

SPECIAL ISSUE ON WHOLE-PROCESS PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

The Press Office, International Department
of CPC Central Committee

China nsight



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Xi Stresses the Enhancing of a Whole-Process People's Democracy

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



Chinese President Xi Jinping, also General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, addresses a central conference on work related to people's congresses, held from October 13 to October 14 in Beijing (XINHUA)

system of great significance in the political history of both China and the world, Xi said.

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

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

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

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

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

While the people's congresses should enhance self-building, the overall leader-

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

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central

Military Commission, made the remarks while addressing a central conference on work related to people's congresses, held from October 13-14 in Beijing.

The people's congress system, made by Chinese people under the CPC leadership, is a great creation in the history of political systems as well as a brand new

► Main Criteria for Judging Whether a Political System Is Democratic and Effective

- whether the country can conduct leadership transitions in a lawful and orderly manner;
- whether the people can administer national, social, economic, and cultural affairs in accordance with the law;
- whether people can openly express their demands;
- whether various sectors of society can participate effectively in affairs of national political importance;
- whether the state decision-making process is rational and democratic;
- whether talent from a variety of sectors can enter the systems of national leadership and administration through fair competition;
- whether the governing party can exercise leadership over national affairs in accordance with the Constitution and law;
- and whether the exercise of power is subject to effective restraint and supervision.

► Deeper Meaning of Democracy

- Democracy is about whether people have right to vote, but is more about whether they have the right to participate widely;
- Democracy is not only about promises people hear during the election, but more about the fulfillment of these words following the electoral outcome;
- Democracy is judged by political procedures and rules stipulated by systems and laws, but is further evaluated by whether these systems and laws are actually implemented;
- Democracy depends on whether rules and procedures to exercise power are democratic, but also depends on whether the power is subject to checks and oversight by the people.

► Six Principles for the People's Congress System

- Leadership of the Communist Party of China
- That the people are the masters of the country must be guaranteed through systems
- Law-based governance
- Democratic centralism
- Socialism with Chinese characteristics
- Modernization of the national governance system and capabilities

ship over the people's congresses by the Party should also be enhanced, Xi said.

"Democracy, a shared value of humanity, is a key tenet unswervingly upheld by the CPC and the Chinese people," Xi stressed.

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

"Whether a country is a democracy or not depends on whether its people are really the masters of the country," Xi said.

"If the people are awakened only for voting but enter a dormant period soon after, if they are given a song and dance during campaigning but have no say after the election, or if they are favored during canvassing but are left out in the cold after the election, such a democracy

► Features of Whole-Process People's Democracy

- It is democracy in its most extensive, honest, and useful form.
- It is a complete-chain, omni-directional, and all-encompassing democracy.
- It is a process and outcome democracy, procedural and substantive democracy, plus direct and indirect democracy.

is not a true democracy," Xi said.

"It is in itself undemocratic to use a single yardstick to measure the rich and varied political systems and examine the diverse political civilizations of humanity from a monotonous perspective," Xi said.

The whole-process people's democracy in China not only has a complete set of institutions and procedures, but also full participation and practices, Xi said, noting that it is the broadest, most genuine, and most effective socialist democracy.

"The system of people's congresses is an important institutional vehicle for realizing whole-process people's democracy in China," he said.

Under the leadership of the Party, the country will continue to expand the people's orderly political participation and strengthen legal protection for human rights to ensure that the people enjoy extensive rights and freedoms as prescribed by law, Xi said.

Li Keqiang, Wang Yang, Wang Huning, Zhao Leji and Han Zheng -- who are members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee -- as well as Vice President Wang Qishan attended the meeting.

Li Zhanshu, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, delivered the concluding remarks.

In his remarks, Li Zhanshu hailed Xi's speech as "a guiding document powered with Marxist truth."

He called for full implementation of the guiding principles of Xi's speech and stressed upholding the leadership of the Party to ensure that all the work of people's congresses proceeds under the Party's leadership. **C**

Whole-Process People's Democracy: Facts and Figures

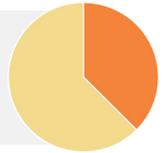


15.7%

Among the deputies to the 13th National People's Congress (NPC), frontline workers and farmers account for 15.7 percent, and all 56 ethnic groups are represented;

in the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), non-CPC members account for 60.2 percent.

60.2%



More and more women are participating in the decision-making and management of state affairs.



There are 742 female deputies to the 13th NPC, accounting for 24.9 percent of the total;

24.9%



20.4%

there are 441 female members in the 13th CPPCC National Committee, representing 20.4 percent of the total.



3 million

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, public opinion has been solicited on draft laws on 187 occasions, and more than 3 million comments from about 1.1 million people have been received, many of which have been adopted.



During online solicitation for the preparation of the 14th Five-year Plan, over 1 million suggestions were received in two weeks.

During the drafting of the Civil Code, 10 rounds of public opinion solicitation were conducted, resulting in over 1 million comments from 425,000 people.

425,000



The NPC Standing Committee has established 10 local legislative outreach offices.

By June 2021, these outreach offices had conveyed nearly 6,600 pieces of advice on 109 draft laws and legislative plans, many of which had been accepted.



The CPC Central Committee has organized or entrusted relevant departments to organize more than 170 consultative forums since 2012. On these occasions, it engaged in consultation with the other political parties and prominent individuals without party affiliation (non-affiliates) and solicited their opinions on matters of great importance such as the reports to the CPC national congress and plenary sessions of the CPC Central Committee and the formulation of the 14th Five-year Plan.



The central committees of the eight non-CPC political parties and the non-affiliates have made more than 730 written proposals, many of which have turned into major state policies.

These parties made 36,000 interventions in democratic scrutiny over poverty alleviation actions,



From March 2018 – when the First Session of the 13th CPPCC National Committee was held – to June 2021, the CPPCC National Committee received 23,089 proposals.



In the fight against poverty, the CPC Central Committee entrusted central committees of the other eight political parties to monitor the process in eight central and western provinces and autonomous regions that faced onerous work in poverty alleviation.



offered over 2,400 pieces of written advice to CPC committees and governments of the eight provinces and autonomous regions,



and submitted more than 80 reports of various types to the CPC Central Committee and the State Council.

(Source: white paper titled *China's Epic Journey from Poverty to Prosperity* released by The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China on September 28, 2021)

About the White Paper

China's State Council Information Office issued a white paper on September 28 documenting the country's journey to moderate prosperity in all respects, or xiaokang. The paper, titled "China's Epic Journey from Poverty to Prosperity," explains how the realization of moderate prosperity, as declared in July, marks a critical step toward national rejuvenation.

Scan the QR code to read its full content:





Chinese President Xi Jinping makes his way to the ballot box during the first session of the 13th National People's Congress, the highest state organ of power, in Beijing on March 17, 2018. Xi and fellow deputies voted to elect the president, vice president and other leaders (XINHUA)

Xi's Insight Into Democracy

Democracy is not an ornament to be used for decoration; it is to be used to solve the problems that the people want to solve

Expand the people's orderly political participation at all levels and in various fields

Efforts must be made to actively develop whole-process people's democracy, and advance comprehensive, extensive, and coordinated development of the systems and institutions through which the people run the country. We must establish diverse, unimpeded, and well-organized democratic channels, diversify forms of democracy, and expand the people's orderly political participation at all levels and in various fields, so as to ensure that China's governance and institutions in all sectors give full expression to the will of the people, protect their rights and interests, and spark their creativity.

From Communiqué of the Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

Upholding the principal position of the people

The Central Committee has stressed the importance of upholding the principal position of the people and ensuring their law-based participation in democratic elections, consultations, decision-making, management, and oversight.

From Communiqué of the Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

To reach consensus on the wishes and needs of the whole of society is the essence of people's democracy

Under China's socialist system, deliberations help when a problem crops up, and matters involving many people are discussed by all those involved; to reach consensus on the wishes and needs of the whole of society is the essence of people's democracy. On matters that concern the people's interests, deliberations should be held with the people; without deliberation or with insufficient deliberation, it is difficult to handle these matters well.

From speech at the meeting marking the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese people's political consultative conference

Whether a political system is democratic and effective

To evaluate whether a country's political system is democratic and effective, it mainly depends on whether the country can conduct leadership transitions in a lawful and orderly manner; whether the people can administer national, social, economic, and cultural affairs in accordance with the law; whether people can openly express their demands; whether various sectors of society can participate effectively in affairs of national political importance; whether the state decision-making process is rational and democratic; whether talent from a variety of sectors can enter the systems of national leadership and administration through fair competition; whether the governing party can exercise leadership over national affairs in accordance with the Constitution and law; and whether the exercise of power is subject to effective restraint and supervision.

From speech at the central conference on work related to people's congresses from October 13 to 14, 2021

Democracy is not an ornament to be used for decoration

Democracy is not an ornament to be used for decoration; it is to be used to solve the problems that the people want to solve. Whether a country is a democracy or not depends on whether its people are really the masters of the country. Democracy is about whether people have right to vote, but is more about whether they have the right to participate widely. Democracy is not only about promises people hear during the election, but more about the fulfillment of these words following the electoral outcome. Democracy is judged by political procedures and rules stipulated by systems and laws, but is further evaluated by whether these systems and laws are actually implemented. Democracy depends on whether rules and procedures to exercise power are democratic, but also depends on whether the power is subject to checks and oversight by the people.

From speech at the central conference on work related to people's congresses from October 13 to 14, 2021

This democracy is not a true democracy

If the people are awakened only for voting but enter a dormant period soon after, if they are given a song and dance during campaigning but have no say after the election, or if they are favored during canvassing but are left out in the cold after the election, such a democracy is not a true democracy

From speech at the central conference on work related to people's congresses from October 13 to 14, 2021

The judgment on whether a country is democratic or not should be made by their people, not by the handful of others**Copy the political systems of other countries cannot work**

In this rich and varied world, we should uphold inclusiveness, learn from the strengths of others with an open mind, and digest and absorb what we learn through an objective mindset so that we can turn it into our own strength rather than just blindly copying others. It is not feasible for China to copy the political systems of other countries, since those systems are not suited to our national conditions. Any attempt like this would at best lead to poor imitation, and might even ruin the country's future. The most reliable and effective systems for a country are always the ones that take root in and draw nourishment from their own soil.

From speech at the ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the national people's congress, on September 5, 2014

We must remain clearheaded and determined

Will countries be freer, more democratic, and stabler to follow in the footsteps of the West? Some developing countries have copied Western political and party systems. And what happened next? Many countries have descended into political turmoil and social unrest, and their people have found themselves displaced. There are many such examples to draw on. What has passed cannot be retrieved, but what is to come, we ourselves can shape. Therefore, we must remain clearheaded and determined.

From a speech given during a meeting on the united front work on May 18, 2015

The judgment on whether a country is democratic or not should be made by their people, not by the handful of others.

Democracy is the right of all peoples, rather than an exclusive privilege of the few. There are multiple ways and means to realize democracy, instead of a single stereotype. The judgment on whether a country is democratic or not should be made by their people, not by the handful of others.

From speech at CPC and world political parties summit, on July 6, 2021

Military intervention from the outside and so-called democratic transformation entail nothing but harm.

A world of peace and development should embrace civilizations of various forms, and must accommodate diverse paths to modernization. Democracy is not a special right reserved to an individual country, but a right for the people of all countries to enjoy. Recent developments in the global situation show once again that military intervention from the outside and so-called democratic transformation entail nothing but harm.

From speech at the general debate of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly, on September 21, 2021

China's democracy works for China

Socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics is something new, and something good.

Socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics is something new, and something good. Of course, this is not to say that China's political system is flawless and needs no further improvement or development. That we are confident in our system does not make us smug or complacent, nor does it mean that we are resistant to change and progress. Rather, it demands that we combine this confidence with continued reform and innovation, and that we develop and improve our political institutions on the basis of upholding our fundamental and basic political systems.

From speech at the ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the National People's Congress, on September 5, 2014

Avoid phenomenon that politicians making wild promises during elections but unable to deliver later on

We must uphold the principle that all power in the country belongs to the people, guaranteeing not only law-based democratic elections but also law-based democratic decision-making, democratic management, and democratic supervision, so as to avoid the phenomenon of politicians making wild promises in the elections process that they are unable to deliver later on.

From speech at the ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the National People's Congress, on September 5, 2014

Chinese-style works for China

Marx and Engels once said, What is democracy? It must carry a certain meaning, otherwise it cannot exist. Therefore, it is crucial to determine the true meaning of democracy. There are many diverse ways to realize democracy, so we cannot just rigidly copy any particular one. Practice has proven that a Chinese-style democracy works for China.

From speech at the meeting marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, September 20, 2019

The whole process of people's democracy with all-inclusive systems and procedures and full-fledged public participation in practice

The whole process of people's democracy not only features all-inclusive systems and procedures, but also comes with full-fledged public participation in practice. Whole-process people's democracy is democracy in its most extensive, honest, and useful form. It is a complete-chain, omni-directional, and all-encompassing democracy. It is a process and outcome democracy, procedural and substantive democracy, plus direct and indirect democracy.

From speech at the central conference on work related to people's congresses from October 13 to 14, 2021

Democracy Under CPC Leadership

The Early Period of the CPC and PRC



1. The Chinese Soviet Republic

In November 1931, the Communist Party of China (CPC) convened the first national congress of the Chinese Soviet Republic in Ruijin, Jiangxi Province, and elected and established its central executive committee and council of people's commissars. The Chinese Soviet Republic was the first democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants in Chinese history.

Tourists visit the site of the Second National Congress of the Chinese Soviet Republic in Ruijin, Jiangxi Province, on May 21, 2021 (XINHUA)



2. Bean Ballot in Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region

In 1937, the bean ballot became the most important method of election in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region as more than 90 percent of the grassroots voters were illiterate or semi-illiterate.

Statues of people at a bean ballot in a museum in Baoding, Hebei Province (XINHUA)



Representatives of non-CPC parties pose for a group photo after arriving in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, in January 1949. In the autumn of 1948, leaders of non-CPC parties and other representatives began arriving in liberated areas of northern and northeastern China to prepare for the convening of the first People's Political Consultative Conference (VCG)



The site of the Changyan United County Government, which was established on January 5, 1940. It was China's first anti-Japanese democratic government and an important revolutionary base during the Chinese People's War Against Japanese Aggression (VISUAL PEOPLE)

3. Three-Thirds System for the Anti-Japanese Democratic Government

In order to unite and cooperate with other parties, the CPC initiated the three-thirds systems for the government it set up during the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, stipulating that of the positions in both the administrative organs and the people's representative bodies, one-third should be for CPC members, another one-third for non-CPC left progressives and the remaining one-third for the middle sections of society. It helped the CPC democratic government to build a united front with a broader social basis.

4. Proposal to Form a Democratic Coalition Government in 1948

The CPC Central Committee issued a call on April 30, 1948, proposing the convening of a new political consultative conference to set up a democratic coalition government. This call won the appreciative response from various political parties, people's organizations, democrats without party affiliations and overseas Chinese who all participated in preparations for the new political consultative conference later. It marks the turning of a new page in China's democratic political process and party system development.

5. Common Program of the CPPCC adopted in 1949

662 representatives from all Chinese political parties, people's organizations, the People's Liberation Army, different regions and ethnic groups, as well as overseas Chinese were invited to attend the first plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) on behalf of the people of all ethnic groups across the country. The session witnessed the adoption of the Common Program of the CPPCC.

The First Plenary Session of the CPPCC is held in Beijing in 1949 (XINHUA)



Chairman Mao Zedong declares the founding of People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949 in Beijing (XINHUA)

6. Founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949

The founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, marked the great victory of the New Democratic Revolution of the Chinese people under the leadership of the CPC, as well as a fundamental change in the political status of the Chinese people. From then onwards, the Chinese people began to be the true masters of the country.



The 12th CPC National Congress is convened in September 1982 (COURTESY PHOTO)

7. Relationship Between the CPC And other political parties

The relationship between the CPC and other political parties was re-emphasized in the report to the 12th CPC National Congress which was convened in September 1982. It said that CPC would continue to adhere to the policies of long-term coexistence, mutual oversight, sincerity, sharing both rough times and the smooth, and enhance cooperation with various other political parties, non-party democrats, ethnic minorities, and religious patriots.

中共中央关于坚持和完善中国共产党领导的多党合作和政治协商制度的意见

(一九八九年十二月三十日)

中国共产党领导的多党合作和政治协商制度是我国的一项基本政治制度。在新的历史时期，坚持和完善这一制度，对于发展社会主义民主政治，实现社会主义现代化，具有十分重要的意义。中共中央根据邓小平同志关于坚持和完善中国共产党领导的多党合作和政治协商制度的重要论述，结合我国政治发展的实际，提出以下意见。

The front-page headline of the People's Daily on December 30, 1989, concerning Opinions on Upholding and Improving the System of Multiparty Cooperation and Political Consultation Under the Leadership of the Communist Party of China (COURTESY PHOTO)

8. Improving the System of Multiparty Cooperation

In 1989, the CPC Central Committee formulated the Opinions on Upholding and Improving the System of Multiparty Cooperation and Political Consultation Under the Leadership of the Communist Party of China, continuing the process of institutionalizing China's political party system. It clarified the common tasks, political basis and basic policies of cooperation between the CPC and other political parties.



The CPPCC building in Beijing on March 3, 2009 (CNS)

10. Further Development in the New Century

The multiparty cooperation and political consultation system under CPC leadership has been further developed in the 21st century.

In 2005, the CPC Central Committee issued a guideline on further strengthening the system.

In 2006, it released opinions on reinforcing the role of the CPPCC, allowing the system to further develop.

In July 2006, the Central Committee of the CPC issued the Opinions on Consolidating and Strengthening the United Front in the New Century.



Photo shows the 1993 Amendment to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, which was adopted at the First Session of the Eighth National People's Congress on March 29, 1993 (COURTESY PHOTO)

9. Included in the Constitution

In 1993, it was written into the Constitution of the People's Republic of China that the system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC will continue and develop well into the future, providing a constitutional basis for the system.

The New Era

President Xi, also General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, concluded that the Chinese people's democracy is whole-process democracy based on the CPC's experience during its unremitting struggle for the people to become the masters of the country over the past century. This concept embodies the connotations, features and advantages of socialist democracy, as well as points out the direction for the latter's future development.



1. Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee

In November 2013, the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the CPC proposed to further emphasize improving the country's democratic system, enriching democratic forms, and giving full play to the strength of China's socialist political system.

The Communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China is adopted during the session on November 12, 2013 (COURTESY PHOTO)



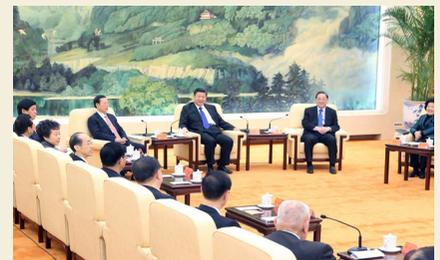
2. CPPCC Biweekly Consultative Seminars

On December 24, 2013, the first biweekly consultative seminars of the CPPCC took place, where members talked about strengthening automobile exhaust regulations and reducing urban air pollution. The seminars have been held once every two weeks, each inviting some 20 related representatives from all walks of life to talk about different topics and give their feedbacks. The biweekly consultative seminars are an effective way to promote consultative democracy and develop a deeper mutual understanding.

A biweekly consultative seminar of the CPPCC is held in Beijing on June 18, 2015 (XINHUA)

2. CPPCC Biweekly Consultative Seminars

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Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is also General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, extends Spring Festival greetings to leaders from non-Communist parties and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, as well as personages without party affiliation ahead of the Spring Festival at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, on January 30, 2016 (XINHUA)

4. The 19th CPC National Congress

In October 2017, the report to the 19th CPC National Congress stated that the CPC would continue to improve the system of institutions through which the people run the country and develop a socialist democracy. The report further announced the CPC would expand the people's orderly political participation to see that, in accordance with the law, they engage in democratic elections, consultations, decision-making, oversight and management.

A photo taken on October 30, 2017 shows a customer in Shanghai buys materials relating to the report submitted to the 19th CPC National Congress (CNS)



5. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee

In October 2019, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the CPC proposed to adhere to and improve the system of the people as masters of the country as well as actively develop a socialist democracy.

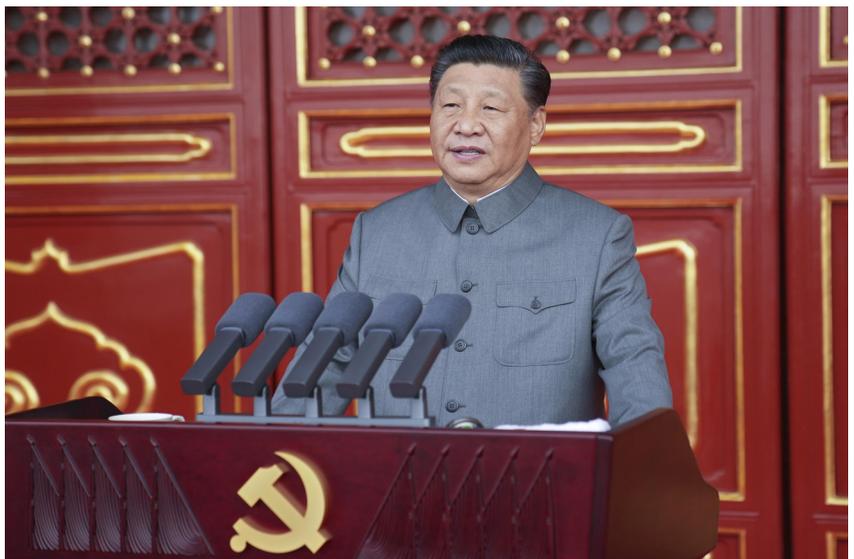
The Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee is held in Beijing in October 2019 (XINHUA)



Chinese President Xi Jinping visits the Gubei Civic Center in Changning District of Shanghai on November 2, 2019 (XINHUA)

6. Enhancing Community Governance and Service

People's democracy is a type of whole-process democracy, President Xi said during his visit to the Gubei Civic Center in Shanghai's Changning District on November 2, 2019. China is on the path of socialist political advancement with Chinese characteristics, where all major legislative decisions are made after going through procedures and democratic deliberations to ensure the decision-making process is comprehensive and democratic, Xi said.



Chinese President Xi Jinping, also General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, delivers a speech at the ceremony marking the centenary of the CPC in Beijing on July 1, 2021 (XINHUA)

7. Ceremony marking the centenary of the founding of the CPC

We will [continue to] practice a people-centered philosophy of development and promote whole-process people's democracy, General Secretary of CPC Central Committee Xi said at a ceremony marking the centenary of the CPC on July 1, 2021

Cases of Practicing Whole-Process People's Democracy

Case One

Local Legislative Outreach Office in Hongqiao Neighborhood, Shanghai

In November 2019, President Xi Jinping visited a local legislative outreach office of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee's Legislative Affairs Commission in Hongqiao neighborhood in Shanghai. During a conversation with Chinese and foreign residents attending a consultation meeting on a draft law, President Xi said, "We are following a path of socialist political development with Chinese characteristics, and our people's democracy is a whole-process democracy." President Xi reiterated this concept in his speech at the ceremony marking the centenary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in July 2021 emphasizing the need to "develop whole-process people's democracy."

Local legislative outreach offices directly solicit the public's opinions and ideas, which is a tangible manifestation of China's attempts to create new mechanisms of democracy in China and to expand current mechanisms. To meet the requirements set out in the Resolution of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee established four local legislative outreach offices in 2015, including one in Hongqiao neighborhood of Shanghai's Changning District.

In 2020, the Legislative Affairs Commission established a further six local legislative outreach offices, respectively in Kunshan City of Jiangsu Province, in Zhengding Town of Hebei Province, and at the China University of Political Science and Law in Beijing, bringing the total number to 10. As of June 2021, these legislative outreach offices had provided nearly 6,600 suggestions relating to 109 draft laws and legislative work plans, many of which have been used following careful analysis and research.

In 2020, the outreach office in Hongqiao neighborhood in Shanghai held more than 180 consultation meetings regarding 16 draft laws, which were attended by more than 3,000 people. In 2015, the Hongqiao outreach office received a proposal regarding the draft Anti-Domestic Violence Law. The proposal was for community-level organizations to be included on the list of entities that can apply for personal safety protection orders, and it was chosen for incorporation into the law.



Residents read magazines at the library at Gubei Civic Center at Hongqiao Neighborhood, Changning District, Shanghai on July 24, 2021 (XINHUA)



A picture of Gubei Civic Center, where the local legislative outreach office of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) in Hongqiao neighborhood in Shanghai locates, shot on November 27, 2020 (XINHUA)



Xia Yunlong, 81-year-old information official at the local legislative outreach office, introduces a community magazine on July 24, 2021 (XINHUA)

Case Two

Courtyard Meeting Hall in a Hutong Community in Beijing

On February 1, 2019, when President Xi Jinping walked into a meeting hall in central Beijing's Qianmen neighborhood, community workers and local resident representatives were discussing the renovation of courtyard houses in the hutongs, Beijing's traditional alleyways.

Xi joined the discussion, hailing the courtyard meetings as a mechanism that enables community members to discuss and decide their own affairs.

This kind of "courtyard meeting hall" in Beijing has several similar models in other parts of the country, including the "village chat booth" in eastern China's Zhejiang Province, where villagers could discuss with village officials about their concerns. Mechanisms such as these are effective at empowering ordinary people and serving as a pillar of people's democracy in China.

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

The essence of people's democracy is that people have the opportunity to discuss the matters that affect them and that common ground can be reached based on the wishes and needs of the entire society, Xi said.



Zhu Maojin (first left) prepared dumplings with his family in a household of Caochangsitiao Hutong, downtown Beijing on January 14, 2020 (XINHUA)



An old couple walks in the Caochangsitiao Hutong, downtown Beijing on April 3, 2019 (XINHUA)

Case Three

Voting System on Projects Concerning People's Livelihood in Hexi District, Tianjin

In 2019 the government of Hexi District in Tianjin chose to implement a project to change broken street lights and install new ones. The decision to implement the project was made through a new voting system established in 2018 by the Standing Committee of the Hexi District People's Congress as a pilot project to select new projects and solicit community feedback.

Su Zhi, Director of the Standing Committee of the Hexi District Municipal People's Congress said the voting system includes soliciting suggestions through multiple channels, formulating an annual list of projects concerning people's daily life, and annual voting by deputies in the district's People's Congress on the priority of projects.

"The number of suggestions we receive



The Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Hexi District, Tianjin organizes deputies to inspect the updates of the lamp upgrading project on August 22, 2019 (Courtesy Photo)



Children get inoculated at the newly-established Meijiang Street Community Medical Service Center in Tianjin on December 9, 2019 (Courtesy Photo)

each year averages over 200. The most popular and achievable projects benefiting the most people are submitted to the People's Congress, and the deputies vote annually on which projects to implement in the coming year," said Sun Youxiang, Vice Director of the Standing Committee of the Hexi District Municipal People's Congress.

How to ensure smooth implementa-

tion of those projects? Su said that the system is designed to ensure all parties concerned shoulder their responsibilities including supervision obligations. According to Su, in the past three years, a total of 28 projects were listed and finished on time.

Stories of the Deputies to the People's Congress at Different Levels

Editor's Note: China has over 2.6

million deputies at various levels of the People's Congress. These deputies come from the people and thus represent the people. It is the role of deputies to maintain close contact with the people and serve as one of the bridges connecting them to the CPC and the government by conveying their concerns, suggestions and opinions, and helping to solve their problems.

Case Four

NPC Deputy Lei Wenfang: Turning the People's Expectations into Reality

On a rainy day in September in Wufeng neighborhood, Heichi Village in Heyang County of Shaanxi Province, there are few people on the roads between the fields but the neighborhood's meeting hall is buzzing with activity. In the morning, Lei Wenfang, the Party branch secretary of the village

gives a lecture on policy and, in the afternoon, agricultural professionals teach the latest techniques in sweet potato cultivation.

This arrangement of working on sunny days and learning on rainy days is a result of Lei's works to consult with local people on their wants and needs. Lei has been a National People's Congress (NPC) deputy for two consecutive terms, and during that time she has regularly visited households

throughout Wufeng neighborhood, keeping up to date on residents' ideas and opinions. It was a request from residents that led her to begin organizing training days on days when residents are unable to work in the fields.

In the past, basic infrastructure, including sanitation, remained backward in Wufeng, so Lei launched several projects to improve the local living environment. Under her lead, the neighborhood built a



Lei Wenfang discusses local issues with residents in Wufeng Neighborhood, Heichi Willage, Heyang County, Shanxi Province

waste sorting facility, upgraded shared toilet facilities and built a sewage treatment station. Other infrastructure such as the community service center, entertainment venues roads and street lights were all improved.

Lei believed in the importance of improving the rural living environment as part of pushing forward comprehensive rural vitalization. During an NPC meeting in March, she made a submission requesting additional financial support for the projects and received feedback from the Ministry of Finance on June 28.

Lei also worked to develop the neighborhood's daylily, plum, cherry, and persimmon businesses, and built a cold storage facility for the daylilies. She has also promoted the use of water-efficient irrigation technologies, and has provided more than 50 suggestions for promoting rural vitalization.

"As an NPC deputy, I am happy to work with the people on implementing whole-process people's democracy and turning their expectations into reality," Lei said.

Case Five

Zhao Xi, Deputy to the People's Congress of Tianhe District, Guangzhou: Whole-process Participatory Budget Monitoring

"The main focus for members of the People's Congress is the fair use of the government's budget," said Lin Zhiyun, Deputy Secretary of the Standing Committee of Tianhe District People's Congress in Guangzhou. "In Tianhe District, the supervision process begins while the budget is still being determined."

Zhao Xi, deputy to the People's Congress of Tianhe District and CEO of a local technology company, has experience working on the district's whole-process participatory budget supervision.

Zhao was first elected as a member of the People's Congress in 2011 and says the procedure for the deputies to supervise the government budgets at that time was simple and only lasted a few days.

According to Zhao, things began to change in 2013, with deputies becoming involved in deliberations during the planning phase of the annual budget.

Over the past eight years, the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Tianhe District has participated in the budget planning process for 58 government departments and projects. Of these, the budgets for 47 departments

and six projects underwent whole-process monitoring that included supervision by popularly-elected deputies.

Demand for education has been rapidly developing in Tianhe District, and the government has built many new schools in recent years. In Early 2021, Zhao made a proposal for the first three years of maintenance fees to be included

in the budget for each new school and the proposal was adopted by the district's education authority.

"Whole-process participatory budget monitoring is not about cutting budgets. It aims to make government spending more transparent and scientific, which will end up promoting high-quality development."



Members of Standing Committee of People's Congress of Tianhe District, Guangzhou are using the online budget supervision system (Courtesy Photo)



A voter casts his ballot at a voting booth to elect new deputies for the local people's congress in Beijing, capital of China, November 15, 2016. (Xinhua)

The Communist Party of China: Holding High the Banner of People's Democracy

By People's Daily

Democracy is an important concept that the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese people have always insisted on. At a central conference on work related to people's congresses, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee and President of China, grasped the law of democratic political development and the practice of people's democracy in China, expounded the CPC's basic views on democracy and the major concept of whole-process people's democracy, and stressed the need to continue to develop this specific type of democracy to consolidate and develop a lively, stable and united political landscape.

Democracy is a shared value of all human beings. How to translate democratic values and concepts into scientific and effective institutional arrangements and into concrete and realistic democratic practices requires a focus on the organic unity of history and reality, theory and practice, form and content, and finding the right institutional mechanism, ways and means. The political system is used to regulate political relations, establish political order, promote national development and maintain national stability, and cannot be abstractly judged in isolation from specific socio-political conditions. Xi pointed out in 2014 that the evaluation of whether a

country's political system is democratic and effective mainly depends on whether the country can conduct leadership transitions in an orderly manner according to the law, whether all people can manage state and social affairs as well as economic and cultural undertakings according to the law, whether the people can express their requirements freely, whether all sectors of society can participate effectively in the political life of the country, whether national decision-making can be scientific and democratic, whether talents from all walks of life can enter the state leadership and management system through fair competition, whether the ruling party can achieve

leadership in state affairs in accordance with the Constitution and laws, and whether the exercise of power can be kept under effective restraint and supervision.

Democracy is not an ornament to be used for decoration; it is to be used to solve the problems that the people want to solve, Xi further stressed. The key to a country's democracy lies in whether the people are really in charge of its affairs, depending on whether they have the right to vote and, more importantly, whether they have the right to participate in governing the country extensively; depending on what verbal promises the people have received during the election process and, more importantly, how many of these promises have been fulfilled after the election; depending on what political procedures and rules are stipulated by institutions and laws and, more importantly, whether these institutions and laws are implemented. We have to see whether the rules and procedures for the operation of power are democratic and, more importantly, whether power is really monitored and restrained by the people. If the people are awakened only at the time of voting and go into dormancy afterwards, if they listen to smashing slogans during election campaigns but have no say afterwards, if they are favored only when canvassing but are left out after the election, such a democracy is not a true democracy. Democracy is the right of all people, not the exclusive right of a few. Whether a country is democratic or not should be judged by the people of that country, not by a minority of outsiders pointing fingers. The international community should be the judge of whether a country is democratic or not, not a handful of countries. There are many ways to achieve democracy, and there cannot be one size to fit all. To use a single yardstick to measure the world's various political systems and examine the political civilization of humanity with a monotonous vision is, in itself, undemocratic.

The CPC has always held high the banner of people's democracy and

always adhered to the following basic views: First, people's democracy is the life of socialism; without democracy, there is no socialism, no socialist modernization, and no rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Second, the people as masters of the country is the essence and core of all socialist democratic politics. The development of socialist democratic politics is to reflect the will of the people, protect the people's rights and interests, and stimulate their creative vitality, with the institutional system ensuring the people's primacy. Third, the road for the political development of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the right way that conforms to China's national conditions and ensures that the people are the masters of their own house. It is the inevitable result of the historical logic, theoretical logic and practical logic of the long struggle of the Chinese people since modern times, and is the inevitable requirement of adhering to the essential attributes of the Party and practicing the fundamental purposes of the Party. Fourth, the exercise of the people's rights through elections and voting and full consultation among the various parties within the people before major decisions are made, so as to reach agreement on common issues as far as possible, are two important forms of socialist democracy in China, which together constitute the institutional characteristics and advantages of socialist democratic politics in China. Fifth, the key to developing socialist democratic politics is to give full play to the characteristics and advantages of China's socialist democratic politics, to continuously promote the institutionalization, standardization and routinization of socialist democratic politics, and to provide a more perfect institutional guarantee for the Party and the country to flourish and enjoy long-term peace and stability.

The amalgamation of all aforementioned basic views creates a profound summary of socialist democratic politics in China, enriching and expanding the political, theoretical and practical connotations of socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics, and chart-

ing the course for political development of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

People's democracy is a style of whole-process democracy. People's democracy on the whole is a vivid practice and the essential approach for the people to be the rulers of their own country. Since its coming into being, the CPC has made it its original aspiration and mission to work for the happiness of the Chinese people and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and has undertaken the unremitting exploration and struggle for the realization of its goals. Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPC Central Committee, with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, has insisted on the organic unity of the Party's leadership, the people's primacy and the rule of law, improved the system of the people as the masters of the country, extended the people's democracy and continuously developed and perfected its whole process.

Facts demonstrate that Chinese socialist democratic politics bears strong vitality. To establish a firm confidence in a socialist system with Chinese characteristics, first of all, we must have confidence in the socialist political system with Chinese characteristics, and enhance the confidence and determination to take the road of the political development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. On the way forward, we should continue to promote the socialist democratic politics, develop a socialist political civilization, and continuously advance the whole process of people's democracy. Under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core, and by following the path of socialist political development with Chinese characteristics, people's democracy in its entirety will continue to improve and develop, and become increasingly vibrant, making contributions packed with Chinese wisdom to the progress of human political civilization, and building the cornerstones of democracy for the realization of the two centenary goals and national rejuvenation. **C**

What Does 'Whole-Process People's Democracy' Mean?

By Zhu Zheng



Staff members of the Circuit People's Court of Yunyang County in a legal education event with residents of Tupanpu Village in Yunyang County in southwest China's Chongqing, April 12, 2018. (Xinhua)

Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized while addressing a central conference on work related to people's congresses, held from October 13 to 14 in Beijing, that the country should continue to uphold and improve the people's congresses system, with an aim at enhancing whole-process people's democracy.

The concept of "whole-process people's democracy" was first used by President Xi when he visited Shanghai in November 2019. It was again heard in the president's speech on the Communist Party of China's 100th founding anniversary when he talked about the journey ahead.

To Western observers, the idea is difficult to understand as democracy is so stereotyped in Western countries that few analysts would understand it from a new perspective.

The conference held from October 13 to 14 would shed light on the meaning of the term. This is the third time that the term has been used, and on a quite unique occasion – a specific

meeting by the Party for work related to people's congresses. Previously, the affairs were addressed by a conference called "the Central Political and Legal Affairs Conference."

The meeting therefore says more than it appears. It for the first time indicates that people's congresses at all levels should operate under the Party's leadership, because the word related to people's congresses in the future will be matters addressed by the Party's gatherings.

But what does it mean by "whole-process people's democracy?" According to the authoritative explanation of Xinhua News Agency, the concept at least encompasses two-fold meanings.

First, people's democracy means people will be at the center. The Party was established with the mission to pursue happiness for the people, and over the past 100 years, has stayed true to its original mission and put people high on the country's political agenda.

It requires that all state institutions and officials serve the people whole-

heartedly, with channels established to hear people's voices, be they concurring or dissenting. What we see in China today is that the people exercise state power through the National People's Congress and local people's congresses at different levels. China also has a unique political consultation system and corresponding institutions, which are important ways for the people to get involved in democracy.

Secondly, the idea attaches great importance to the "whole process." As President Xi demonstrated, China's democracy is different from the West, where politicians and election campaigners would only hear what the people say when casting ballots. China should practice a whole-process democracy in which the people not only have the right to election, but also have the right to be broadly involved in the whole process of decision-making and governance.

This is a new type of democracy that is different from the West. Theoretically, the people should be empowered to supervise the government's operation, and have a say on how they should be governed. But mostly this is Western political rhetoric. In China's telling, the people should not be cast aside when the election ends. Instead, all things relating to the people's interests should be debated and carefully handled by the government.

The Chinese authorities brought about this idea with an ambition to sum up China's past revolution, and more importantly, to distinguish China's democracy from those in the West. In doing so, China aims to find its own political narrative to justify and push through ensuing reforms. What we will see is that the concept will be more often used in the country's political telling, and its implications will be sensed in the days to come. **C**

(Zhu Zheng is an assistant professor focusing on constitutional law and politics at China University of Political Science and Law)

The Nation Xi: Democracy a Key Tenet



President Xi Jinping has underlined further promoting whole-process democracy that enables the Chinese people to be broadly involved in national governance, saying that whether a country is democratic or not depends on whether it is truly run by the people.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military

Commission, made the remark while addressing a central conference on work related to people's congresses, which was held from Wednesday to Thursday in Beijing.

He called for upholding and improving the system of people's congresses, a political system fundamental to the Party's leadership, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance. He said that such a system ensures the realization of whole-process democracy in the country.

In China's political system, the people exercise State power through the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, and local people's congresses at different levels, ensuring their interests are reflected in the decision-making process.

Xi called Chinese democracy "whole-process people's democracy" for the first time in November 2019 during an inspection tour of Shanghai. This enables the Chinese people to broadly and continuously participate in day-to-day political activities, including democratic elections, political consultation, decision-making and oversight.

"Democracy, a shared value of humanity, is a key tenet unswervingly upheld by the CPC and the Chinese people," Xi emphasized.

NIKKEI Asia Chinese Democracy: Xi says 'Whole Process' of Decision-Making is Sound

One year and eight months since its last key meeting, the top echelon of the Chinese Communist Party descended on Beijing for a four-day gathering through Oct. 31.

Despite immense speculation, the 19th Central Committee's fourth plenary session came and went with no bombshell announcement in terms of new policy or personnel promotions.

What caught the eye of China watchers around the world were remarks by Chinese President Xi Jinping on Saturday, after the plenary session had ended. Appearing in Shanghai and mingling with residents, Xi said, "China's people's democracy is a type of whole-process democracy."

It was the first time for Xi to make such a remark. Speaking at a meeting to solicit opinions about the drafting of a law, the Chinese leader referred to "democracy" as many as four times during his short speech.



Experts: Whole-Process People's Democracy Is High-Quality Democracy

● Yukteshwar Kumar

Deputy Mayor of Bath in the United Kingdom visited the rural area of China's Hunan Province and witnessed first-hand the Chinese people's participation in local governance.

He said that during the visit, many farmers who suffered poverty told him that, in the past, poverty elimination policies covered many people but was not well-targeted, so some of those stuck in extreme poverty didn't get effective help; moreover, numerous poverty elimination projects did not suit local conditions very well.

He added, with targeted poverty elimination policies, the village committees of the Communist Party of China (CPC) work with individuals and households to find their way out of poverty after inclusive discussions, setting a good example of community-level democracy.

● Néstor Restivo

Member of the China Research Group of Argentine Council for International Relations, holds that a socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics is closely connected with the CPC's people-centered development philosophy.

Restivo elaborated, "The Chinese people's enthusiasm in participating in politics and their ability to take action amaze me. People are getting involved in the decision-making process, from

legislation to compiling national economic and social development plans and to managing a residential neighborhood and organizing various tasks such as sorting waste."

Restivo further noticed that, over 1 million suggestions were received during the compilation of the 14th Five-year Plan (2021-25), and were later reflected in the document's final version.

"Such achievements could only be made by combining democracy with the demand of meeting people's needs. Here, the CPC's will is aligned with the people's wishes. Consequently, the people are fully mobilized."

● Daryl Guppy

Chairman of the Northern Territory branch of the Australia China Business Council, believes that from consultative democracy and multi-party cooperation to democracy at community level, China is broadening the channels for consultative democracy, pushing forward the system and the practice in all areas of people's life.

He referred to China's democracy as a procedural and result democracy, a democracy in form and in essence, a direct democracy and indirect democracy. It solves the problems people encounter, he noted.

● Dmitry Novikov,

Member of State Duma and Deputy Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the

Russian Federation, explained that the path toward happiness is not identical for all so each country should have the right to choose the path and system that best suit it.

"The right to determine whether a country is democratic or not lies in its people," he said. "China puts its people first and its whole-process people's democracy is a high-quality democracy."

● Eduardo Roldán

Former Director General at the Consulate General of Mexico in Hong Kong said, when it comes to events concerning people's livelihoods, the participation of the public becomes a necessary part in the decision-making process.

"For example, during the drafting and passing of China's Civil Code public suggestions were openly solicited no fewer than 10 times and over 425,000 people offered more than 1.02 million pieces of advice," he said. "China's National People's Congress is doing its best to stand for the people's interests and meet their needs."

● Alexei Kovalii

Political commentator with Ukrainian newspaper Mirror Weekly, said China's whole-process people's democracy is an important modernization of socialist democracy and the CPC is taking people's opinions into consideration, seeking professional suggestions, and looking to establish the broadest consensus.

"Before the annual legislative sessions each year, with the help of media outlets, the Chinese Government solicits public opinion from netizens nationwide. Through digital governance platforms, China is building a democracy that is flat and goes beyond the limit of time, space, and manpower."

● **Evandro Carvalho**

A legal expert from Brazil, told Xinhua that China's socialist democracy is "not only a democracy in form, but in substance."

Such a democracy is not limited to the democratic decision-making process, but also focuses on its outcome, said Carvalho, a former visiting scholar in China and law professor at Brazil's Getulio Vargas Foundation, an economic think tank.

Institutional arrangements for China's democracy involve the procedural aspects and public participation, with the aim of finding solutions to the problems people face, Carvalho said.

"Unlike several Western democracies that are increasingly alienating the people from the political process and ignoring their needs, the Chinese government wants, with the use of technology, to listen more to its population and monitor the execution of measures to meet people's needs," he said.

"China is building a democracy with Chinese characteristics that involves more public participation and is more connected to the reality and interests of the people than many Western democracies."

● **Haruo Nishihara**

A renowned Japanese criminal law expert and former president of Waseda University, said among all others, the leadership of the CPC provides fundamental politi-

cal guarantee for China's whole-process people's democracy.

"Because the CPC, from its inception, has considered the happiness of the Chinese people and the revival of the Chinese nation its goals, it is capable of leading the Chinese people to achieve national independence, raise comprehensive national strength and live a happy life," he explained. "This feat could not have been accomplished without a democracy with Chinese characteristics."

● **Elias Jabbour**

Professor with the Rio de Janeiro State University, commented that the whole-process people's democracy demonstrates a governance philosophy of multi-party participation and joint governance under the leadership of the CPC. It helps modernize overall social governance.

● **Charles Onunaiju**

Director for Nigeria's Center for China Studies, said there are two standards for real democracy, whether the people are satisfied and whether the people trust their government.

He said, "China's development achievements and its capability in handling risks are based on the people's faith in their government. China has found a democracy that fits itself."

● **Laurence J. Brahm**

A senior international fellow at the Center for China and Globalization, a Chinese non-governmental think tank based in Beijing, said Chinese democracy is different from that in the West.

"It is a system of consensus-building. It is quiet and, in many ways, like Tai Chi," concluded Brahm.

● **Zlatko Lagumdžija**

Former Chairman of the Council of Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, believes that China's democracy is a people-centered democracy that seeks human right protection through development.

He added, "The core principle of China's model of democracy is to attain development by the people and for the people."

● **Danilo Türk**

Former President of Slovenia, said that whether absolute poverty has been eliminated or not serves as an important measurement for democracy.

According to Türk, only through the elimination of absolute poverty can mankind achieve a higher degree of dignity. The concepts of democracy and human rights are intertwined with development and it would be unscientific to talk about democracy and human rights without including development.

He mentioned that China has eliminated absolute poverty and successfully finished its building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects. It excited him to see that China promised to leave no one behind in poverty alleviation, he said.

● **Essam Sharaf**

Former Prime Minister of Egypt, explained that different from party politics in the West, China's democracy is a real democracy of the people.

He further stated that in formulating its 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), China solicited suggestions from the whole society to guarantee its development would benefit all the Chinese people, manifesting a real example of China's model of democracy. **CI**

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