President Hu Jintao on September 25 called on world leaders to make every effort to promote global economic growth and a comprehensive, balanced and sustainable socioeconomic development.

In a speech at the Group of 20 (G20) economic summit in Pittsburgh, Hu said the world economy has seen positive signs since the two G20 summits held in Washington in November and in London in April.

“The international community’s confidence has strengthened, financial markets have moved toward stability and the world economy has seen positive signs,” the Chi-

nese president said.

Hu warned that the foundation of an economic recovery is not yet solid, and that many uncertainties remain.

“A primary task at present, is to counter the international financial crisis and promote a healthy world economic recovery.”

Hu called for more efforts be made in the following three areas:

– First, to stand firm in commitment to stimulating economic growth:

“All countries should keep up the intensity of their economic stimulus plans,” he said.

Both developed and developing countries should take more solid and effective

measures and make a greater effort to boost consumption and expand domestic demand, he said.

“Major reserve currency issuing countries should take into account and balance the implications of their monetary policies for both their own economies and the world,” Hu said.

– Second, to stand firm in commitment to advancing reform of the international financial system:

“We should follow through on the timetable and the roadmap agreed upon at the London summit, increase the representation and voice of developing countries and push for substantive progress in the reform,” the Chinese president said.

He urged world leaders to improve the existing decision-making process and mechanism in international financial institutions, and encourage more extensive and effective participation of all parties.

“We should move forward the reform of the international financial supervisory and regulatory regime,” Hu said.

– Third, to stand firm in commitment to promoting balanced growth of the global economy:

The global economic imbalances include gaps between savings and consumption, and imports and exports in some countries. But more importantly, he said, it manifests itself in the imbalances in global wealth distribution, resource availability and consumption and the international monetary system.

“The root cause, however, is the yawning development gap between the North and the South,” Hu said.

He called on world leaders to build up

The major change followed an earlier announcement that the G20 summit of developed and emerging nations would become the world's top economic forum, effectively replacing the G8, which comprises only developed countries and has been the forum since 1975.

international institutions that promote balanced development.

“We should scale up input in development in diverse forms ... We should value the important role of technological cooperation in promoting balanced development, reduce man-made barriers to technology transfer, and create an enabling environment for developing countries to narrow the development gap,” Hu said.

The Chinese leader said his country has attached great importance to comprehensive, balanced and sustainable socio-economic growth, and has mainly relied on expanding domestic demand, in mitigating the impact of the international financial crisis.

“In the first half of this year, despite the drastic contraction in overseas demand, China's GDP managed to grow by 7 percent year-on-year,” he said.

Hu said that China has taken an active role in international development cooperation, and has been actively engaged in international cooperation to tackle the crisis since it broke out.

He said China will follow through on its assistance pledges and measures in a responsible manner, and within its capabilities offer more help to developing countries, particularly the least developed nations in Africa.

“I am confident that with the concerted efforts of the entire international community, we will prevail over this international financial crisis and usher in a more prosperous future for the world

economy,” he said.

Leaders from the Group of 20 gathered in Pittsburgh on Thursday and Friday to discuss ways to promote a recovery from the world economic and financial crisis.

World leaders unveiled a new vision on September 25 for economic governance, with bold plans to fix global imbalances and give more say to emerging giants, such as China and India.

The G20 summit in Pittsburgh committed the International Monetary Fund to shifting at least 5 percent of voting rights to the developing world and tasked it with a bigger monitoring role, AFP reported, citing an official statement.

The major change followed an earlier announcement that the G20 summit of developed and emerging nations would become the world's top economic forum, effectively replacing the G8, which comprises only developed countries and has been the forum since 1975.

“Today, leaders endorsed the G20 as the premier forum for their international economic cooperation,” the statement said. “This decision brings to the table the countries needed to build a stronger, more balanced global economy, reform the financial system and lift the lives of the poorest.”

The gathering of the world's 19 biggest developed and emerging economies, plus the European Union, came just over a year after a credit collapse in the US triggered a global economic slowdown.

While welcoming the announcement,

new Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said the G8 summit “should not be terminated.”

“And subjects must be extremely limited if you want to reach a conclusion among so many people,” he said. “I don't really think the significance of the G8 has disappeared.”

The G20 agreed that it was too early to begin scaling back the multi-trillion dollar stimulus measures that have helped stave off further economic misery following last year's financial meltdown.

Leaders, unable to come to a consensus on enforcement measures on banks, could only muster a pledge – thin on detail – to impose “strong international compensation standards aimed at ending practices that lead to excessive risk-taking,” the statement said.

The issue, a highly symbolic one for taxpayers, had been all the rage in the days before the summit, with French President Nicolas Sarkozy leading calls for tough action and even threatening to walk out of the summit.

While bankers might have gotten off the hook, banks themselves should expect tighter regulation and monitoring, according to a strongly worded part of the G20 accord.

“The steps we are taking here, when fully implemented, will result in a fundamentally stronger financial system than existed prior to the crisis,” their agreement said. “If we all act together, financial institutions will have stricter rules for risk-taking, governance that aligns compensation with long-term performance, and greater transparency in their operations.”

With unemployment still rising steadily in many parts of the globe and the world economy far from out of the woods, G20 leaders will be judged on their bold promises the next time they meet.

As the predominant economic forum, there will be two meetings in 2010, the first in Canada, and the second in South Korea, before a meeting in France the following year. (Xinhua-Global Times) ■

The square array of Young Pioneers seen in the Beijing parade on October 1, 2009 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.



NPC

National People's Congress of China