

GENERAL PROGRAMME OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY FOR NATIONALITIES

Promulgated by the Central People's Government on August 9, 1952

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS ARTICLE 1

This General Programme is drawn up in accordance with the provisions of Articles 9, 50, 51, 52, and 53 of the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.¹

ARTICLE 2

Each national autonomous region is an integral part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. The autonomous organ of each national autonomous region is a local government led by the people's government of the next higher level, under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government.

ARTICLE 3

The Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is the general line along which all nationalities of the People's Republic of China unite in their common struggle at the present stage. In administering the internal affairs of their own nationality, the people in each national autonomous region shall advance along this general line.

¹Article 9. All nationalities within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China shall have equal rights and duties.

Article 50. All nationalities within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China are equal. They shall establish unity and mutual aid among themselves, and shall oppose imperialism and public enemies in their midst so that the People's Republic of China will become a big fraternal and co-operative family comprising all its nationalities. Greater nationalism and local nationalism shall be opposed. Actions involving discrimination, oppression and splitting the unity of the various nationalities shall be prohibited.

Article 51. Regional autonomy shall be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated, and various kinds of autonomous organs for the different nationalities shall be set up according to the size of the respective populations and regions. In places where different nationalities live together and in the autonomous areas of the national minorities, the different nationalities shall each have an appropriate number of representatives in the local organs of state power.

Article 52. All national minorities within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China shall have the right to join the People's Liberation Army, and to organize local people's public security forces in accordance with the unified military system of the state.

Article 53. All national minorities shall have freedom to develop their spoken and written languages, to preserve or reform their traditions, customs and religious beliefs. The people's government shall assist the broad masses of all national minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural, and educational construction work.

CHAPTER II
AUTONOMOUS REGIONS
ARTICLE 4

In areas where national minorities are concentrated, the following types of autonomous regions may be established according to the relations obtaining between the nationalities of the locality and to the conditions of local economic development, with due consideration of the historical background:

- (1) Autonomous regions established on the basis of an area inhabited by one national minority.
- (2) Autonomous regions established on the basis of an area inhabited by one large national minority, including certain areas inhabited by other national minorities with very small populations who, likewise, shall enjoy regional autonomy.
- (3) Autonomous regions jointly established on the basis of two or more areas, each inhabited by a different national minority. Whether a separate national autonomous region will be established in each of these areas depends on the actual conditions in the respective areas and on the wishes of the nationalities concerned.

ARTICLE 5

According to the economic, political and other requirements of the locality and with due consideration of the historical background, each national autonomous region may include some districts, towns or cities inhabited by Hans (the largest of the nationalities in China otherwise known as Chinese -- Translator). In localities within a national autonomous region where the Hans are concentrated, no regional autonomy is necessary, but the organs of state power there shall be of the type generally adopted in the rest of the country. However, in localities within a national autonomous region where the number of Hans is exceptionally large, a democratic-coalition government of nationalities shall be established.

ARTICLE 6

The boundaries of each national autonomous region shall be properly demarcated, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 4 and 5 of this General Programme. If it is not possible properly to demarcate the boundaries of an autonomous region at the time of its establishment, temporary arrangements may be made, pending future readjustments.

ARTICLE 7

The administrative status of a national autonomous region shall correspond to that of a *hsiang* (or village), district, county, special region or a higher level, depending on the size of its population, its area and other factors.

ARTICLE 8

In designating a national autonomous region, the name of the nationality shall be prefixed with the geographical denomination. Exceptions are permitted in special cases.

ARTICLE 9

In demarcating and readjusting the boundaries of a national autonomous region and in deciding its administrative status and its name, proposals shall be brought forward through consultation between the people's government of the next higher level and the representatives of the nationality or nationalities concerned. These proposals shall be submitted to the people's government of the next higher level for approval. In the case of a national autonomous region of county level or above, these proposals shall be submitted to the Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government for ratification. All proposals, approved by the local people's governments of different levels, shall be submitted through successive levels to the Government Administration Council for registration.

CHAPTER III AUTONOMOUS ORGANS ARTICLE 10

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region is the organ of state power of the people in that region.

ARTICLE 11

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region shall be set up according to the basic principles of democratic centralism and of the system of people's congresses.

ARTICLE 12

The people's government in a national autonomous region shall be composed mainly of members from the nationality or nationalities exercising regional autonomy, with the participation of an appropriate number of members from other national minorities and the Hans inhabiting the same region.

ARTICLE 13

The question as to which higher organ the autonomous organ of a national autonomous region shall be subordinated to shall be determined by the administrative status of the said region. Exceptions may be made in special cases.

CHAPTER IV RIGHTS TO AUTONOMY ARTICLE 14

The actual form which the autonomous organ of a national autonomous region is to take shall be determined in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the nationality or nationalities exercising regional autonomy and the wishes of the local leaders who are associated with the people.

ARTICLE 15

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may adopt the language most commonly used in the region as the chief medium of intercourse in the exercise of its

authority. But when the autonomous organ exercises its authority over a nationality to whom this language is unfamiliar the language of the latter nationality shall also be adopted.

ARTICLE 16

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may adopt the spoken and written language of the nationality (or nationalities) of the region for developing their culture and education.

ARTICLE 17

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may take necessary steps to train cadres from among the nationalities in the region who have a highly developed sense of patriotism and close contact with the local population.

ARTICLE 18

Internal reforms shall be carried out in a national autonomous region in accordance with the wishes of the majority of its people and of the local leaders who are associated with the people.

ARTICLE 19

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may, subject to the unified financial control of the state, administer the region's finances within a sphere prescribed by the Central People's Government and the local people's governments above its level.

ARTICLE 20

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may freely develop the region's economy in accordance with the unified economic system and plan for economic construction of the state.

ARTICLE 21

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may take necessary and appropriate steps to develop the culture, education, arts, and health services of the various nationalities inhabiting the region.

ARTICLE 22

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may organize its own local security forces and militia within the unified military system of the state.

ARTICLE 23

In compliance with the provisions of the laws and decrees of the Central People's Government and the local people's governments of higher levels, and within the limits of its autonomous jurisdiction, the autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may draw up special regulations for the region, which shall be submitted for approval to the people's governments

of the two next higher levels. Such special regulations, when approved by the local people's governments of higher levels, shall be submitted through successive levels to the Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government for registration.

ARTICLE 24

The above-enumerated rights to autonomy shall, in principle, apply to all national autonomous regions; the scope of their application shall depend on the administrative status of the national autonomous region concerned.

CHAPTER V

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE NATIONALITIES. OF AN AUTONOMOUS REGION

ARTICLE 25

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region shall protect the right to national equality of all nationalities in the region; educate the people of different nationalities to respect each other's languages, both spoken and written, customs, traditions and religious beliefs; and prohibit national discrimination and oppression, and all acts liable to provoke disputes between nationalities.

ARTICLE 26

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region shall guarantee to all people in the region, irrespective of nationality, freedom of thought, speech, publication, assembly, association, correspondence, person, domicile, change of domicile, religious belief, and the freedom to hold processions and demonstrations, as stipulated in the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and the right to elect and to be elected according to law.

ARTICLE 27

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region shall, in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of this General Programme, help the other national minority or minorities concentrated in the region to practise regional autonomy.

ARTICLE 28

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region shall enter into full consultation with representatives of other nationality or nationalities living in the region on all problems relating particularly to that nationality or nationalities.

ARTICLE 29

The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region shall educate and guide the people living in the region towards unity and mutual assistance between all nationalities of the country, and towards love for the People's Republic of China in which all nationalities live together in a spirit of fraternity and co-operation like one big family.

CHAPTER VI
PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP FOR THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENTS OF
HIGHER LEVELS
ARTICLE 30

The people's governments of higher levels shall respect the rights to autonomy of the national autonomous regions and help to put them into practice.

ARTICLE 31

The people's governments of higher levels shall make an adequate appraisal of the special characteristics and actual conditions of each national autonomous region at the present stage of development, so that their directives and orders will conform both to the general line as laid down in the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and to these special characteristics and actual conditions.

ARTICLE 32

The people's governments of higher levels shall assist the autonomous organs of the national autonomous regions in the planned training of cadres from among the nationalities in the area, and assign suitable cadres for work in the autonomous regions according to requirements.

ARTICLE 33

The people's governments of higher levels shall assist the national autonomous regions in their political, economic, cultural, and educational development, as well as in the expansion of health services.

ARTICLE 34

The people's governments of higher levels shall take appropriate measures to acquaint the people of the national autonomous regions with the advanced experiences and conditions about political, economic, and cultural development.

ARTICLE 35

The people's governments of higher levels shall educate and assist the people of all nationalities in observing an attitude of equality, fraternity, unity, and mutual assistance among the nationalities, and in overcoming all tendencies to domination by the majority nationality or to narrow nationalism.

CHAPTER VII
SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS
ARTICLE 36

Except for areas where regional autonomy is already being practised, preparations for regional autonomy shall be made in all areas throughout the country where national minorities are concentrated, where the initial stage of revolutionary order has been established, and where regional autonomy is the common desire of all sections of the people. Such preparations shall include the establishment of preparatory organizations, or utilization of existing appropriate

organizations, for the convocation of people's representative conferences and other necessary measures.

ARTICLE 37

In dealing with the special cases referred to in Article 8 of this General Programme concerning the designating of a national autonomous region and in Article 13 concerning the subordination of the autonomous organ of a national autonomous region to a higher organ, proposals shall be made by the people's government of provincial (or sub-provincial) or Greater Administrative Area level, or by the people's government of the autonomous region of a corresponding level, and submitted for approval to the Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government. Such cases may also be dealt with directly by the Government Administration Council.

ARTICLE 38

Measures for the implementation of regional autonomy in districts inhabited by national minorities within cities populated mainly by Hans shall be separately drawn up by the Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government, in accordance with the basic spirit of the present General Programme.

ARTICLE 39

This General Programme, proposed at the enlarged second session of the Commission of Nationalities Affairs of the Central People's Government, shall be put into practice after adoption by the Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government at an administrative meeting, and after approval by the Central People's Government Council.

ARTICLE 40

The right of interpretation and amendment of this General Programme rests with the Central People's Government.