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The 3rd Session of the 11th NPC opens at the Great Hall of the People on March 5 in Beijing. State leaders including Hu Jintao, Wu Bangguo, Wen Jiabao, Jia Qinglin, Li Changchun, Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, He Guoqiang and Zhou Yongkang step into the venue. *Li Xueren*



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Excerpts of the Work Report of NPC Standing Committee

The following are the excerpts of the Work Report of NPC Standing Committee, delivered by Wu Bangguo, chairman of the committee, on March 9.



Ensuring that the goal of formulating a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics is reached on schedule

Formulating a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics by 2010 was the overall target set at the 15th National Party Congress of CPC for our legislative work in this new historical period. Reaching this target on schedule is our bounden duty and the primary task of our legislative work and a top priority of the NPC's work this year. While steadfastly improving the quality of legislation, we need to redouble our efforts and work vigorously to promptly enact laws that form the framework of the legal system, lose no time in revising laws that are not suited to economic and social development, continue to improve social legislation, give greater emphasis to legislation supporting a green economy and a low-carbon economy, complete the work of sifting through existing laws and regulations, and ensure that a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics is established on schedule, thereby successfully accomplishing this historic mission entrusted to us by the Party and the people.

1) We will promptly formulate new laws. We will finish deliberating and revising the draft Social Security Law and further improve the legal system concerning social security to dispel the people's worries and better maintain social harmony and stability. We will continue to deliberate the draft Law on Administrative Enforcement and further promote government administration in accordance with the law to better safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of our citizens. We will submit for deliberation the draft VAT Law and the draft Law on Vehicle and Vessel Tax, further improve the system of fiscal and tax laws, and standardize the management of tax revenue. We will also research and formulate a people's mediation law, law on education and correction of illegal acts, law on the application of laws to civil relationships involving foreign interests, and law on the protection of our natural heritage.



On March 9, NPC Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo delivers the work report of the Standing Committee.

Liu Weibing

We will urge relevant authorities to promptly draw up drafts for laws, including the law on basic medical and health care and the social assistance law.

2) We will promptly revise some existing laws. We will revise the Law on Deputies to the People's Congress and the Organic Law of Villagers' Committees, and constantly promote the self-improvement and self-development of the socialist political system with Chinese characteristics. We will revise the Administrative Supervision Law to further improve the mechanism for checking and overseeing state power and strive to prevent and

punish corruption at the source. We will revise the Budget Law to ensure that budgets are more complete and are implemented in a more standardized way and overseen more strictly. We will continue to deliberate the draft amendment to the Law on State Compensation, research revisions to the Land Administration Law, Forest Law, Water and Soil Conservation Law, Law on the Prevention and Treatment of Occupational Diseases, and Law on Officers in the Reserve Forces.

3) We will make legislation more scientific and democratic. We will make progress this year on the foundations of what we have already accomplished. First, we will ensure NPC deputies fully play their role in legislative work. Regardless of whether we are debating and making decisions concerning legislative items or drawing up and deliberating draft laws, we will earnestly study and accept suggestions expressed in deputies' bills and invite concerned deputies to participate in legislative work. Second, we will expand the orderly participation of our citizens in the legislative process. We will maintain and improve the mechanism for announcing draft laws to the public; improve the effectiveness of legislative forums, discussions and public hearings; select issues of widespread concern contained in draft laws and fully debate them; earnestly solicit opinions from a wide range of sources, especially the people at the primary level; continuously improve draft laws; and adopt a suitable method for giving feedback to society on how suggestions were dealt with. Third, at an appropriate

time we will launch a pilot project to evaluate legislation after it is enacted. Based on problems the Standing Committee discovers in its investigations of law compliance as well as new circumstances and problems arising in the implementation of laws, we will select one or two laws affecting the vital interests of the people for the pilot project and develop a work mechanism for evaluating legislation after it is enacted.

4) We will supervise and guide efforts to sift through administrative regulations and local statutes. Administrative regulations and local statutes are integral components of the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics. Thanks to the common efforts of everyone involved, China currently has more than 690 administrative regulations and over 8,800 local statutes. They have played an important role in ensuring effective implementation of laws, promoting administration in accordance with the law, and managing local affairs. Nevertheless, we must also be aware that some existing regulations and statutes are unsuited to present circumstances, not coordinated with each other, or lack supporting regulations and statutes. On the basis of the substantial results we achieved last year in amending existing laws, we will supervise and guide the State Council and local people's congresses in thoroughly amending their existing administrative regulations and local statutes and completing the work by the end of the year.

5) We will continue to improve the filing and examination of normative documents. Administrative regulations, local statutes, statutes of autonomous bodies, specific regulations, legal interpretations and other normative documents must be filed in accordance with the law. We will take the initiative to carry out inspections in key areas. We will study and examine individually the legal interpretations newly issued by the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and supervise them in thoroughly reviewing the legal interpretations they made before 2005.

It must be emphasized here that developing socialist democratic politics is a goal our Party constantly pursue. At the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, the Party reviewed the lessons since the founding of the People's Republic, particularly those of the Cultural Revolution. It made the historic policy decision to shift the focus of the work of the Party and the State to economic development and introduce reform and opening up. It also made developing socialist democracy and improving the socialist legal system an important strategic task in building socialism with Chinese characteristics. Through the common efforts of everyone involved, a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics had been basically established by the end of the Tenth NPC's term. There are now laws that cover almost every area of the country's economic, political, cultural and social activities, and these laws effectively ensure and promote the development of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. At

the same time, we need to realize that rapid economic and social development, constant progress in socialist democratic politics, a rich and varied cultural life, the enthusiastic creation of a harmonious society, structural and institutional reforms and innovations, and the expansion of economic globalization continually place new demands on our legislative work. Legislation remains an important task of the current NPC. Our legislative work this year will be arduous and doing it well will be glorious. In order to meet our legislative goals on schedule, we must maintain a correct political orientation, put people first, proceed from China's actual conditions, seek truth from facts, and ensure the uniformity of law. We must also properly handle the relationships between powers and rights, between the stability of law and the uncertainty of practice, and between the foresightedness and feasibility of our laws and regulations in order to provide firm legal guarantees for promoting reform and opening up and socialist modernization, implementing the rule of law as a fundamental principle, and developing a socialist country ruled by law.

Focusing on implementing the CPC Central Committee's major decisions and arrangements and carrying out oversight work

China is in an important period of strategic opportunities for its economic and social development as well as a period of serious social problems, and its tasks for promoting reform, development, and stability are arduous and formidable. The Central Committee has made comprehensive arrangements to succeed in this year's work by drawing up the "five points requiring greater attention." It has emphasized the need to give greater attention to improving the quality and performance of economic growth; transforming the pattern of economic development and restructuring the economy; advancing reform, opening up, and independent innovation, and enhancing the vigor and vitality of economic growth, improving people's wellbeing, and maintaining social harmony and stability; and taking both the international and domestic situations into consideration to achieve steady and rapid economic development. The NPC Standing Committee needs to conscientiously implement the Law on Oversight; improve oversight on economic work and the handling of issues affecting people's wellbeing, focus on the "five points requiring greater attention," strive to tighten and improve oversight and increase its effectiveness; implement the major decisions and arrangements of the Central Committee; and ensure this year's tasks and objectives for economic and social development are successfully accomplished.

1) We will focus on transforming the pattern of economic development, and strengthen oversight on economic work. Since the

policy of reform and opening up was first implemented, China has made tremendous achievements in economic and social development that have attracted worldwide attention. At the same time, China displays the traits of the new stage of social and economic development. Against the backdrop of the global financial crisis, the existing pattern of economic development is clearly unsuitable; therefore, accelerating its transformation has become an inherent requirement for ensuring sustainable economic development and social harmony and stability. Based on China's particular conditions, at its 17th National Congress, the Party thoroughly analyzed the domestic and international situations we faced, and took accelerating the transformation of the pattern of economic development and improving and upgrading the industrial structure as urgent and major strategic tasks that have an overall bearing on the national economy. It clearly stated that to promote economic growth, we must shift from relying mainly on investment and exports to relying on a coordinated combination of con-

sumption, investment, and exports; from relying on secondary industry as the major driving force to relying on primary, secondary, and tertiary industries to jointly drive economic growth; and from relying heavily on increased consumption of materials and resources to relying mainly on advances in science and technology, a better quality of the workforce, and innovation in management. That issue was emphasized again at the Central Economic Work Conference in 2009. Accelerating the transformation of the pattern of economic development and improving and upgrading the industrial structure are important objectives and strategic measures for implementing the Scientific Outlook on Development, as well as major tasks of this year's economic work. The NPC Standing Committee needs to carry out its oversight on economic work focusing on this theme, strive to intimately integrate maintaining steady and rapid economic development with accelerating the transformation of the pattern of economic development, promote transformation in the course of development, and work for



NPC deputies listen to a report during the NPC session. *Ma Zengke*



NPC deputies sing the national anthem at the opening ceremony of the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC. *Chen Shugen*

development in the course of transformation.

First, by hearing and deliberating the State Council's reports on the implementation of the plan for the first half of 2010 and the implementation of the central budget for the same period, the reports on the central government final budget and the auditing work for 2009, and examining and approving the final budget for 2009, we will urge the implementation of a proactive fiscal policy, a moderately easy monetary policy, and other macro-control policies; check compliance with the requirements to boost consumer demand, actively yet prudently press ahead with urbanization, make basic public services more equal and guide the orderly relocation of industries; and promote steady and rapid economic development.

Second, by hearing and deliberating the State Council's reports on the development of the service sector and the culture industry, we will urge the implementation of policies and measures for supporting the development of emerging industries, promote restructuring, and foster new areas of economic growth.

Third, by checking compliance with the Law on Energy Conservation and the Law on the Promotion of Cleaner Production, we will promote the implementation of the Resolution of the NPC Standing Committee on Addressing Climate Change and relevant laws; encourage key industries to carry out technological upgrading aimed at conserving energy, reducing its consumption and developing the circular economy; and improve and upgrade

traditional industries, to ensure that the targets for conserving energy and reducing emissions set forth in the Outline of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan are met on schedule.

Fourth, by checking compliance with the Law on Scientific and Technological Progress, we will help improve the scientific and technological innovation system based on the combined efforts of enterprises, universities and research institutes, increase our independent innovation capacity, and promote the application of scientific and technological advances in production.

Fifth, by listening to and deliberating the State Council's report on national food security and inspecting compliance with the Law on Popularization of Agricultural Technology, we will promote the implementation of policies to support and benefit agriculture, rural areas, and farmers; strengthen agricultural and rural infrastructure; accelerate the development of modern agriculture; oversee and inspect the implementation of the plan for increasing grain production capacity by 50 million tons nationwide and the completion of the task to reinforce the country's dilapidated large reservoirs; promote the building

of a new socialist countryside; and ensure stable and increasing agricultural production and as well as steady income increases for farmers.

Sixth, focusing on relevant special topics, we will continue to carry out follow-up investigations and studies on the implementation of the central government's investment plan, and urge relevant departments to carefully study and handle the suggestions contained in the Standing Committee's reports on these investigations and studies and the comments put forward by Standing Committee members during their deliberation to promote the smooth progress of major investment projects of the central government.

Seventh, by inspecting compliance with the Law on the Protection of Investment of Taiwan Compatriots, we will strengthen protection of the legitimate rights and interests of Taiwan investors on the mainland.

2) We will focus on promoting social harmony and stability, and strengthen oversight of the work to solve problems affecting people's wellbeing. Since the policy of reform and opening up was first implemented, not only has China experienced sustained and rapid economic growth but people's wellbeing has improved considerably, and there has been a long period of social and political stability. Nevertheless, we must recognize that China is still in the primary stage of socialism and will remain so for a long time, and the principal problem in Chinese society is between the ever-growing material and cultural needs of the people and our

backward social production. At present, Chinese society is generally harmonious, but there are a number of disparities that affect social harmony, and there are relatively serious problems in employment, social security, income distribution, education, medical care, housing, workplace safety and public security that concern the immediate interests of the people. It has been explicitly stated at the 16th National Party Congress, the Sixth Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee, and the 17th National Party Congress that we must move faster to build a harmonious society, with the focus on improving people's wellbeing, and strive to ensure that all our people enjoy the rights to education, employment, medical treatment, old-age care, and housing. Ensuring and improving people's wellbeing is an essential requirement for applying the Scientific Outlook on Development and a priority for our economic and social development this year. The NPC Standing Committee needs to focus on solving the most practical problems of the utmost and immediate concern to the people and urge relevant authorities to correctly handle the relationship between economic development and people's wellbeing; always put people first, strive to solve social problems and develop social programs; improve public administration and services; promote social equality and justice; foster a culture of harmony; and coordinate social development with economic, political, cultural and ecological development.

First, by listening to and deliberating the State Council's report on deepening reform of the medical and health care system, we will inspect progress of the implementation of recent key reforms; press ahead with the development of the basic medical care system, national basic drug system, and basic medical and health care service system; and promote equal access to basic public health-care services and the pilot reform of public hospitals.

Second, by listening to and deliberating the State Council's report on diverting the rural labor force and safeguarding the rights and interests of rural migrant workers, we will help solve major problems rural migrant workers have concerned such as wages, working conditions, training, basic old-age and medical care insurance, workers' compensation, and schooling for their children. We will also inspect the progress in bringing rural migrant workers into the urban public service system.

Third, by inspecting compliance with the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women, we will help solve problems concerning equal employment, equal remuneration for work of equal value, land-related rights and interests, workplace safety, health and retirement protection; and facilitate better implementation of the basic State policy of equality of men and women.

Fourth, by listening to and deliberating the State Council's report on the economic and social development of ethnic minorities and ethnic minority areas, we will urge the relevant authorities to implement the Law on Regional National Autonomy and the policies and measures of the central leadership to accelerate eco-

nomical and social development in Tibet, Xinjiang and other ethnic minority areas, particularly the new policies and measures of the central leadership to support the development of Tibet, Tibetan ethnic areas in four provinces, and Xinjiang and further solidify and develop the socialist ethnic relations of equality, unity, mutual assistance and harmony.

Fifth, by listening to and deliberating the report by the Supreme People's Court on the work of civil trials and the report by the Supreme People's Procuratorate on the work of improving procuratorial work concerning the dereliction of duty and infringements of rights, we will help courts and procuratorates constantly improve their work, and safeguard judicial impartiality, social equality, and justice.

Sixth, by listening to and deliberating the State Council's report on strengthening road traffic safety management, we will promote implementation of the Road Traffic Safety Law, urge relevant authorities to improve the system of accountability for road traffic safety management, and promote civilized and standardized law enforcement. We will also inspect the implementation of compulsory third-party liability insurance for motor vehicles and the arrangements for social assistance funds for victims of road traffic accidents.

3) We will focus on making oversight more effective, and further improve oversight methods. Oversight powers are important powers granted to people's congresses by the Constitution and laws. Oversight by people's congresses carries the force of law and is carried out in the name of the country and the people. People's congresses exercise their oversight powers collectively in accordance with the law and prescribed procedures. They do



NPC deputies of ethnic minorities have a group photo taken before the Great Hall of the People. CFP



NPC deputies listen to a report during the conference. CFP

not exercise administrative, judicial or procuratorial powers, nor do they directly deal with specific issues. Over the years, we have made tremendous efforts to strengthen and improve the oversight work of people's congresses with considerable success, created a body of effective work mechanisms and methods, and helped solve major problems that have an overall impact and are of deep concern to the people. Experience shows that oversight by people's congresses in accordance with the law helps governments, courts and procuratorates improve their work. Accepting oversight by people's congresses also facilitates governments' administration in accordance with the law as well as the impartial justice of courts and procuratorates. To properly handle their relations with governments, courts and procuratorates when overseeing their work, it is important for people's congresses to act in strict accordance with the Law on Oversight. This requires us to always uphold the approach of concentrating on core issues, identifying priorities and seeking substantive results, and constantly improve the way we carry out oversight. This year, we will intensify oversight in the following three areas.

First, we will further intensify oversight of budgets. Overseeing the implementation of central and local budgets is an important power granted by law to the NPC Standing Committee and an important guarantee for comprehensively implementing the budgets approved by the NPC and its resolutions on them. The Standing Committee used to deliberate the report on the imple-

mentation of budgets for the first five months of the year at its June meeting when it heard and deliberated the final budget of the central government for the previous year. In order to make the NPC's oversight of budgets more effective and in accordance with the Law on Oversight and the Budget Law, we will hold a special hearing and deliberation at the August meeting of the Standing Committee on the State Council's report on the implementation of the budgets since the beginning of this year and focus on examining the implementation of the NPC's resolutions on budgets; the main revenue and expenditures in central and local budgets; the implementation of fiscal policy and fiscal and taxation measures; the availability and use of funds for key expenditures such as agriculture, education, science and technology, culture, health and social security; transfer payments from the central government to local governments; and the issuance of government bonds.

Second, we will carry out investigations and studies on compiling the Outline of the 12th Five-Year Plan. To implement the guiding principles of the 17th National Party Congress and the Central Economic Work Conference, in the first half of this year we will organize NPC special committees and executive bodies of the Standing Committee to carry out investigations and studies on issues involved in the compilation of the Outline of the 12th Five-Year Plan, including the distribution of national income; economic restructuring; employment and social security; development of education, science and technology, culture and health; agriculture, rural areas and farmers; energy conservation, emissions reductions and environmental protection; and reform of the fiscal and taxation systems. We will put forward a substantial number of comments and suggestions to provide the central government with material for making decisions, and prepare the NPC to deliberate and approve the outline during its session next year.

Third, we will make inquiries and interrogations on special issues in accordance with the law. Inquiries and interrogations are legal means by which people's congresses oversee governments, courts and procuratorates. On the basis of the Law on Oversight and the guiding principles of the Decision of the NPC Standing Committee on Intensifying Oversight of Economic Work, this year we will select a number of issues of widespread concern to NPC deputies; hear reports on those issues by relevant departments of the State Council; and as provided for in relevant laws, ask main leaders from those departments of the State Council to listen to suggestions, respond to inquiries and answer questions.

The 2010 Shanghai World Expo, with the slogan "better city, better life," will be an international arena for cities to showcase their cultural fruits, share their experience and ideas of development, and explore how to coordinate urban and rural development. The Expo will be another global event hosted by China, taking up where the Beijing Olympic Games left off. We will give our utmost support to all preparatory work to ensure the Expo is successful, spectacular and unforgettable. ■

China's Congress Amends Electoral Law and Approves Major Work Reports

After nine days of convening, the Third Session of the 11th National People's Congress (NPC) held its closing meeting on March 14. Nearly 3,000 lawmakers voted to approve the amendment to the Electoral Law, which grants equal representation in people's congresses to rural and urban population.

The NPC also approved work reports of the government, the NPC Standing Committee, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate. The NPC also endorsed the central and local budgets, and the report on economic and social development.



NPC deputies vote to approve the amendment to the Electoral Law. On March 14, 2010, the closing ceremony of the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC was held at the Great Hall of the People. Deputies took votes on eight drafts and resolutions, including the government work report delivered by Premier Wen Jiabao. *Du Yang*

Amendment to the Electoral Law

China's Congress adopted on March 14 the amendment to the Electoral Law, which grants equal representation in legislative bodies to rural and urban population.

Lawmakers applauded after NPC Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo announced that the amendment was approved with 2,747 votes from the 2,909 NPC deputies present at the closing meeting.

The amendment is regarded as part of China's efforts to narrow the urban-rural gap. It requires "both rural and urban areas adopt the same ratio of deputies to the represented population in elections of people's congress deputies."

Wang Zhaoguo, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, said the law provides legal guarantees for elections of deputies to people's congresses, the country's fundamental political system, as well as citizens' right to vote and the right to stand for election.

After the last amendment in 1995, the law stipulated that each rural deputy represented a population four times that of an urban deputy. Critics said this could be interpreted as "farmers only enjoy a quarter of the suffrage of their urban counterparts."

Before the amendment in 1995, the difference was eight times.

"Such stipulations were absolutely necessary and conformed with China's political system and the particular situation at that time," Wang said.

According to the 1953 national census, the urban population made up only about 13 percent. The rural population was much more than that of cities at that time and an equal ratio of rural and urban representation would have meant an excessive number of rural deputies.

With rapid urbanization and rural economic development, the proportion of urban population increased to 46.6 percent last year, he said, adding people's congresses at all levels have gone through many terms of elections, accumulating abundant experience.

"The time is right for equal representation," which is conducive to expand democracy, he said.

Wang said the amendment ensures "equal representation among people, regions and ethnic groups."

The amendment adds stipulations such as "organizing more face-to-face contacts between candidates and electors to allow deputy candidates to introduce themselves and answer voters' questions."

It says the setup of polling stations, convening election congress and the management of mobile polling boxes should be further standardized and improved.

It also suggests to set up "confidential polling booths" to root out bribery in elections.

Violence, threats, corruption and other acts that disrupts elections should be investigated and punished, it says.

The number of deputies to the NPC is limited within 3,000, and the distribution of the NPC deputies is decided by the NPC Standing Committee, according to the law.

China's parliament endorses government work report

The NPC endorsed the government work report delivered by Premier Wen Jiabao on March 14.

Wen's report was approved with 2,836 votes from the 2,909 NPC deputies present at the closing meeting of the congress's annual session. The report underlines people's livelihood and sets the economic growth target at about 8 percent this year.

Wen said in the report at the opening meeting last week that the government needs to guide all sectors to focus on transforming economic growth pattern and restructuring economy.

He said that 2010 is a "crucial year" for continuing to com-

bat the global financial crisis, maintaining "steady and rapid" economic development, and accelerating the transformation of growth pattern.

It is also an important year for achieving all the targets of the 11th Five-Year Plan (2006-10) and laying a solid foundation for the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-15), he said.

Other key economic and social targets included creating more than 9 million jobs in cities, keeping urban registered unemployment rate under 4.6 percent and keeping the rise in consumer prices at about 3 percent.

Listing key government tasks, Wen said it will continue to implement a proactive fiscal policy and continue to implement the stimulus package which was unveiled in late 2008 that in-

cluded a 4-trillion yuan (585.5 billion US dollars) two-year investment.

The State Council made 15 modifications, including 7 major ones, to the report according to opinions of lawmakers and political advisors. One of the major changes is removing the phrase "grey income" from the report. Wen said in the report on March 5 that, "We must outlaw illicit incomes and regulate grey incomes to gradually develop an open and transparent income distribution system."

Lawmakers said "grey income" is hard to define, and it sparked heated debate among lawmakers and netizens.

2010 is a "crucial year" for continuing to combat the global financial crisis, maintaining "steady and rapid" economic development, and accelerating the transformation of growth pattern.

Human rights protection tops China's judiciary agenda

Human rights protection is becoming a priority of China's judiciary work as more than 2,200 bullies were found in detention centers in 2009 year, even with reports of inmate deaths.

Among the 2,207 prison bullies, 123 were referred to prosecution, Procurator-General Cao Jianming told nearly 3,000 lawmakers at the annual congress session on March 11.

Human rights protection was a keyword in the annual work reports of the Supreme People's Courts (SPC) and the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP), which were submitted to the Third Session of the 11th National People's Congress, or congress.

Delivering the SPC report to the congress, Chief Justice Wang Shengjun urged courts to "earnestly handle State compensation work."

Among all the concluded cases of State compensation last year, the courts ruled to compensate for 450 cases with more

than 34 million yuan (\$5 million), Wang said.

He said efforts should be made to ensure an early realization of these compensation.

Following are the highlights of Wang's report extracted from the text distributed to the media before the opening of the fourth plenary meeting of the annual parliamentary session:

In 2009,

— the SPC dealt with 13,318 cases of various types and concluded 11,749 cases, up 26.2 percent and 52.1 percent year on year, respectively. Local courts at various levels handled 11.37 million cases of various types, up by 6.3 percent.

— Chinese courts concluded 767,000 criminal cases and sentenced 997,000 criminals, down by 0.2 percent and 1.1 percent respectively.

— Chinese courts concluded 267,000 cases of severe crimes, including homicide, kidnapping, robbery, and those undermining national security, up 2.3 percent. A total of 375,000 criminals involved in these cases were sentenced, 0.8 percent more than the previous year.

— Chinese courts concluded 527 cases of gang crimes and sentenced 3,231 criminals involved, an increase of 13.8 percent and 16.6 percent respectively.

— Chinese courts sentenced 2,413 criminals for woman and child trafficking and 56,000 for drug trafficking.

— Chinese courts concluded 11,000 cases of money laundering, and 55,000 cases of fund-raising fraud, credit card fraud, making and selling counterfeit banknotes and fake invoices.

— Chinese courts concluded 25,912 cases of embezzlement, bribery and malfeasance, and sentenced 26,226 criminals involved.

— Chinese courts concluded 1,703 cases of spreading pornographic electronic information, 47.5 percent higher than the previous year.

— Chinese courts concluded 5.797 million civil cases, up by 7.7 percent over 2008.

— Chinese courts concluded 3.154 million contract cases, up 8.6 percent; 519,000 financial cases, rising 12.9 percent; 3,573 cases of corporate bankruptcy, down 4.7 percent; 317,000 cases of labor disputes, up 10.8 percent; 36,000 intellectual property right infringement cases, up 29.7 percent.

— Chinese courts concluded 11,000 civil cases concerning foreign parties, 16 percent higher than in 2008.

— Chinese courts concluded 121,000 administrative cases, an increase of 10.5 percent; 1,531 cases claiming state compensation, down 6.3 percent year on year.

Cao, the SPP president, said equal efforts should be given to both crimes crackdown and human rights protection.

He said supervision of extorting confessions by torture, overdue detention and other acts that infringe people's interests, should be enhanced and judicial guarantee of human rights



On March 5, 2010, the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC opens at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. The military band plays music during the opening ceremony. CFP

should be strengthened.

Lawmaker Han Deyun, a lawyer with southwestern Chongqing municipality's Suotong Law Office, said the country's judiciary has attached great importance to human rights protection since "respecting and ensuring human rights by the State" was enshrined in the Constitution in 2004.

Han said it is a good sign that both the SPC and the SPP highlighted the human rights protection in their work reports this year.

Lawmaker Zhang Zhonghou, president of the Higher People's Court in eastern Jiangxi Province, said judicial protection of human rights has improved over the years and the protection of detainee's rights and interests has extended to larger areas such as "ensuring suspects speak in defense of themselves and their rights to seeing doctors and working."

Zhang said there are more cases of ordinary citizens bringing government officials to court, a sign of the public's enhanced legal and rights awareness.

He said the quality of law enforcement staff should be further enhanced.

Lawyer Han said judicial workers are supposed to meet higher qualification requirements than administrative staff.

"Maintaining the judiciary's integrity is key to ensuring justice, which is fundamental in judicial protection of human rights," he said.

Highlights of work report of SPP

Procurator-General Cao Jianming delivered a report on the work of the Supreme People's Procuratorate on March 11 af-



Reporters covering the ongoing Two Sessions take photos of NPC deputies of ethnic minorities, attending the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. *CFP*

ternoon at the Third Session of the 11th National People's Congress. The following are the highlights of Cao's report:

What's Done In 2009

- Approved the arrest of 941,091 criminal suspects, and prosecuted 1,134,380, a decrease of 1.2 percent and 0.8 percent year on year.
- Investigated 41,531 people, up 0.9 percent year on year, in 32,439 work-related crime cases, an decrease of 3.3 percent from the year before. Among the total, there were 18,191 major embezzlement and bribery cases, and 3,175 major cases of malfeasance and infringement of rights.
- Investigated 2,670 government officials at the county level and above, including 204 at the prefectural level and eight at the provincial and ministerial level.
- Investigated 9,355 government workers suspected of duty dereliction, malfeasance, and infringement of people's rights.
- Investigated 10,218 cases of commercial bribery involving government workers in the fields of resources development and sales, property right transaction, and government procurement.
- Investigated 2,761 judiciary workers suspected of graft and malpractice for personal gains, among other crimes.
- Punished 247 prosecutors for acts of breach of discipline or

Maintain social harmony and stability through lawful crackdown on crimes, while improving the work mechanism to resolve social disputes.

the law, and brought 25 of them to court.

- Prosecuted 42,473 suspects for smuggling, financial fraud, and illegal business operations among other crimes which undermined the order of the market economy.
- Prosecuted 2,695 suspects for infringement of intellectual property rights.
- Prosecuted 507 suspects involved in making and selling poisonous and harmful food and medicines.
- Prosecuted 4,017 suspects for involvement in woman and child abduction and trafficking.
- Investigated 478 government workers suspected of misusing their powers for illegal detainment, revenge or sabotage of elections.
- Found 2,207 prison bullies in a nationwide investigation and prosecuted 123 of them for suspected crimes.
- Appealed against 3,963 criminal judgments, up 22 percent year on year. Appealed against 11,556 civil and administrative judgments or rulings, and proposed the re-trial of 6,714 cases, an increase of 0.9 percent and 28.6 percent respectively.

- Proposed correction on the prolonged detainment of 337 people, an increase of 86.2 percent; and corrected improper commutation of punishment, parole and temporary execution of sentence outside jail of 9,883 people, an increase of 98.1 percent.

What's To Be Done In 2010

- Make stepped-up efforts to ensure sound and fast economic and social growth by giving fully play to the role of procuratorate organs in crackdown on and prevention of crimes, supervision and judicial protection.
- Maintain social harmony and stability through lawful crackdown on crimes, while improving the work mechanism to resolve social disputes.
- Intensify efforts to prevent, investigate and punish work-related crimes and help build an anti-corruption system which gives equal footing to prevention and punishment.
- Further strengthen legal supervision over litigations to ensure fair and honest law enforcement.
- Deepen the reform of the procuratorate organs, and improve the mechanism of self-supervision and self-restraint.
- Improve the competence of procurators. ■

(NPC and Xinhua)

China's legislature session open to Danish parliament delegation

By Li Fei

On the afternoon of March 9, 2010, the appearance of a group of foreign guests with blond hair and blue eyes at the Great Hall of the People attracted the attention of media which were covering the ongoing conference of the 3rd Session of the 11th National People's Congress (NPC). At that moment, NPC Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo was making an annual work report of the top legislature.

These guests hailed from Denmark, which is the motherland of fairy tales writer Hans Christian Andersen. Denmark is also a developed Western industrial country famous for its provision of high income, taxation, consumption and social welfares.

The 20-or-so Danish Parliament education committee delegation was paying a visit in China. To listen and observe the convening of the Two Sessions was one of the important schedules of the



On March 9, a delegation of Danish Parliament Education Committee attends the 3rd Plenary of the 3rd session of the 11th NPC as observers at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. *Rao Aimin.*

delegation's tour.

"The Two Sessions are becoming more practical;" "The system of NPC is of great importance to China;" "The world is willing to get a better understanding of the Chinese political life;" "The whole world is interested in listening to China's voice." After attending the conference, they have gained an in-depth impression towards China's democratic politics.

More and more foreigners are changing their opinions on China.

Thirty years of reform and opening-up policies witnessed rapid economic development in China, surprising the whole world. China took the lead in recovering from the international financial crisis, forcing the Western countries to reevaluate the Oriental giant.

In recent years, with the continuous opening-up and transparency in Chinese political life, China showed the rest of the world what is the so-called Chinese democracy.

Spectacular, pragmatic, friendly and intelligent

At the invitation of the NPC Education, Science, Culture and Health Committee, the Danish delegation arrived in Beijing on March 7.

During its visit, the delegation held meetings with officials of the Sichuan Provincial People's Congress Standing Committee and representatives from Sichuan University. Bai Keming, chairman of the NPC Education, Science, Culture and Health Committee, met the Danish delegation. And most importantly, they are invited to present the 3rd Plenary of the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC and listened to the work report by Chairman Wu on behalf of the NPC Standing Committee.

For most of the delegates, it was their first time to visit China. They expressed their feeling towards Beijing by using words like "beautiful, magnificent and impressive" while visiting the Forbidden City and the Great Hall of the People.

For Rasmus Jarlov, who visited the Great Hall for the first time, the big size of China's parliament impressed him the most. "A growing China is more and more important to the world. Everybody wants to know what is going on in China and that's why we are here," he said.

Inviting foreign parliament members to watch what's happening is very helpful for China to promote the relations with the outside world. It is right that China increases representation of its rural population in the parliament, said Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen, the

Danish Ambassador to China "I hope it will be successful."

"I particularly note China puts emphasis on improving the environment and on moving forward to a more innovative and knowledge-based society. These are important areas for cooperation between Denmark and China," he said.

"I know for Chinese people, the Two Sessions are very important political moments during a year. For all of us, it is a precious opportunity to be present to the conferences."

The ambassador assumed his position two years ago and is quite familiar with the development China has made. He said, "I can see that the Two Sessions are becoming more and more practical. Just like Premier Wen Jiabao mentioned in his report on March 5, China is now facing all kinds of challenges, to maintain economic

development, to accelerate transformation of economic development pattern, to build a society on the basis of knowledge-oriented economy and environmental protection. You can find all these topics being discussed during the conferences."

"I am very excited to visit such a big conference, it's really a precious opportunity for me!" Rasmus Jarlov echoed. The scale of the NPC conference dwarfed the Danish Parliamentary meeting. The young parliament member had a very deep impression on the government work report delivered by Premier Wen. In his opinion, the Two Sessions in China are very important political events for the

whole world. Not surprisingly, so many media come to cover the event.

As for his visit to China, the most impressive thing for him is the great potential and unlimited vitality for China's future development and the hospitality and diligence of the ordinary Chinese people.

"I am very pleased to see that more Chinese people are enjoying equality in election. It is really the right direction," Rasmus Jarlov said. He expressed his best wishes for China, "I hope China will be stronger and keep its pace on economic growth."

NPC system is of great importance for China

The Danish parliament members thought highly of the key agenda of the Two Sessions, the amendment of the Electoral Law, which stresses on the equality between the rural and the urban, and equality among different regions and ethnic groups.

"I am very pleased to see that more Chinese people are enjoying equality in election. It is really the right direction," Rasmus Jarlov said.

The 44-year-old deputy chairperson of Danish Parliament Education Committee and head of the delegation Anne-Mette Winther Christiansen, who has served as a parliament member for five years, said that it's a very good way to allow every ordinary citizen to express their own ideas. She is also the head of the Danish delegation.

The establishment of the NPC system aims to listen to the voices of the people – this is very important. The woman parliament member told reporters that she thought NPC is a very important channel for Chinese to express their ideas by electing deputies to NPC. “It plays the same role that the Danish Parliament functions in Denmark.”

She said that she only has a rough idea about China's NPC system so far, adding that “China has made its own choice by electing deputies on behalf of the ordinary people in the NPC. In Denmark, the number of parliament members is only 175 because the nation's total population is only 5 million.”

China is a huge country and develops so fast. Everyone in the world is interested in the political life of Chinese people, she noted.

The exchanges with NPC and people's congresses at local levels helped the Danish delegation better understand Chinese political system. Rasmus Jarlov told reporters, “Though China has a different political system from that of Denmark, I have a belief that the NPC system fits China well after the visit.”

He said China's influence towards the world is increasing, attracting increasing attention. The invitation of Danish delegation to hear the NPC session showed the transparency of China and is conducive to the understanding between the nation and the world.

Denmark and China enjoy great potential of cooperation in numerous fields.

Being an education delegation, these Danish delegates naturally paid special attention towards topics related with education.

In the eyes of Christiansen, it is of great value to seek consensus after deputies had brought their ideas on education to the conference. She hoped that students in the two nations could enhance exchanges at various levels and welcomed more Chinese students to study in Denmark.

As a fact, the education exchanges between China and Denmark have gained momentum for many years. For example, students from the two countries have been studying in each other's country. A number of universities and colleges set up cooperation at the same time. Besides, in 2007, a Confucius Institute was set up in Copenhagen, capital of Denmark.

The year of 2010 marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the bilateral ties between the two nations.

For the future relationship between Denmark and China, the woman parliament member noted that China is a friend of Denmark and the two have achieved cooperation in education and nursing training. Meanwhile, there are more fields, such as engineering, for the two nations to seek cooperation.

During the interview, the Danish Ambassador said it is the third time for him to be present to the NPC annual conference. He said he cherished the precious opportunity to listen to the speeches of Chinese leaders as well the blueprint of China's future development. That would help him to catch the possibility of cooperation between Denmark and China.

In his work report, Chairman Wu noted climate change is the biggest challenge that the human kind is facing, ushering in international cooperation in this field. The NPC and its Standing Committee pay highly attention towards this issue and vow to conduct international exchange and cooperation with overseas organizations and counterpart parliaments. With mutual understanding enhanced, a cooperative atmosphere will be formed in the world in dealing with global climate changes.

The ambassador told reporters that Denmark and China can strengthen their cooperation in the fields of environmental protection and climate changes. Reports said that the Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen wrote a letter to Premier Wen in February, hailing Chinese government's submission on China's measures to reduce greenhouse gas emission in accordance with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. He also praised Premier Wen's suggestion that future negotiations should be held with the framework of the UN convention.

At the same time, Ambassador Jeppe noted that the two nations have great potential of cooperation in technological innovations and the transition towards a knowledge-oriented society and some other fields. ■



The Parliament Building of Denmark in Copenhagen. *File photo*

Foreign media hails outcome of NPC, CPPCC sessions

Foreign media lavish praises on a positive response China has made in coping with global financial crisis and remarkable success it has scored in this regard, and global media are now looking forward to these two sessions to transmit the world a renewed hope and confidence.

As the world was hit by a stern financial crisis in the past 2009, China and other countries faced a serious, immense test and challenge in this crisis, said a Syrian scholar and freelance writer in an interview with a People's Daily reporter, but China, however, soon extricate itself from an economic impasse and embarked on an early recovery. This is of great significance to the realization of global economic recovery as a whole.

This not only affirms the recognition of a vital role China has been playing in the world financial crisis, he noted, but he also expresses or elaborates the reason why world media has been playing high attention to China's NPC and CPPCC sessions.

All economies worldwide endured an "economic winter" when the banking turmoil swept across the entire globe, said a senior Thai official and a member of the Thai Local Administration Committee to PD resident reporters in Thailand. Positive response to the world financial crisis has ensured China's contrarian economic growth in a V-reversal type, so the nation became the first country on earth to attain a recovery and arrest increasing global attention. A clear, definite direction in the future development of Chinese economy would likely be formulated during the two sessions, which are expected to fill people with a renewed hope or confidence.

Pakistan's Daily Post chief editor said he had a personal memory of China's NPC and CPPCC sessions. When the two conferences were in session, he talked to or interviewed some Chinese taxi drivers, journalists and men or women in street; so he had the impression that they concern themselves with major topics under deliberation at the two sessions. This not only offers a debate among NPC deputies and CPPCC National Committee members on the national development and people's livelihoods but provides a superb opportunity for ordinary people to air their views and partake in China's policy making.

Global media interpreted one after another China's 2010 NPC and CPPCC sessions from varied perspectives. Professor Srikanth Kongdapalli of international studies noted that China is India's close neighbor and also a reference body to India's development.

Moreover, he said, economic growth in China and its development mode is of utmost concern to personages in India's economic circles.

The World News of Thailand devoted a half-page space to China's NPC and CPPCC sessions. A headline article is focused on the work report of the Chinese government to be submitted, explaining that China would accelerate the transformation of its economic growth mode, while stepping up cultural development and going in for an all-round, comprehensive implementation of the strategy of relying on science and education to build up the nation and the strategy of hinging on talents or intelligence to make the nation strong.

Thailand's Daily News reported on March 2 edition on the situation in China's economic and social development with particular attention given to increasing the national input in agriculture and rural areas and to raising the prices of farm produce or agricultural products.

New York Times reported that investors will be deliberating (or combing) the annual government work report and pay close attention to see if there are any new measures after China resumes the stability of its steady economic recovery. Meanwhile, the Associated Press noted in a report on the same day that China's annual legislative session comes at a time when its strength is growing indeed. The Chinese government is likely to further increase its input in the fields of education, pensions and medical insurance and continue to improve its social security network.

The chief of the China society (Ottawa), Canada, underscored China's endeavors to eradicate poverty. Chinese leaders visit rural farmers during the Spring Festival annually over recent years and this shows their concern for the livelihoods of villagers and rural development, he said. Irrefutable facts show that China has enlarged input in rural villages, so as to reduce rural poverty, and the eradication of rural poverty will be China's major contribution to the world.

The magic for China to rid itself out of poverty is definitely to make greater efforts to develop domestic consumption markets and enlarge domestic demand while giving more heed to the export-oriented business or industries, he said.

As China's legislature and advisory body ended their annual sessions, media from overseas and foreign experts and scholars

alike have highly commended third annual sessions of the 11th NPC and the 11th National Committee of CPPCC. Meanwhile, they highlight a positive message Premier Wen Jiabao released during his press conference at the closing session of China's NPC on March 15.

In an interview with People's Daily reporters, Dr. Surin Pit-suwan, Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the NPC and CPPCC 2010 sessions have reaped a lot of significant outcome, which would indicate the direction of China's future development and provide a policy support to help the Chinese government to solve practical issues it is currently facing, so as to obtain the sustainable development of Chinese economy.

The "Millennium Newspaper" in Mexico has reported that the Chinese government cites the maintenance of economic stability as a most crucial task for the coming year. China's greatest challenge in the economic field, however, is to maintain a stable and relatively fast (economic) growth after the eruption of global financial crisis, said a visiting professor of international strategic issues from Brazil's supreme military academy and director of China-Asia Pacific Institute.

Chinese leaders take precautions to speed up transforming the mode of economic development, enhance the environmental protection, develop the low-carbon economy and narrow the urban-rural gap, which is conducive to China's sustainable economic growth and the eradication of main obstacles along the road of sustainable development.

China Business Daily in the US noted in a commentary on the in-depth reporting page that China's annual NPC and CPPCC sessions have drawn global attention. The Chinese government reaffirms that it would unswervingly push forward the reform and further expand the opening-up, so that the world has once again felt the nation's firm resolve to open itself further to the outside world.

Mainstream media overseas have reported in their prime time the Chinese Premier's press conference. Reuter news agency, for example, has the news reports titled that Premier Wen says China would maintain the currency stability, and its stories center around Chinese currency exchange rate, the world economy, China's stabilized pick-up, the trade issue and other related topics to quote Wen's replies to reporters' queries.

In its reports, the Associated Press (AP) stresses the latest sign of China's greater government vigilance on global financial crisis and efforts of expanding the hard-won economic recovery so as to stabilize the situation and to prevent repetitious economic development with an indication that economic development remain the focus of attention in the country.

China will maintain a smoother, faster economic growth and stimulus policy measures, says the Agence france-press (AFP) in a signed article, and Beijing would not cede to foreign pressure to boost the value of its currency.

Meanwhile, Russia's Information Agency Novosti (or RIA) quoted Premier Wen as saying that "We oppose mutual accusation between countries, and even using coercion to force a country to raise its exchange rate, as doing so is not conducive or favorable to the reform on the yuan exchange rate.

Kyodo News in Japan has quoted Premier Wen as saying that the RMB yuan is currently not undervalued, and stressing that the yuan exchange rate would basically be maintained in the future, and Japan's NHK reported that Premier Wen highlighted the attainment of the structural adjustment of China's economy, the change of economic development mode and the efforts to contain inflation.

Agencia EFE, a national news agency in Spain, also reported that

the Chinese government has sought to conduct more contacts or engagement with overseas investors, and China would continue its policy of opening-up, and this third largest global economy would welcome foreign companies and high-tech firms in particular.

Mohan Guruswamy, president of the center for policy alternatives, New Dehhi, told People's Daily's resident reporters in India that Premier Wen underscored the determination of the Chinese government to alter China's economic development mode and set the long-term direction for sustained development of Chinese economy.

Mr. Keynes, the president of Media Water Global based in the capital city of Ottawa, Canada, who had come from agriculture areas in Western Canada, acknowledged that Premier Wen voiced his deep concerns and great interest in the production and living conditions of Chinese farmers at the press conference. And he also expressed the belief that China, as Premier Wen stated clearly, has long resolved to gradually eradicate the rich-poor gap and seek the common prosperity. (People's Daily) ■

China will maintain a smoother, faster economic growth and stimulus policy measures, says the Agence france-press (AFP) in a signed article, and Beijing would not cede to foreign pressure to boost the value of its currency.

Legislators and advisors urge economic mode transformation



Premier Wen Jiabao delivers the government work report at the opening ceremony of the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC at the Great Hall of the People on March 5 in Beijing. *Ma Zengke*

March 13 and 14, 2010, respectively saw the conclusion of the 3rd Session of the 11th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the 3rd Session of the 11th National People's Congress (NPC). How to speed up the transformation of the mode of economic development in China has been the hottest topic of the Two Sessions.

For a nation that had just rebounded from the turbulence of international financial crisis, 2010 is both a decisive year for fully realizing the target of the 11th Five-Year Plan and also a year to lay the foundations for the development in the 12th Five-Year Plan period.

This is a critical choice. In the face of the complex post-crisis situation, China needs to grasp the opportunity when world economy is undergoing major adjustments and to develop rapidly for the sake of China's long-term economic and social development and building a well-off society.

After 10 days of deliberations, discussions and conferring, 5,000 or so NPC deputies and CPPCC members gradually reached and let known by the world the so-called "China Consensus."

It's imperative to accelerate the transformation of the mode of China's economic development.

"In the first quarter of last year, the economic growth in Guangdong Province, for the first time in the past 30 years, was slower than the national level. The ongoing international financial crisis reminds us the extensive mode of economic growth, which heavily relies on international market and foreign investment, is hard to continue," said NPC deputy Huang Huahua, the governor of Guangdong Province, whose remarks got a ready response among the audience.

On the one hand, the international financial crisis stampedes the speed of economic growth; on the other hand, it poses a challenge towards China's mode of development. Participants attending the Two Sessions agreed that immediate actions must be taken to transform the mode of economic development.

According to NPC deputy and Party Secretary of Zhejiang Province Zhao Hongzhu, China can achieve a complete victory in dealing with the financial crisis only if its economic growth resumed to or above the pre-crisis level. More important, China must take the "opportunity from crisis" and transform its development mode.

The government work report arranged in six aspects for the transformation in 2010: Continue the adjustment and rejuvenation of major industries, foster strategic emerging industries, promote the development of small and medium-sized companies, accelerate the development of service sectors, push forward energy saving and emission reduction and promote a harmonious development of regional economy.

"Every aspect has corresponding policies and specific requirements (in the work report), and all the six aspects are inter-related, mapping out the way of transformation to be carried out in 2010," said NPC deputy Chen Shiqiang, chairman of Henan Hongchang Group.

"That the growth target of this year is set around 8% means we can invest more in structural adjustments and in promoting and improving the quality and efficiency of economic growth,"

NPC deputy Wang Zhan suggested. “We must take scientific outlook on development as a guide and promote the transformation of the economic development mode through policies and institutions.”

“To ensure long-term development, the structural adjustment has to be done, and the transformation of the economic development mode has to be done determinedly,” NPC deputy and Mayor of Loudi in Hunan Province Zhang Shuo-fu said. “Loudi is a resource-based city, which feels mountains of pressure to adjust the structure, but however difficult, we must pay attention to its implementation.”

To transform the development mode, efforts must be made at “speeding up.”

“As far as enterprises are concerned, technological innovations and structural adjustment must be carried out with a sense of urgency of ‘cannot afford to wait,’ a sense of crisis of ‘cannot afford to slow down’ and a sense of responsibility of ‘cannot afford to sit still’ ...” The remarks were made by CPPCC member Long Guojian, who is also chairman of Changsha Zhonglian Heavy Industry Science and Technology Development Co., Ltd.

To transform the mode of economic development, “transformation” must be carried out in actuality.

NPC deputy and General Manager of Jinzhou Petrochemical Company of CNPC Pei Hongbin illustrated the toughness of practicing “transformation” with energy saving and emission reduction as an example.

“The work report proposes to fight an arduous and protracted campaign of energy saving and emission reduction. Arduous means the work is too hard; protracted means it will take a long time.”

To transform the mode of economic development, effects must be made on “development.”

NPC deputy and Party Secretary of Jiangsu Province Liang Baohua, associating with the reality in Jiangsu Province, proposed “three transformations” through an innovation-driven and endogenous growth: Transformation from relying mainly on consumption of resources to innovation-driven, from extensive growth to intensive growth, and from an urban-rural-dual-structure to the integration of urban-rural development.

The transformation is a profound reform in the economic field. CPPCC member Chi Fulin, a veteran in the study of China’s reform, maintained that currently it was imperative to speed up a new round of reforms with the transformation of economic

“This round of reform concerns the success of the transformation of mode of economic development and sustainable development of China’s economy and society in the next 30 years.”

growth mode as the main line, involving economic, social, administrative and other institutional reforms. “This round of reform concerns the success of the transformation of mode of economic development and sustainable development of China’s economy and society in the next 30 years.”

No slacking off is allowed in ensuring and improving of people’s livelihood.

Have roads and electricity been extended to every township? Can every child go to school? Has the policy of “free food, free boarding, free education” been implemented in the middle and primary schools in farming and pastoral areas? Are there clinics in towns?

On the morning of March 6, at the plenary panel of the Tibetan delegation, General Secretary Hu Jintao was particularly attentive to the speeches of Baidancuomu of Menba nationality and Xiaohong of Luoba nationality. He also asked about the production and living conditions of the two minorities.

Nothing about the interests of the people is trivial, and all concerning people’s livelihood weighs utmost. A strong message about ensuring and improving the livelihood of the people



A night scene of Shanghai’s Pudong New Area. Pudong takes the lead in transforming its economic growth mode. *Xinhua*



Qianwan Wharf in Qingdao, Shandong Province. *CFP*

was transmitted again at the sessions.

From the central leaders to ordinary delegates, from NPC conference venues to CPPCC panel discussions, from migrant workers' difficulty to dwell in city, the pain of "humble dwelling" due to high housing prices, and the sufferings of the "ant tribe" of college graduates, to the long-standing problems of seeing doctors, schooling and employment ... All these heated discussions and topics regarding people's livelihood reflect a consistency between the Two Sessions.

To realize social harmony, it demands to improve people's livelihood and let the development fruits equally shared by the people. It is also an important driving force to expand domestic consumption and to fuel economic growth.

"The international financial crisis exposed the fact that the sluggish domestic demand is the 'stumbling block' impeding the sound development of our economy," NPC deputy and Vice President of Tianjin Agricultural University Xing Kezhi said. "Irrational income distribution, low social security level, abnormally high housing prices and other livelihood problems stopped people to spend their money."

Kang Houming, a deputy representing migrant workers, said, "Improving people's livelihood is the fundamental purpose of economic development. Only by endeavoring to ensure and improve people's livelihood, can economic development maintain a sustainable momentum, can social progress have a solid foundation, and the State enjoy long-term stability."

"Everything we do is to make people live happier and with more dignity, so that our society will be more righteous and more harmonious. All these words in the work report are what we ordinary people have deep down in heart!"

In 30 years of reform and opening up, China's economy has created a development miracle which attracts worldwide atten-



Workers of the China South Locomotive & Rolling Stock Co. Ltd work at the general assembly workshop of electric locomotives. Electric locomotives have played an important role in the development of railways in Central Asia. In recent years, China has sped up its economic transformation. *Li Ming*

tion, but the lagging behind of social development is becoming increasingly prominent. As the world's largest developing country, whether China can solve its livelihood problems on its previous basis and can successfully implement social transformation is what people at home and abroad are concerned about.

"In addition to education, healthcare, pension and some other old topics, I noted two new topics concerning people's livelihood: High housing prices and the citizenization of migrant workers," Secretary-General of China Development Research Foundation Lu Mai said, "China's livelihood reforms are 'wading' the 'profound zone' such as income distribution, household registration system, housing system, medical care and education system."

Recently, reforms involving important areas and key segments of people's livelihood are kicked off: The construction of the social security system is under way, medicine and healthcare reforms have been launched, the "Medium- and Long-Term Reform and Development Plan of National Education" is soliciting opinions.

CPPCC member and an official from the National Federation of Trade Union Zhang Shiping said, "Despite the initiatives taken by the government, some serious institutional drawbacks regarding the old livelihood issues are still existent, and the initiatives are still far short of the people's expectations."

Suffer the people's sufferings, worry about the people's worries, be concerned with what concerns the people and no slacking off is allowed in the ensuring and improving of people's livelihood.

The government work report allotted a chapter to deploy the hot livelihood issues: Do everything possible to expand employment, give priority to the developing of education, accelerate the improvement of social security system which covers urban

and rural residents, reform income distribution system, promote stable and healthy development of real estate market, speed up the reform and development of medicine and health care, carry out the population and family planning work.

CPPCC member and President of China Urban Construction Holding Group Yu Lian listed the sets of data concerning livelihood in the government work report: The central government will allocate 43.3 billion yuan for the promotion of employment, invest 318.5 billion in social security, assign 63.2 billion as affordable housing subsidies. Besides, the pilot projects of new rural social pension insurance will be expanded to cover 23% of the counties, the standard of financial subsidies for basic medical insurance for urban residents and new type of rural cooperative medical care will be increased to 120 yuan.

Yu said, "This livelihood report has much gold content, displaying an exciting blueprint for the development of people's livelihood."

Ensure people's right to vote, to know, to participate, to express and to supervise with the aim to realize socialist democracy and gather wisdom and strength from all parties.

On the morning of March 8, the second plenary of the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC was held at the Great Hall of the People, and the draft amendment to the electoral law were brought to the assembly for examination and discussion.

According to the amendment, deputies are to be elected according to the proportion of the population in urban and rural areas; There should be an appropriate number of grass-roots representatives; stress is laid on ensuring the rights to vote among voters and representatives.

The draft amendment generated a strong response among NPC deputies and CPPCC members and even in society. CPPCC member and President of China National Lawyers Association Yu Ning maintained that the spirit of equality ran through the draft, which enriched the contents of the socialist democratic

politics, helped gather intelligence from all parties and mobilize all forces to join the cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics.

People's democracy is the lifeline of socialism. Sticking firmly to the development of socialist democracy and ensuring the people to be masters of the nation are not only significant contents of building socialism with Chinese characteristics, but also inevitable demands of gathering wisdom and power of all parties.

In discussing the government work report, members of Chongqing delegation vied to give a speech on price fluctuations of pigs. "The great investment of the central government was primarily laid on agricultural production, and the construction of market system did not embrace enough support," said NPC deputy Ma Zhengqi, vice mayor of Chongqing Municipality.

"We must get out of the circle of 'reform means price hike'. Reform does not mean the shrugging off of responsibilities on the part of the government, even less an opportunity for businesses to make money. In areas where monopoly still exists, cost examination and social supervision should be strengthened!" said CPPCC member Li Lixin at a CPPCC group meeting.

Discussing problems without understatement and proposing suggestions without parroting, sparks of idea confrontations can be seen everywhere at the Two Sessions.

Will independent admission create new inequalities between urban and rural students? Party Secretary of Fudan University Qin Shaode explained the inexistence of this phenomenon with an examination point set in Zhejiang Province as an example. NPC deputy Song Wenxin from Taishan Nationality Middle School in Tai'an,

Shandong Province doubted that independent admission might add to the examination cost of the rural students.

Is it the right time for the introduction of the so-called property tax? CPPCC member Jia Kang considered it the right time to implement tax reform, but NPC deputy Wang Gang thought that housing price has little to do with the property tax.

The system of people's congresses is China's fundamental political system. More than 2,000 deputies earnestly discussed the work report of the NPC Standing Committee and offered advice and suggestions on how to further the role of this funda-

Sticking firmly to the development of socialist democracy and ensuring the people to be masters of the nation are not only significant contents of building socialism with Chinese characteristics, but also inevitable demands of gathering wisdom and power of all parties.

mental system –

Pay close attention to the making of legal system, transform the mode of economic development, strengthen the efforts on livelihood issues, improve ways and means of supervision ... Deputies maintained that the NPC Standing Committee should perform its supervisory functions according to law, employ various forms of supervision, and urge and support the government, the court and the procuratorate to work in accordance with the goals proposed in their respective work reports, and ensure the successful completion of the annual economic and social development tasks.

NPC deputy and Director of Shanghai Municipal People's Congress Liu Yungeng stressed the need to strictly obey the law of supervision, make functionary the "reversed pressure mechanism" from the masses, enhance the effectiveness of supervision by the NPC and promote the construction of democratic politics.

CPC-led multi-party cooperation and political consultation system is China's fundamental political system. CPPCC members from all nationalities and social sectors enthusiastically expressed their opinions on how to improve political consultation, democratic supervision, and participation in and deliberation of State affairs.

Give full play to CPPCC's functions as an important channel and a platform in the expansion of the citizens' orderly political participation, carry out a dynamic trace analysis of the deep-rooted problems in economic life, place heavy emphasis on the inspection and research of excessive income disparity and other livelihood issues.

Many members said that the Standing Committee of CPPCC had deployed the work in the new year in six aspects, which are appropriate and quite concrete, setting a clear direction for the CPPCC.



Yunnan Province in Southwest China exploits solar energy resources thanks to its abundance in sunlight. The province has accelerated its economic transformation in recent years. *Li Yiguang*

Sun Nanshen from the Democratic League of China suggested that the CPPCC should firmly focus on the transformation of the mode of economic development, make in-depth inspection and research in low-carbon economy and regional economy and present high-level comments and suggestions.

"Without political reform and economic reform, modernization could never be achieved ..."

"Ensure effectively the democratic rights of the people as masters, in particular the right to vote, to know, to participate, to express and to supervise ..."

"Create conditions that allow people to criticize, monitor and supervise the government, and meanwhile give full play to the supervisory role of the news media, so as to make power operate in the sunshine ..."

The government work report mapped out the plan for the development of socialist democratic politics and for the building of service-oriented government to the people's satisfaction.

"The essence of socialist democracy is to mobilize the enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity of all parties through the rational design of the system," NPC deputy, Vice Principal of Linhai Foreign Languages School of Zhejiang Province Ren Meiqin said. "An important outcome of the Two Sessions this year is that after heated discussions, the consensus on promoting socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics is clearer, the direction more definite and the deployment more specific."

Being realistic, pragmatic, enterprising and innovative to meet new challenges in the post-crisis period.

This is a memorable scene:

On March 8, at the plenary panel of Tianjin Delegation, when textile worker Zhang Xiaoyan mentioned the recruitment difficulty in some enterprises, General Secretary Hu Jintao asked to learn more about the situation and demanded the labor and social security departments and trade unions to do more for workers and help the migrant workers be employed.

"The central leaders and the delegates made in-depth discussions around specific issues, not only raising questions and finding out the causes, but also discussing solutions," recalled Zhang, who still remembered every detail about the realistic and pragmatic spirit shown at the panel that day.

Analyzing problems rationally, facing challenges calmly -- the realistic and pragmatic, open and transparent and innovative and enterprising spirit shown at the Two Sessions have touched numerous deputies and members like Zhang.

Irrational industrial structure makes transforming and upgrading a heavy task; low level of urbanization makes urban and

rural coordinated development a heavy task; a huge population with a poor foundation and financial weakness makes coordinated economic and social development a heavy task ... On the morning of March 10, at the plenary panel of Henan delegation, NPC deputy and Governor of Henan Province Guo Gengmao used data and examples to expose “the prominent contradictions and problems Henan faces in its development.” He also proposed countermeasures.

“We feel very sorry for the ‘poisonous cowpea’ incident, which sounded the alarm for us, requiring us to improve the institutional mechanisms. We welcome the media to monitor and help us,” said Governor of Hainan Province Luo Baoming on the afternoon of March 7, when the Hainan delegation conducted an open group discussion.

Mental state is the outward manifestation of a nation’s intrinsic qualities. In post-crisis era, all kinds of positive changes and adverse effects eliminate and replace each other, short-term problems and long-term conflicts are intertwined, domestic factors and international factors interact, dilemmas grow in economic and social development.

In face of the complicated international and domestic situations, it is particularly important to adhere unswervingly to the realistic and pragmatic way of doing things, and to maintain the state of mind of being enterprising and innovative.

“This year we must continue to deepen the reform in key areas and crucial links, and strive to achieve new breakthroughs.” The government work report made general mobilization for the new round of reform: The reform of State-owned enterprises, prices of resource products and environmental protection fees the financial and taxation systems “must be carried out with an enterprising and innovative spirit and a striving attitude. Seize the opportunity and deepen the reform,” said NPC deputy and Party Secretary of Taizhou in Zhejiang Province Chen Tiexiong.

Meanwhile, social change also calls for innovation. Innovation is the soul of national progress. Independent innovation, innovation-driven, scientific and technological innovation, financial innovation, cultural innovation, social management system reform and innovation – In the 36-page work report, the word “innovation” appears frequently.

“Without innovation, my business will be closed down. Innovation is a spirit, is the permanent power for development,” NPC deputy and Chairman of Henan Coal Industry Chemical Group Chen Xuefeng said. “With constraints of resources and environment becoming more and more prominent, where is the way out for the coal enterprises? I think coal enterprises should



Passersby at the Wangfujing Street watch a live TV broadcasting of the work report made by Premier Wen Jiabao. CFP

In the 36-page work report, the word “innovation” appears frequently.

transform their ideas, shift from a ‘coal-headed’ style to a ‘low-carbon project-headed’ one with the utilization of high-carbon resources. “

In today’s world, the competition to occupy the commanding development point and strive for new competitive advantages has begun. “In the new round of scientific and technological revolution, China, who has contributed ‘Four Great

Inventions of ancient China’ to the world, can no longer stay aloof and let slip the opportunities,” said NPC deputy and Mayor of Chengde, Hebei Province Zhang Gujiang.

“This is an era of rapid development!” said NPC deputy Li Shuxian from Haiwei village in Yi Autonomous County of Yunnan Province, at her hotel room after hearing the government work report. She closed the door and checked materials on the Internet. The deputy from the grassroots level said, “There are many new terms in the report, such as ‘Internet of Things,’ ‘Forest Carbon Sink,’ and ‘integration of three networks’ ... It really won’t do without strengthening study and grasping the latest achievements of scientific and technological development!”

The two Sessions of 2010 was like an invisible magnetic field, attracting attentions from numerous people and continuously releasing tremendous energy. The propositions of the Party and the government and the expectations of the people, were here elevated and blended into a national will. When the curtain is drawn on the first decade of the new century, the great cause of the 1.3 billion Chinese people to build an overall well-off society will surely reach a new level! (Xinhua) ■

A historic leap forward in Electoral Law

By Zhang Weiwei

The 3rd Session of the 11th National People's Congress (NPC) passed the amendment to the Electoral Law on March 14, marking another historic leap forward in China's democratic political system.

The Electoral Law, born in 1953, one year earlier than the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, has gone through one "overhaul" and four "maintenance services" in the past years. The ratio urban or rural populations represented by deputies have been changing from 8:1 to 4:1, for example. Each amendment of the election law reflected the country's changes

of society and times, and witnessed the continuing pursuit of democracy and rule of law in China.

The latest amendment covers a wide range of reforms and changes, including adjusting the rural-urban ratio of deputies to 1:1, ensuring certain percentage of grass-root representatives, increasing the transparency of deputy candidates, and standardizing electoral procedures.

In the eyes of the people's congress deputies, the Chinese society has been undergoing profound changes; the socialistic market economy has been taking shape; the legal system with Chinese characteristics has been established. The new amendment to the Electoral Law will set a solid foundation for the country's democratic political system to become more open and more compatible.



The 3rd Session of the 11th National People's Congress (NPC) holds the second plenary conference at the Great Hall of the People on March 8, 2010. NPC Standing Committee Vice Chairman Wang Zhaoguo speaks about the amendment to the Electoral Law. *CFP*

Same rural-urban ratio: better equality

Former leader Deng Xiaoping expressed his wish 50 years ago that our country would adopt a more improved electoral system in the future as the political, economic and cultural sectors developed.

The current situation has changed a lot since the last amendment. As Vice Chairman of NPC Standing Committee Wang Zhaoguo said, the industrialization and urbanization have been accelerating, the economic and cultural development have been moving ahead dramatically also in rural areas, and the social structure has been much different than before. The urban residents accounted for 29.04 percent in 1995. In 2009 the percentage rose to 46.6. In the mean time, the people's congresses of all levels have accumulated rich experiences through numerous elections. Now that the socialist democracy and legal system have made significant progresses, everything is ready for the country to amend its laws to elect people's congress deputies based on the same ratio of urban and rural populations.

The new Electoral Law, therefore, stipulates that the quota of NPC deputies is decided by the NPC Standing Committee based on the populations of each province, autonomous region and municipality, with each deputy representing equal number of urban or rural residents. The law also makes sure each area,

ethnic minority and social class has certain number of representatives.

Liaoning Province has participated in the electoral law research program organized by the NPC. Wang Qiong, deputy director of the standing committee of the provincial people's congress, told the reporter that he believed time has come for the election of people's congress deputies based on equal rural and urban populations.

"On the one hand, the reform and opening-up in the past 30 years have come with improved political and social environments, closer number of urban and rural residents, and better awareness of rural people in rule of law and political participation," he said.

On the other hand, experiments of equal urban-rural ratio in some places have been proved effective and practical. The amendment will further foster people's enthusiasm and creativity, so as to balance the development in urban and rural areas and help build a harmonious society.

"The same urban-rural ratio has guaranteed citizens' equal electoral rights, and thus meet the expectations of the rural people," said Ding Ruilian, secretary of a village committee of the Communist Party of China in Inner Mongolia.

"Now that many rural people's incomes have grown significantly, their education levels, business and managing skills have also grown, they have greater interest in participating in managing the national affairs," she added. "These people becoming deputies will help improve the representing structure, and help realize 'Three Equalities.'"

When making a speech on the amendment to the Electoral Law, NPC Standing Committee Vice Chairman Wang Zhaoguo said the election of people's congress deputies must be in line with "Three Equalities," which is to ensure equal electoral rights of all citizens by electing deputies based on the same ratio of urban-rural populations; to ensure regional equality by electing similar basic number of deputies in different administrative regions, no matter they have a bigger or smaller population; and to ensure equality of all ethnic minorities – even the minority with the smallest population will have at least one representative.

Wang Shouchu, a member of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of the NPC, agreed that the 1:1 urban-rural electoral ratio is in line with the principles of equality among all citizens, equality among all ethnic minorities, and equality among all regions.

"China is a country run by the people. Every one has equal

rights in election, politics, decision making, and managing State affairs. There is no difference because of their residential areas or walks of life," he said, adding that the amendment of Electoral Law will help accelerate building the socialist democracy, encouraging more people to participate in political affairs and managing the country, and help promote a harmonious society.

Jiang Xiangming, a deputy of Maonan ethnic minority in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, has a personal experience in the "Three Qualities."

There are less than 100,000 ethnic Maonan people in China, which makes Maonan one of the 22 ethnic minorities with relatively smaller populations. If the election is based on population only, there should be no NPC deputy from Maonan minority, Jiang said.

"However, we have a NPC deputy at every session, which proved that the country has ensured equality for every ethnic minority," he said.

Ho Iat Seng, NPC deputy from Macao, also agreed with the latest amendment of the Electoral Law.

"Although we have only 550,000 people, we still have certain number of representatives to participate in the managing of State affairs, which is a clear sign of regional equality," he said.

The amendment will further foster people's enthusiasm and creativity, so as to balance the development in urban and rural areas and help build a harmonious society.

Enlarging grass-roots democracy: greater representation

The amendment of the Electoral Law adds that the people's congresses at national and local levels should have wider representation, including certain number of grass-root deputies, especially workers, farmers and intellectuals.

Besides, research showed that some villages and townships have more than 100,000 or 200,000 people following recent reforms to combine smaller villages, which made the quota of no more than 130 too small for the village and township deputies. Based on this finding, the amendment of the Electoral Law changed the quota from 130 to 160 to include more grass-root representatives.

"I'm a deputy from the countryside, I'm so excited for the changes in the amendment," said Zhang Liansheng, NPC deputy and secretary of the Party committee at Xi'an village of the city Longyan, Fujian Province.

He said rural deputies were born and grew up in the countryside, they know the countryside very well. The amendment

will enable the government to learn more about the grass-root levels and the countryside, and better solve problems faced by the farmers.

“The amendment reflects greater trust of the central government toward the farmers, and the rise of farmers’ political status,” he said. “I hope more farmers can participate in the governance of their country, and I also hope the amended Electoral Laws can really be carried out.”

In response to popular perception that grass-root deputies have a lower quality, farmer deputy Zhu Xueqin said that the issue needs enough attention, but cannot be exaggerated. The quality issue can be solved through training and education. She pointed out that in the earlier years, the Communist Party of China’s electoral system was based on a majority of farmers, and it worked well. Today we still need the

“I hope more farmers can participate in the governance of their country, and I also hope the amended Electoral Laws can really be carried out.”

new generation of farmers to express their political wills and interests.

Zhang Zhi’an, president of Hubei-based wine maker Foster’s and NPC deputy, said the quality of a deputy is not decided by his academic diploma, social titles or awards he received, the key qualification lies in his ability to learn the truth, speak the truth for the interest of the people, and whether he can make useful proposals to better run the country.

With the progress of times, ordinary people in cities or rural areas are more than ever willing to have a

greater say in order to protect their lawful interests. Zhang Xiu-long, a deputy and Party secretary of Laibing, Guangxi, said the biggest say needs to be realized by the platform of the people’s congress. He added that the Electoral Law amendment that ensures greater representation at the grass-root levels and reduce the percentage of officials as deputies, is a positive move to enhance people’s right to run the country, and is helpful for a harmonious development of society.

Grass-root deputies often better represent normal people’s concerns. Li Qinglin, NPC deputy and vice chairman of China Laws Society, said the grass-root deputies often have their unique understanding of the civil issues, thanks to their long-term working experience at the grass-root levels.

“Because the civil issues matter a lot to themselves, they have greater motives than officials to speak up for the normal people, and their proposals are often more plausible,” said Li, adding that the increase of lower-level deputies reflected the top leadership’ willingness to listen to more calls from the ordinary people.

Meeting the constituents: better transparency

“In reality, the grass-root elections often came with lukewarm enthusiasm from the constituents,” said Li Qinglin, who is familiar with the local elections through years of experience. As the profiling materials of deputy candidates were often too simple and following outdated formats, the voters were not enthusiastic to vote as a result of lack of knowledge.

The Electoral Law amendment stipulates that candidates “should,” instead of “can” in the previous version, meet the constituents before election. Li said this change means that it has become compulsory for the candidates to introduce themselves to the constituents and answer their questions.



Tibetan people, breaking free from slavery system, for the first time vote for their own representatives in suburban Lhasa in 1963. Yuan Ling

The amendment also stipulates that candidates should provide real identity and resume information to the electoral committee. If there is any discrepancy, they should report to the constituents or people's congress deputies.

According to Bai Suning, deputy director of the Standing Committee of Jiangsu People's Congress, the province arranged candidates to meet the constituents as early as the year of 2007, when more than 130,000 candidates of county and village people's congress deputies introduce themselves face-to-face to the constituents, reported their working plans, and answered questions. About 95.5 percent of county-level deputy candidates and 87.2 percent of village-level candidates have met with the constituents. The citizens no longer just "heard about the candidates' names but never saw them," and were more enthusiastic to participate in elections.

"Our Hai'an county has been arranging deputy candidates to meet the constituents, and more than 98 percent county-level people's congress deputy candidates have been contacting the constituents, collecting more than 1,600 proposals or complaints each year," said Shan Xiaoming, mayor of Hai'an and NPC deputy, adding that the amendment is a successful implementation of the grass-root experiences.

Secret voting place: democracy in details

The essence of democracy cannot be achieved without free implementation of rights and free expression of will. The Electoral Law amendment stipulates that secret voting place should be set up, and mobile voting boxes should be better monitored. These seemingly small changes are considered to have great implications.

Chen Sixi, vice chairman of the NPC Internal and Judicial Affairs Committee, said the secret voting place will enable voters to register a vote at their own will, and without any interruption or interference. It ensures the privacy and secrecy of ballot vote, and will promote democratic voting system.

"Secret voting place will help prevent bribed voting," said Li Qinglin.

He told the reporter that in some places, people gathered together and looked at each other when voting, candidates who bribed the voter could easily find out if the voter has cast a ballot for him. Now that a secret voting place is set up, candidates will have less motivation to bribe the voters, Li said.

The amendment in 1995 added mobile voting box in order to help people with a disability or those living in remote areas. But with lack of specified regulations, this mobile voting given some people a chance to cheat.

The latest amendment specifies that only people with limited



Farmer NPC deputy Zhu Xuqin (right) speaks at a meeting with Shanghai deputies to review the amendment to the Electoral Law on March 8, 2010.

Chen Shugen

mobility because of disease or poor transportation conditions can vote at mobile boxes.

"The stipulations of secret voting places and mobile voting boxes draw experiences from other countries or regions, making the voting more humane," said Ho Iat Seng, NPC deputy and vice president of the Legislative Assembly of Macao.

Chen Jiabao, director of the Standing Committee of Nanjing Municipal People's Congress, agreed that the stipulations ensured voters' right to freely vote, and also reflect the election's seriousness as well as practicability.

Electoral system is a window to view the progress of a country's democratic political system. Commenting on any law's advantage or backwardness must include the perspective of its particular historical background. It has proved that the series of amendments in Electoral Law since the country's reform and opening-up has provided legal guarantee for the people to implement their right to vote or be elected, and were in line with the actual situation of their times. The latest amendment is the best reply to the current development of China's democratic political system under the social development of the new time. ■



Vice Premier Wang Qishan, together with NPC deputies from Shandong Province, discuss the government work report on March 5. *Wang Baosheng*



NPC deputy Shen Tiemei, who is also the director of Chongqing Municipal Theatre of Chuanju Opera, puts up her hand to make a speech during the meeting of Chongqing Delegation on March 10. *Fei Maohua*



Wang Shucheng, vice director of the Financial and Economic Committee of NPC, makes a speech during the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC. *Du Yang*



NPC deputy Huang Ming, who is also chairman of the Himin Solar Energy Group Co. Ltd, makes a suggestion to carry out rigorous standard on the emission of carbon dioxide. *Zhang Ke*



NPC deputy Wang Zhenhua, who is also the Chief Justice of Liaoning Provincial High People's Court, proposes to pragmatically implement the Judges Law on March 12. *Ju Peng*



NPC deputy Ma Dexiu, who is from Shanghai, speaks aloud when expounding her opinion on March 11. *Fei Maohua*



NPC deputy Gong Xueping (left) interposes a remark when another deputy Qin Shaode makes a speech on March 11. *Fei Maohua*



NPC deputy Du Shanxue, who is also the mayor of Changzhi in Shanxi Province, makes a speech when deliberating the government work report on March 5. *CFP*



NPC deputy Qi Qi, who is also the Chief Justice of Zhejiang Provincial High People's Court, proposes to improve the quality of judges. *Huang Shengang*



Deputies walk out of the Great Hall of the People after the closing ceremony of the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC on March 14. *CFP*



Staff of the Great Hall of the People clean the snow outside of the venue, where the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC was held, on March 14. *Yu Hao*

NPC deputies of ethnic minorities attend the closing ceremony of the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC on March 14. *CFP*





Venue of the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC CFP



Women assistants attending the Two Sessions

Tang Yanjun



A photographer takes a photo at the first press conference of the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC on March 4. Xie Sufang



Chaired by Li Lianning, the first press conference of the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC is held on March 4. NPC session spokesman Li Zhaoxing (left) attended the event. CFP



A female Tibetan reporter conducts an on-the-spot interview in front of the Great Hall of the People. Zhang Weiwei



Reporters conduct an interview with NPC deputy Zhu Xueqin, who represents the massive migrant workers.

Zhang Weiwei



A cluster of reporters surround NPC deputy Shi Yongxin, who is also the abbot of Shaolin Temple in Henan Province, in front of the Great Hall of the People on March 5. *Tang Yanjun*



Foreign reporters interview the plenary meeting of the Taiwan delegation. *Du Yang*



Reporters surround to interview Minister of Health Chen Zhu. *CFP*



Reporters surround and interview Yuan Guiren, who is the minister of education, before he enters the Great Hall of the People on March 5. *Liao Pan*

Headed by Vice Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee Wang Zhaoguo, a NPC delegation paid a goodwill visit to Tunisia, Egypt and Malaysia on March 19-30 at the invitation of the parliaments of the above-mentioned countries.



Prime Minister of Tunisia Mohamed Ghannouchi (right) meets Vice Chairman of NPC Standing Committee Wang Zhaoguo, who is paying a goodwill visit to the African country. *Kang Xinwen*

Vice Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee Wang Zhaoguo (front left) meets Ahmed Fathi Sorour (front right), speaker of People's Parliament in Cairo, capital of Egypt on March 24. After their meeting, Wang also presents gifts to the People's Parliament. *Chen Gongzheng*



Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif (right) meets Wang Zhaoguo, Vice Chairman of NPC Standing Committee, who was conducting a goodwill visit to Egypt, on March 25.

Chen Gongzhen



Vice Chairman of NPC Standing Committee Wang Zhaoguo (left), who is paying a goodwill visit to Tunisia, presents a gift to his Tunisian counterpart Mohamed Afif Chiboub House of Representatives on March 22. *Kang Xinwen*

Vice Chairman of NPC Standing Committee Wang Zhaoguo (second from right) and Samir Laabidi (second from left), who is the minister of youth and sports, watch a painting show by Tunisian children on March 22. A picture exhibition themed on the Shanghai Expo was held in the city of Tunisia, capital of Tunisia. *Kang Xinwen*



Wong Foon Meng, speaker of the upper house of Malaysia, meets visiting Vice Chairman of NPC Standing Committee Wang Zhaoguo (left) in Kuala Lumpur on March 29. *Xiong Ping*

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak meets Vice Chairman of NPC Standing Committee Wang Zhaoguo in Kuala Lumpur, on March 29. Malaysia is the last leg of Wang's three-country goodwill visit. *Xiong Ping*



2 years later, life resumes and business booms in Lhasa



Residents in Lhasa enjoy a Tibetan opera at the Longwangtan (Dragon King) Park in Tibet on February 25. *Jueguo*

Two years after the riots, Lhasa now appears to be peaceful. Barkhor Street, where rioters looted and burned shops in March 2008, is now swarming with tourists and pilgrims. A group of monks in brown robes are prostrating themselves toward the gate of Jokhang Temple. Western backpackers, ambling along and clicking away, all look bewitched by the azure sky, the dazzling sunlight, and the colorful, omnipresent prayer flags fluttering in the unworldly air.

The tension is easily overlooked amid the hustle and bustle of the prosperous city, until one sees those in uniforms. Security guards, police and the paramilitary forces are stationed at almost every intersection downtown and patrolling the streets. On a rooftop near the square in front of Jokhang Temple, two armed policemen keep a watch on the crowd below until sunset.

Their presence instills a sense of security in the businesspeople. “I feel safe when I see the police patrolling streets,” said Li Jinhua, a 29-year-old shop assistant of the menswear store Septwolves on Beijing East Road. The old store was burned to the ground during the riots but soon rebuilt with government subsidies. Favorable policies like exemption from taxes have lured the boss, a 30-something entrepreneur from neighboring Sichuan Province back to the old business.

Yishion, a fashion store on the same street that suffered the worst damage, is now run by its old boss too. Business owners tend to see the riots as “accidental” and seem to have regained confidence in safety.

In a city increasingly dependent on tourism for its revenue, tour guides might be the last people who would like to see any turmoil. “A lot of tourists ask me if it’s safe here within minutes after we met, and I told them, absolutely, yes,” said Laba Zhuoma, a Tibetan tour guide, her hand sweeping out toward the rooftop



A Tibetan vegetable-stall keeper makes a phone call on March 27. A number of vegetable booths have been set up in Lhasa to provide fresh vegetables for local people. *Su Dan*

guards across the street from where she was sipping butter tea on the second floor of a chic restaurant.

Education in the temple

Security guards are also seen in Drepung Monastery, five kilometers from the western suburb of Lhasa. There is consensus among officials and scholars that a stable Tibet relies on the situation of temples, especially Drepung Monastery, where earlier Dalai Lamas resided and their later reincarnations had reserved the title of honorary abbot of the monastery. It was here that monks began their protest on March 10, 2008 and triggered the riots four days later.

After the riots, more officials were sent to join the management committee of the monastery, which now composes 12 monks and nine officials—some as

high-level as the vice-chairman of Lhasa municipal people’s political consultative conference, Luobu.

Dozens of officials have been sent to Drepung to function as a “legal education working team” since the riots. Twenty of them are assigned the responsibility of educating the monks to be patriotic and law-abiding, through seminars, individual talks and playing videos of Shenzhou VII spacecraft launching and the parade of 60th anniversary of the founding of the New China, according to Luobu.

The working team said the education was rewarding. “Monks had long been secretly listening to overseas radios like VOA and BBC’s Tibetan service and spreading the Dalai Lama’s edicts in the temple, but no one has been found listening to such programs or spreading news about him since the education started,” said Yundan, a Party official of the autonomous region.

“This is not a campaign-like educa-



Residents in Lhasa purchase goods before the lunar new year on January 24, 2009. The abundant provision of goods in the city has ensured prices to maintain stable during the festival days. *Gesangdawa*

tion but a long-term one,” said Luosang Jiangcun, chief of United Front Work Department of Committee of the CPC in Tibet. He said that if there was any lesson the government needs to learn from the past, it is that the government should be “courageous enough to manage religious affairs.”

“Of course there should be a pretext—the management should be based on law,”

he added.

Most temples in Tibet made their last recruitment in 2003, and the government now imposes a population cap on monks. Before the 14th Dalai Lama went to exile in 1959, Tibet had 110,000 monks, over one-tenth of its population. Now the number has fallen to 46,000.

Monks, especially those in Lhasa, now lead a much less cloistered life. Tourism

has brought a bonanza to temples in Lhasa. Jokhang Temple, located in the city center and renowned for the Buddha statue brought by Princess Wencheng of Tang Dynasty, raked in 27 million yuan (\$3.86 million) through tourism in 2007. The revenue plummeted to a mere 6 million yuan in 2008 due to the riots, but rose to 30 million yuan last year.

Almost all the monks in Jokhang have cell phones, and a lot of them possess laptop computers. Younger monks change to shorts when they play football, an increasingly popular game in Tibet. Some juxtapose pictures of living Buddhas with pin-ups of Japanese football star Hidetoshi Nakata, who visited the temple years ago. Senior monks in Jokhang earn a monthly salary of 2,600 yuan, and neophytes are each allocated 1,000 yuan per month, compared with an average annual per capital income of 3,500 yuan for farmers and herdsmen in Tibet. Young monks in Drepung don’t cook, and instead visit a restaurant for every meal.

Even 170 kilometers north of downtown Lhasa, in Kangma Temple, which stands on a barren slope of the foot of a mountain, the meeting room is lit with electricity and heated by air conditioners. The temple runs a grocery store and a teahouse. Monks bought a truck and hired a driver to run a transportation business and have built themselves a two-storied dorm.

Given the material gains and the declining rigors of life, fewer people want to become monks amid urbanization. Almost all the monks in Drepung and Jokhang are from farming or nomadic families. “Society is changing fast and there are too many temptations in the world,” said 59-year-old Lama Pingcuo in Jokhang through a translator.

Road to modernity

Booming Lhasa is indeed alluring, attracting people across the plateau and

elsewhere to seek opportunities to get rich. Even outside Lhasa, the barren land looks less unbearable compared to the rural region of Northwest China.

Along the highway from Lhasa to Xining, the valley is dotted with Tibetan style houses. Some herdsmen have a shelter from icy winter for the first time thanks to a policy that stipulates the government, the bank and the individual each share one-third of the cost to build the house. The average income of Tibetan farmers and herdsmen increased 11.2 percent last year, the highest in the country.

The expanding modernity seems to have irked some tourists who had expected to see a rustic Tibet. "Lhasa is more modern than I thought," said a British tourist, relaxing in a restaurant in Damxung Prefecture north of Lhasa. "It is a shame," he added.

Officials, scholars and even high school students in Lhasa rebuffed such a view. "This is not a zoo, or a museum. The Tibetans are entitled to a comfortable life, too," said Zhang Lihua, deputy chief of United Front Work Department of Committee of the CPC in Tibet.

Tibetan culture hasn't gone unscathed in the rapid development. But if language and self-identity are an index of the vitality of a culture, it is still robust. Both Chinese and Tibetan are taught in schools, though Tibetan students communicate with their parents and with each other in their mother tongue. In the elitist Lhasa High School, students claim that they can write poems in Tibetan even

though they speak Chinese fluently. In a DVD shop on Beijing East Road, the owner tried to sell the newest albums to the Global Times reporters. "This is the bestseller, more popular than Jay Chou," he said, pointing to an album by a local Tibetan band called Nine-Eyed Stone.

Belief in Bhuddism is still prevalent in Tibet. People practicing full-body prostration and rotating the praying wheels are common sights even in Lhasa. And, in the temples, Tibetan college students dressed a la mode, touch their forehead with 10-cent notes and put them piously before each statue.

Laba Pingcuo, chairman of Lhasa High School's student association considers himself a Buddhist. As he said, "99

percent of us are Buddhists."

Top students of Lhasa High School tend to attribute the backwardness of Tibet's economic development to geographic isolation. "It's too far away from other regions, and the altitude is too high to attract people to build big factories," said one of them.

A few said Tibetans are not open-minded though they stressed that a balance should be struck between economic development and cultural preservation. They would like to go to university in more prosperous cities in China to widen their horizons, but they will come back to Tibet because "it's home."

It's hard to tell how much pain and confusion the Tibetans will experience on the road to modernity as the barriers of nature had isolated them from the rest of the world for centuries. When the government tries to popularize the use of solar energy among nomads, some complained that the sun would be exhausted from working so much. Indeed, things in Tibet are mystical. Perhaps, even the road to modernity.

Another way to reach Lhasa

It is along the National Highway 109 from Lhasa to Xining, with snow-topped Mount Tanggula as the backdrop and the occasional appearance of crystal brooks on its slopes. For those travelling in a car, merely stepping out into the open is painful—the air is thin; and the wind biting. Some, however, in order to be as holy as the plateau, prostrate themselves millions of times, proceeding for hun-



Two Tibetan girls celebrate the Tibetan traditional new year on February 14.

Jueguo



Residents of Lhasa purchase goods in the Huadeng (Flower Lantern) Street for the upcoming new year on January 21, 2009. *Gesangdawa*

dreds of kilometers on their knees, until they reach Jokhang Temple in Lhasa.

Every three steps, Luoga and Lunzhu, two brothers from Nagqu Prefecture, joined their palms, touched their forehead, jaw and chest, and then knelt down on the side of the highway, to perform prostration.

Their eyes were alight with piety, almost shining against their dark complexion. Their hair was greasy and scruffy, and clothes soiled. Till April 4, they had spent one month and a half covering half of the 328 kilometers from Nagqu to Lhasa, and expected to spend another one month and a half before arriving in Lhasa.

The brothers joined five others to perform the centuries-old practice to pray for the cleansing of the world's sins, Luoga, 31, told the reporter through an interpreter.

They drove a tractor. Every morning at 7 o'clock, they had a simple meal and drove for some distance. Then they stopped, put up a tent, walked back to where they started to drive, and began to perform the full-body prostration. When they got to their tent, they stopped to have some food, and repeat the same process. They covered about two to three kilometers every day, and went to sleep at 8 pm.

"The most horrible thing is that the clothes and shoes are worn-out," said Lunzhu, 40.

Both of them wore aprons they had made themselves and had rubber pads stuck onto their shoe toes, a part that easily wears off. But if one of them is sick, they would keep on doing it, just slower, according to Lunzhu.

Both of them have had little education, but the eldest son of Lunzhu went to university. Lunzhu didn't know what his major was. It seems that he didn't care.

"I heard about the riots, the earthquake in Sichuan Province and a lot of other disasters in the world," Luoga said. "But I could do nothing about it, so when I prostrate myself, I pray that there is less pain in the world." (The Global Times) ■

China's entry into the Inter-Parliamentary Union

By Xiong Wei



Chairman of NPC Standing Committee Wu Bangguo (left) chairs the plenary meeting at 5-6 pm of the 2nd World Conference of the Speakers of Parliament at the UN headquarters in New York City on September 7, 2005. During the three-day meeting, Wu was nominated as the first deputy chairman of the conference.

Zhao Peng

With its long history and numerous memberships, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the most influential international parliamentary organization in the world. When tackling the relations between NPC and IPU, most documents indicated that China's decision to join the organization was first made during the 6th NPC Standing Committee in December 1983. Few people have the idea that the contacts between NPC and IPU can be traced back to 1950s which witnessed a complex and heart-stirring battle.

NPC's decision to join in IPU

At the very beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China, IPU started its contacts with the Chinese government by mailing its minutes and decisions of the annual conference. But at that time, the NPC had not been established and the situation of China's entry into the organization was not mature. In September 1954, the first NPC was established.

Shortly after that, the issue of joining IPU was put on the agenda.

Created in 1889 on the initiative of two parliamentarians William Randal Cremer from the United Kingdom and Frédéric Passy from France, it was named "International Conference on Accelerating International Arbitration Among Parliaments". Its main purposes are to maintain and protect world peace. After World War II, some newly-independent countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America joined IPU, leading to some changes to the organization. The power of Western countries was balanced and curbed. IPU, which used to be an association of individual parliamentarians, became an international parliamentary organization that attracted the entry of parliaments from all countries. IPU was the first permanent forum for political multilateral negotiations.

In the 1950s, when the New China was just founded, some Western countries under the leadership of US intentionally barred China from returning to the United Nations and other international organizations as well. Only countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America and socialist countries established diplomatic relationship with China. China needs to open up new pages in diplomacy and seek more international cooperation. The entry into IPU was an important decision made by the authority.

After the decision had been made, preparatory work started. On July 24, 1955, the then Secretary-General of the 2nd Ses-



Some of the Chinese delegates attending the 117th meeting of the Inter-Parliament Union in October 2007 have a group photo taken. *File photo*

sion of the 1st NPC Peng Zhen wrote to the IPU Chairman Viscount Stansgate, Secretary-General André de Blonay and Organizing Committee of the 44th IPU Conference, which was held in Helsinki from August 25-30, respectively. Peng informed them that NPC from China will organize a delegation to participate in the conference and join the IPU as well.

On July 30, 1,090 deputies who were participating in the 2nd Session of the 1st NPC voted to join the IPU. During the conference, Lin Boqu made a report on IPU and the preparatory work for joining the organization. Resolutions on China's joining in IPU and corresponding charters were approved. Executive members of the people's delegation were elected. Peng was nominated as the chairman of the delegation, Cheng Qian, Lin Feng, Sai Fuding, Chen Jiageng, Zhang Bojun, Ma Yinchu, Li Zhuchen and Liao Chengzhi were se-

lected as the vice-chairmen. Wu Kejian was selected as the secretary-general. A total of 61 executive members were also selected as well.

On August 6, the people's delegation executive committee held its first meeting. It appointed Qu Wu, Gong Pusheng and Wu Maosun to the deputy secretary-generals of the executive committee. Besides, Li Yimang and Hu Yuzhi were selected as the board members. The delegation that would participate in the 44th IPU Conference was taken shape at the same time. Peng was elected as the head of the delegation, Cheng Qian, Liao Chengzhi were elected as the deputy heads. Delegates also included Zhu Xuefan, Wu Wenxi, Wu Yifang, Li Yimang, Li Chunqing, Zhou Gengsheng, Hu Yuzhi, Nan Hanchen, Chen Hansheng, Lei Jieqiong, Jiang Nanxiang, Qian Duansheng, Luo Longji and some others. Li Yimang served as the secretary general.

The delegation was full of talented people, indicating that China had attached great importance to the IPU Conference.

On August 19, Secretary General Li Yimang and delegation member Wu Wenxi flew to Helsinki to make some necessary preparations. On the front page of the People's Daily on August 22, an article entitled China's delegation will leave soon for participating in the IPU Conference. All the preparatory work has been finished. Once the IPU approved China's application, the Chinese delegates would appear at the IPU conference.

China's application rejected

According to IPU rules, all the applications for joining IPU must be discussed by the Executive Committee and then approved by the board. Before the Helsinki conference, the IPU Executive Committee held a discussion on August 24.

At that time, the Executive Committee was composed of members from UK, US, Thailand, Turkey, Lebanon, Sweden and Switzerland. Most of the committee members were supportive of the application except the US and Thailand. The US member Kula strongly opposed China's application and even threatened to stop submitting the membership fees and withdraw from the IPU.

He said, "If Beijing were allowed to become an IPU member, the US would withdraw from the meeting." As a result, the conference could not reach an agreement on China's application. So finally members voted for it. Under the US' pressure, the voting result was 3:2 (with Lebanon absent from the conference and the chairman not to vote). The IPU Executive Committee decided to postpone China's entry application, which means China's application was laid aside.

Helsinki Conference is a very important one in the history of IPU. The theme of this conference was "Peaceful co-existence be-

tween countries”. Under the Cold War at that period of time, this theme is strongly meaningful. The conference made a decision to accept countries including Soviet Union to join the IPU. But in the report the Executive Committee submitted to the board, it did not mention a word about China’s application. This caused queries and dissatisfaction among many attendants of the conference, who pointed out that it was an urgent issue for IPU to accept China as a member. To reject China’s entry application was against IPU rules. It was also not in accordance with IPU’s theme that countries with different political and social systems get along with each other peacefully.

China’s application for becoming an IPU member remained as the key issue for the Helsinki Conference. On that conference, only the US representative criticized China, representatives including some from the Western countries showed their strong support to China. The head of the Soviet Union delegation stressed that China’s participation in IPU would definitely promote its influence around the world. On the next IPU conference, China’s entry application could no longer be postponed. Head of the Danish parliamentary delegation Althin Anderson said, “It’s no longer a secret that all the Scandinavian countries support China’s NPC to gain its right to join the IPU.” The head of the British delegation, Scott pointed out that, undoubtedly, China would be invited to join IPU in the near future. The Head of the Belgian Parliament also expressed his disappointment for some groups’ opposition towards China’s application because the IPU Rules required its members to admit the parliamentary representatives from China.

Chair of the Board expressed his pity for China’s being denied of its application in his closing remarks. He pointed out, the entry of countries like Soviet Union added value to the conference. But on the other hand, the goal of making IPU an organization that welcomes every parliament had yet to be fulfilled.

Protest with a clear-cut stance

Because of the irrational decision made by the IPU Executive Committee, the Chinese delegation finally did not participate the Helsinki Conference as planned. The Chinese side began to take tit-for-tat measures.

On August 27, Secretary General of the Chinese delegation Li Yimang, who was then in Helsinki, wrote a letter to the Chairman of IPU Executive Committee Viscount Stansgate, protesting against the unreasonable decision and demanding the committee and the conference to correct its wrong decision.

On August 28, head of the Chinese delegation Peng Zhen wrote to Viscount Stansgate and the Chairman for the 44th IPU Conference Lennart Hillgus to express strong protest. He pointed out that the decision made by the executive committee was “totally against the principles and rules of IPU and was illegal”. Peng also pointed

that “only the people’s delegation from the PRC can represent China to join the IPU. But, someone intend to realize its conspiracy of “two Chinas” by putting aside China’s application. Any schemes or actions on “two Chinas” will be doomed. Chinese People will not tolerate such things. If someone wants to put China’s application for joining the IPU together with the application by Chiang Kai-shek’s group, which has been disdained by the Chinese people, it would be regarded as a kind of interference of China’s domestic affairs by creating the so-called “two Chinas.” The action will be regarded as the scheme to make the IPU a tool of against the Chinese people, who would be strongly against it.”

On August 29, Li Yimang held a press conference in Helsinki and delivered the protest letters written by Peng. More than 30 journalists from Finland, Soviet Union, UK, US, France and other countries participated in the conference and wrote their reports.

On August 30, a front-page editorial entitled “Solemn protest from the Chinese people” appeared on the People’s Daily.



Venue of the 118th Conference of the Inter-Parliament Union in South Africa’s Cape Town in April, 2008.

File photo



Headquarter of the Inter-Parliament Union in Geneva. *File photo*

It pointed out that the purpose of the US' decision was to reject China's application and then accept Chiang' group for joining IPU. Another purpose of the activity was to accept "two Chinas" to join the IPU and therefore pave way for the scheme of "two Chinas". The 3,000-word article also noted that only the people's delegation from PRC can represent China to join the IPU, just like the only representative in the UN was the government of PRC. IPU should accept PRC's application other than postponing it. The establishment of PRC's delegation was in accordance with the rules of IPU. The article appeared timely, producing great influence in the society.

Persistence paid off

After the Helsinki Conference, IPU discussed China's entry application for many times afterwards.

On November 30, 1955, the IPU Executive Committee New Delhi Conference held a long discussion on China's application, deciding to accept China as a member and reject Taiwan authority's application. The Executive Committee decided to submit a

report to the plenary conference of the IPU board for a final approval.

On April 4-8, 1956, the IPU's 78th session was held in Dubrovnik in Yugoslavia. The main topic of the conference was to discuss China's application for joining IPU. Representatives from Soviet Union, Poland, Yugoslavia, India and many other countries were strongly supportive of China's application. But the representative from the US refused to accept decision made

by the Executive Committee. Representatives from Thailand also scattered opposite opinions and demanded that the decision should be postponed until China participated into UN.

Usually, the IPU Board would not reject the decision made by the Executive Committee. But under the persistence of the US and Thailand, the Board conference decided to organize a voting for China's application. Under such circumstances, the situation was not in favor of the Chinese side. So finally the result showed that 23 votes were favorable while 32 votes against and 5 abstain. In that case, the proposal made by the IPU Executive Committee was rejected once again. Some friendly countries gave their support to China. The representative delegation from the Soviet Union declared that they were strongly supportive of China's right for participating in IPU. Parliamentary delegation from Yugoslavia also said that the decision made by the board were illegal and ineffective according to the IPU rules.

During the IPU 45th Conference held in Bangkok in August 1956, whether China can join the IPU was also a heated topic. Representatives from Soviet Union, Po-

land, Sweden, Burma, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Albania and other countries pointed out that China, with its 600 million people should be invited to participate in the international organization. During that conference, the Executive reviewed China's application once again and concluded that China agreed with all the requirements set by the IPU rules. It suggested the IPU Board to accept China as member directly. But because of the opposition from the US, the Board once again denied China's application. It was decided that this should be discussed until China solve its problem of joining the UN. Therefore, China's application for joining IPU was put aside since then.

In 1971, China had regained its legal chair in the UN. After that, IPU contacted the Chinese government for many times and suggested China to become a member. But due to the international and national situation at that time, the Chinese government had further considerations on that. So IPU's invitation was turned down. During the 1970s, no development had been made on China's entry into the organization.

Things started to change at the beginning of 1980s. On December 8, 1983, the 3rd session of the 6th NPC Standing Committee decided to join IPU. On March 6, 1984, the 4th Session of the 6th NPC Standing Committee approved Rules of National People's Congress Joining International Parliamentary Union. A delegation that represents the NPC was organized accordingly. On April 2 of that year, on the 71th IPU Conference in Geneva, the Board of IPU approved China's application to be a member. For the first time, the NPC delegation headed by NPC Vice-Chairman Geng Biao appeared on the conference and was welcomed by enormous applause. Thirty years have passed since China first proposed its application in 1955. When we look back, we are reminded of the past scenes. It reminds us of an old Chinese verse, "The river flows eastward, and no mountain can stop it." ■



Foreign reporters cover the 3rd Session of the 11th NPC in Beijing. More and more foreign reporters have showed interest to interview the Two Sessions, indicating China's parliament is becoming more open and transparent.

Xinhua and CFP



NPC

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