

# NPC



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## URBANIZATION MAKES CHINA DREAM COMING TRUE



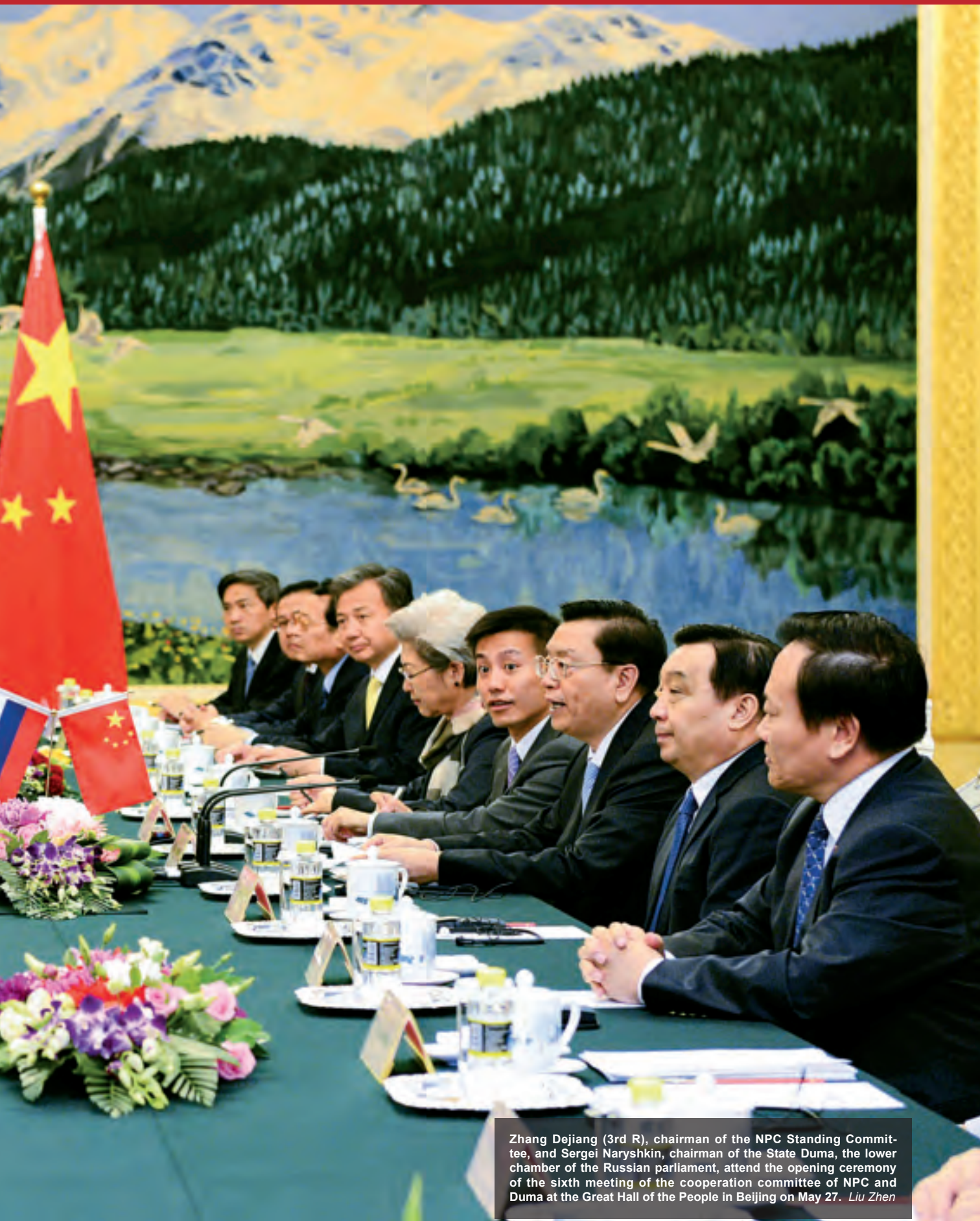
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Zhang Dejiang (3rd R), chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, and Sergei Naryshkin, chairman of the State Duma, the lower chamber of the Russian parliament, attend the opening ceremony of the sixth meeting of the cooperation committee of NPC and Duma at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 27. *Liu Zhen*



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COVER: A villager and his cattle in Caoba New Village, Xuyong County, Sichuan Province on March 10. With an investment of more than 10 million yuan, the village has built 27 new cottages for local residents. The county government of Xuyong has spared no effort in pushing forward the transformation of villages to communities. *Liu Chuanfu*



General Editorial

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# Propel investigations and researches in improving legislation quality

## Chairman Zhang tackles drafting of Special Equipment Safety Law

By Huo Xiaoguang

**S**pecial equipments, ranging from lifts/elevators, boilers, large amusement facilities, liquefied petroleum gas cylinders to bungee ropes, are closely related to people's life and property safety.

On June 29, the third meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee voted and passed Special Equipment Safety Law of PRC. This is the first law that regulates in a unified and

comprehensive safety management of special equipment. The promulgation of this safety law represents a big stride in scientific and institutionalized management of special equipments.

Under the guidance of improving legislation quality, the third draft of the law makes more detailed supplements as compared to the second one. It emphasizes supervision in the whole process of special equipment, including manufac-



Zhang Dejiang (C), a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, talks with a worker at an elevator manufacturing workshop of Guangzhou Guangri Group Co. Ltd in Guangzhou, capital of south China's Guangdong Province, May 31, 2013. Zhang took an inspection tour in Guangdong from May 30 to June 1. *Huang Jingwen*

turing, installation, operation, using, maintenance, test and inspection. It also defines identity management system, quality tracking system, recall and abandonment system, which greatly improves the operability and enforceability of the law.

The Standing Committee pays high attention to the legislation of the law. NPC Chairman Zhang Dejiang made special trips to Guangdong Province from May 30 to June 1 for investigations and researches. He put high expectations on this law, hoping it could set an excellent example for improving legislation quality.

### **Zhang stresses the importance of investigations and researches in legislation**

As a saying goes: No investigation, no right to speak. During his tour, Zhang made special field investigations on the drafting of the Special Equipment Safety Law, modification of Environment Protection Law and Trademark Law, both of which were to be submitted for review at the third meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee.

“Negligence of investigation or careless investigation probably leads the legislation away from reality and social needs. It may finally render laws useless or lose authority.” Zhang’s words clearly defined the basic and important role that investigations and researches played in legislation.

Speaking at previous NPC Standing Committee chairman meeting, Zhang said that no appropriate, comprehensive and insightful comments could be given based only on a half- or one-day deliberation without careful thinking, adequate investigations and researches in advance.

The Special Equipment Safety Law, which was approved at the third meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee, was submitted for first review on the 28th meeting of the 11th NPC Standing Committee, for second review at the second meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee. Legislators from NPC, which is China’s top legislature, have done large amount of investigations, laying a solid foundation for the law’s draft.

Nowadays, a number of elevator accidents have taken place in China, not only exposing hidden perils in the management but also alerting the public over safety issues. This makes legislation more urgent through investigations and researches. According to Zhang, the amendments to laws shall closely relate to social concerns and should not turn a deaf ear to social hot topics.

On May 31, Chairman Zhang visited Guangzhou Guangri Group, the largest elevators manufacturing and service supplier in southern China. He visited the plants of elevator manufacturing and exchanged ideas on how to strengthen special equipment safety. When chairing a legislation workshop in Guangdong, he listened to opinions from experts, manufacturers and supervision departments.

“Many aspects are involved in the designing, manufacturing, maintenance, test, operation, the using and management of elevators. When accidents occur, who should be responsible?” asked Zheng Jiong, president of Guangdong Special Equipment Test Research Institute, at the workshop. He noted that major problems in investigating and tracing of accident’s responsibilities are unclear matrix.

During his tour, Chairman Zhang emphasized that safety of special equipments depend on scientific designs, careful manufacturing and standard installation, maintenance, parts

**“Negligence of investigation or careless investigation probably leads the legislation away from reality and social needs. It may finally render laws useless or lose authority.”**  
**Zhang Dejiang said.**

replacement and abandonment, operation and management procedures. Each elevator should have a unique identity in order to trace its manufacturer, installation and operating units as well as its life cycle. When accidents occur, there should be very clear responsibilities as to whether accidents are caused by design, manufacturing or management.

In Guangri Group, Chairman Zhang said, “Product quality is vital to an enterprise because elevators are closely related to people’s life. If accidents occur to your elevators, your brands will be ruined. Without equipment safety, there will be no sustainable development. Equipment quality standard should be strictly followed.”

In the first and second review of the law draft, a member of the NPC Standing Committee pointed out that no corresponding responsible entity could be found in special equipment accidents. Usually the loss of special equipment was covered by the government. People vividly describe this phenomenon as “enterprises earn money while the government pays the bill.”

Ren Xiaotie, head of Guangdong Provincial Quality and Technology Supervision Bureau, pointed out that fundamental reasons lie in that there are no clear and traceable responsibility records and a primary responsibility system is yet to be established.

Enterprise’s primary responsibility is one of the focuses of the law, which is fully deliberated during previous reviews. The safety law defines the three-into-one safety work mode of special equipment, that is, the primary safety responsibility of enterprises, safety supervision responsibility of the government and monitoring function of the public. It also stresses that the safety responsibility of the manufacturing, operating and using enterprises is primary.

### **A breakthrough development in China’s legislation**

The number of articles in the draft law increased from 70 to 101 after three rounds of deliberations. Most of the newly-added articles are more mature and operable than those in Special Equipment Safety Supervision Regulations currently enforced. During review, a legislator from the Standing Committee said that improving the operability of the law could effectively reduce legislation cost, establish legal authority, prevent and curb departmental interests.

Since taking duty as the chairman of the 12th NPC Standing Committee, Zhang has paid attention to the legislation quality. Speaking at the legislation workshop in Guangdong, he said: “One of the major functions of the 12th NPC Standing Committee is to stick to the principle of rule of law and to safeguard the authority of the Constitution and other laws.

As legislators, our task is to improve legislation quality.”

“To improve legislation quality is to better the internal demands of socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics, which is a theme of our legislation work under the new situation. Laws need to be implemented and obeyed by the public. It will harm the authority of laws if the legislation is not of high quality. The more we stress the rule of law, the more we need to improve legislation quality.”

How to improve legislation quality? One distinctive answer is to improve the operability and enforceability of laws. Legislation itself is not difficult when compared with its implementation, which depends not only on the strict enforcement of laws, but also on the enforceability of laws. Through the review of the law, the concepts of being detailed and specific have become the common understanding of legislators and gradually carried into real practice.

Zhang said many legal regulations are too abstract and lack operability and enforceability in practice. This kind of regulations could resolve no problems. Large amount of implementing rules or judicial interpretations are required in the enforcement of laws. Some local courts even refused to receive cases if there are no judicial interpretations. This greatly harms the authority of laws.

He pointed out, when making implementing rules for laws, some departments often interpret laws from their departmental interests' view, or even finally institutionalizes their departmental interests. Therefore, there need an appropriate balance.

Legislation is prerequisite of rule of law. In building a well-off society, many problems of unbalance, in-harmony and non-sustainability still exist and even become more and more prominent. Quite a lot of challenges and problems we are facing relate with legislation. There is still a long and hard way to go in China's legislation.

## Legislation becomes more comprehensive

On May 31, the same day when Chairman Zhang visited Guangri Group, the Commission of Legislative Affairs of the NPC Standing Committee held a unique workshop attended by 17 representatives who shared their opinions on the contents, timing, impact and potential problems of the law before it was officially submitted for vote. Representatives included NPC deputies, experts from the manufacturing, operating, using, testing and inspection organizations of special equipment. There were also representatives from industry associations and supervision departments. Some of the suggestions were incorporated into the final draft.

Evaluation before voting is one of the important measures of the 12th NPC Standing Committee to improve legislation quality and to better legislation procedures. Chairman Zhang pointed out that different opinions were welcomed to ensure the scientific accuracy of the law since now most comments were confirmative based on large number of investigations and researches.

Actually “pre-evaluation” was also performed before Tourism Law was reviewed and voted on at the second meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee. During his stay in Guangdong, Zhang fully recognized the pre-evaluation work on Tourism Law, and stressed to further this process into a system.

He said, the current public expectation on laws is not only the simple existence of certain laws, but whether the laws are specific, detailed and executable. This requires us to widely seek for comments, strengthen the comprehensive analyses and actively respond to the public concerns of laws through promoting scientific and democratic legislation, so as to better our laws and regulations and to play a more active role.

Whether a law is well enforced depends on whether the society can comprehensively and accurately understand it. This is an important basis for law enforcement.

After comprehensively explaining major means of improving legislation quality, Zhang emphasized the importance of strengthening legal publicity and improving legislation effect and impact. Appropriate interpretations should be issued timely so that the public can accurately understand the background, purpose and meaning of laws, grasp the principle, contents and requirements so as to prevent incomprehensive understanding and misleading of laws and to create excellent environment for correctly applying and following laws.

Zhang said law-making is a process of promoting democracy, gathering collective wisdom and seeking common understanding. It is also a process of spreading knowledge and enhancing legal awareness. The public now cares not only the legislation results but also the legislation process. This will play an active role in the legislation process and the enforcement of laws.

Legislation is a subject of science. More innovations are expected in practice so as to design laws more systematically and comprehensively, to fully manifest justice and fairness of laws, to continuously improve legislation quality, to publicize legal knowledge and to make each law reasonable, executable and helpful. (Xinhua) ■



Elevator accidents across the country have drawn wide attention in recent years. CFP



# Birth of Special Equipment Safety Law



Customers shopping at the Xidan Joy City in Beijing take a 50-meter-long spanned escalator, the longest one of its kind in the world. CFP

On June 29, Special Equipment Safety Law of PRC got approved with 160 votes in favor, one against and four abstentions at the third meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee. To the public, the promulgation of this law is timely rain in preventing safety accidents and protecting people's life and safety in this accident-ridden summer month. To them, this law is a most effective and basic means for people to adhere to safety guidelines.

Since August 2012 when the draft law entered legislation process, it had gone through three rounds of reviews, solicited public comments and received pre-evaluations. The public showed great interest in each phase. The law stipulates: relationship between safety technical specifications and national standards should be made further clear; inspection, acceptance and sale records of special equipment must be kept at least three years; the owner, the lessor, the lessee, the user and the maintenance personnel of special equipment bear common liability. In the legislation process, many comments and suggestions from all walks of life were congregated to the legislation departments. The NPC Standing Committee paid high attention to these suggestions. From May 30 to June 1 when Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, was leading investigations in Guangdong, he made it clear that special equipment safety is vital to people's life and product quality vital to the life of enterprises. He further stressed that legal specifications of safety law should be designed more scientifically, detailed and specific.

Therefore, the number of articles of the safety law increased from 65 at its first review to 101 at its last review. Kan Ke, vice chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, said, "This is a very detailed and specific law. For example, it regulates the specifications of ropes of bungee and those of bumper cars in amusement parks." He pointed out when being interviewed by reporters that the safety law gave detailed regulations to safety of special equipment from manufacturing, using, supervision, administration to emergency aid etc. It wove a safe net into people's life and property.

## Response to people's safety appeal

In the southeast 2nd ring road of Beijing, there locate Fanggu Garden, Fangcheng Garden and Fangxing Garden etc. They are the first commercial buildings with comprehensive planning in Beijing. They were constructed in 1990s and were crowded with flowing population. Yang is a resident of the building and has lived there for five years. For him, anxiety about this community increases as the buildings age with years. He said, "The building was built in 1992, and has served 21 years. Who will be responsible for the elevators if



About 100 tourists are stuck up in the air due to a sudden tourism lift breakdown at Mount Yaoshan, Guilin in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on May 26, 2012. CFP

there are elevator accidents?”

This kind of anxiety over special equipment did not come from nowhere. In the past several years among all special equipment safety accidents, more accidents occur to elevators. For example, on May 14, in a supermarket in Yichang of Hubei Province, one passenger dropped from an elevator in operation and died. On the same day, in Xi'an of Shaanxi Province, because the door of an elevator opened but the elevator did not stop at the same floor, one passenger dropped down to the elevator well and died. On May 15, a lift in Shenzhen of Guangdong Province went down suddenly without closing its car door and landing door, and a female passenger was squeezed between the elevator well and the car and died. On May 16, in Yuxi of Yunnan Province, a passenger dropped down into a lift well and was killed. These lift/elevator accidents added more anxiety to the public concerns.

Teng Wei, director-general of social law office of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, expressed the same concern over the safety issues in some old communities. In some resident communities, the aging of elevators is a very serious problem. Because of the limited budgets, the maintenance is not well performed as scheduled. Elevator accidents happen frequently and potential safety

## **Austere safety situation of special equipments requires urgently a special equipment safety law that can down-to-earth protect life and property safety of the public.**

hazards hang over people's life. As the number of special equipments is increasing rapidly, safety issues get more serious and complicated.

Austere safety situation of special equipments requires urgently a special equipment safety law that can down-to-earth protect life and property safety of the public. Xu Youxiang, an NPC deputy who had made a similar legislative proposal told reporters, “Since the eighth NPC, every year there have been proposals and suggestions demanding the legislation of a special equipments safety law. As the economy of China develops quickly and the number and type of special equipments increase rapidly as well, such a safety law is in growing

demand to ease the safety anxiety of the public.”

Upon the public's appeals and problems of special equipments, the NPC Standing Committee showed great concerns to the safety issues of special equipments. Being highly responsible for the life safety of the people, after adequate preparations and thorough investigation and research, they finally passed the Special Equipments Safety Law after three rounds of reviews. This law lessens the public anxiety over special equipments including the elevator safety problems. For example, owners of some elevators in residential buildings are owners of the property. However, property management units are entrusted to maintain the elevators. Under such circumstance, the entrusted units must perform related duties such as maintenance and regular inspections. Teng said that this has clearly shown the purpose of legislation, that is, for people's safety and putting people's interest first. The safety law will facilitate a turnaround of safety accidents trend.

### From regulations to law

On April 25, 1955, a boiler exploded in Tianjin No. 1 Cotton Spinning Mill. Eight people died, 69 injured and the direct economic loss was 370,000 yuan. This was the start of safety supervision to special equipments in New China. “In July the same year, the State Council set up the General Bureau of Boiler Safety Supervision under the Ministry of Labor and started the safety supervision over special equipments including boilers, pressure containers and lifting machinery etc.” Shi Jiajun, an engineer of Special Equipments Safety Supervision Office of General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, said in an interview.

In more than 10 years since then, the safety supervision organization, though going through a lot of reorganizing, had been working well until the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). However, in 1979, a number of serious special equipments safety accidents occurred, causing dramatic losses, due to the temporary suspension of safety supervision.

On June 1, 2003, there came a new twist. The State Council issued the Regulations on Special Equipments Safety Supervision. It clearly defines the functions of different entities in special equipment safety, that is, enterprises are fully responsible for their equipment safety, and government departments supervise and take lead in safety issues. This has become a momentum milestone in the development of special equipment supervision.

The regulations were drafted and issued by administrative government departments, which focused more on the governmental supervision over the safety of special equipment. Many experts said the regulations relied too much on the safety supervision and inspection of the government and had inadequate binding upon the main body of special equipment. Teng Wei pointed out, we had more disasters of special equipment than we should because of this inadequacy. Statistics show that China's special equipment accident rate is 4-6 times higher than that of developed countries. During the 11th Five-Year Plan period (2006-10), there occurred 1,538 major accidents nationwide, causing 1,601 lives and 1,744 injuries.

This inadequacy also impacted on international trades. Kan Ke told reporters, “So far China has issued 144 special

equipment safety technical regulations. However, due to the lack of appropriate legal status, some countries do not accept these safety technical regulations when we import equipment.” This has not only increased the cost of imported special equipment, but also greatly hindered the safety management of imported equipment.

Legislation on special equipment safety will bring an end to this chaos, because in China, laws have higher authority than regulations, which means no regulations can be contradictory to laws. Laws have more binding force than regulations. Lu Hao, a member of the NPC Standing Committee, holds similar opinions that the promotion of special equipment safety regulations to the level of laws will facilitate the safety management of special equipment and bring safety issues of special equipment into legal tracks.

### Legislation evaluation: Evaluate from a broader view while focusing on details

Since the new NPC Standing Committee was elected, either in his investigation and research or in the review of the committee, Chairman of the Standing Committee Zhang Dejiang, has been stressing to improve legislation evaluation, to strengthen the comprehensive analysis of opinions from all walks of life, to respond actively to the public concerns and to play an active role of the legislation in expressing, leveraging and adjusting social interests. To release the law in a better timing and to pre-evaluate the impact and problems of the law after its release, on May 31, the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee held a meeting to listen to all opinions from deputies.

Liu Zuojun, deputy director-general of the social law office of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, said, the 17 representatives include two NPC deputies (one is the deputy who put forward the proposal for legislation of the special equipment safety law), one expert on special equipment safety, five from the manufacturing and maintaining units of special equipment, three from units of special equipment, two from inspection and test units, three from supervision departments, and one from industry associations. The representatives cover both theories and practice from both eastern developed areas and mid-west areas. Besides, none of the representatives attending the evaluation had participated in the drafting of the law.

Deputy Engineer-General of Beijing Yanshan Branch of Sinopec Zhao Baocheng said, “The management of special equipment is upgraded from regulation level to law, indicating China has taken a great leap in special equipment management from traditional management to scientific, standardized and legal management. Beijing Yanshan Branch, as a subordinate enterprise of Sinopec, meets the basic requirements for safe manufacturing as per Special Equipment Safety Law. We have well-framed organizations, and comprehensive documentations for special equipment management. Therefore we think now it is a good opportunity to release Special Equipment Safety Law.”

Zhao added, “Each phase in the management of special equipment is equally important. The draft of Special Equipment Safety Law stresses the full life cycle management of special equipment, which is a professional way of managing special equipment. It also clearly defines functions and

responsibilities of supervision organizations, for example, as a unit that uses special equipment, our responsibility lies mainly in how to use special equipments. If we do not operate special equipment as per instruction manuals, we have to account for all responsibilities if safety accidents occur. However, safety of special equipment also includes normalized design as per specifications, standard materials and product quality. However, the using unit cannot control the above and a third party organization or a government department is required to perform inspection duties. The law clearly defines duties of supervision, management and inspection and this will certainly accelerate the effective safety management of special equipment.”

According to Li Lianghua, director of Beijing Municipal Bureau of Quality and Technological Supervision, “The law is drafted in good time. First, the number of special equipments is increasing dramatically. For example, the number of elevators reaches more than 2 million and increases by more than 10 percent annually. Take Beijing for example, the percentage of pressure pipes that use cleaner fuels reaches more than 25 percent and increases rapidly each year. I remembered that the first elevator of Beijing was installed in Red Mansion in 1955 and many people went there to have a look at the elevator. Now special equipments are widely used in and closely related to people’s everyday life. Therefore, the safety of special equipment is in a crucial phase. My evaluation to this law is that it is executable.”

Chen Xuedong, a researcher in Hefei General Machinery Research Institute, commented, “In general, I think it necessary to have a law like this to regulate special equipment safety. From 1982 when regulations on special equipment safety supervision were released to 2003 when the regulations were modified, the annual accident rate per 10,000 piece of special equipment dropped from 2.5 percent to 0.8 percent. This has demonstrated the importance of administrative management.” He pointed out that special equipment safety law can further reduce accident rate and protect people’s life and property.

Kan Ke, vice chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, who chaired the evaluation meeting prior to the vote of the Special Equipment Safety Law, said that the purpose of pre-evaluation was to evaluate in general the system design, contents, operability and social impact of the law, not to solicit opinions on the wordings of specific article proper or not. Obviously starting from general view does not mean that specific comments on technical modifications are not welcomed. For example, an inspector from Beijing Special Equipment Inspection Center suggested using the same wording for routine maintenance and regular maintenance in different article of the law. In the Special Equipment Safety Law, reporters noticed that wording for routine maintenance and regular maintenance was adjusted and modified.

On evaluation meeting, the wording “check and inspection” also brought heated discussions. “Check is actually an enterprise action and cannot be separated from manufacturing and operation. It is a procedure and a behavior of the manufacturing. However, inspection requires a fair and independent third party. Supervision and inspection is an administrative action. Therefore, routine inspection is now still an administrative action and can be socialized, but

## Now evaluations are performed before legislation and this is helpful in improving legislation quality.

cannot completely become a market action.” Li Lianghua, director of Beijing Quality Technology Supervision Bureau, said that check and inspection departments should be clearly defined.

Deputy Inspector of Jiangsu Provincial Quality Technology Supervision Bureau, Zhou Guoqing, said, “China has set a goal to establish a complete socialist market economy system by the end of 2020. Under this goal, we can define the inspection by its attributes. Personally there are three kinds of inspections. The first is inspections for public service, totally free and putting the public interests at first place. The second is inspections for private service. Enterprises pay their cost to the inspections of special equipment, which is done by a third party agent. The third one is market behavior, for example, I buy your special equipment and I do not feel safe, then I will find a third party agent to inspect it.”

“The inspection specified in the 50th article in the Special Equipment Safety Law that says “the inspection organizations performing supervised inspection and regular inspection for special equipment” is not defined as an administrative action, but a technical supervision under the guidance of governmental departments.” Kan Ke said this definition leaves space for later administrative approval system reform.

Ma Ruiwen, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region’s people’s congress, also a member of the Standing Committee of the NPC, said, the evaluation report of the Special Equipment Safety Law draft clearly recorded the evaluation details and the general comments of the representatives. He said, in the past, usually evaluations were performed after years of legislation. Now evaluations are performed before legislation and this is helpful in improving legislation quality. Pre-evaluation should be encouraged and carried on as a NPC routine practice and serve as a good example for local legislation.

As a new effort of NPC in improving legislation quality, pre-evaluation displays laws’ active role in expressing, leveraging and adjusting social interests. It is also a real practice for the public to participate in legislation and to combine both the Party’s and the people’s wills.

## A brand-new work pattern taking shape

Many people said the three-into-one new work mode is the most brilliant part in this new law when being interviewed. What is three-into-one new work mode? To Kan Ke, it means the new safety work mode for special equipment, that is, enterprises of special equipment take the main safety responsibility, the government takes administrative supervision responsibility and the society responsible for monitoring. In this way, besides summarizing China’s actual practice and lessons, the law for the first time defines functions of enter-



Passengers are excited to take a roller coaster in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province on June 1. CFP

prises, the government and the public under socialist market economy.

In this three-into-one work mode, the responsibility of enterprises is put in the first place. "The safety responsibility of enterprises, including the manufacturing, operating and using enterprises, is put into first place," Liu Zuojun said. "The specifying of main responsibility of manufacturing, operating and using enterprises is an important lesson learned from previous accidents. Most accidents were caused by poor management and unclear safety responsibilities in enterprises. For example, some equipments have quality defects when being manufactured and cause problems after being put into use. Most accidents are caused by wrong operations, lack of checks and maintenance. Without clear responsibility, there will be no safety for special equipment. Once accidents occur, it is hard to locate or trace those bearing responsibility. Usually the government has to pay for the loss of the accidents. Special Equipment Safety Law is to address this problem. By stressing the responsibilities of enterprises and increasing the penalties to violation activities, including raising the sum of fine to the accident-responsible person of enterprises, the law improves the consciousness of the manufacturing, operating and using enterprises and their management persons about their first-place responsibility in special equipment.

Besides, the law also requires monitoring of the public for special equipment safety. It stipulates that all forces of the public are to participate in safety-related work of special equipments. In Kan Ke's view, double impact can be achieved

if social monitoring, for example, monitoring from the public and media, is stressed. Therefore, the law specifies the monitoring and participation of social forces and individuals in safety-related work of special equipment. It also requires detailed supervision management archives and information inquiry system for registered special equipment so that the public can trace the safety status of special equipments.

### **Supervise in accordance with the law and no responsibility evasiveness**

Supervision responsibility of the government is stressed as much as the primary responsibility of the manufacturing, operating and using enterprises.

For example, to issue a manufacture licence for special equipment, the approving department needs to strictly investigate if the applying enterprise meets the requested requirements by the Law. If some hidden danger is reported or found in supervision inspection, the administrative department should order the involved enterprises to take counter-measures. The administrative department should order the manufacturers to recall the defective equipments if they fail to do so. If the special equipment reaches its life cycle and needs to be abandoned, the administrative department should urge the users to perform their abandonment duties.

Kan Ke noted, "Government departments take supervision responsibilities for special equipment safety. However, this supervision is not to be a 'babysitter' but a 'supervisor', who takes a close eye on whether safety measures are taken appropriately and adequately."

How to play the function of a "supervisor"? The safety law defines at the beginning that the State performs safety supervision to the complete process of special equipment, including manufacture, operation and utilization. For example, there are five primary quality safety responsibility entities in the life cycle of a lift. The first is in its trial phase, during which the trial entity is the primary responsibility entity; the second in its manufacturing and installation phase, during which those bearing responsibility is the manufacturing and installation units; the third in its using phase, during which the using entity is fully responsible for the safety matters; the fourth in its maintenance phase, during which the maintenance unit is responsible for safety management and maintenance; the fifth is inspection organization who is responsible for safety inspections. What are functions of supervision organizations? Their function is to supervise and check whether



An official from Shijiazhuang Bureau of Quality and Technology Supervision introduces elevator safety know-how to pupils from Chengjiao Primary School in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province on June 24. Being part of the province's work safety month activities, the bureau organized on-the-spot lectures and demonstrations of elevator safety and donated books to the students. *Wang Min*

## Legislators suggested that management of special equipments, such as elevators, is closely related with people's life.

the above five responsible entities perform their safety duties according to the Law, and to give them penalties if they fail to perform the safety duties appropriately and adequately.

To further clarify the supervision function of government departments, the Law also specifies in details measures and procedures of governmental supervision as well as requirements for qualified safety supervision officers. It states that special equipments in densely-populated public places such as schools, kindergartens, hospital, bus/rail stations, wharfs and shopping malls are key objects to be specially supervised. It uses 25 articles to define illegal actions and its penalties for special equipment safety. For example, if a manufacturing

enterprise knows that a kind of special equipment has defects but do not immediately stop the manufacturing and recall the products, the supervising department will order them to recall the products within a certain period of time. If the manufacturing enterprise fails to do, the supervising department will order them to stop manufacturing and give them penalties. For those enterprises transgressing the Law seriously, their manufacturing license might be cancelled.

## Prevent the institutionalizing of departmental interests

The Special Equipment Safety Law was hailed for its details and operability. For example, the section about supervision management had only three articles in its first review and 12 in its third review; the section about legal responsibility had 14 articles in its second review and 25 in its third review. The equality between responsibility and rights increases the operability of the law and establishes the authority of the law. However, some people may think that supervision management responsibility and legal responsibility are regulated in too trivial with a tendency of "strengthening government

powers and institutionalizing departmental interests”.

For the above concerns from the public, Li Lianning, deputy secretary-general of the Standing Committee of NPC, said in the third review meeting, “This edition, based on its previous, analyzes the practice of the Special Equipment Safety Regulations adopted in 2003, incorporates contents of the regulations into the law draft with many supplementary details. The number of articles of the Law increases from 70 plus in its second review to the current 101. This modification is a good example in improving legislation quality especially the operability of the Law.”

Li noted the bettering of the Law would greatly reduce the law making cost in the future. In the past, legislation being adopted, large amount of administrative regulations, department rules even judicial interpretation had to be made to guarantee the operability of that piece of legislation, which cost large amount of time and effort of the legislation department. However, this law greatly reduces the legislation cost and improves its legislation authority by being so detailed and operable.

Detailed regulations of a law can prevent the institutionalization of departmental interests. In the past, when a law passed, related departments would be responsible for the drafting of regulations and rules, which would give them opportunities to incorporate interests of their own departments into the regulations and rules. However, this safety law prevents the possibility of bringing their own interests into regulations of the law.

Li said that blanket laws required the drafting of regulations of related government departments after legislation, thus approval authority, inspection and penalty rights would become interests of related departments, which would affect the authority of the law. As the highest legislative body, the NPC and its Standing Committee have no individual interests, therefore, they will try their best to improve the operability of laws and reduce departmental regulations and judicial interpretations, thus prevent sector interests. The Special Equipment Safety Law gives a strong signal for improving legislation quality and will bring a new legislation prospect.

## Supervise in accordance with the law to reduce safety accidents

The vitality of laws lies in their feasibility. Many members of the NPC agreed that the best way to prevent safety accident is to make sure the law be followed and enforced strictly and those who break laws be punished severely.

“We need to strengthen the supervision of the law. During my investigations and research, I found many hidden dangers of our special equipments such as elevators and boilers in manufacturing, test, using and supervising process. For example, accidents may occur if quality of components or the designing does not meet the standards; tragedies may also occur if the installation is not performed as per standard instructions; accidents may also occur due to wrong operations in maintenance. The elevator accident in Shenzhen is caused by wrong use of lubricants. Accidents may be caused by various reasons. However, unclear supervision responsibility and incomplete supervision system are fundamental reasons,” Wang Chen, vice chairman and secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee, stressed that the law must be strictly followed and strict supervision system must be established

so that this law can be effectively enacted. Wang said, though the law defines the safety responsibilities of enterprises, it is still complicated in practice. Take the example of elevators. Safety of elevators is carried by manufacturing units, property management units or third parties. How to further define supervision responsibilities? In Guangzhou, there is some nice practice called Primary Responsibility System. That means to make clear that the user and manager of the special equipment is the primary responsibility body if accidents occur. This effectively prevents unclear ownership of accidents. New examples and practice should be further encouraged to promote the operation of the safety law.

## Improve safety awareness of the public

Before the third review of the draft law, a lift accident occurred, bringing more modifications to the draft. On June 21, a flat-bed trailer carrying soft drinks rushed down in full speed from the escalator directly onto a 60-year-old lady who died immediately in a supermarket in Jiading District, Shanghai.

When hearing the news, Kan Ke said, “I feel very sad. If the elevator is well managed and the flat-bed trailer had not been on the escalator, no tragedy would have taken place. You can’t bet on accidents, which usually happen all of a sudden. Loss of a life is a permanent harm to victims’ family. We should not manage special equipments by luck.”

Legislators suggested that management of special equipments, such as elevators, is closely related with people’s life. They proposed to modify article 43 in the draft of the law. The original article says, when taking or operating elevators, passenger cables and large amusement facilities, the public should follow safety instructions and cautions, follow the guidance of the working personnel; if any problem occurs during operation, the public should evacuate following safety instructions. After modification, “follow the guidance of the working personnel” was changed into “follow the management and guidance of the working personnel”. The modification was finalized in the Special Equipment Safety Law.

The safety awareness of the public is of importance. Experts say quite a number of the serious accidents could have been avoided if the public could increase their safety and self-protection knowhow. For example, the rate of accidents increases if children take elevators without the company of adults because kids do not have adequate safety consciousness. In some elevator accidents, passengers got injured because they tried in vain to open the car doors by force instead of waiting for aid when trapped in elevators.

The Special Equipment Safety Law stipulates in detail how the public shall be on board and operate special equipments. It says, “When riding or operating elevators, passenger cables and large amusement facilities, the public shall follow safety instructions and cautions, follow the management and guidance of the working personnel. If any problem occurs during operation, the passengers shall evacuate orderly upon safety instructions.”

Many interviewees emphasized that the public should pay adequate attention to safety issues. Each individual should improve his or her safety and self-protection awareness, learn adequate and necessary safety knowledge and take safety as one of the utmost tasks in everyday life. (NPC) ■

An exclusive interview with Kan Ke, vice chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee

## Safety: The core of newly-adopted safety law



Kan Ke, vice chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee *CFP*

**L**aw has always been an indispensable tool for life safety. On June 29, the third meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee deliberated and passed the Special Equipment Safety Law, providing a new handy tool for China's national safety work. How can this law effectively protect people's safety of life and property? What positive changes it will bring to China's special equipments sector? To answer these questions, NPC magazine interviewed Kan Ke, vice chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee.

### Put people's life first

Special equipments refer to lifting machinery, pressure pipes and boilers, as well as pressure containers such as tank trucks and liquefied petroleum gas cylinders, elevators, carriage cables, large amusement park facilities and plant (factory) dedicated motor vehicles. Having participated in the drafting of the Special Equipment Safety Law, Kan said, "Special equipments represent the economic development of a country to some extent. The wide application of special equipments not only brings convenience into people's life,

but also promotes the social and economic development."

In China, special equipment industry is one of the sectors that have developed most rapidly since the reform and opening-up policies were adopted in 1978. Kan said, "I still remembered in 1975 when I first travelled to Beijing, I was told Beijing Hotel was the highest building. But now more and more buildings are higher than Beijing Hotel, indicating more special equipments have been put into use."

Statistics show by the end of 2012 the number of special equipments in China had reached 8.22 million, among them 640,000 are boilers, 2,720,000 pressure containers, 2,450,000 lifts, 1,910,000 lifting machinery, 845 passage cables and 17,000 large amusement park facilities, as well as 138,800,000 gas cylinders and pressure pipes of 851,300 kilometers.

However, special equipments are also very dangerous considering that they work under high pressure, high temperature and high speed as well as their characteristics of being flammable, explosive and easy to collide and fall from the air. Kan said, "Safety of life and property should always be put in the first place. Only on this assumption can economy develop in a healthy way. We should definitely say no to the mindset that puts industry development and GDP above the safety of life."

"Taking people as the foremost is one of the basic principles of China's legislation activities," said Kan. The NPC Standing Committee attached high attention to the legislation of the Special Equipment Safety Law after adequate preparations and thorough researches. "This is the first law in New China that regulates the safe administration of special equipments."

### More specific and detailed provisions

On August 27, 2012, a draft with only 65 provisions was submitted to the 28th meeting of the 11th NPC Standing Committee for preliminary review. However the final draft submitted for review and vote at the third meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee in April, 2013 increased to 101 provisions.

What has made these changes to the safety law? At the second meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee, top legislator Zhang Dejiang said, "We need to design the legislation in a more scientific and specific way, to supplement,



modify and clarify it whenever changes occur so that the operability and enforceability of the law can be reinforced.”

In Kan’s eyes, this is the core of legislation and has an important meaning to reinforce the enforceability of the law.

However, it is not easy to draft the legislation provisions more detailed and specific. “Most of us are good at law theories since we have long been working on legislations for NPC. However, each law regulates different social relationships and we are not possibly familiar with every social relationship. A demerit of ours. Therefore we need more investigations and researches.”

To draft a more specific and detailed law, a drafting group of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee headed by Kan made thorough investigations into factories, plants, industry associations, government organizations and office buildings.

“We know the industry better after our field investigations. For example, in our tour to Yanshan Petrochemical, we saw some expired liquefied gas cylinders were to be disassembled and melted. This is exactly what Provision 19 of the Special Equipment Safety Law regulates,” said Kan.

“Compared with the first and second drafts, the adopted version has gone through big changes. For example, the law regulates that trial operations and routine safety checks must be performed and safety auxiliaries and safety protection devices must be checked and confirmed for passenger cables and large amusement park facilities before being put into operation every day. That’s to say, the law regulates in great details what the operating unit must do every day. This greatly improves the enforceability of the law.”

Following the Tourism Law adopted by the 12th NPC Standing Committee, this safety law is another law with excellent details for execution. After the Special Equipment Safety Law takes effect, the Special Equipment Safety Super-

vision Provisions made by the State Council will be void.

## Improve legislation quality

An additional evaluation meeting was held before a legislation draft was finally submitted for review and vote. Experts, specialists and enterprise staff were invited to evaluate the scientific accuracy, timing and social impact of the legislation. This is an important measure of the 12th NPC Standing Committee to improve legislation quality. Kan said, “This can effectively improve the comprehensiveness of the legislation and prevent unexpected errors.”

“Opinions we solicited at pre-evaluation are indispensable to improve the legislation quality,” Kan said. The evaluation results were satisfactory. All the attendees agreed that this draft of law was well-framed and had more contents than the second one, which was well suitable to China’s current situation and was just in good timing.

In this meeting, Kan said, some participants have given detailed suggestions to the safety law and some were incorporated after discussion. For example, one representative pointed out that the inspection to special equipments should be defined as a kind of technical supervision under the instruction of the government instead of a governmental administrative action. About that, Kan held similar opinion, saying the government needs to make clear functions of the government and marketing entities and leave enough space for delegating approval authorities. The Legal Affairs Commission made modifications accordingly.

Now in less than half a year, the Special Equipment Safety Law will be officially taking effect. Kan hopes that all citizens will study this law carefully so that it can be strictly enforced and followed and people’s life and property safety will be better protected. (NPC) ■



Tourists take a heart-thrilling ride on the super swing hammer in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province on June 1. Imported from Germany, the world-largest swing hammer can go up to 42 meters high, swing 240 degrees with a highest speed of 110 kilometers per hour. CFP



# Urbanization makes China Dream coming true

**U**rbanization is deemed inevitable in the modernization drive. The on-going urbanization campaign steers the China Dream of tens of millions of Chinese people, especially among farmers, for living a well-off life in a modernized society.

On behalf of the State Council, Minister of National Development and Reform Commission Xu Shaoshi delivered a report on China's urbanization to the 12th NPC Standing Committee on June 26. When reviewing the report, legislators recognized the achievements of urbanization but also pointed out existing or potential problems in the process.

## **Urbanization: An inevitable choice of modernization**

“To live like a townsman” has always been the dream of farmers for generations. Since the establishment of New China especially after the reform and opening-up movement, tens of millions of farmers have migrated into cities, living a city life.

Migration into cities is not a spontaneous choice. As the national economy develops, factories and service industries are in great need of labor forces. At the same time, large



This October 8, 2011 picture shows visitors feed fishes at a park in Yiwu, Zhejiang Province. The city launched a health campaign to renovate old and filthy villages and merged 716 natural villages into 290 communities for a better administration. Zhang Jiancheng

numbers of rural labor surplus were freed from once-labor-intensive agriculture sector due to continuous technological progress.

“Urbanization is an inevitable road to China’s modernization, which is a strategic way to meet the changed demand in industry patterns, urban and rural development,” said Minister Xu. Statistics indicate that China’s urban populations increased from 172 million to 712 million with an increasing urbanization rate from 17.92 percent to 52.57 percent from 1978 to 2012.

However, most of the farmers working in cities do not be-

come urban dwellers because they are still fettered by rural *hukou* – household registration – and their social security is greatly dwarfed by their urban counterparts. Big gaps exist in public services such as job opportunities, medical treatment, education, social security and housing between rural and urban dwellers.

Having stepped into a historic era of building an all-around well-off society, China’s urbanization means not only a population migration but also simultaneous changes in life style and welfare. The 12th Five-Year Plan (2010-15) draws a beautiful blueprint: China will push forward urbanization in an active and stable manner, focusing on gradually transferring farmers qualified for urban household permits into cities.

Developing hand in hand of “industrialization, informatization, urbanization and agricultural modernization”, according to the report of the CPC’s 18th National Congress. Since there is no textbooks on how to realize urbanization in a populous nation like China, different regions have different ideas.

Lü Wei, a member of the NPC Standing Committee, told NPC magazine that urbanization is a national concept, which stresses scientific planning in advance.

Lü’s opinion was shared by many other legislators.

“Materials and populations are of equal importance for the planning of urbanization. Populations transferring from rural areas to cities must be realized according to economic and social plans, especially industrial development planning. Good planning helps us avoid possible mistakes,” said Yin Zhongqing, vice-chairman of NPC Financial and Economic Affairs Committee and member of the NPC Standing Committee.

“We need to make scientific and reasonable plans with layouts of large, medium and small cities, townships and satellite cities. Urban planning should closely relate to regional economy and industrial development to match the capacity of resources and environment. As one of our key tasks, we need to push forward the gradual transferring of rural dwellers into urban dwellers. Ecological culture ideology and principles need to be incorporated into the process of urbanization, which requires an intensive, intelligent, eco-friendly and low-carbon road,” according to the central economic conference convened early this year.

Minister Xu said relevant departments of the State Council have finished urbanization planning after three years of preparations, which is now soliciting suggestions from local governments and related departments. The draft will be submitted to the National People’s Congress for discussions and reviews before publication.

## **NPC’s investigations and researches: prompt and efficient**

Urbanization is not only closely related to modernization, but also to the interests of vast rural residents who moved into cities. To push forward a healthy development of urbanization is one of the key supervision tasks of the NPC Standing Committee.

When making supervision plans of 2013, the 12th NPC Standing Committee reviewed the work report of the State Council about urbanization at the end of June. To fulfill



Above: Cao Shizhen, a farm worker with the Xishan Farm of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, coaches his daughter in homework, at his home on June 21. Cao and his colleagues moved into new houses in townships recently because of the strategic shift of the corps from stationing troops to open up wasteland to defending the boundary with the development of urbanization.

Middle: Cao Shizhen's new house in Fenghuotai Township, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Top: Farm worker Cao Shizhen weeds the farmland.

*Photos by Wang Fei*

the task, the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the NPC set up an investigation and research group in April.

Prior to the on-spot investigations, the group held a meeting, inviting personnel from the State Council, chairmen of the finance and economics committees from four provincial people's congresses and experts to attend. Two vice chairpersons of the NPC Standing Committee, Yan Junqi and Zhang Ping made speeches at the workshop.

After the workshop, headed by Chairman of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the NPC Li Shenglin, an investigation group was dispatched to more than 10 provinces, such as Hubei, Guangdong, Shandong, Zhejiang, Henan, Hunan, Sichuan and Jiangsu, for field studies. The group consists of several vice chairpersons, including Lü Zusan, Peng Sen, Gu Shengzu, Shao Ning and Yin Zhongqing, as well as some committee members Ding Jiye, Yu Gesheng, Lü Wei and Zhu Fazhong.

The key is how to coordinate urban and rural development, that is, how to help farmers obtain steady jobs, enjoy the same social securities and public service as city residents, and how to promote agriculture modernization, improve public services in rural areas and increase earnings of farmers.

Major points of the investigations include, first, the general status, development trend, major problems of the urbanization; second, problems in the process of rural-urban migration, like public services including obstacles and difficulties in employment, pension, medical care, education and social security and *hukou* administration; third, problems of pushing agriculture modernization; fourth, urbanization experiences and practices from local governments; fifth, suggestions and comments on above problems or other aspects of urbanization.

The group visited towns, streets, communities and villages-in-cities to do investigations and listened to opinions and suggestions from the grassroots. Workshops attended by local departments and experts on urbanization were also organized.

The purpose of researches was to provide reference for the NPC Standing Committee in reviewing the report about urbanization to be delivered by the State Council. By doing so, it strengthens the supervision function of the NPC, helps related departments improve their work, improve urbanization quality and push forward the decision making of the central government.

To save time and improve efficiency, the group was divided into six small teams, each with 2-3 members. "By dispatching investigation teams to 10 provinces and covering a wide range of topics, the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee has put lots of efforts, time and resources," said Hou Yibin, a member of the committee.

"In general, we got a lot of useful information from this investigation. Local governments accumulated rich experiences in urbanization in recent years as well as encountered many problems and obstacles," Peng Sen, vice chairman of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the NPC, said.

On June 29 when the third meeting of the 12th NPC Standing Committee convened, investigations reports were

presented as references for members and representatives of the legislators to review the State Council report.

## Development quality crucial to urbanization

The 12th Five-Year Plan proposes that by the end of 2015 the urbanization rate will reach 51.5 percent, which has been achieved so far. However, a series of problems have emerged due to the fast development.

The first is the misuse of farmlands. “Some local governments randomly set up industrial and development zones, which lead to the urbanization of lands faster than that of populations,” Peng Sen said. China’s industrial land coverage rate is between 0.3 and 0.6, quite lower than that of developed countries whose index is usually above 1.

Vice President of Nanjing Planning and Design Research Institute Cheng Maoji said that cities have given excessive emphasis on the construction of industrial areas, leading to inadequate input into the rebuilding of old districts. Therefore, in many cities, modern new districts co-exist with ragged old areas. Moreover, social security has been improved continuously for urban residents, large amount of migrant workers have less opportunities to enjoy cities’ public services. Industrial structure of some cities adjusted slowly due to limited input into infrastructure and urban environment.

Several interviewees said the over-enthusiastic and rapid urbanization in some local governments displayed their understanding of urbanization incorrect and inadequate. “Urbanization is a process of historical development, not a man-made movement and cannot be sped up simply by strategic pushing,” Peng said. So many people have put too much expectation on urbanization, taking it as an important impetus to expand domestic demands and increase economic development.

Peng said that urbanization was the intensive and efficient utilization of lands and the following problems should be taken into consideration: how to use industrialization to support urbanization, how to improve utilization efficiency of industrial lands, how to ensure the smooth transformation of development and industrial zones and settle related labor surplus.

“Undertake an intensive urbanization road,” Cheng echoed, adding that China had more populations and less land. He suggested to plan the development of cities according to land, resources and environment carrying capacity and economic level. “We need to change our current outward urban expansion into inward updating and improvement. More efforts should be made on the improvement of efficiency of land use and rebuilding of ‘urban villages’ and ragged old districts.”

“Urbanization should be urbanization of populations, not only that of objects and lands,” Lü Zushan said to reporters. The government must follow the natural law when pushing forward urbanization instead of seeking higher rates or blind city expansion despite of input. The so-called urbanization of populations refers that rural residents could easily find jobs in cities and enjoy the same public services as their city counterparts.

Lü Wei, who also participated in the investigation and

research, said, “We should improve urbanization quality, build scientific urbanization evaluation system, and evaluate urbanization through public service, land utilization rate and non-city worker employment rate etc.”

## Balance interests of rural and urban areas

Urbanization must base on the development of industries. “Urbanization is the result of industrialization and economic development. It is the natural result of change of farmers’ life and work style, not the result of man-made production and pushing,” Yin Zhongqing told reporters.

China has wide geographical coverage with big regional gaps, especially eastern and mid-western areas. This means urbanization in different areas cannot copy the same mode with the same speed.

“Urbanization is closely connected with industrial development and according to their different circumstances,” said Lü Wei, who joined the investigation group to Zhejiang and Henan provinces. Zhejiang is one of the eastern developed provinces and Henan one of mid-China agricultural provinces, both of which have adopted urbanization strategies suitable to their own actual conditions. For example, Zhejiang accelerates the integration between urban and rural areas through modular and private economy. However, Henan focuses more on developing central townships through improved public services.

The investigation groups went to both eastern and mid-western provinces, both northern and southern provinces to get a comprehensive understanding of nationwide urbanization. They held that a basic purpose of urbanization is to reduce gaps between cities and rural areas and to gradually eliminate the “urban-rural two-layer” structure.

“Some local governments focus more on urban development instead of the coordinated and integrated development of both urban and rural areas. It is not correct if we focus on only urban development and take no consideration of economic development and modernization of rural areas,” Peng Sen said.

“Urbanization rate doesn’t mean everything. The most important is whether urban-rural gap is reduced, farmers’ earnings improved, rural basic facilities and public service enhanced, which should be the main indexes of urbanization,” Lü Zushan told reporters. Any actions that harm interests of farmers and weaken the development of agriculture and rural development are not allowed for urbanization.

Now more and more local governments realized that coordinated development between rural and urban areas is the only way to a sustainable way of urbanization and they adjusted their development strategies accordingly. For example, after the 12th Five-Year Plan, Jiangsu Province extended their strategy into integrated urban-rural development because “urban-rural two-layer” structure hinders the shifting of farmers to city residents and the urbanization process is greatly impacted due to the imbalance between urban-rural industrial and labor structures.

Therefore, investigation groups suggested that breakthroughs should be made through marketing measures, including reforming *hukou*, finance and tax, social security and land management systems so as to build up an integrated urban-rural economic and social development. (NPC) ■

# Target of China's urbanization:

## Seeking a balanced and coherent development of rural and urban areas

Lü Zushan

Member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

Vice-Chairman of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress



Urbanization represents the change that urban and rural areas in China are collectively experiencing. Because of differences in areas and economic development, all areas across China have adopted different measures to explore urbanization and encountered different problems. At the same time, China's urbanization needs the correct guidance at national level.

Remarkable achievements have been made in the overall development of urbanization, however, the problems brook no ignorance. The achievements are mainly two-folded: first, the problem of transfer and employment of a large number of rural surplus labor force has been solved; second, the overall and coordinated development of urban and rural areas has been promoted during the process of urbanization.

By the end of 2012, there are 263 million migrant workers in China, with 163.36 million outgoing migrant workers and 99.25 million local migrant workers. Most of them have obtained non-agricultural employment and enhanced their income level, facilitating farmers to enjoy more benefits from the country's industrialization and urbanization. Meanwhile, new progress has been made in coordinating development of urban and rural areas. On the one hand, with the growth of urban population, it is obvious that cities, counties and towns across China, not to mention megacities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, have taken on a completely new look compared with 30 years ago. On the other hand, things have also changed substantially in rural areas, where infrastructure level has been improved, the fundamental system of public services in rural areas has been basically established, and social security has been gradually set up.

At the same time of rapid development of urbanization, there is no denying that conflicts and problems have emerged.

First, some areas blindly pursue the speed of urbanization with no consideration of actual conditions. During the

inspection, we found that some areas, violating economic development laws in the name of promoting urbanization, are in blind pursuit of the speed and level of urbanization. Second, the majority of migrant workers are not entitled to the same basic urban public services. At present, the quality of urbanization in many areas is rather poor. Third, the spatial layout and scale and structure of cities are irrational. Due to the difference in economic development, the level of urbanization in eastern China is high while that in western area is low. Fourth, some places have not paid enough attention to rural development and farmers' rights and interests in urbanization. Currently, the development of countryside and small towns is lagging far behind that of large and medium-sized cities, and the gaps brought about by the urban-rural structure have been expanded rather than narrowed.

It is highly important to coordinate and enhance understanding and awareness for the sake of better and healthy development of urbanization. The fundamental purpose of urbanization is to narrow the gaps between urban and rural areas and gradually solve the problem of urban-rural structure. Therefore, measures must be taken to balance and coordinate development of urban and rural areas, not to seek urbanization at the expense of harming the interests of farmers and weakening agricultural and rural development. Second, more attentions should be paid to the urbanization of human being, not only to the urbanization of things and land. Third, we should conform to the objective law when promoting urbanization, which is the result of economic and social development and shall not be spoiled by excessive enthusiasm beyond development level and stage. Fourth, it is required to properly handle the relationship between government and market in the process of urbanization. Fifth, we should tailor measures to local conditions and provide guidance according to different circumstances without imposing a single solution. Sixth, we shall break the bottleneck constraint to urbanization, eliminate the institutional barrier of urban-rural structure and establish the institution and mechanism for the integration of urban and rural development through deepening reforms and promoting innovations on institutions and mechanisms.

In the next step, we should increase vitality and dynamism for urbanization through reforms. Urbanization is not only concerned with construction, but more importantly, it is an issue of reform. We have to break the constraint to urbanization by reform approaches and market forces. At present, barriers of institution and mechanism have greater impacts on urbanization, which relies more on reforms to solve the problems of people, land and money. A series of reforms should be adopted on the basis of urbanization, including the reforms of public service system, social security system, household registration system, rural land system and fiscal and financial system.

Focusing on urbanization of human being, we should accelerate the reforms of household registration and social security, stripping off unequal social welfare adhered to household registration and striving to achieve the equalization of basic public services. Currently, it is our priority to register permanent residents as permanent urban residents, progressively realize that migrant workers and their families enjoy the same public services as urban residents. Given the large number of migrant workers, it can only be realized in phases, and those farmer workers with family migration or working long-term in the city should be given preference to enjoy the same social security and schooling of their children as the urban residents. Also, the transfer and continuation of registration of endowment insurance across regions should be accelerated. Meanwhile, we have to attach great importance to the housing of migrant workers and vigorously develop the housing rental market while further improving the urban housing security system in combination of accelerating the reform of rural land system, giving full play to enterprises, society and market.

We should deepen the reform of rural land system, improving the efficiency of land use while protecting farmers' right to land and assets, so as to ensure the value-added income mainly belongs to farmers. The work of registering and certifying ownership of collective rural land should be accelerated. We will support the orderly circulation of farmers' contracted land in accordance with the law on a voluntary and compensatory basis, promote the moderate concentration and large-scale operation of rural land, and accelerate the healthy development of modern agriculture. We will further expand the application of the policy of linking the increase in land used for urban development with the decrease in land used for rural development, extending from the currently county-wide application to province-wide gradually. We will actively explore the pilot market-

oriented reform of rural homestead, so that farmers will get profits from the circulation of homestead. We will accelerate the reform of land requisition and establish the compensation mechanism for land requisition in accordance with market rules, solving the problem of long-term livelihood of landless farmers.

It is an important step in urbanization to intensify reform in the areas of taxation, finance and investment. We should establish a scientific and rational urban cost-sharing mechanism with various participants, define reasonably the proportion and method of cost-sharing by the central and local governments, government and enterprises as well as individuals, and rationalize the relationship between exporting and importing areas of the labor force.

At the same time, we should reform and improve the existing fiscal and taxation system according to the principle of matching financial resources with powers, define the expenditure liabilities of the central and local governments, provinces and counties, establish and absorb the transfer payment system in which the number of household registration of migrant workers and the size of permanent population match, thus reducing the over-dependence of local governments on "land finance". We will revitalize rural land assets, realizing the market liquidation of the rights of farmers to land contract management, homestead use and collective income distribution. We should readjust the existing distribution structure of land value-added income, which will be mainly used to solve the problem of registering eligible rural workers as permanent urban residents. We should guide financial and private funds toward farmers, rural areas and agriculture, participating in the process of urbanization.

The goal of China's urbanization is to balance urban and rural development. Progress will be made in balancing and integrating rural and urban development. ■

## Reform crucial to dividend of urbanization

**Peng Sen**

Member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress  
Vice-Chairman of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress

### What kind of new urbanization do we need?

In traditional sense, urbanization focuses on size and land, taking to the road of expanding urban construction with the motive mechanism of accumulating capital and demographic dividend through unequal exchange of urban and rural resources and elements without really touching the urban-rural structure. In the new period of completing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, we have to review historical experience to establish new concepts, open new roads and form new features for China's urbanization.

The new-type urbanization does not lead to extensive de-



velopment, not pursuing the size of investment, the expansion of urban areas or the enhancement of urbanization level, not even the urban development. The only purpose is to carry out livelihood reform and living condition improvement in consistent to the requirements by a moderately prosperous and modernized society. It is the development of human being.

Priority should be given to balancing urban and rural development, including not only new problems, such as the registration of eligible rural workers as permanent urban residents, but the existing problems as well, such as the optimization and renovation of the old city and the building of communities in a new countryside.

The motive mechanism for the new-type urbanization does not stand for administrative power and policy, nor is it driven by land finance or profit-oriented hot money. However, it brings about dividend through reform as well as market forces and people's desires. All the barriers of system and mechanism maintaining the urban-rural structure and obstructing the new-type urbanization should be broken.

There are the following three criteria for judging the new-type urbanization, namely, the integration of planning and managing urban and rural development, the market orientation of free circulation of urban and rural elements, and the equalization of basic public services in urban and rural areas.

The integration of planning and managing urban and rural development requires to break the administrative separation of urban and rural areas in real sense. Through the reform of planning system, we should take overall consideration of spatial layout in all regions and build intelligent and green cities with IT application. Through the reform of administrative institutions and transformation of government functions, we should solve the problems of departmental division and overlapping functions in urban and rural areas. Meanwhile, through the reform of household registration, we should solve the problem of unequal treatment of those living in the same city.

The market orientation of free circulation of urban and rural elements requires to break economic separation between urban and rural areas, which is essentially to solve the problem of unequal exchange of resource factors in urban and rural areas. The core issue relates to land, and we should carry out reform of rural property rights system and land requisition system. Besides, it involves the problems of different payment for the same work, as well as low wages and benefits of migrant workers. This is the difficulty for the new-type urbanization.

The equalization of basic public services in urban and rural areas requires to break social separation between urban and rural areas. We should carry out reforms of the public finance system, the distribution system of State capital gains, and educational, medical and social security systems, thereby expending the spending power and desire of urban and rural residents and raising social consumption level. This is the focus for the new-type urbanization.

## What shall we do now?

Whether or not will the urbanization provide dividend and driving force relies on institutional innovation and firm advancement of market-based reform. Currently, the following three aspects of measures need to be adopted to promote the new-type urbanization:

First, we must focus on improving the equal exchange of elements in urban and rural areas and advancing the reform of land system. For a long time, the key reason for the difficulty in breaking the urban-rural structure in China lies in unequal exchange of elements in urban and rural areas.

To actively yet prudently carry out urbanization, the most essential and pressing task is to improve equal element relations as China's 12th Five-Year Plan has outlined. We should restore the "right" of rural productive elements and resources to equally participate in market exchanges through new institutional designs and establish equal element relations conforming to market economic law. The most important thing is to further promote land system reform based on the reform of rural property rights. Proceeding from the principle of protecting farmers' interests and using land economically and intensively, we must accelerate to revise relevant laws and regulations, promote proper circulation of collective agricultural land and scale management, and strengthen the reform of the system of development land requisition.

Second, we must focus on equalizing the basic public services in urban and rural areas, actively yet prudently carrying out household registration reform. Megacities and large cities should, in accordance with their actual conditions, make innovations to encourage the registration of eligible rural workers who have stable income and live in the cities for a certain period of time. Small and medium-sized cities and towns should relax controls on household registration and lower the threshold for rural workers to find jobs and live in urban areas.

Superficially, the registration of rural workers as urban residents falls within the scope of household registration, it is by nature a reform of various social welfare and security systems affiliated to the household registration system, with the core issue being to let rural workers enjoy the same basic public services as urban residents. In the near future, we should promote the expansion of public services to cover permanent residents so that more rural workers, especially the new generation of migrant workers, will be better integrated into urban areas. As for those rural workers who have not registered as urban residents, we should pay attention to covering and equalizing the basic public services institutionally and strive to solve practical problems for them, including payment, schooling of their children, public health, house renting and purchasing, and social security. In the long run, we should focus on compulsory education, public health and basic medical care, public culture, social security, government-subsidized housing and employment service, progressively improve the basic public service system to be conforming to our national condition, so that it will be relatively complete, covering urban and rural areas and sustainable, and gradually realize the unification of basic public service systems in urban and rural areas and reach fundamentally balanced service levels.

Third, we should focus on institutional innovation and liberation of productive forces and carefully review the experience in promoting pilot reforms. In recent years, county-level governments and people have been actively exploring the new-type urbanization and created and accumulated rich experience in coordinating urban and rural development. For example, pilot reforms of coordinating urban and rural



development have been in operation for almost 10 years in Chengdu and Chongqing, and the reform of rural property rights system is also among the first to be conducted in the areas. Focusing on returning the power and conferring the function, the two cities have carried out the work of registering and certifying land ownership and defined clearly various rural land ownership. Another example is that many local governments have proposed “three concentrations” for urbanization, namely the concentration of industries to industrial parks, the concentration of agricultural land to scale management and grain experts, and the concentra-

tion of rural residents to new-type communities. Facts have proven that national development has to enjoy dividend of urbanization, and farmers have already begun to enjoy the reform dividend. It can be said that the new-type urbanization has liberated productive forces to the maximum extent. Mature experiences shall be made into laws and regulations in accordance with procedures so that the fruit of reform will be consolidated by rule of law. For those experiences short of legislation, necessary flexibility and authority should be given. We should encourage pilots and bold breakthroughs to add to the overall reform. ■

## Respecting the development rules when promoting urbanization

**Shao Ning**

Vice-Chairman of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress



Urbanization constitutes the inevitable trend of social development and progress and is crucial to China's modernization.

This is a long-term process. In this process, we should respect the development rules of urbanization, and it is better not to use excessive administrative measures, or use methods of campaign, assessment, or completion of a task, to intervene in the development of urbanization, otherwise destructive enthusiasm will harm its healthy development.

As we may have known, in the past 30 years, the level of urbanization in China has increased more than 30 percent, with 1.05 percentage of enhancement each year. During this period of time, China didn't pay special attention to promoting urbanization, in that urbanization developed naturally with industrial evolution.

In fact, the development of non-agricultural industries serves as the premise for urbanization. The speed of urbanization is determined by that of non-agricultural development, not by people's desire. Correspondingly, the pattern of urbanization is determined by that of non-agricultural development, not by people's desire. Therefore, urbanization should keep

pace with the development of non-agricultural industries.

In the coming years, China's economic development is likely to slow down, and naturally, non-agricultural industries will be sluggish to grow. In this case, we should not simply pursue development speed for urbanization and refrain from setting goals too high.

In some areas, since there are no conditions for the development of non-agricultural industries, local authorities should get down to work on building a new countryside. After all, promoting urbanization is not all the work for all areas.

Under the premise of respecting the law of development, we should tailor measures to local conditions without imposing a single solution. Based on actual conditions, we should fully respect the good experience accumulated in recent years and learn from it in real earnest. For the universal applicable experience accepted by farmers, we should carry out promotion and give guidance tailored to different circumstances.

It should be emphasized that China is a country with a large population yet inadequate farmland and fragile agriculture, therefore, the development is increasingly constrained by natural resources and environment. In this sense, when promoting urbanization, we must proceed from our national conditions to coordinate urban and rural development and balance relations in all aspects.

For example, large cities cannot be over populated, and certain thresholds should be set up in some megacities and large cities to reasonably control the number of population. We should pay attention to the collective management and circulation of land and refrain from leaving land uncultivated at the same time of urbanization.

Another example is that we should stick to market orientation and give more play to the market, preventing from causing heavy financial burden to the government. Meanwhile, we should adhere to reform and innovation, break laws and regulations as well as policy obstructions that are not consistent to the time. More importantly, we should respect the desire of farmers, etc. ■

# Industrial support: Key to urbanization

**Lü Wei**

Member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

Member of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress



**I**n the first place, urbanization is closely related to regional economic and industrial development, and therefore it must evolve according to local circumstances. Urbanization must be supported by economy and industry, and the industrial development pattern has determined the pattern of urbanization.

Take Zhejiang Province as an example, the industrial development of this eastern coastal province, where reform and opening-up policies were carried out at a relatively early stage, it is based on private economy and presents massive economic features, promoting the province's county-level economic development and narrowing the gap between urban and rural areas. The province has basically realized the urban-rural integration and entered into the upgraded stage of balancing urban and rural development.

Zhejiang's economic prosperity and smooth development of urbanization will not be achieved without the growth of distinctive industrial clusters. Driven by privatization and featured as private ownership, flexibility, quickness, low cost and small, the province's industrial clusters have offered op-

portunities for local ordinary farmers to start their own businesses or obtain employments and increased fiscal revenues while attracting a large number of migrant workers to come to Zhejiang. Almost every town in the province has a distinctive industrial cluster, such as button town, zipper town, etc. The flourishing of distinctive industrial clusters featured by massive economic development have accelerated the urbanization in Zhejiang. The overall income of farmers is relatively high, mostly because of the high proportion of non-agricultural employment of the rural population. Zhejiang's urbanization is an endogenous process on a voluntary basis, relying on the growth of privately owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the concentration of non-agricultural employment population, thus forming industrial and employment supports, so that the urbanization in the province may achieve sustainable development.

In this sense, in terms of development pattern of urbanization, we should tailor measures to local conditions without imposing a single solution. China is a vast country with a large population, while industrial structures and development patterns vary among regions. The pattern of urbanization is closely related to that of industrial development. All regions need to choose the pattern of urbanization that fits to their own characteristics and development stage in accordance with the actual conditions. A variety of urbanization should be practiced with the combination of centralization and decentralization and the coordinated development of large, medium and small cities as well as towns.

At present, in order to promote coordinated development of regions and rural-urban areas, we need to strengthen the development of small towns, which play different roles in different areas, in particular for the central towns. In the regions supported by industries, villagers may "go upstairs" collectively. As we have seen, industrial concentration has emerged in some suburban areas in Henan Province, where scattered enterprises have been organized to get together through the construction of industrial parks and use land collectively. This will help improve land use efficiency and management. While in major grain producing areas and areas with less non-agricultural industries, it is not necessary to encourage farmers to "go upstairs" collectively.

On the one hand, urbanization requires to balance urban-rural development, narrow the gap between urban and rural development, and realize integrated development of urban and rural areas; on the other hand, it promotes the centralized utilization and development of resources and elements,

brings about the effect of economy of scale, and enhances the productivity of elements and investment efficiency. The clustering of population and industries will increase the efficiency and scale productivity of urban infrastructure and public services. Therefore, we need to pay attention to the scale productivity when focusing on the development of small towns and prevent from flourishing on a large scale.

Currently, some areas, such as Zhejiang Province, are at the stage of transformation and upgrading of urbanization. To further promote the new-type urbanization is to achieve scientific and intensive economic development with high efficiency in a fully functional, environment-friendly and harmonious manner, and bring about urban-rural integration and comprehensively promote quality and level of urbanization. During the inspection, we found that with the rising costs of elements and fierce competition, some industrial clusters in Zhejiang have voluntarily started transformation and upgrading, which will inevitably bring about transformation and upgrading of urbanization and then improve the quality of urbanization. Our major task in the next stage is to enhance the urban functions and the leading role, promote industrial transformation and upgrading, expand the coverage and improve the quality of public services, and increase the quality and efficiency of urbanization. In the future, we will strengthen the vitality and dynamism of urbanization through reform. Meanwhile, the government shall increase its support to industrial transformation and upgrading, develop the market of elements, and continuously improve public service system, so as to realize the healthy and sustainable development of urbanization.

Secondly, the indicators of urbanization shall not be disassembled or broken down, and a scientific evaluation indicator system needs to be established. Urbanization does not represent the growth of urban population, nor is it simply the increase of urban residents, it is, however, the urbanization of human being, as well as of public services, infrastructure and industrial cluster development.

For the time being, the indicator of urbanization is mainly the level of urbanization, which is a national index based on the permanent population. If assessed in a broken-down manner, the indicator will probably lead to blind pursuit of development of urbanization, for the labor force flows with the industrial development and migration. China is now in the process of industrial structural adjustment and transfer. For example, some labor intensive enterprises in coastal areas begin to relocate to middle and western areas, and consequently a number of employment and population will transfer and migrate. Therefore, the level of urbanization should not be used to assess local governments' performance. Market economy represents the free flow of elements, while as the most important element of productivity, the labour force has to migrate, flowing to where there are good job opportunities and pleasant living conditions.

One of the purposes of urbanization is to increase non-agricultural employment and promote intensive management of agricultural land. The simple calculation of urbanization level based on permanent population will not truly reflect the non-agricultural employment in all areas. For example, in Zhe-

jiang, where rural-urban integration has been basically realized, a rural household lives in several hundred square meters and would not like to go to the city for just dozens of square meters, plus it is very convenient to commute between urban and rural areas. Therefore, a large number of rural population live in rural areas and work in counties with their household registration in countryside. Also, Henan is a labor-exporting province with more than 25 million outgoing migrant workers each year, and less than 9 million workers stay within the province, while the rest, more than 10 million workers with non-agricultural employment are calculated into the total population of Henan, the level of urbanization is included in the areas absorbing employments.

Proceeding from improving the quality and efficiency of urbanization, we should establish a scientific system of urbanization analysis and evaluation indicators, paying attention to not only the level of urbanization, but such indicators as non-agricultural employment level, fundamental public service coverage, agricultural modernization level and land use efficiency as well. All areas and departments shall be guided to give priority to improving the quality of urbanization, refraining from blindly pursuing the speed and scale of urbanization development.

The overall planning and balancing of urbanization shall be strengthened, requiring not only to arrange land use, urban building and spatial layout, but to arrange human resources as well, such as employment, education, social security and other public service plans. Funds are needed for carrying out urbanization, and the overall planning of urbanization shall be based on cost-effective measurement, with a comprehensive consideration of job offers, social security, medical care and education, as well as necessary expenses. ■



Balanced development of rural and urban areas CFP



The picture taken on March 17, 2012 shows a bird's-eye view of Shengshan Township, in Shengsi County, Zhoushan City in Zhejiang Province. *Ju Huanzong*

## Zhejiang explores new way of urbanization

**Z**hejiang, a coastal province in eastern China, welcomed a NPC delegation in the first half of May. Headed by Li Shenglin, member of the NPC Standing Committee and Chairman of the NPC Financial and Economic Affairs Committee, an investigation team visited townships, residential communities, rural areas and enterprises for a field study of urbanization.

Legislators witnessed active urbanization explorations in Huzhou, Wenzhou and Yiwu and were impressed by achievements the province had made in recent years. Firstly, urban-

ization movement helps resolve farmers' employment in cities and provide equality in public services. Secondly, development of small cities and central townships is emphasized. Thirdly, the province focuses on the integrated development of rural-urban areas and on the construction of "beautiful countryside."

"Urbanization level of Zhejiang reached 63.2 percent in 2012, 11 percent higher than the national average. Now the province is deepening new urbanization and an exciting urban-rural new blueprint is unfolding," the team was told.

The primary task of Zhejiang's integrated urban-rural development is to reduce income gaps between urban and rural residents through improving employment of rural residents. In addition, big steps have been made in re-constructing public service providing system, so that both urban and rural residents have equal access to education and medical service. To the joy of farmers, they now enjoy medical, economic aid, pension and support same as the urban residents do.

In Zhejiang, the investigation team also noticed a prominent feature of its urbanization, i.e. focusing on the development of towns and central townships. Ever since 1995 when Zhejiang started its trial reform of towns and townships in an all around way, many of them have become small but full fledged cities, which was attributed mainly to the growing medium-and-small-sized enterprises and concentration of non-agricultural employee population. These cities are sustained by industries and population.

The province made central townships and small cities an important platform for integrated urban-rural development. They cultivated 200 central townships and selected 27 of them for small city experiment. On the basis of cultivating central townships, Zhejiang was one of the first provinces that had made strategic decisions for small city building by the end of 2010.

The healthy development of urbanization requires the strong support of rural development. Adhering to urban-rural interaction, deeply pushing forward new rural construction and building "beautiful villages" is the distinctive features of Zhejiang's integrated urbanization movement.

In 2003, Zhejiang provincial government under the leadership of Xi Jinping made a bold decision to invest heavily on the improvement of numerous villages, turning a new page in Zhejiang's construction of beautiful countryside.

An official from Zhejiang's agricultural department disclosed that all the cost of environment treatment in these villages was covered by the provincial budget in order to seek a sustainable development of the economy and the society.

"Beautiful villages" movement is a sweet fruit of green urbanization campaign of Zhejiang. The CPC Zhejiang Provincial Committee led by then secretary Zhang Dejiang attached great importance to the sustainable development, new industrialization and urbanization at the beginning of the 21st century. In 2002, the CPC Zhejiang Provincial Committee led by then secretary Xi Jinping put forward a sustainable development strategy of "constructing an eco-friendly province" to achieve a "well-off life and sustainable eco-system" as the goal. Starting from 2003, Zhejiang has built a cluster of "beautiful villages", "clean villages" and "happy villages."

**To the joy of farmers, they now enjoy equal medical, economic aid, pension and support system as the urban residents.**



Located in the Yangtze River Delta and surrounded by sea from three sides, Xiangshan, a county of Ningbo City in Zhejiang Province, enjoys an excellent geological position. CFP

Zhejiang's urbanization lies in its prosperous development of industry clusters. The importance of industry cluster to urbanization can be well displayed by examples of satellite cities in central Zhejiang. Within an area of 50-kilometer radius in Zhejiang, there are seven to eight prosperous cities with complementary industries that give strong drive to the regional economy.

One suggestion made by Zhejiang is to establish a nationwide system on the transferring of rural labor surplus. "Being one of the few provinces that see more farmers flowing in than out, Zhejiang has resolved employment problems of large amount of farmers. We hope the central government gradually builds up a system that matches its resource input and distribution with residential populations. In terms of special fund, we suggest the central finance departments to establish special aid funds like 'educational or medial coupon' so that farmers can enjoy it wherever they work," said the agricultural official.

"As for farmland management, we suggest the central government to increase construction land for some provinces that have more farmers flowing in order to strengthen their urban construction and their public service system," said the official. (NPC) ■

# Changing homestead land for houses in **Tianjin**

**A**t the end of May 2013, an investigation team headed by vice chairman of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the NPC, Shao Ning, visited Tianjin for field study on urbanization.

Decades of economic development in Tianjin has enabled its “industries to repay agriculture as well as urban areas to repay rural areas,” Shao summed up their trip to the coastal municipality in North China. Taking its geographical advantages and excellent planning in city’s development, Tianjin has been exploring a new urbanization road that features changing homestead lands for houses and correlating farmers’ communities, demo industrial zones and industrialized agriculture areas. This new practice functions especially well for the urbanization of suburbs.

## Exchanging homestead land for houses

In 2005, Tianjin kicked off its experiment of building demo townships by exchanging houses with housing lands.

Shao told reporters that the first step of exchanging houses with homestead lands is to centralize housing lands. “At that time, housing lands of farmers in the suburbs of Tianjin were abundant but quite sporadic. After centralization, dwelling apartments can be built to save more lands.”

What will the remaining lands be used for? This is a second step. The remaining lands are used for developing commercial buildings or industrial areas. In this way, the value of remaining lands increased rapidly and the introduction of



A fork-lift truck transports flowers at Binhai International Flower Garden in Tianjin on May 7. Constructed at the homestead land of Chitu Village in Dongli District with an investment of 4 billion yuan, the garden has fostered more than 2 million flowers of 200 types. Yue Yuewei

industrial areas created more job opportunities.

A third step is to make good use of increased value and earnings. Part of the increased earnings are used to build houses for farmers to ensure that they pay nothing if they exchange houses use lands, and others to resolve problems of social security for local residents, as well as to improve the public services, like education and medical care, of small townships.

A fourth step is to promote land flow under the premise of keeping the balance of housing lands and contracted farmlands. In this way, scattered agriculture farmlands became scale operation and farmers became shareholders with their contracted lands to receive dividends. Meanwhile, commercial public facilities in new buildings are used for renting and the rental income is returned to compensate farmers.

“From the above, farmers’ housing, social security and public service as well as life necessity are all guaranteed. Therefore the transforming from farmers to city residents becomes natural,” said Shao.

He added that local farmers also have adequate job options after they become city residents, for example, they can find job opportunities in service industry, industrial areas or agriculture industrialization areas. If they can find a well-paid job, they will enjoy a quality life as their city counterparts.

### Help farmers live a well-off city life

Since 2005, Tianjin has approved four batches in 49 townships, planning to construct 54 million square meters of farmers’ relocation buildings and apartments with investment budget 280 billion yuan. About 1 million farmers are involved in the program. Until now 22 demonstration townships have been established. A total of 24.8 million square meters of buildings have been completed with an investment of 151.1 billion yuan and 4.5 million farmers have moved into their new houses in those small townships.

Shao said Tianjin also actively pushes the construction of example industrial areas and agriculture industrialization areas. Through the interaction between the three areas, land resources are largely utilized, and emission and environmental pollutions are reduced. Farmers also enjoy the benefit of being urban residents, that is, they live and work in peace and contentment, with guaranteed public security and service.

Based on “interaction of three areas”, Tianjin also promoted “three shifts and one integration” in 2011, that is, to change village committees into community committees, farmers into urban dwellers, collective economy into shareholding economy, and urban-rural integration.

To further promote rural financial development, Tianjin has steadily pushed forward rural finance reforms and innovations by setting up seven township banks to handle fund-raising demands of rural economy.



This file photo shows the newly-constructed high-rises in Huaming Township, Dongli District, Tianjin. More than 36,000 farmers in the township have moved into urban houses thanks to a homestead-land-for-houses program. Cui Yueyong

## Shao Ning said Tianjin also actively pushes the construction of example industrial areas and agriculture industrialization areas.

After all these years of efforts, Tianjin’s urbanization rate has reached 81.55 percent.

### People-oriented policies

In Shao’s opinion, Tianjin did a good job in urbanization, taking into consideration almost all important issues of urbanization such as education, social security, housing and employment and providing better solutions. For example, farmers, after shifting into cities, get new houses, social security, rental incomes, shareholders’ dividends as well as salaries. Though farmers do not receive one-time full compensations for their homestead lands, they are more ensured with a better life in the long run.

Meanwhile, Tianjin still confronts with some problems and challenges, such as huge pressure in land balance, gaps in construction investment and administration cost for farmers’ shifting into cities. Related laws and regulations are also needed in this regard.

To resolve those problems, Shao said decision-makers in the city should adhere to intensive utilization of lands, stick to reforms and innovations as well as tap new practices to stimulate development vitality and realize a smooth population urbanization. (NPC) ■

# Sichuan seeks integrated urban-rural development through pilot programs

In mid-May 2013, an investigation team led by Chairman of the NPC Financial and Economic Affairs Committee Li Shenglin visited Sichuan Province looking into the urbanization process there.

Located in south-western China, Sichuan has a large variety of landscapes including plains, hills and mountains. It has less developed industrial economy but more rural populations. What should be the feasible way of urbanization in Sichuan?

Tao Shengyuan, chairman of the Financial and Economic Committee of Sichuan Provincial People's Congress, said that urbanization in Sichuan has developed rapidly in recent years. Since the 11th Five-Year Plan period (2005-10), urbanization rate has reached 1.44 percent annually. While the total population in Sichuan has reached 351.5 million by end of 2012, its urbanization rate has reached 43.53 percent, 17.2 percent higher than that of 2000.

"We now reach our turning point in terms of urbanization gap. The urbanization gap between Sichuan and national average rate is narrowed now, ranking No. 25, moving up one place as compared to the previous year," said Tao.

"The key to new urbanization is the integrated development of urban and rural areas, while the key means for the integrated development is through reform," said visiting Li Shenglin.

In 2007, the State Council approved General Pilot Planning for Comprehensive Reform in Chengdu Integrated Development of Urban and Rural Areas, which allows Chengdu to conduct pilot programs in nine aspects, including administrative innovations, improving employment and social security and equalizing public service for farmers and urban residents. This greatly facilitated the explorations of Chengdu or even Sichuan in tackling innovations in the development of urban and rural areas.

As one of the first pilot for integrated development of urban and rural areas, urbanization in Sichuan achieved substantial progress. Taking this chance, Sichuan set Zigong, Deyang, Guangyuan and seven other counties (county-level cities and districts) as other pilot projects, thus bringing a new urbanization prospect characterized by the integrated urban-rural development.

The investigation team found that Chengdu had set up all kinds of social security for integrated urban-rural integrated development. For example, all the residents living in Chengdu hold the same *hukou*, i.e. household registration, and farmers do not need to give up their contracted and housing lands to live in urban areas.

"No additional conditions are required for farmers to live

## Tao Shengyuan said Sichuan adopts different reforms for different pilot areas.

in cities. This helps eliminate the inequality between urban and rural *hukou*. Urban and rural residents enjoy equal basic rights for public service and social welfare, including housing security, social security and employment, political and democratic management rights," said Li.

Tao said Sichuan adopts different reforms for different pilot areas. For example, the city of Zigong explored into reform of urban-rural integrated development in mountain areas by focusing on new village constructions. They also focused on the construction of small cities and townships. While the city of Guangyuan, located in mountains, tried to develop both urban and rural areas through forest integrated development of mountain areas and featured agriculture industrialization area construction.

Now Sichuan has formed a basic city system, with the metropolitan Chengdu at the core, with four city clusters including Chengdu Plain, southern Sichuan, west Panzhihua and northeastern Sichuan, as the major city, with 11 metropolitans and 24 medium-sized cities as the backbones, and 60 small cities and 1,700 towns as the basis.

One of the key measures of Sichuan's urbanization is to enable "agricultural populations residing in cities to enjoy same rights and responsibilities that their city counterparts are entitled to." "We used to focus on the development of urban expansion in the past, but now we focus on the interests of people," said He Jian, chief of Sichuan Housing and Urban-Rural Construction Department.

According to the target of integrated urban-rural development, farmers in Chengdu will enjoy the same public service as city residents. In some pilot areas, public transportation, water, electricity, gas, telecommunications, postal services and sewage treatment have been incorporated into public services and gaps of employment, education, medical care, culture and sports, social security and housing between urban and rural residents are being narrowed down continuously.

Tao said, "Sichuan has gained useful experiences in urbanization, which can be shared nationwide."

However, a number of problems still exist. "A lot of public services and social management functions attached





An aerial image of Chengdu Tianfu Software Garden in Sichuan Province taken in November 2012. Being a 2,300-year-old inland city in southwestern China, Chengdu has witnessed rapid development thanks to an on-going urbanization movement. *Xinhua*

closely to *hukou* system and cannot be effectively separated. Gaps of employment, income distributions and social security between urban and rural areas are still the major obstacles,” said Tao, adding that *hukou* system must be reformed actively and steadily.

“The difficulty of breaking ‘urban-rural two-layer’ structure of China lies in unequal exchange of urban and rural resources and elements,” Peng Sen, a team member of the group, told reporters. The most important part in pushing forward urbanization is to improve equality between urban and rural areas according to the 12th Five-Year Plan, to restore into the market an equal exchange right of rural production elements and resources, of which land is the most important. (NPC) ■



A clean street of Mianzhu Nianhua Village in Deyang, Sichuan Province. The city of Deyang has sped up the construction of infrastructure, public service and grassroots organization in recent years. *Li Qiaoqiao*



Farmers harvest vegetables inside a greenhouse powered by solar energy in Jimo, Shandong Province on March 14. The city breaks a new way by combining solar energy with modern agriculture and new township development. *Ning Youpeng*

## Shandong: ‘Localized urbanization’ demands in-depth reforms

**I**n early May 2013, Gu Shengzu, vice-chairman of Financial and Economic Committee of the National People’s Congress, led a group to Shandong Province to study its urbanization process.

Urbanization is a long, arduous and systematic process with all-around influence, observed Gu.

Latest data from the coastal province indicated that 90 percent of farmers’ migration activities take place within the boundary of Shandong. In-depth reforms are urged to push forward Shandong’s urbanization, such as “changing rural farmers into urban residents,” “fund raising,” “planning in a scientific way” and “intensive development of lands.”

### Urbanization in a fast lane

As one of most developed coastal areas in China, Shandong attaches high importance to urbanization.

Song Shoujun, deputy director-general of Shandong Urban-Rural Housing Construction Bureau, said Shandong is one of the three provinces that took the lead in establishing provincial urban planning system in China. It always stresses the comprehensive study of cities’ orientation and their geographical layouts. For example, the province has drafted and implemented Shandong Peninsula City Cluster General

## Since farmlands are vital for farmers' living and development, Gu said that rural land system was the core of land problems.

Planning, Yellow River Delta Cities and Towns Development Planning, Jinan Satellite Cities Development Planning, City and Township Development Planning in Southern Shandong. Cities make their development blueprints according to their situations. A total of 107 cities and townships hammered out overall city plans, of which 91 have been approved and implemented consequently. The preliminary development framework of cities and towns featured by "one city cluster, one city satellite, one district and one belt" has become reality.

Meanwhile, Shandong takes industrial development as the locomotive of urbanization and pushes forward infrastructure and public service development in both urban and rural areas. With the aim to improve cities' capacity, it launches the project of "Constructing 100 Model Townships," building new rural communities, "integrating townships with industrial parks" and "digital townships and industrial parks." Besides, reforms have been made in household registration system, or *hukou*, so that a unified system can be applied in rural and urban areas to ensure a free flow of labor force within the province.

Statistics showed that the rate of urbanization in Shandong has reached 52.43 percent in 2012, or 12.75 percent higher than that in 2000. The proportion of residents with a local *hukou* reached 41.15 percent in 2012.

### Institutional reform of public services

Despite Shandong has made tremendous progress in urbanization, it still faces the challenge of how to provide basic public services for farmers-turned-urban-residents.

According to Gu, "the first and foremost task in urbanization reform is the improvement of public service system," in order to cover all urban residents and to speed up the "urbanization of migrant workers."

In recent years, Shandong has expanded basic public services to all its permanent residents. For example, Shandong was the first province that allowed students to attend national university entrance examinations wherever they live even if they have no local *hukou*. It also plans to adopt policies that enable urban and rural residents to simultaneously receive pensions. As a result, it strives to improve social security with the realization of "zero-obstacle" shifting and to speed up basic pensions, medical care and insurances for inter-provincial migrated workers.

Moreover, a large number of funds are needed in the deepening of reforms for the development of urbanization. Gu believes that it is of great necessity to build a diversified cost-sharing system, a market investment mechanism and an effective fund-raising system.

### Optimizing geographical layout and promoting localized urbanization

Shandong defines its geographical layout for urbanization

into five levels: city clusters, regional central cities, county central cities, small cities and townships and new rural communities.

A key task is to promote local urbanization for farmers.

Gu urged Shandong to optimize its geographical layout and make clear the relationship between core cities and large, medium and small cities.

He also noted that county cities and county central townships played as major nodes connecting urban and rural areas and providing more spaces for local urbanization. Therefore, he suggested Shandong focus on the development of county economy as the driving forces for local urbanization.

Since farmlands are vital for farmers' living and development, Gu said that rural land system was the core of land problems. Therefore, efforts must be made to deepen land reform, to ensure farmers' land property rights, to push forward the "ownership defining and rights rendering" of rural collective lands, to improve the flow of farmers' contracted and housing lands, to improve land utilization intensity and to resolve all potential problems during the influx of farmers into cities. (NPC) ■



Pictures taken on September 2, 2010 and October 16, 2012 respectively show the huge difference after renovations of Xinxinyuan Community, an old slum in Zaozhuang Colliery, Shandong Province. The renovation not only improved the dwelling situation but also created employment opportunities for local residents. Xu Suhui



Zhang Dejiang (R), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, shakes hands with Sergei Naryshkin, chairman of the State Duma, the lower chamber of the Russian parliament, before their talks in Beijing, capital of China, May 27, 2013. *Ding Lin*

## Top Chinese legislator meets head of Russian State Duma

**T**op Chinese legislator Zhang Dejiang held talks with Sergei Naryshkin, chairman of Russia's State Duma, the lower chamber of parliament, on May 27 in Beijing.

Zhang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), the country's top legislature, and Naryshkin also attended the sixth meeting of the cooperation committee of the NPC and the Russian State Duma, which opened on May 27.

In their talks, Zhang said China and Russia are each other's most important strategic coordination partner, citing President Xi Jinping's State visit to Russia in March.

Zhang called on both countries to carry out the consensus of the top leaders of the two countries and promote the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination.

The NPC would like to boost relations with the Russian State Duma, adhere to the regular exchange mechanism and bring legislative relations to a new high, Zhang said.

On legislative relations, Zhang tabled a three-point proposal,

calling for more support on bilateral and multilateral tiers for issues concerning each other's core interests and major concerns.

Zhang appealed for sharing more legislative experiences concerning stability, macro controls, people's livelihood and economic modernization.

To consolidate the social foundation for bilateral friendship, Zhang also called for more exchanges of visits between legislators of the two countries, particularly young legislators, and more publicity for concepts featuring China-Russia friendship.

Naryshkin said it is Russia's diplomatic priority to develop the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination with China.

Naryshkin underscored Russia's continued support for China on important issues.

Naryshkin said the Russian State Duma attaches great importance to developing ties with the NPC and would like to promote legislative cooperation through specialized committees, step up sharing experiences in State governance and boost cooperation in trade and the economy, culture and other areas. (Xinhua) ■

# Continuously promoting the cooperation mechanism between China's National People's Congress and the Russian Parliament

By Liu Rui

Close contacts between China's National People's Congress (NPC) and the Russian Parliament began in 1993 when Russia established a bicameral parliament -- the Federation Council and the State Duma. For almost 20 years, especially since the beginning of this century, bilateral exchanges and cooperation have increased. China's NPC and the Russian Parliament have approved important legal documents, including Sino-Russian Good-Neighborly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and Supplementary Agreement on Sino-Russian Eastern Border, providing legal guarantee for the long-term and stable development of bilateral relations.

In June and September of 2005, Wu Bangguo, chairman of the 11th NPC Standing Committee, signed in Beijing respectively with Boris Gryzlov, Speaker of Russian State Duma, and Sergei Mironov, Chairman of Russian Federation Council, the Cooperation Charters between China's NPC and Russian State Duma and Federation Council, agreeing to set up permanent cooperative bodies, establish objectives and areas of cooperation, confirm that speakers from both sides serve as chairmen of cooperation committees, and meet usually once a year and alternately in both countries. The bilateral parliamentary cooperation entered into the track of regular exchange, serving as another high-level meeting mechanism following the establishment of the meeting mechanisms of Sino-Russian heads of States and governments.

It is so far the only regular exchange mechanism co-chaired by the speakers of the two parliaments among the regular exchange mechanisms that China's NPC has established with the parliaments and parliamentary organizations of important countries and regions, reflecting the significance and speciality of Sino-Russian relationship in parliamentary cooperation.

Sticking to the purpose of cooperation and as an important component of China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination, Sino-Russian parliamentary cooperation keeps up with pace of the development of bilateral relations and comprehensively promotes various exchanges within the framework of the cooperation mechanism with the focus on arranging meetings of the speakers and of the cooperation committees.

Since 2006, the NPC has held six meetings with the Russian Federation Council and five meetings with the State Duma respectively. The mutual exchanges have actively responded to the changes in international and domestic situations, in close combination of the needs for promoting strategic coordination and beneficial cooperation, and joined the meeting mechanisms of heads of States and governments to form an overall effort.

Remarkable achievements have been made: First, with developing and consolidating political and strategic mutual trust and deepening good-neighborly and friendly cooperation as their priority, both sides have reiterated on many occasions the importance and necessity of mutual respect and firm support on major issues concerning each other's core interests. China supports Russia to safeguard national security, stability and dignity, while Russia supports China's correct positions on issues concerning Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang and other issues.

Second, both sides have made full use of the legislative functions and characteristics, exchanged experiences on social and economic development, trade and overseas investment cooperation, development and utilization of energy and resources, ecological safety and environmental protection, curbing regional development disparities and gap between the wealthy and poor, participation in regional economic integration, and coping with the international financial crisis and global climate change, and provided information for revising and improving relevant laws and promoting cooperation smoothly. After

long-term exchanges and innovative cooperation, Russia has gradually improved the situation in which the promulgation of relevant laws lags behind the decision-making process by the highest State leaders, so as to facilitate the improvement of the investment environment in border areas with China and accelerate people-to-people exchanges.

Third, both sides have participated in major exchange projects, promoted the implementation of the cooperation projects of bilateral governments and enterprises, and supported each other in organizing large-scale international exchange activities. Within the framework of China Year, the two legislatures have organized high-level seminars and exchanges of young legislators, supported their governments in the "Year of Languages" and the "Year of Tourism" campaigns, exchanged opinions on trade, energy, science and technology, culture, local cooperation, environmental protection, intellectual property right protection and other areas of cooperation and achieved normalization, supported the large strategic projects such as oil pipelines, nuclear power, aerospace, biological pharmacy, encouraged Northeast China and Russian Far East and eastern Siberia to develop cooperative projects and tracked the process of cooperation, attached importance to each other's concerns, enhanced mutual trust and urged respective government departments to pay attention to the problems in the cooperation and provided suggestions. Besides, both sides have sent delegations to attend economic forums, fairs and other activities in each other's country and jointly participated in commemorating campaigns such as celebrating the 65th anniversary of victory over fascism.

Fourth, in the international and regional parliamentary organizations, such as the World Conference of Speakers, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, both sides have maintained close cooperation and coordinated positions and solutions to safeguard the common interests of both countries.

For eight years, the NPC and the Russian Parliament have actively carried out various exchanges within the framework of cooperation mechanism, playing an important role in promoting bilateral relations. It is because of the following reasons: First, China and Russia are faced with similar international conditions, domestic construction and development responsibilities and enjoy the unique advantages of adjacency, strategic mutual trust and consistent development interests, constituting the fundamental factors to deepen parliamentary cooperation. With high level, the Sino-Russian parliamentary cooperation have attracted enough attention from government leaders of both countries, actively guiding the direction for the development of cooperation mechanism. The public opinions for conducting bilateral exchanges have solid foundation, where people from all walks of life in China support Sino-Russian cooperation and all the Russian political parties attach great importance to developing relations with China.

Second, members of the Cooperation Committee, friendship groups and special committees have participated in the exchange activities, and most of them have relevant experiences in administration, law, finance, culture, education, foreign affairs and party affairs, understanding the concerns of the central governments and the people and conveying the willingness of cooperation. More and more members of Russian parliament are focusing on specific cooperation between the two sides.

Third, the working offices from both sides have made good preparations and produced plans in topics designs, expected fruits and organizations in advance, facilitating to concentrate cooperation consensus and improve efficiency of the mechanism.

(The author is the Minister Councillor of the Chinese Embassy to Russia)



China welcomes the US to play a constructive role in Asia, which can be a start point of a new kind of great power relationship between China and the US, said visiting Fu Ying, who is the chairwoman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee, in Washington DC, capital of the US on June 12, 2013. Fu, who served as China's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, delivered a speech at Brookings Institution. *Chen Guomin*

## Fu Ying: In harmony, with different outlooks

**F**u Ying, Chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the 12th National People's Congress, made a speech at the Brookings Institution on June 12, 2013 during her visit to the United States. The following are the selected points of her speech.

This is an important moment for China and US as President Xi Jinping and President Obama just had a historic meeting at Annaburge. I am very impressed by the harmonious atmosphere of all the form of meetings they had. One of the most important messages coming out is their commitment to working together to build a new model of relationship for the two countries heading for partnership not for conflict as some had feared. We hope it leads to many years of working together with excellent result coming on the way.

There is no denying that China and the US have fairly different outlooks which influence their perspective one way or another. The importance is for us to try to understand why the other side thinks and does things the way they do and try to find a way working together for the interest of all.

China is often regarded as a world power now or even No 2 of the world and therefore will be competing for world

power. Most people in China do not see things that way. For them, the per capita income is more real than the GDP total. It is widely shared in China that though we may be a large country in size and population, we are far behind the developed world. We are confronting challenges and difficulties the outside world can hardly imagine.

Thanks to the successful reform and opening-up to the outside world, the lives of the Chinese people are completely transformed, and the time of shortage is gone forever. Is everyone happier? Not necessarily. Take for example those born in the 80s who are the first generation of Chinese knowing no hunger, they claim they are old and tired. They find themselves struggling to meet life's demands from high mortgage, competition in jobs to rising cost of living.

The challenges for people today are no less daunting, though at a higher level. As China is going beyond the basic needs, people are embracing new dreams. They long for more stable jobs, more reliable social security, better education, better environment, and better cultural facilities. They want better application of the rule of law, greater guarantee for their rights. They also want to take pride in the country in the

community of nations. They want to have a sense of dignity as they become global citizens and assurance that the country and people are well protected.

The concept of the Chinese Dream proposed by President Xi Jinping came on time. He said, The Chinese Dream is as much a dream of the whole nation as a dream for every individual. People should all share in the opportunities to fulfill his or her potential, to realize the expectation and to make progress along with the progress of the nation.

The 18th Party Congress set forth two centenary goals. The first is to double not only GDP, but also per capita income on the basis of 2010 for the 100th year of the founding of the Party in 2021. The second is for 2049 or the 100th year of the People's Republic of China, to turn the country into a strong, prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious socialist society.

The new Chinese leadership is firmly committed to continuing reform. They gave priority to sustaining stable economic growth. More reform measures are announced, including readjusting government functions to allow the market and society to take bigger role with proper regulations. The government will focus on providing fair ground for competition and taking care of those falling behind. The country will strive towards industrialization, informatization, urbanization and agricultural modernization. The future urbanization in China will be the largest the world has ever seen, involving 600 million farmers, unleashing great stimulus for growth and expansion of consumer demands.

The underlying condition is improved rule of law. The Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress has laid down its program to step up legislation, making

more laws mainly in the areas where people's concern is, improving the quality of laws, better enforce laws and foster the culture of law compliance.

That is the direction China is heading and US can very well come to be China's important partner as US would only benefit from the many opportunities China's progress brings. China cannot achieve its purpose without good international environment and without working closely with the outside world, especially working constructively with the US. China's progress will add to peace and prosperity of the world.

The past years gave rise to concerns that China's neighborhood has grown unquiet. I prefer to look at it in a historical and global perspective. In the years after the cold war, Asia at large remained relatively peaceful, allowing most countries focused on economic progress and became successful. China's policy for regional peace and China itself maintained domestic stability and economic prosperity contributed to it significantly.

It is very important for China to stay focused and avoid losing sight of its right direction. The new leadership in China has shown a lot of confidence and the wisdom to do so.

China has on many occasions welcomed constructive role of US. The region expects China and US work to promote the positive trend in the region not the other way around. There is a lot the two countries can and need to do in Asia and this could be a ground where a new model of relationship between China and US start in operation.

Now that the two leaders have charted a bright future for us and let's try harder working together to make the world a better place in the 21 century. (NPC) ■



The NPC delegation with Chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee Fu Ying (C), Ma Zehua and Chen Xiaogong, meet Minority Leader of the US Senate Mitch McConnell (2nd R) and his wife Elaine Chao (2nd L), June 11, 2013. *Chen Guomin*



Chairwoman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee Fu Ying meets Rick Larson and Charles Boustany Jr., co-chairmen of the US-China Working Group of the US House of Representatives, June 12, 2013. *Chen Guomin*



Chairwoman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee Fu Ying talks to Bob Corker, a ranking member of US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, June 13, 2013. *Chen Guomin*



Chairwoman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee Fu Ying shakes hands with Ed Royce, chairman of the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs, June 13, 2013. *Chen Guomin*



Chairwoman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee Fu Ying visits the National Committee of the US-China Relations, accompanied by Stephen Orlins, President of the National Committee in New York, June 11, 2013. *Chen Guomin*



Chairwoman of NPC Foreign Affairs Committee Fu Ying (2nd L) meets with Senator Mark Begich, Chairman of the NPC-US Senate conference mechanism, June 12, 2013. *Chen Guomin*



A round table discussion with members of US House Foreign Affairs Committee, in Washington DC, capital of the US. Second from the left is Fu Ying, Chairwoman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee, June 13, 2013. *Chen Guomin*



# The 30th anniversary of the establishment of the bill and suggestion system of the National People's Congress

By Li Bojun

In accordance with the Organic Law of the National People's Congress (NPC) adopted at the Fifth Session of the Fifth NPC in December 1982, starting from the First Session of the Sixth NPC in June 1983, motions submitted by NPC deputies would be divided into bills on the one hand, and suggestions, criticism and opinions on the other. So far, it has been 30 years since then.

From 1954 to 1982, bills put forward by NPC deputies were called motions, reviewed by Bills or Motions Review Committee, which was established provisionally in the sessions and provided review opinions and reported to the sessions. The sessions would finally deliberate and vote on the opinions.

The Organic Law of the NPC adopted at the Fifth Session of the Fifth NPC in December 1982 clearly stipulates, "A delegation or a group of thirty or more deputies may submit to the National People's Congress bills or proposals that fall within the scope of its functions and powers. The Presidium may decide whether or not to put the bills or proposals on the agenda of the Congress or it may refer the bills or proposals to the relevant special committees for deliberation and after receiving their opinions then decide whether or not to put the bills or proposals on the agenda of the Congress." "The proposals, criticisms and opinions put forward by deputies to the National People's Congress or its Standing Committee concerning any sphere of work shall be referred by the working bodies of the Standing Committee to the relevant agencies or organizations for study, handling and a responsible answer."

Xi Zhongxun, vice-chairman of the Fifth NPC Standing Committee, made it clear in his explanation of the draft law of the Organic Law of the NPC: "This is not the same as those motions submitted by deputies during the past sessions, most of which were suggestions, criticisms and opinions on various work. Many of them were not related to the NPC and the sessions, and the sessions were not in the place to adopt substantive resolutions and had to refer them to relevant agencies or organizations to study and address them."

The draft law stipulated that the proposals, criticisms and opinions put forward by deputies to the NPC and its Standing Committee concerning any sphere of work should be referred to the relevant agencies or organizations for study, handling and a responsible answer. "The provision conforms to real needs, simplifies the working procedure and makes the suggestions, criticisms and opinions by deputies to be properly handled and replied."



Staffers with the Secretariat of the 1st Session of the 12th National People's Congress sort out bills and proposals submitted by NPC deputies on March 11, 2013. *Liu Jinhai*

Starting from the Sixth NPC, the Secretariat of the Session files reports to the Presidium on handling the bills put forward by NPC deputies and the Presidium reviews and adopts them. The suggestions put forward by the NPC deputies shall be referred by the working bodies of the Standing Committee to the relevant agencies or organizations for study, handling and a responsible answer. As Wang Hanbin, vice-chairman of the Eighth NPC, put it, distinguishing bills from suggestions was a significant improvement in the rules of procedure.

In December 1986, the 18th meeting of the Sixth NPC Standing Committee revised the Organic Law of the Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments, where the contents revised according to the Organic Law of the NPC include the following: Ten or more deputies to a local people's congress at or above the county level, or five or more deputies to the people's congress of a township, nationality township, or town may jointly submit a bill or proposal to the people's congress at the corresponding level within the scope of its functions and powers. The presidium shall decide whether to place the bill or proposal on the agenda of the people's congress or to first refer it to a relevant special committee for deliberation and a recommendation on whether to place it on the agenda before the presidium makes such a decision. Suggestions, criticisms and complaints on any aspect of work put forward by deputies to a local people's congress at or above the county

level to that people's congress and its standing committee shall be referred by the administrative office of the standing committee to the departments and organizations concerned for consideration, disposition and reply. In April 1989, the Second Session of the Seventh NPC adopted the Rules of Procedure for the NPC, making detailed provisions on the submission and disposition of bills, proposals and suggestions in accordance with the law.

In April 1992, the Fifth Session of the Seventh NPC adopted the Law on Deputies to the NPC and Deputies to the Local People's Congresses, stipulating that deputies have the right, in accordance with procedures prescribed by law, to submit to the people's congress at the corresponding level bills and proposals within the scope of its functions and powers. Bills and proposals submitted shall consist of subjects, grounds and schemes. Deputies to a people's congress have the right to put forward proposals concerning any sphere of work to the people's congress at the corresponding level, and deputies to a people's congress at or above the county level have the right to put forward proposals concerning any sphere of work to the standing committee of the people's congress at the corresponding level. State organs or institutions concerned must make study and disposition thereof and be responsible for giving a reply. The revision to the Law on Deputies to the NPC and Deputies to the Local People's Congresses by the 17th meeting of the Eleventh NPC in October 2010 adds the provision on the procedure for handling bills and proposals by deputies. Meanwhile, it requires that proposals by deputies shall clearly identify details and pay attention to reflecting actual conditions and problems. Relevant State organs and organizations shall contact and communicate with deputies in the study and disposition of the suggestions, and shall report the handing of suggestions to the people's congresses at the corresponding levels and print and deliver the report to the next session.

The 2010 revision to the Law on Deputies focused on adding provisions, especially having developed some regulations in the No. 9 Document of the Party's Central Committee in 2005, including contents concerning bills, proposals and suggestions by deputies to be made into laws. On May 26, 2005, the No. 9 Document was issued, which would require to establish and improve various institutions for deputies to fulfill their responsibilities according to law and demand, based on legal regulations and actual work conditions, to improve relevant working mechanisms and improve the quality of the submission and disposition of bills, proposals and suggestions by deputies. Specifically speaking, the fundamental requirements and scope of bills and proposals should be defined institutionally, the procedure of submission of bills and proposals standardized, and the disposition of bills and proposals improved. Less than one month after the issuing of the No. 9 Document, approved in principle by the Chairman's Council of the 10th NPC Standing Committee, the General Office promulgated five relevant documents to support the No. 9 Document, including the two procedures for handling the bills, proposals and suggestions by deputies, raising in work level specific measures and methods to implement the No. 9 Document. In reference to the requirements of the No. 9 Document and the practices of the NPC Standing Committee, the local people's congresses at various levels have carried out a lot of work in the institutionalization and standardization of the handling of bills, proposals and suggestions. Following the revision of the Law on

Deputies, local people's congresses further improved the working mechanisms through modifying existing implementation rules as well as regulations on handling bills and suggestions.

During the First Session of the Sixth NPC in 1983, deputies put forward 61 bills, 33 of which were handled as bills and 28 as suggestions. From then on, the above three numbers increased continuously, reaching respectively to 1,374, 641 and 733 during the second session of the Tenth NPC in 2004. From the Third Session of the Tenth NPC in 2005, bills were no longer handled as suggestions. Since the Fifth Session of the Tenth NPC in 2007, the number of bills has been keeping three digits and decreasing, and there were only 401 bills submitted by deputies during this year's First Session of the Twelfth NPC, representing the lowest level in more than twenty years. The submission of suggestions by NPC deputies has also experienced the same course. From 1983 to 2002, there were 2,000 to 4,000 pieces of suggestions in the annual NPC sessions. Later, the number of suggestions increased year by year until it reached its highest level to 8,189 during the fifth session of the Eleventh NPC in 2012, and decreased to 7,569 during the First Session of the Twelfth NPC this year. NPC deputies also submitted some suggestions to the NPC Standing Committee when the NPC was not in session.

In recent years, NPC deputies, serving the primary objectives of the Party and the State and focusing on the problems of people's concerns, in accordance with the requirements of the Law on Deputies and the No. 9 Document, carried out investigations and researches while immersing themselves among the mass of people, made careful preparations, and put forward bills, proposals and suggestions based on the powers and responsibilities of people's congresses as well as agencies and organizations at corresponding levels in combination of their own work. They paid attention to distinguishing bills from suggestions, focusing on the quality not the quantity, taking common responsibility for the joint bills and suggestions, and meeting specific standards and requirements.

High quality of submission leads to high quality of disposition. Relevant agencies or organizations carefully handle bills, proposals and suggestions based on legal functions and responsibilities. Responsible units attach importance to the work of disposition, establishing and improving the working mechanisms for disposition, implementing the system of leadership responsibility, and strengthening contacts and communication with deputies and relevant agencies or organizations.

From 2005 to 2012, the General Office of the NPC Standing Committee and the General Office of the State Council, jointly with other organizations concerned, investigated and determined 88 pieces of important suggestions submitted by NPC deputies concerning to people's livelihood, producing good social effects.

Chairman Zhang Dejiang called in his speech in the First Meeting of the Twelfth NPC on March 19 to further establish and improve the working mechanism on deputies, and build on it as systemized, standardized and procedurized. This call pinpoints the direction for us to further improve the system of submitting and handling bills, proposals and suggestions in the new situation and bring into a full play of the role of deputies.

(The author is director-general of the Office of the Committee on Credentials of Deputies and Counsel of the Liaison Bureau of the NPC General Office.) ■

# A foot masseuse with a big dream



Liu Li, an NPC deputy, attends a press conference at the sideline of the 1st Session of the 12th National People's Congress on March 10. Being one of several migrant worker deputies, Liu, a foot masseuse, shared her experiences as a newly-elected legislator with reporters. *Zhang Hao*

**L**iu Li, born in 1980 and from Yingshang County of Anhui Province, has donated her hard-earned wages to help dozens of poor children to extend their dreams of going to school. Liu therefore received the Top Ten People Touching China Award in 2010 and is known as “China’s most beautiful foot masseuse”. Currently Liu has quit the job, but she is still funding 137 poor children to go to school.

## So excited to be with State leaders

When knowing she was elected as deputy to the Twelfth National People's Congress (NPC), Liu felt like dreaming. “I didn't know what to say to my mother on telephone. Coming from grass roots, I'm so excited to discuss State affairs side by side with State leaders.” Liu said.

## Focusing on the problem of “temporary couples” of migrant workers

As the first migrant worker elected as deputy to the NPC in Anhui Province, Liu's suggestions during the “Two Sessions” this year concerned with migrant workers. “I'm not well-educated, but I know I have to say for other migrant workers like me.”

Liu indicated that the influx of migrant workers has led to the rise of income of rural families and changed the poor conditions, however, migrant workers want to stay in the city and have their own place after so many years of working, but it's too difficult for them to do so. Migrant workers are doing the hardest work in cities with the lowest wages, but they are actually outsiders and living in an embarrassing situation. Liu hopes that, through her hard work and the platform of NPC deputies,

the society and government will pay more attention to this special group of people.

Liu said bluntly in a press conference in this year's “Two Sessions” that due to the household registration system, the ever-rising price of commercial residential building and other reasons, many migrant workers cannot take their families with them and have to separate with their spouses. Therefore, a growing number of “temporary couples” emerge among migrant workers, leading directly to an increase of incidents of extramarital affairs among rural couples and therefore a rise of divorce rate, influencing the education of their children. Liu has suggested the government pay sufficient attention to this problem and seriously resolve it.

## Accelerating the efforts on public welfare

At present, Liu has established a platform, namely “Li for Public Welfare”, focusing on the child education. As Liu has put it, the platform will actively practice the spirits of Fujian, which include patriotism, striving for success, tolerance and kindness, and integrate social resources and unite social forces to serve the entire society through encouraging affiliate merchants to participate in public welfare through online platform and external matching. Meanwhile, Liu encourages everyone to do good things as their capacity allows, so as to form an atmosphere of public welfare.

Inspired by her acts, several hundreds of well-intentioned people have joined her team.

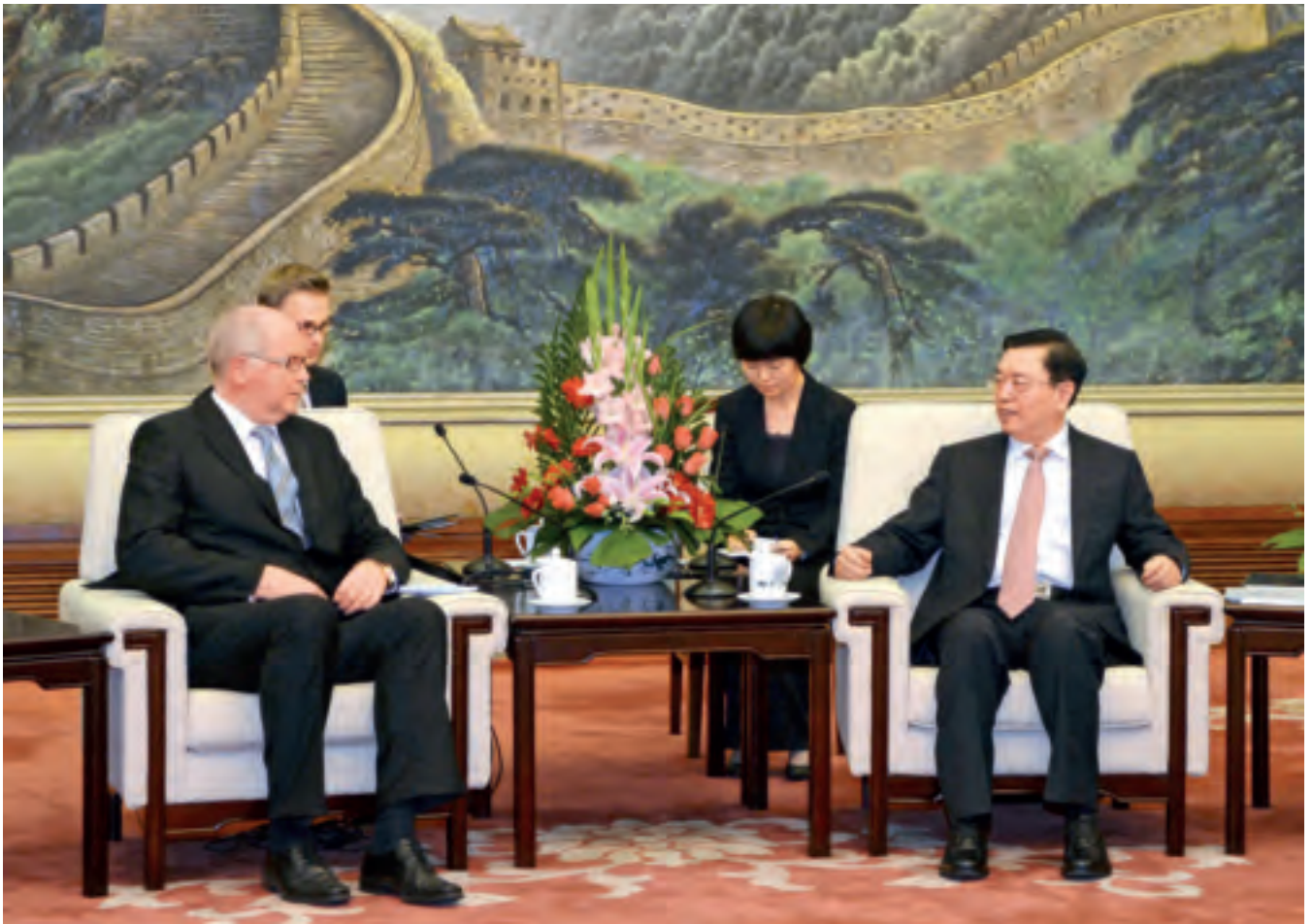
## Winning China's Youth Award

On May 4, Liu won the National Youth Award and was warmly received by Party General Secretary Xi Jinping. In a campaign launched in the Academy of Space Technology of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, Liu delivered a speech, expressing her hope to exert her efforts with more people to make the dream of supporting poor children better through the platform.

Liu held back tears of excitement when shaking hands with Xi Jinping. She had never thought she could shake hands with President Xi for six times in one day: one in the receiving meeting, one in the group photo of all delegates, two in the group photo of winners of Youth Award, and two in the discussion meeting. “As a foot masseuse, I have never dreamed of shaking hands with State leaders.” Liu believes she is conveying a firm faith in the dream of public welfare. ■

## Quotes of masseuse Liu Li:

- ▶ Being foot masseuses, we (proudly) inherit traditional Chinese medicine and help others (relax their body) through our hard work. We don't need to feel inferior to others.
- ▶ Be confident about your work and serve others with your best professional performance. Confidence makes one's heart strong. It is equally great to love whatever job you take!
- ▶ I have a dream that one day we can establish a foot-massage center with other masseuses, so that we can not only make money but also take good care of the seniors and youngsters by providing assistance to those who need help.



▲ Zhang Dejiang (R), Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, meets with visiting Finnish Parliament Speaker Eero Heinaluoma, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on June 13. *Rao Aimin*



▲ Zhang Dejiang (R), Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, meets with Belgian Parliament Speaker Andre Flahaut, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 21. *Xie Huanchi*

▼ Zhang Dejiang (R), Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, meets with Julian Dominguez, President of the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the Argentine parliament, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on April 28. *Xie Huanchi*





← Zhang Dejiang (R), Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, shakes hands with Polish House of Representatives Speaker Ewa Kopacz before their talks at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on June 5. *Huang Jingwen*



▲ Zhang Dejiang, Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, addresses the reception held by the African Diplomatic Corps in China to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity, predecessor of the African Union, in Beijing on May 25. *Xie Huanchi*

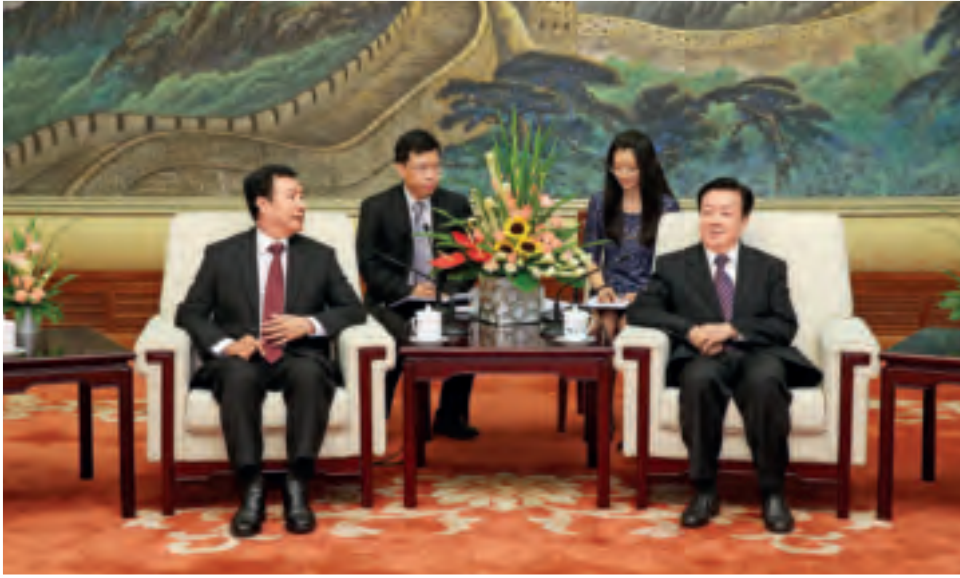
→ Zhang Dejiang (R), Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, shakes hands with Somsak Kitasuranont, President of the National Assembly and Speaker of the House of Representatives of Thailand, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on April 22.

*Zhang Duo*



▼ Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee Zhang Dejiang presides over a working session with visiting Irish parliamentary leaders Sean Barrett and Paddy Burke, Chairmen of Dail Eireann and Seanad Eireann, the two houses of Irish parliament at the Great Hall of the People on May 14. *Liu Weibing*



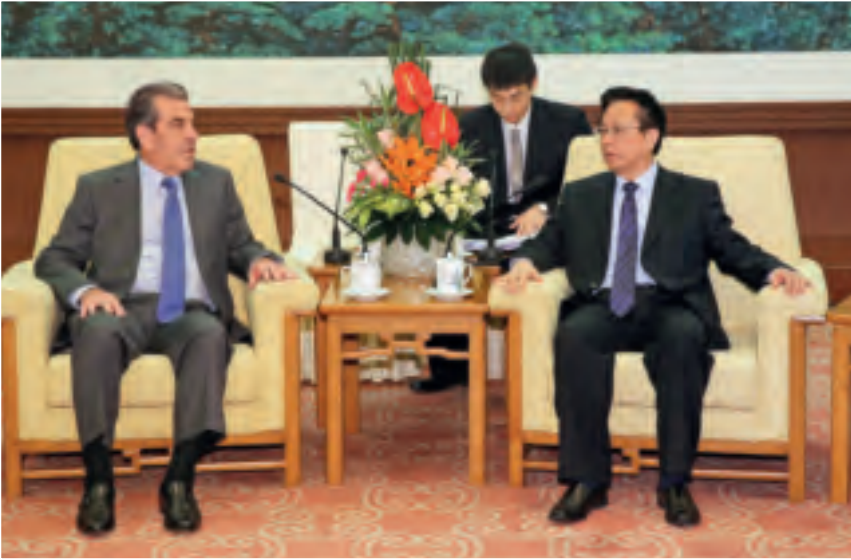


Vice Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee Wang Shengjun (R) meets with the Thai National Assembly Delegation headed by Somchai Wisanuwan, chairman of the Military Committee of the House of Representatives. *Fan Rujun*



Zhao Shaohua (5th R), vice chairwoman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee, takes a group photo with visiting delegation from Thailand parliament. *Fan Rujun*





Vice Chairman of NPC Standing Committee Chen Changzhi (R) meets with a Chilean delegation headed by former Chilean President Rduardo Frei, who also serves as the chairman of Chile-China Dialogue Committee, in Beijing on March 23. *Fan Rujun*



Vice Chairman of NPC Foreign Affairs Committee Wang Xiaochu (2nd R) presides over the 7th meeting of China-Chile Political Dialogue Committee, in Beijing on April 22, with both sides exchanging opinions on bilateral relations, economic cooperation, personnel exchanges and other issues of common concern. *Fan Rujun*



About 50 reporters from China Radio International, who involve CRI's reporting in Chinese, English, Japanese, Spanish and other languages, visited the Great Hall of the People, which houses the NPC Standing Committee, on June 26. The visitors were briefed of the organization structure and major functions of the top legislature. After the briefing, the reporters observed the proceedings of the 1st Plenary of the 3rd Session of the 12th NPC Standing Committee.

*Photos by Fan Rujun*

# *City of glamour* **Huizhhou, China**

