

Premier Li Keqiang Meets the Press

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The Fourth Session of the 13th National People's Congress held a press conference at the Great Hall of the People on the afternoon of March 11, 2021. Premier Li Keqiang met with Chinese and foreign reporters and answered their questions at the invitation of Spokesperson Mr. Zhang Yesui.

In his opening remarks, Premier Li Keqiang said that he was delighted to meet friends from the media and thanked the journalists for their hard work in covering China's NPC and CPPCC sessions. He noted that the press conference was again held via video link this year and then opened the floor for questions.

CNBC: Premier Li, the coronavirus pandemic has affected the way in which many jobs are done and located. What changes has China seen in the last year for its jobs in terms of quality and salary? And what specific measures will China take especially as the population ages? How has this affected consumption especially for foreign brands?

Premier Li: Employment is of paramount importance for a family and a country. In the raging times of COVID-19 last year when bustling streets were deserted and shops were closed, our biggest concern was massive job losses.

I recall a visit to a small shop during a local inspection tour. The shop owner told me that he was practically out of business for almost three months, but because of the government support in tax and fee cuts, exemptions of utility bills and rents, and wage subsidies, he managed to pull through and didn't let any employee go. I asked him if he could still afford to pay his employees wages. He said he gave them some living allowances. There were some 20 employees on the spot. They all said they had nothing to complain about when they could still have something to cover their basic needs in such difficult times. Both the company and the employees were aware that as long as the company and jobs were there, once production was resumed, business would go up.

Last year, we faced much uncertainty in formulating macro policies. In the end, we decided not to set a numerical target for GDP growth, and with long and hard thinking, we set the target of new urban jobs at no less than nine million. Employment is the foundation of people's well-being and development. It is also a source of

2021年3月11日下午，十三届全国人大四次会议在人民大会堂举行记者会，国务院总理李克强应大会发言人张业遂的邀请出席记者会，并回答中外记者提问。

记者会开始时，李克强说，很高兴同媒体的朋友们见面，感谢大家对中国两会报道所付出的辛劳。今年我们还是继续通过视频进行交流，请大家提问。

美国消费者新闻与商业频道记者：李总理，新冠肺炎疫情对许多工作完成的方式和地点都产生了影响，疫情暴发一年了，请问中国就业质量和收入有什么明显的变化，中方将采取什么具体的措施改善这种状况？特别是在人口老龄化背景下，对消费需求特别是国外品牌消费有什么影响？

李克强：就业对一个国家、对一个家庭可以说都是天大的事。去年在疫情肆虐的时候，很多街面上都见不到行人了，多数店铺都关了，当时我们最担心的就是出现大规模的失业。记得后来我到地方考察，看了不少店铺。在一个小店，店主跟我说，3个月没有营业了，因为政府减免税费，支持减免房租、水电费，稳岗补贴资金到位，我们没有裁员，挺过来了。我问员工的工资怎么办？他说当时只发生活费了。在场的20多位员工都说，店里管吃管住，不让我们下岗，还有什么说的。企业和员工都明白，只要保住了企业、稳住了岗位，一复工复市，生意就会旺起来。

wealth. We said we would strive for a positive growth of China's economy for the whole year, out of the belief that if we could add no less than nine million new urban jobs, we would be able to achieve positive growth of the economy. Employment helps to generate income, boost consumption and drive economic growth.

Last year, under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, and thanks to joint efforts made by all sides, the market entities showed great resilience, and our people faced the difficulty in solidarity.

For the whole year, we added 11.86 million new urban jobs. The economy expanded by 2.3 percent. There was continued increase in household income. All these performances were better than expectations.

This year, we still face mounting pressure in employment. Some 14 million new entrants will join the labor force, including another record high of college graduates totaling 9.09 million. We also need to meet the employment needs of ex-service members, and some 270 million to 280 million rural migrant workers.

We will continue to give top priority to employment in the macro policies this year. Employment will remain at the top of the "six priorities" where stability is the key and the "six areas" where protections are needed. The pro-job policies introduced last year will be kept in place, and beefed up in some respects. Other policies should also be conducive to job creation. We believe that steady economic rebound will boost employment, and expansion in employment will in turn promote steady and sound growth of the economy.

We have set the projected target of no less than 11 million new urban jobs for this year, and we hope to overfulfill it in actual implementation. In generating jobs, we will continue to enable the market to play a principal role. In other words, we will continue to promote employment by supporting market entities. We will stabilize and expand employment, and at the same time, open up new channels for job creation.

During the pandemic last year, we saw some new changes in the means of employment. New drivers of growth that developed rapidly in China in recent years, including online shopping and express delivery services, showed a strong momentum of expansion despite COVID-19 impacts. They helped to boost employment and the growth of some traditional industries. We will continue to encourage the creation of stable jobs, and also promote flexible employment, which is now rapidly developing in China. About 200 million people are involved in flexible employment. Some people work several jobs, which is quite tough. The government will provide them with subsidies for social security, and introduce institutionalized methods to give them basic protections in terms of occupational injury to bolster the healthy and stable growth of flexible employment.

As for the elderly population you referred to in your question, there are some 260 million elderly people in China. Industries related to services for elderly people are big sunrise industries as there is diverse demand among the senior population.

The Chinese market is multi-tiered with diverse consumer

去年我们在制定宏观政策的时候，因为不确定因素太多，没有制定经济增长的预期目标。但是反复权衡，还是制定了就业目标，也就是城镇新增就业900万人以上。因为就业是民生之本，是发展之基，也是财富创造的源头活水。当时我们也提出，要努力实现全年经济正增长，实际上是相信只要能够实现900万人以上的城镇新增就业，就有经济的正增长，因为有就业就有收入，就可以带动消费、拉动经济。

去年，在以习近平同志为核心的党中央坚强领导下，经过全国上下共同努力，我们的市场主体表现出坚强的韧性，广大人民共克时艰，最后实现了城镇新增就业1186万人，全年经济增长2.3%，居民收入相应增长，都好于预期。

今年我们的就业压力仍然很大，城镇新增劳动力约1400万人，其中高校毕业生909万人，创历史新高，还要保障退役军人就业，还要为两亿七八千万农民工提供打工的机会。所以今年我们在制定宏观政策的时候，依然坚持就业优先的政策，我们继续推动“六稳”、落实“六保”，还是把就业放在首位。去年出台的有关就业的政策举措，不仅没有调退，还有所增加，其他政策都要有利于就业。我们相信，通过经济稳定恢复增长，会带动更多的就业岗位，而更多的就业岗位会推动经济稳中向好。

今年我们确定新增城镇就业的目标是1100万人以上，希望在实际执行中还可以更高一点。我们也很明确，就业还是要让市场来唱主角，也就是继续通过保市场主体来保就业。一方面推动稳岗增岗，另一方面拓展就业渠道。去年疫情中就业方式也有新变化，像我们这几年发展的新动能，包括网购、快递等逆势快速增长，也带动了就业和传统产业发展。我们一方面要继续鼓励增加相对稳定的就业岗位，也要广开灵活就业的渠道。现在中国的灵活就业正在兴起，已经涉及到两亿多人。有的一人打几份工，很辛苦，所以我们应该给他社保补贴，特别是要用机制性的办法来解决可能出现的职业伤害问题，给他们提供基本的权益保障。这也利于灵活就业市场更加健康、

demand. This big, open market represents great opportunities for products, services and investments from foreign companies.

Our country has a 1.4 billion population. The labor force remains our most abundant resource. Our people are hardworking and resilient. Whenever there is an opportunity, they will seize it and put their talent to good use. A good life hinges on diligence. With diligence, one has no fear for shortages. I believe with the hard work of our people, we will be able to achieve common prosperity over time.

Agencia EFE: The United States has blamed China for the so-called lack of transparency to the WHO mission in Wuhan last month. The chief of the team said the Chinese counterparts shared a lot of details with them but he said they would like to have access to more raw data about earlier cases of illness similar to COVID-19 between October 2019 and December 2019. Will China provide these data and be willing to receive another mission visit?

Premier Li: COVID-19 is a global public health contingency. Like other countries, China also hopes that we can get to the bottom of where the virus came from as early as possible. This will help us to stem the spread of the virus and make COVID containment more effective. Tracing the origins of the virus is a complex science matter. It calls for closer cooperation among countries and continuous research. The Chinese side has acted in a fact-based manner and with an open, transparent and cooperative approach. China has maintained communication with the WHO and provided support to the WHO mission during its research work in China. We will continue to work with the WHO in taking work on this front forward.

The virus is still spreading in many parts of the world. In addition to tracing its origins, our pressing task is to enhance COVID-19 response, including vaccine rollout. COVID-19 is a common enemy of humankind. We hope that all countries will come together to defeat this virus, for no country can do it alone. We have strong faith in the ability of humanity to prevail over the disease eventually. I also hope that next year we will be able to have the press conference face-to-face.

NIKKEI: In delivering the Government Work Report, you said the Chinese government would set its GDP growth target for 2021 at above six percent. Many international institutions forecast that China's economy may well grow at about eight percent this year. In the first year of the period covered by the 14th Five-Year Plan, in addition to expanding investment in fixed assets, we are also seeing a risk of an over-heated real estate sector due to excessive liquidity worldwide. Currently the Chinese government is pursuing accommodative fiscal and monetary policies. Mr. Premier, given the aforementioned factors, is there a possibility for China to tighten its macro policies this year? According to estimates by the Japan Center on Economic Research, the size of China's economy will surpass that of the United States in 2028. What is your comment on that?

稳定地向前发展。

至于刚才记者朋友提到的老年人问题，中国老龄人口已经有两亿六千万，老龄产业也可以说是一个巨大的朝阳产业，它带来了多样化的需求。正因为中国市场多层次、多样化的需求，这样一个广大的市场也必然会给外国企业的产品、服务乃至投资创造更多机会，因为我们的市场是开放的。

中国有14亿人口，劳动力资源可以说是最丰富的资源，中国人民又能够吃苦耐劳，只要有就业门路就会多挣。“民生在勤，勤则不匮”。我相信中国人民会用自己勤劳的双手，来逐步迈向共同富裕。

西班牙埃菲社记者: 美方指责中方对上月到访武汉的世界卫生组织专家组缺乏透明度，专家组组长指出中方同事分享了大量工作细节，同时也表示专家组希望获得在2019年10月至12月之间与新冠肺炎疫情相似疾病病例的更多原始数据，中方是否愿提供这些数据，或者是否愿再次接待专家组访华？

李克强: 新冠肺炎疫情是一起突发的全球公共卫生事件，中方和各方一样都希望能够尽快查清病毒是从哪里来的，这样有利于切断传播的渠道，更好更有效地来防控疫情。但疫情溯源的确是一个复杂的科学问题，需要各国加强合作，持续研究。中方本着实事求是、公开透明、开放合作的原则和态度，同世卫组织保持沟通，也支持世卫组织专家在华开展溯源研究工作。下一步我们还愿意继续同世卫组织一道，推动科学溯源工作。

当前疫情还在全球蔓延，当务之急不仅要溯源，还要做好各种防控工作，包括接种疫苗等。新冠病毒是人类共同的敌人，我们希望各方携起手来，因为在这样一个人类共同的敌人面前，没有哪个国家能够独善其身。我们也坚信人类有能力最终战胜这个病魔，我也希望明年我们能够面对面进行交流。