

China's Political Party System: Cooperation and Consultation

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the People's Republic of China

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Contents

Preamble	1
I. China's Political Parties	3
II. A Unique Political Creation	10
III. Close Cooperation Between Political Parties	14
IV. China's Political Party System Has Distinctive Characteristics and Strengths	16
V. The CPC Consults with Other Political Parties and Non-Affiliates	19
VI. The CPC Supports Other Political Parties and Non-Affiliates in Conducting Democratic Oversight	22
VII. The CPC Cooperates with Other Political Parties and Non-Affiliates in Governing the Country	24
VIII. Non-CPC Political Parties and Non-Affiliates Provide Advice on Economic and Social Development	27
IX. The CPPCC Is an Important Political and Organizational Platform in China's Political Party System	30
Conclusion	33

Preamble

A country's political party system is a major component of its political framework and makes a critical contribution to democracy. The system best suited to a country is determined by its history, traditions, and realities. There are many types of political party system around the world, and there is not a single system that is good for all countries.

The system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) is a basic element of China's political framework. A new model grown out of the soil of China, it also learns from other countries and absorbs the fruits of their political achievements. The *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* stipulates, "The system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China will continue and develop long into the future."

In this system, in addition to the CPC, there are eight other political parties: the Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang, the China Democratic League, the China National Democratic Construction Association, the China Association for Promoting Democracy, the Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party, the China Zhi Gong Party, the Jiusan Society, and the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League. The system also includes prominent individuals without affiliation to any of the political parties (hereinafter referred to as "non-affiliates").

Following the principles of long-term coexistence, mutual oversight, sincerity, and sharing the rough times and the smooth, the CPC and the other political parties have created a multiparty cooperation system in which the CPC exercises state power and the other parties participate fully in the administration of state affairs under the leadership of the CPC.

This is a unique political model. It has displayed unquestionable strength and vitality in China's political and social life. It is essential to the task of modernizing China's governance system and capacity. It continues to make an invaluable contribution to the political progress of humanity.

I. China's Political Parties

Political parties are an important force in state politics. Globally, there are numerous political parties of many types, differing in background, class basis, values, and political stance. They also play different roles in state affairs.

In China, the CPC and eight other political parties were founded for national salvation. Their shared goals were the realization of national independence, the people's liberation and wellbeing, and the prosperity of the country.

China is one of the oldest civilizations in the world. Following the Opium War in 1840, China was reduced into a semi-colonial, semi-feudal state under the occupying Western capitalist powers and the failing feudal autocracy. People of insight tried tirelessly to find a way to salvage the nation – the Taiping Rebellion, the Self-Strengthening Movement, the Hundred Days' Reform, and the Boxer Movement – but all failed in the end.

The Revolution of 1911 led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen ended the feudal autocracy that had ruled China for more than 2,000 years, bringing tremendous change to society. But it failed to do away with the backward social system and failed to lift people out of misery. The historic mission of national independence and the people's liberation remained unfulfilled.

The CPC was founded in 1921, at a time when China was facing grave dangers at home and abroad, trapped in a morass of social crises. Always retaining in the forefront of mind its founding mission – to seek happiness for the people and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation – the CPC has succeeded in applying Marxist tenets to the Chinese context, rallying all the forces that can be combined to form an extensive united front. It has achieved many great feats that have drawn worldwide attention and ensured that the CPC and the people hold to the right path on the way forward.

Over the course of a century, the CPC has, leading the Chinese people, made unprecedented achievements. These include:

By completing the New Democratic Revolution (1919-1949) and founding the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, it put an end to the semi-colonial, semi-feudal society of old China and realized national independence and the people's liberation.

By completing the socialist revolution and establishing socialism in China, it brought the most extensive and profound social change to the Chinese nation.

By introducing the policy of reform and opening up, it has pioneered socialism with Chinese characteristics so that the people can enjoy a better life, and the nation can become stronger and have its status notably raised in the international community.

By implementing the Five-sphere Integrated Plan¹ and the Four-pronged Comprehensive Strategy², it has ushered in a new era of Chinese socialism.

With these historic achievements and transformation in the cause of the CPC and the nation, China has stood up, become better off, and grown in strength. It can now look forward to the bright prospect of national rejuvenation.

The CPC's role in leading the country was confirmed and consolidated in the course of China's revolution, economic development, and reform. It is the choice of history and of the people. By the end of 2019, CPC membership had reached 91.9 million.

The non-CPC political parties were created and developed in the Chinese people's fight to destroy imperialism and autocracy and pursue democracy. Their membership came from the national bourgeoisie, urban petty bourgeoisie, and intellectuals and other associated patriots. Under CPC leadership, these parties have participated in founding the PRC, reconstructing the country, advancing reform, and realizing the Chinese Dream. Together, they have committed themselves to the great cause of seeking national independence, the people's liberation and wellbeing, and the prosperity of the country.

The Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang was created by former members of the democratic group of the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party of China, or KMT) and other patriots. Standing against the autocratic rule under Chiang Kai-shek, the patriots inside the party carried forward Sun Yat-sen's legacy of devotion to the nation, to revolution and to progress, and together founded the Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang in Hong Kong in January 1948. Dedicated to the ultimate ideal of realizing the Three Principles of the People proposed by Sun Yat-sen and building an independent and democratic new China where everyone lives a happy life, the committee defined its program of action – to end KMT autocracy and form a democratic coalition government.

Currently, the Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang consists mainly of people who have links with the KMT, have historical and social connections

¹ This refers to China's overall plan for building socialism with Chinese characteristics, that is, to promote coordinated progress in the economic, political, cultural, social and eco-environmental fields.

² This refers to China's strategic plan for building socialism with Chinese characteristics, that is, to make comprehensive moves to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects, to further reform, to advance the rule of law, and to strengthen CPC self-governance.

with the committee, or have relationships with Taiwan compatriots, along with specialists in social and legal affairs, and in business relating to agriculture, rural areas, and rural people. The party has a membership of more than 151,000.

The China Democratic League was founded by a group of well-known public figures and intellectuals seeking democracy and progress. To support the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (War Against Japanese Aggression, 1931-1945), promote unity and democracy, and ensure their own rights to survive, a number of political parties and organizations joined hands to secretly establish the China Democratic Political League in Chongqing in March 1941. It adopted a platform to fight Japanese aggression, practice democracy, and promote unity across the country. Reorganized as the China Democratic League in September 1944, it opposed autocracy and the civil war, and called for democracy and peace.

Now, the China Democratic League is mainly composed of senior intellectuals specializing in culture, education, and relevant fields of science and technology. It has a membership of more than 330,000.

The China National Democratic Construction Association was initiated by an assembly of patriotic businesspeople and associated intellectuals. During the War Against Japanese Aggression, a group of patriotic businesspeople and intellectuals aspired to save the nation by developing industry, supporting movements against Japanese aggression, and advocating political and economic democracy. In December 1945, they founded the China National Democratic Construction Association in Chongqing, proposing that an ideal nation is owned by the people, governed by the people, and enjoyed by the people. They advocated democratic economic planning and corporate autonomy under the guidance of such planning.

Today, the China National Democratic Construction Association is home to businesspeople, economic specialists and academics. It has a membership of more than 210,000.

The China Association for Promoting Democracy was founded by intellectuals in the fields of culture, education, and publishing, along with patriots from industry and business. In the course of the War Against Japanese Aggression, a number of intellectuals and businesspeople stayed in Shanghai to resist Japanese occupation. After the war they exposed the KMT's reactionary rule through the newspapers and publications they ran, and founded the China Association for Promoting Democracy in Shanghai in December 1945. With a mission to carry forward democracy and facilitate democratic politics in China, the association called for an end to KMT autocracy and the civil war, and for the return of state power to the people.

Now, the China Association for Promoting Democracy mainly recruits intellectuals in education, culture, publishing, and relevant fields of science and technology. It has a membership of more than 182,000.

The Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party was founded by left-wing KMT members supporting Sun Yat-sen's principles of allying with the Soviet Union, allying with the CPC, and helping the peasants and workers. After the failure of the First National Revolution in 1927, left-wing KMT members formed a provisional action committee in Shanghai in August 1930, proposing to set up a government of peasants, workers and common people. The name was changed to the Chinese Action Committee for Nation Liberation in November 1935, and then into the Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party in February 1947. It called on all Chinese compatriots and political parties to unite for peace and national unification, and to work for an independent and prosperous China.

Currently, the Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party mainly consists of intellectuals in medicine, health care, human resources, the eco-environment, and relevant fields of education, science and technology. It has a membership of more than 184,000.

The China Zhi Gong Party was founded by overseas Chinese communities. As China fell into chaos following the Opium War in 1840, many Chinese left the country for Southeast Asia and the Americas, and formed many local communities and organizations. In October 1925 the Hung Society Zhi Gong Hall, an overseas Chinese society, founded the China Zhi Gong Party in San Francisco, taking as its mission to fight for national independence and liberation of the people, and to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of overseas Chinese. In May 1947, the party was reorganized into a new democratic party at its third congress in Hong Kong.

The China Zhi Gong Party is mainly composed of the middle and higher ranks of returned overseas Chinese and their relatives, and representatives of people with overseas connections. It has a membership of more than 63,000.

The Jiusan Society was founded by intellectuals in culture, education, science and technology. At the end of 1944, a group of academics in these fields organized a forum on democracy and science in Chongqing, with the purpose of supporting the War Against Japanese Aggression, boosting democracy, and carrying forward the spirit of the May 4th Movement, underpinned by patriotism, democracy and science. On September 3, 1945, to celebrate victory in the War Against Japanese Aggression and World War II, the organization was renamed the Jiusan Forum, which became the basis for the Jiusan Society, founded on May 4, 1946. Its platform was to carry forward the spirit of the May 4th Movement and promote democracy and science.

The Jiusan Society recruits intellectuals in science and technology, and relevant fields of higher education, medicine, and health care. It has a membership of more than 195,000.

The Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League was founded by patriotic Chinese compatriots in Taiwan Province. Taiwan returned to the motherland after the War Against Japanese Aggression, but the corrupt, autocratic rule of the KMT authorities infuriated local people, resulting in the February 28 Uprising in 1947. The uprising was brutally suppressed and its leading members withdrew to Hong Kong, where they founded the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League in November that year, calling for an independent new China characterized by peace, democracy, prosperity, and people's wellbeing, and opposing any secessionist attempt to break Taiwan away from China.

The Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League is mainly composed of Taiwan compatriots residing in the mainland and intellectuals in Taiwan studies. It has a membership of more than 3,300.

There are also well-known, influential public figures who are not affiliated to any political party but have contributed to national independence, the people's liberation and wellbeing, and the prosperity of the country. They are mainly non-affiliated influential intellectuals who have the desire and ability to discuss and participate in the administration of state affairs, and who have contributed to society.

In the long course of revolution, economic development and reform, and in the historic process of seeking happiness for the people and the rejuvenation of the nation, the CPC has withstood countless tests and become the vanguard of the Chinese workers, the Chinese people, and the Chinese nation. It represents the leadership of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The other political parties have evolved into a close political alliance of the socialist workers and patriots whom they represent, and become parties participating in the administration of state affairs. Non-affiliates are also an important force in Chinese politics.

II. A Unique Political Creation

China's political party system is a result of adapting Marxist political party theory to the Chinese context. It is a unique political structure created by the CPC, the Chinese people, the non-CPC political parties, and non-affiliates. It sprouted from Chinese soil and evolved over time based on China's historical heritage, cultural traditions, and economic and social development.

The system is rooted in the best of Chinese traditions. The Chinese people have created a time-honored, extensive and profound traditional culture. They aspire to the common good, put people first, promote peace and harmony, seek common ground while reserving differences, and value inclusiveness and harmonious coexistence. China's culture has provided strong support for the continuous development of the nation and rich nourishment for the formation and development of China's political party system.

The system began during the democratic revolution (1840-1949). After the Revolution of 1911, China followed the example of Western countries and adopted parliamentary politics and a multiparty system. More than 300 political groups were set up.

After 1927 the Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-shek established one-party dictatorship, suppressing and persecuting democratic and progressive forces. This aroused strong opposition from the CPC, the Chinese people, and others committed to democracy.

The CPC announced the program of the New Democratic Revolution, and established close cooperation with other political parties in the struggle against the Japanese imperialist aggression and against the Kuomintang dictatorship.

Panel 1 Parliamentary Chaos in the Republic of China

In the early years of the Republic of China (1912-1949), China adopted the Western parliamentary party system. From 1912, when the first cabinet was established, to 1928, the head of state was replaced 10 times and the prime minister 59 times, and the cabinet was reshuffled 45 times. The longest term of office was less than one year, while the shortest was less than one day. In addition, there were five parliaments and seven constitutions. The frequent changes of presidency, cabinet, parliament and constitution caused enormous social unrest.

The system took shape during political consultations in preparation for the founding of the PRC. In April 1948, in honor of the upcoming International Workers' Day, the CPC called for a political consultative conference and a democratic coalition government. The call received strong support from other political parties, non-affiliates, and all sectors of society.

This marked the point at which all those non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates accepted the leadership of the CPC. It also marked the prelude to the establishment of a new China through consultation between the CPC and other

political parties, organizations, prominent individuals from all fields, and the people of all ethnic groups, and laid the foundations for the system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC.

In September 1949, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) adopted at its First Plenary Session the Common Program of the CPPCC, which made the following provisions: Prior to the convening of the National People's Congress (NPC) elected by universal suffrage, the plenary sessions of the CPPCC would exercise the functions and powers of the NPC; once the NPC was in place, the CPPCC would raise proposals to the NPC or the Central People's Government regarding national development and other important measures. China's new political party system was thus established.

Panel 2 Political Parties Responded to the CPC's Call and Accepted Its Leadership

On April 30, 1948, the CPC Central Committee called on all political parties, people's organizations and public personages to quickly hold a political consultative conference to convene a people's congress and form a democratic coalition government.

Within a short period of time, political parties, people's organizations, overseas Chinese organizations and non-affiliates all responded positively to the call by issuing telegrams, statements, manifestos and public letters. They accepted the CPC's invitation and proposal, and after overcoming many difficulties, they traveled to the liberated areas to discuss plans to found a new China.

This marked the point at which the other political parties and non-affiliates willingly chose the leadership of the CPC and the position of unity and cooperation with it.

The system has developed in the course of socialist revolution, economic development, and reform. After the founding of the PRC, the CPC strengthened its solidarity and cooperation with the other political parties and non-affiliates, and proposed the principle of long-term coexistence and mutual oversight, which evolved into a principle of long-term coexistence, mutual oversight, sincerity, and sharing the rough times and the smooth. The framework of China's new political party system was thus formed.

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. In 1993 it was written into the Constitution that the system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China will continue and develop long into the future, providing a constitutional basis for the system.

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 develop further.

The system is improving in the new era of Chinese socialism. Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping as the core has worked hard to promote innovation in the theory, policy, and practice of multiparty cooperation. It has strengthened its overall leadership over multiparty cooperation, and improved the institutional framework for cooperation.

The CPC Central Committee has held conferences on the work of the united front and the CPPCC, and emphasized that the system is a new model of party politics, an important part of China's governance system, and a great contribution to modern political civilization. This has raised multiparty cooperation to a new level.

The CPC has made it clear that the other political parties participate in state governance under Chinese socialism, and their basic functions are to discuss and participate in the administration of state affairs, and to engage in democratic scrutiny and political consultation. This provides huge scope for them to play an active role.

To further institutionalize and standardize multiparty cooperation, the CPC issued a series of documents on strengthening socialist consultative democracy, strengthening consultative democracy of the CPPCC, improving consultation with the non-CPC political parties, improving those political parties' participation in state governance, and reinforcing the role of the CPPCC in the new era.

The CPC proposed that all the political parties should modernize their approach to cooperation, update their consensus, and undertake new initiatives to fulfill their duties. These serve as the fundamental principles of multiparty cooperation in the new era.

In accordance with the requirements of Chinese socialism for their participation in governance, the non-CPC political parties should continue to optimize their development, better perform their duties, and endeavor to play a more important role in the country's political life.

III. Close Cooperation Between Political Parties

Over the years, the CPC has worked together with the non-CPC political parties, advancing side by side, withstanding all kinds of tests, and forming a new type of relationship featuring cooperation, unity and harmony.

The CPC is in a leading and ruling position. The Constitution stipulates, “The socialist system is the fundamental system of the People’s Republic of China. Leadership by the Communist Party of China is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics.” The CPC is the leadership core of Chinese socialism. The other political parties and non-affiliates accept the leadership of the CPC and support its ruling status. The CPC exercises leadership over them through political guidance, mainly on political principles, direction, and major policies. It supports other political parties and non-affiliates in independently carrying out their work and performing their functions and duties. Upholding the leadership of the CPC is a distinctive feature and an important part of China’s political party system. It is also the primary prerequisite for the sound development of multiparty cooperation and acts as a fundamental guarantee.

Non-CPC political parties participate in state governance under socialism with Chinese characteristics. They are not in opposition, nor are they bystanders or outsiders. Instead, they participate in state governance under the leadership of the CPC. Their role includes the administration of state affairs, consultation on major principles and policies and candidates for important leading positions, and the formulation and implementation of state policies, laws and regulations. Their status and their right to participate in the administration of state affairs are protected by the Constitution, which is an important manifestation of people’s democracy. They offer their advice and invest effort on major issues concerning China’s economic and social development, and they have witnessed, practiced, upheld and defended the cause of Chinese socialism.

The CPC is a close friend to other political parties. The CPC attaches great importance to the role of the non-CPC political parties in the country’s political and social life, and respects, protects and accommodates their interests. These parties agree with the CPC’s basic theory, line and policy, and act as its advisers, helpers and partners. The CPC, together with these parties and non-affiliates, conducts political consultation in good faith, carries out extensive political cooperation, consolidates the common political and theoretical foundations, and works to enhance multiparty cooperation.

The CPC and the non-CPC political parties supervise each other. The non-CPC political parties exercise oversight over the CPC mainly by putting forward opinions, criticism and suggestions; the oversight is consultative and cooperative in nature. The CPC, as the ruling party in a leadership position, willingly accepts the

supervision of other political parties. The CPC and the non-CPC political parties are close friends who speak truth to each other and address all mistakes together. The purpose of mutual oversight is not to fight, weaken, or constrain each other, but to promote common progress. The non-CPC political parties conduct oversight over the CPC mainly for the purpose of helping the CPC exercise rational, democratic and law-based governance.

IV. China's Political Party System Has Distinctive Characteristics and Strengths

Under the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the essence of people's democracy is that problems should be solved through consultation, and anything that concerns the public should be discussed by the public, through which the people are able to build the broadest possible consensus that reflects the aspirations and expectations of the entire society. Based on cooperation, participation and consultation, and by following the principle of unity, democracy and harmony, China's political party system plays an important role in encouraging the people to participate in politics, voice their views, and achieve social integration, democratic oversight and sustained stability. It represents the unity of governance and political participation, of leadership and cooperation, and of consultation and oversight. It is a major institutional channel for socialist consultative democracy through which the people's position as masters of the country is ensured.

The system embodies the interests of the widest range of social groups. This system extensively and unfailingly represents the fundamental interests of the people of all ethnic groups and social sectors, avoiding the defects of the old-fashioned party systems which represent only a selective few or the vested interests. There are many social groups in China. While sharing the same fundamental interests, they each have specific interests of their own. China's political party system respects the aspirations of the majority while taking into account the reasonable expectations of minorities. It can better represent the interests of different social groups, expand and smooth various channels for articulating interests, and fully and comprehensively reflect the opinions and advice from people of all social groups. Hence this system is in a position to accommodate the interests and coordinate the relationships of all sectors.

The system reflects the shared goals of all. It unites all political parties and non-affiliates towards a common goal, effectively mitigating the risks of inadequate

oversight in one-party rule, and the problems of power rotation and destructive competition among multiple political parties. Pooling the wisdom and strength of all through extensive consultation is conducive to building consensus, acting in unison, and achieving shared goals, political unity, and orderly political participation. With the goals of upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics and realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation, this system helps to build powerful social synergy and pool all resources to complete major missions for the benefit of the people.

The system promotes sound decision-making and implementation. Through consultation between political parties, participation and deliberation in the administration of state affairs, democratic oversight, and other standardized institutional procedures and arrangements, the system pools ideas and suggestions to ensure informed and democratic decision-making. It avoids the weakness of the old-fashioned party systems – when making decisions and exercising governance, political parties act in their own interests or the interests of the classes, regions and groups they represent, cling obstinately to their own ideas and keep dissidents out, making society divided. On the basis of democratic centralism, the system allows different parties to seek common ground while shelving differences and makes it possible to create mechanisms for identifying and rectifying mistakes and reducing errors so that it can effectively prevent blind or arbitrary decision-making. It incorporates political consultation into the decision-making process, and ensures consultation both before decision-making and during policy implementation. In this way decisions are made through rounds of consultation, and acted upon in a rational and prudent manner, so as to ensure sound decision-making and effective implementation.

The system ensures effective state governance. It replaces confrontation and contention with cooperation and consultation, effectively avoiding frequent changes of government resulting from discord among political parties. It is conducive to resolving problems and conflicts and maintaining stability and harmony. Under this system, political parties seek common ground through consultation. It is able to avoid vetocracy and situations where there is deliberation but no decision, or where decisions are made but not implemented. It can therefore ensure continuity and consistency of policies. It aims to arouse the enthusiasm of all and attaches importance to stronger support for all non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates in fulfilling their duties. Therefore, it can optimize the allocation of political resources, make it possible for institutions and mechanisms to be created for people from all sectors of society to participate in state governance and help modernize China's system and capacity for governance.

Panel 3 Soliciting Advice on the Economy from Non-CPC Individuals

At the end of every year, the general secretary of the CPC Central Committee presides over a forum attended by prominent non-CPC individuals and hears opinions and advice from leaders of the central committees of the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates on China's economic performance of the year and economic planning for the following year. After the forum, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee collect and sort out proposals and forward them to relevant departments for study, handling and feedback. Every year, many suggestions are adopted and turn into policies and measures.

V. The CPC Consults with Other Political Parties and Non-Affiliates

Consultation is an important form of democracy in which the CPC and other political parties, on the basis of common political goals, carry out direct consultation on major policies and affairs of the state before decision-making and during policy implementation. It is an important part of the system of socialist consultative democracy. Non-affiliates also participate in the consultation.

Subjects of consultation. The CPC and other political parties carry out consultation on subjects including:

- formulation and revision of important documents from CPC national and local congresses and CPC central and local committees,
- proposals on amendments to the Constitution, and on the creation or amendment of important laws and local regulations,
- advice on the candidates for leadership posts in standing committees of people's congresses, governments, national and local committees of the CPPCC, chairpersons of supervision commissions, presidents of courts, and procurators-general of procuratorates, and
- major issues concerning the united front and multiparty cooperation.

Forms of consultation. Consultation between political parties can take place in three forms: forums, talks, and consultation in writing. Consultative forums primarily

include forums on specific subjects, forums on personnel matters, and forums on field work. Consultative talks involve leaders from CPC committees inviting leaders from other political parties to hold discussions on issues of common concern on an irregular basis, or principal leaders from other political parties requesting a session with leaders from CPC committees to provide information and communicate views. Consultation in writing means that CPC committees solicit written advice on major documents and affairs from other political parties, or other political parties submit proposals on major issues in writing to CPC committees.

Institutional support for consultation. Consultation between political parties is ensured by relevant rules and regulations, operates primarily according to relevant CPC Central Committee documents, and is supported by pertinent mechanisms. Every year the CPC Central Committee entrusts central committees of the non-CPC political parties to conduct targeted research on major issues of economic and social development, and supports their field work in areas of specialization on a regular basis. Relevant authorities provide them with information on the chosen subjects, organize special report meetings and briefings, and invite representatives of the non-CPC political parties to sit in on relevant conferences and participate in specialized field work, inspection, and supervision.

Achievements of consultation. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC Central Committee has organized or entrusted relevant departments to organize more than 170 consultative forums. On these occasions, it has engaged in consultation with the other political parties and non-affiliates and solicited their opinions on matters of great importance such as CPC Central Committee's reports to CPC national congresses and to plenary sessions of the CPC Central Committee, advice on amendments to the Constitution, on the drafting of medium- and long-term plans for economic and social development, and on candidates of leaders of the state. Its aim is to ensure more informed and democratic decision-making on major issues. Central committees of the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates have conducted in-depth field work and made more than 730 written proposals, many of which have been turned into major state policies. Proceeding from realities, CPC local committees at all levels conduct consultations with corresponding local organizations of the non-CPC political parties on important local issues, creating a driving force for the development of local economy and society.

Panel 4 The CPC Central Committee Solicited Opinions on Formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan

On August 25, 2020, General Secretary Xi Jinping presided over a forum attended by prominent non-CPC individuals, soliciting opinions on the recommendations of the CPC Central Committee for formulating the 14th Five-year Plan for Economic and Social Development and long-range objectives through the year 2035. Central committees of the non-CPC political parties and representatives of non-affiliates gave advice on a number of issues including:

- better regional economic planning,
- formation of a double development dynamic, with the domestic economy and international engagement providing mutual reinforcement, and the former as the mainstay,
- innovation-driven development and stronger strategic underpinning for national development,
- the Healthy China initiative,
- law-based management of planning, and
- deeper opening up and international cooperation.

All of this has contributed to the formulation and implementation of the 14th Five-year Plan.

VI. The CPC Supports Other Political Parties and Non-Affiliates in Conducting Democratic Oversight

Democratic oversight of the CPC exercised by the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates is an important way to leverage the strengths of China's political party system and is an essential requirement in modernizing China's system and capacity for governance. It plays a unique and irreplaceable role in the oversight system under socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The subjects of democratic oversight mainly include:

- implementation of the Constitution, laws and regulations of the state,
- formulation and implementation of major guidelines and policies of the CPC and the government, and
- the law-based governance of the country by the CPC and the performance of leading officials of the CPC in fulfilling their duties and in exercising power with integrity.

Forms of democratic oversight. The non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates offer opinions, criticism and advice when participating in political consultation and conducting field work, taking part in inspection and oversight of the implementation of major policies, decisions and plans of the state, and carrying out targeted oversight over major issues when entrusted by CPC committees. Specifically, those members of the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates elected as deputies to people's congresses participate in law enforcement inspections organized by the people's congresses. Every year, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate convene forums attended by members of the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates to solicit their opinions and advice. Administrative departments, supervisory departments, courts and procuratorates invite representatives of non-CPC individuals to serve as special staffers and exercise oversight over relevant work. Currently, more than 12,700 non-CPC individuals are serving as special staffers in relevant departments at and above the prefectural level.

New practice of democratic oversight. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC Central Committee has been supporting the other political parties in strengthening targeted oversight over major reform measures, implementation of key policies, and the efforts to meet important binding targets in medium- and long-term plans of the state. In 2016, the CPC Central Committee entrusted central committees of the other eight political parties to pair with eight central and western provinces and autonomous regions that face onerous work in poverty alleviation and to monitor their progress in fighting poverty over the next five years. This move created a new area of multiparty cooperation which serves the priority of the state. Through in-depth field work and frank consultation, these political parties presented a series of constructive opinions, and offered criticism and advice on accurate identification of the impoverished population and targeted poverty alleviation. They made 36,000 interventions in democratic oversight over poverty alleviation, offered 2,400 items of written advice to CPC committees and governments of the eight provinces or autonomous regions, and submitted more than 80 reports of various types to the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, making a great contribution to securing victory in the campaign against poverty.

VII. The CPC Cooperates with Other Political Parties and Non-Affiliates in Governing the Country

In the exercise of state power, the CPC and the other eight political parties, together with non-affiliates, work together in unity. This is an important institutional element of China's political party system. The CPC upholds equality, democratic consultation, and sincere cooperation to support other participants in jointly building state power at all levels of people's congresses, governments and judicial organs.

The people's congress is the authority through which the Chinese people exercise state power. It is also a major institution where members of the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates play their role. Members of the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates account for a certain percentage of the total numbers of deputies to people's congresses, the standing committees of people's congresses, and the special committees of people's congresses at all levels.

Since the First Session of the 13th National People's Congress in 2018, about 152,000 members of the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates have served as deputies to people's congresses at all levels. Among them, 6 have been vice chairpersons of the NPC Standing Committee, and 44 have been members of the NPC Standing Committee; 32 have been vice chairpersons of the standing committees of provincial people's congresses, and 462 have been members of the standing committees of provincial people's congresses; 364 have been vice chairpersons of the standing committees of municipal people's congresses, and 2,585 have been members of the standing committees of municipal people's congresses. They perform their duties as representatives of the people through their participation in:

- formulation and amendment of the Constitution, other state laws, and local statutes,
- election, appointment and dismissal of leading officials in state organs,
- review and approval of the central government's reports on economic and social development plans and their implementation, and reports on state budgets and execution of budgets, and
- inspection of law enforcement.

During the above processes, they convey the will of the people, raise proposals, and make inquiries.

Members of the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates take leading positions in government and judicial organs, fulfilling their duties and achieving notable results. Currently, 14 of these people are in leading positions in the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, or ministries, commissions, offices and bureaus directly under the State Council; 29 are vice provincial governors, vice chairpersons of autonomous regions or vice mayors of municipalities directly under the central government, and 380 are deputy heads of cities, prefectures, leagues or districts; 45 are vice presidents of provincial people's courts or deputy

procurators-general of provincial people's procuratorates; and 345 are vice presidents of prefecture-level people's courts or deputy procurators-general of prefecture-level people's procuratorates. They have the power to give administrative orders, make decisions, and offer proposals on staff appointments and dismissals within the leadership responsibilities assigned to them.

The State Council and local governments value the role of the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates. The State Council and local governments organize symposiums attended by leaders of non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates as necessary. The aim is to solicit their views on the draft government work reports to be submitted to people's congresses for deliberation, on major policy measures, and on major construction projects to boost the economy and improve people's wellbeing, and to brief them on the latest economic and social developments. In addition, they are invited to plenary meetings and special meetings held by the central and local governments as appropriate, as well as special inspections organized by the central and local governments on an ad hoc basis.

VIII. Non-CPC Political Parties and Non-Affiliates Provide Advice on Economic and Social Development

The non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates employ their strengths in gathering talent, pooling wisdom, and reaching out to the general public. They actively deliberate on and participate in the administration of state affairs. They are valued advisers on key national programs, and significant contributors to the development of all social undertakings.

Making suggestions on the formulation of state policies and the implementation of major strategies. Members of the non-CPC political parties perform their functions mainly through conducting inspections and studies and providing consultancy and advice on major political, economic and social issues of overall, strategic and pioneering importance. Over the years, the central committees of the non-CPC political parties, together with non-affiliates, have conducted in-depth research into and surveys on major economic and social development issues such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region, the Yangtze River Economic Belt, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta, innovation-driven high-quality development, and supply-side structural reform. Many of their proposals have been adopted by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council. The CPC is

always looking to improve the briefing, inspection, field work, liaison and feedback mechanisms so as to make the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates better informed.

Exploring new avenues to perform their functions. The non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates have launched initiatives such as Intellectual Support to Underdeveloped Areas, Employment Assistance for Surplus Labor through Vocational Education, and the China Siyuan Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. They assist in nonprofit undertakings including vocational training, educational improvement, fundraising for disaster relief, and aid for people in need. As a bridge connecting the sectors they represent, the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates make appeals and offer suggestions on key difficult issues of extensive public concern, such as education reform, medical care reform, the Beautiful China initiative, employment and business startups, and social security. They have increased their association with compatriots from the Hong Kong SAR, the Macao SAR and Taiwan, and with overseas Chinese, to boost the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations, contain the separatist forces seeking “Taiwan independence”, and promote national unity.

Penal 5 Non-CPC Political Parties and Non-Affiliates Contributed to the Development of Bijie Pilot Zone in Guizhou

Approved by the State Council, Bijie Pilot Zone was established in Bijie City, Guizhou Province in 1988, targeting poverty alleviation, eco-conservation and population management. Partial data indicates that by the end of 2020 non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates had injected funds of RMB2.19 billion, facilitated 2,665 programs, created 287,800 training opportunities for various professions, helped construct, renovate or expand over 200 schools, and helped build 235 town/township health centers and village clinics. Through the efforts of all parties concerned, the pilot zone has helped 6.75 million people, 7 national-level poor counties and 1,981 poor villages rise above poverty, and the city’s GDP exceeded RMB202 billion in 2020.

Standing together with the CPC to meet challenges. During the SARS outbreak in 2003, non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates made donations, offered proposals, and fought the disease at the frontline. After the Wenchuan earthquake in May 2008, they made donations of funds and supplies worth of RMB500 million within the very first month, which won widespread acclaim from all sectors of society.

When Covid-19 raged in 2020, they responded to the call of the CPC Central Committee immediately, standing firmly alongside and acting together with the CPC in the battle against the virus. At this critical moment they helped build strong social cohesion and fulfilled their responsibilities as participating parties.

Penal 6 Non-CPC Political Parties and Non-affiliates Dedicated to Covid-19 Prevention and Control

Since Covid-19 struck, members of the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates have been pooling their wisdom, offering advice, and doing solid work to combat the epidemic. More than 60,000 medical workers among them fought the virus at the frontline; they submitted nearly 4,000 opinions and proposals to the CPC Central Committee, the State Council, and relevant departments; and they donated funds and supplies worth of RMB5.11 billion.

IX. The CPPCC Is an Important Political and Organizational Platform in China's Political Party System

The CPPCC is an organization of the Chinese people's patriotic united front, serving as a key mechanism for multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC. The CPPCC plays a major role in promoting socialist democracy in China. It is an important channel and specialized body for socialist consultative democracy, a key component of the state governance system, and a distinctively Chinese political institution.

The CPPCC National Committee is composed of representatives from the CPC and other political parties, people's organizations, ethnic minority groups, prominent individuals without party affiliation, compatriots in the Hong Kong SAR, the Macao SAR and Taiwan, returned overseas Chinese, and other sectors of society, as well as specially invited individuals. They are divided into a number of participating groups.

Representatives from the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates constitute an important cohort and play a major role in the CPPCC.

The CPPCC membership has distinctive features. Members of the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates account for a substantial percentage of members of each CPPCC committee at all levels. They must constitute no less than 60 percent of the members of each CPPCC committee and no less than 65 percent of the members of the standing committee of each CPPCC committee; they must constitute no less than 50 percent of the vice chairpersons of each CPPCC committee at all levels (excluding those in ethnic autonomous areas).

Since the First Session of the 13th CPPCC National Committee in 2018, 1,299 non-CPC individuals have served as members of the CPPCC National Committee, or 60.2 percent; 195 as members of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee, or 65 percent; and 13 as vice chairpersons of the CPPCC National Committee, or 54.2 percent. Nationwide, over 410,000 non-CPC individuals have been serving as members of CPPCC organizations at all levels; they make up a proper proportion of heads, deputy heads and members of the special committees under CPPCC committees.

The CPPCC respects and protects the right of its members from the non-CPC political parties to express views and raise proposals on behalf of their own parties. To leverage the strengths of China's political party system, the CPPCC National Committee has established mechanisms for its members from the non-CPC political parties to submit proposals, deliver addresses at conferences, and report on social conditions and public opinion. These mechanisms are articulated in the relevant regulatory documents, such as the rules of consultation of the CPPCC National Committee, general rules of the special committees, measures for selecting key proposals and overseeing their execution, and rules for making addresses at conferences.

Since 2013, the eight non-CPC political parties have submitted nearly 3,000 proposals, presented 525 speeches (including 81 oral presentations), and delivered over 30,000 reports on social conditions and public opinion. They have made a positive contribution to leveraging the strengths of China's political party system, promoting harmony among all political parties, and serving national development in the new era.

The CPPCC offers platforms for the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates to conduct political consultation, exercise democratic oversight, and deliberate on and participate in the administration of state affairs. Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPPCC National Committee has been working to enhance the CPPCC's role as a specialized consultative body, to support

extensive, multi-level, and institutionalized consultation by the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates, and to welcome their consultative oversight, comments, criticism and suggestions.

Since 2018, the special committees under the CPPCC National Committee have conducted 22 joint field missions and 24 consultations with the central committees of the non-CPC political parties concerning key proposals. Mechanisms, including briefing on issues of major public concern, have been improved to inform members of the non-CPC political parties on topics of public concern, so that they can better perform their duties.

The CPPCC rallies strength and build solidarity across all sectors of society. The CPPCC is dedicated to promoting unity and democracy and building consensus through political consultation. By organizing symposiums, discussions, inspections, field work and consultations, the CPPCC builds consensus among representatives from all political parties, people's organizations, ethnic groups, and other sectors of society, to strengthen unity on the basis of shared political ideals. To appease public sentiment, coordinate relations between social groups, resolve social problems and forge social cohesion, the CPPCC has launched activities, such as lectures by CPPCC members, and awareness-raising tours for major and special tasks for members from the non-CPC political parties and non-affiliates to explain key state policies and strategies to the public.

Conclusion

China's political party system is the result of a historical process. It is a structure of enormous strength, creativity and vitality. It embodies the essence of Chinese traditions; it reflects the intrinsic requirements of socialism; it conforms to China's realities and its needs in state governance. As a basic component of China's political system, it contributes to China's development, national rejuvenation, and social progress, and is of great benefit to the people's wellbeing.

Over the past seven decades and more, this system has grown and matured. It provides Chinese ideas to the world in terms of modern party politics, and offers a new model for global political progress. China will, as always, learn and draw from the positive experiences of other countries, but will not imitate other political party systems mechanically, or impose its own on any other country. China respects the right of other countries to choose a political party system best adapted to their own realities. Based on equality and mutual respect, China is willing to strengthen

cooperation and mutual learning with other countries, promote democracy on the international stage, and eventually build a global community of shared future.

As China celebrates the 100th anniversary of the CPC this year and moves on towards the second of the Two Centenary Goals³, China will not waver from its commitments to uphold CPC leadership, develop socialism with Chinese characteristics, and improve its political party system. In the new era it will continue to enrich the theories, enhance the institutions, and ensure the efficiency of its political party system, so that this system can contribute with ever more vitality to the process of building a modern socialist country in all respects and achieving national rejuvenation.

³ The Two Centenary Goals were put forth by the CPC at its 18th National Congress in November 2012 for building socialism with Chinese characteristics. The two goals are to complete a moderately prosperous society in all respects by the centenary of the CPC (founded in 1921) and to build China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious by the centenary of the PRC (founded in 1949). The CPC drew up a development plan for the new era at its 19th National Congress in 2017. In the first stage from 2020 to 2035, China will build on the foundation of the moderately prosperous society with a further 15 years of hard work to see that socialist modernization is basically realized. In the second stage from 2035 to the middle of the 21st century, having achieved basic modernization, China will work hard for a further 15 years and develop China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful. – *Tr.*