

# Embarking on a New Journey

CPC National Congress opens a new chapter for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation By Wang Hairong

In a well-lit room in the Great Hall of the People, China's new team of top central leadership, led by Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, appeared before the press right after they were elected at the First Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee on Oct. 25.

With the unveiling of the new CPC leadership, the world's most populous nation has set out on a new march to become a great modern socialist country.

## People-centered

Xi delivered a speech when the new leadership met the press, reiterating that China will remain committed to a people-centered philosophy of development.

He stressed that the aspirations of the people to live a better life must always be the focus of the Party's work.

"The people are the creators of history. It is to them that we owe all our achievements. As long as we firmly align ourselves with the people and rely on them, we can and will have boundless energy to forge ahead, come rain or shine," Xi said in his speech.

The CPC must "strive to ensure and improve living standards, and make steady progress toward enhancing people's sense of fulfillment, happiness and security, and toward realizing common prosperity for everyone," he said.

The importance of the people was also emphasized at the 19th CPC National Congress, held on Oct. 18–24.

"The original aspiration and mission of Chinese Communists is seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation," Xi said in his report at the opening session of the congress.

He also said that the Party has always endeavored to stay close to the people.

"In our Party, each and every one of us must always breathe the same breath as the people, share the same future and stay truly connected to them," Xi said in the report.

Over the past few decades, China has launched many initiatives to improve people's livelihood, and to let people enjoy the fruits of development.

Decisive progress has been made in the fight against poverty. In the past five years, more than 60 million people have been lifted out of poverty, and the poverty ratio has dropped from 10.2 percent to less than 4 percent, according to the report.

Growth of urban and rural personal incomes has outpaced that of economic growth, and the middle-income group has been expanding. Great progress has been made in ensuring people's access to education, public health and medical services, basic housing and other essential public services.

Professor Zheng Yongnian, Director, East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore, says it is very important for the Party to make the aspirations of the people to live a better life the focus of its efforts.

"A ruling party cannot divorce itself from the people; only by meeting the people's demands and representing the people's interests can a party develop itself," he says.

Professor Yao Zhao of the business school of Rutgers University, in the United States, says that the CPC has gained extensive support from the people because it emphasizes that it should always promote people's development and well-being.

## Charting the course

The First Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee was held a day after the conclusion of the weeklong 19th CPC National Congress in October, a quinquennial event of great significance in China.

Delegates to the congress approved the report delivered by Xi on behalf of the 18th CPC Central Committee; the work report of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI); and an amendment to the Party Constitution. They also elected the members and alternate members of the 19th CPC Central Committee and members of the CCDI.

"I think General Secretary Xi's speech reiterated China's long-held principles in promoting economic development and improving the lives of people across the nation, while defending China's national interests and sovereignty in the world," James DeShaw Rae, a professor of politics at California State University in Sacramento, told *Beijing Review*. Xi pledged that China will continue to reform and open up to the rest of the world, which gives people confidence, Rae added.

The congress defined the Party's new theories as Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

The congress also judged that the principal contradiction in Chinese society has evolved into one between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life; previously, it was the gap between the ever-growing material and cultural needs of the people and underdeveloped social production.

The report sketched out an impressive blueprint for securing a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects and securing the success of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, charting the course for continued progress in the cause of the Party and the country.

"I am impressed that China can maintain a consistent vision of progress and growth and map out a plan for the short term, medium term and long term to 2049, and manage expectations for achieving a modestly prosperous society," Rae said.

The congress elaborated on the Party's historic mission in the new era and established the historical position of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

"The overarching goal of upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics is to realize socialist

modernization and national rejuvenation," said the report.

It also said that Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era "builds on and further enriches Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development. It represents the latest achievement in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context, and encapsulates the practical experience and collective wisdom of our Party and the people."

The report called this thought an important component of the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and a guide to action for all Party members and all the Chinese people as the nation strives to achieve national rejuvenation.

The report highlighted the basic policy underpinning the CPC's endeavors to uphold and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, including ensuring Party leadership over all work, committing to a people-centered approach and continuing to comprehensively deepen reform.

An overall plan to advance the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the new project of Party building in the new era was formulated at the congress.

In addition to discussing domestic initiatives, the congress also reiterated China's commitment to world peace and development. It stressed that China will keep to the path of peaceful development; hold high the banner of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit; and uphold its fundamental foreign policy goal of preserving world peace and promoting common development.

"The 19th CPC National Congress and its achievements will have a crucial influence on China's development and the role it plays in international society, as well as on the relations between Austria and China," said Heinz Fischer, former Austrian President and President of the Austria-China Friendship Association.

Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, Secretary General of the United Malays National Organization, said that Malaysia strongly agrees with the new governance concepts, thoughts and strategies of the CPC Central Committee with General Secretary



A delegate casts her ballot to vote for members and alternate members of the 19th CPC Central Committee at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on October 24

Xi Jinping at the core, and believes that Xi will certainly lead China to greater achievements and more contributions to world development.

S. Sudhakar Reddy, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, remarked that the international community believes that the policies established by the 19th CPC National Congress will help maintain world peace and security, and promote common development.

## Amending Party statutes

A major task of the national congresses of the CPC is to amend the Party Constitution. At the congress this year, Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era was added to the Party Constitution.

With regard to this amendment to the Party Constitution, Zhu Zhongkui, a delegate to the congress who is Secretary of the CPC Committee of Ngari Prefecture, in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, said that as socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, we urgently need new theories to guide us in the struggle to safeguard the security and interests of the country and the people, maintain social stability and promote economic development. New theories are also needed to safeguard Party building, the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation.

"Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with

Chinese Characteristics for a New Era responds to the major issues facing us today. It reflects the latest achievements in adapting Marxism to China's conditions, and is an important part of the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics," said Wu Yaoting, a delegate to the congress and Secretary of the CPC Committee of Hainan University.

Other changes were made at the 19th CPC National Congress; the culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the Two Centenary Goals and the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation were incorporated into the Party Constitution this year.

"The principal contradiction facing Chinese society has evolved, and is now that between the people's ever-growing needs for a better life

and unbalanced and inadequate development," Xi announced. This has also been added into the Party Constitution, for the judgment reflects the realities of the development of Chinese society, and serves as an important basis for formulating major policies and long-term strategies for the Party and the country.

Also incorporated into the Party Constitution are statements on the need to achieve "better-quality and more efficient, equitable and sustainable development"; on giving market forces a decisive role in resource allocation, and ensuring that the government plays its role better; and on advancing supply-side structural reform.

The revised Party Constitution also includes a statement on establishing a system of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics, advancing consultative democracy and promoting cultural development.

Other additions include Xi's thinking on strengthening the military, and statements on the Party's absolute leadership over the armed forces, building a community of shared future for mankind, pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative and the Party's self-supervision and strict self-governance. ■



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