

## **Report on the Work of People's Democratic Government Construction**

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People's democratic government building is the fundamental task of organizing a people's state. The specific tasks of this work are entrusted to the civil affairs departments by people's governments at all levels, and therefore this conference will focus on this as its main topic. My report aims to provide a brief overview of the government building work that has been taking place across the country over the past year or so.

### **The convening of people's congresses in various regions over the past year**

With the victory of the revolutionary war throughout the country, the convening of people's congresses at all levels and from all walks of life has become a nationwide movement. As of today, among the five major administrative regions and one autonomous region (Inner Mongolia), Northeast China has convened a major administrative region people's congress and elected the Northeast People's Government. Of the nine administrative regions equivalent to provinces in China's 28 provinces (excluding Taiwan and Tibet), nine provinces—Shandong, Shanxi, Henan, Liaodong, Jilin, Songjiang, Heilongjiang, Rehe, and Chahar—have convened provincial people's congresses and are exercising the powers of provincial people's congresses. Ten provinces—Liaoxi, Zhejiang, Shaanxi, Hunan, Jiangxi, Gansu, Guangxi, Qinghai, Hebei, and Ningxia—are preparing to convene such conferences. Among the administrative regions, northern Sichuan and southern Jiangsu have convened people's congresses from all walks of life, and eastern Sichuan and northern Jiangsu are preparing to convene such conferences. A total of 210 cities, towns, and urban districts nationwide have convened people's conferences of all walks of life. Twelve municipalities directly under the central government and the major administrative regions have convened these conferences. Seven cities, including Beijing, Tianjin, Xi'an, Anshan, Fushun, Benxi, and Shenyang, have exercised the powers of their municipal people's congresses. Sixty-seven cities under provincial and municipal administrative agencies have convened people's conferences of all walks of life. Thirteen cities, including Tangshan, Zhangjiakou, Datong, Xuanhua, Taiyuan, Jilin, Changchun, Qiqihar, Chifeng, Harbin, Chengde, Zhengzhou, and Kaifeng, have exercised the powers of their municipal people's congresses. Shijiazhuang and Baoding have convened municipal people's congresses. One hundred and thirty-one cities, towns, and urban districts under the jurisdiction of prefectural and county governments have convened people's conferences of all walks of life. Of the 2,069 counties (excluding banners) nationwide, 1,707 have held county-level people's congresses. Of these, 18 counties (15 in Northeast China, 1 in North China, and 2 in Northwest China) have exercised the powers of county people's congresses, and 20 counties (14 in Shaanxi and 6 in Hebei) have convened county people's congresses. Seven banners in Northeast China, 22 in Inner Mongolia, and two leagues in Suiyuan—all seven of them—have held league-level or banner-level people's congresses. In Northeast China, 1,212 districts have held district people's congresses, 377 districts have held district people's congresses, 8,393 villages have held village people's congresses, and 17,153 villages have held village people's congresses. In the former liberated areas of North China and Northwest China,

some districts and villages have also convened district and village people's congresses or district and village people's congresses.

State power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people. The organs through which the people exercise state power are the people's congresses at all levels, which act on behalf of the people's congresses, or the people's congresses elected by universal suffrage at all levels, and the people's governments at all levels elected by the people's congresses or the people's congresses. In the past, this practice was limited to the old liberated areas where the revolution triumphed, unleashing the wisdom and material strength of the people and removing the heavy stone of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism that had historically weighed on the people. Now, this practice is practiced throughout the country. The results are evident: we have witnessed the broad masses of people's love for their own political power. All policies of the people's government that accord with their interests, especially those concerning production and construction, are immediately accepted by the people and become their own policies. We have witnessed the great wisdom of the broad masses of people. Every bill, after discussion and revision by the majority, often becomes more perfect, supplementing what government officials were unaware of or had not considered. The broad masses of people not only realize that they are the masters of the country and have the right to manage state affairs, but also feel the responsibility to do a good job in state affairs. The representatives are not only responsible during meetings but also contribute afterward, not only doing their own work but also encouraging others to do the same, accomplishing much that could not be accomplished by a minority. We have seen that certain practices of government officials at all levels that failed to unite the masses, or other deviations, have been corrected through the oversight of the People's Congresses of All Sectors. Furthermore, we have seen that the broad masses of the people not only pay attention to the breadth of representation but also to its purity. They are extremely strict in distinguishing between enemies and friends, and who is eligible to serve as a representative. The development of people's democracy will make the people increasingly serious about the dictatorship of anti-people classes. Finally, we have also seen that the People's Congresses of All Sectors at all levels are the best organizations for the people to collectively manage their own affairs before universal suffrage. With each meeting, the connection and unity between the people, between the people and the government, between the various democratic classes, and between the various ethnic groups advances; the collective wisdom and collective strength are further demonstrated; and the organization and methods of the meetings become increasingly better. This not only proves the absolute superiority of the New Democratic People's Congresses over the old democratic representative system, but also demonstrates the appropriateness of the Common Program's provision that "pending the convening of universally elected local People's Congresses, the local People's Congresses of All Sectors will gradually assume the functions and powers of the People's Congresses" in order to achieve universal suffrage for the People's Congresses.

The great and rich content of people's democratic life, manifested in all aspects of people's life, is already active before us; using the power and system of people's democracy to establish revolutionary order, suppress counter-revolutionary movements and wipe out the remnants of reaction, and to build an independent, equal, prosperous and strong new China is also active before us.

Naturally, the achievements are only preliminary. Nearly a quarter of counties have yet to hold a People's Congress of all sectors, and even fewer district and county People's Congresses have been held at the lower levels. Even those that have held meetings are not always successful, and those that have are only moderately successful, not perfect. The lessons learned are not always profound.

### **Some basic understanding**

The people's government is an organ that works on behalf of the people; it is an organ organized by the people themselves to manage their own affairs. State power belongs to the people. The people's congresses at all levels, which exercise the powers of the people's congresses, and the people's governments elected by them, are the organs through which the people exercise power. This means that the people's government committees at all levels are accountable to and report to the people's congresses at all levels; lower-level people's governments must obey and report to their higher-level people's governments. While we generally recognize the power of the people's government, we often pay less attention to the power of the people's congresses, to which the people's government is accountable, and of the people's congresses that have or will exercise the powers of the people's congresses.

Some local officials view the convening of a People's Congress as a task assigned by their superiors, viewing it as a conflict of interest with other tasks such as disaster relief, economic development, reorganization, and grain collection. They fail to understand that these tasks require consultation and collaboration with representatives from all sectors. They often use the excuse of being too busy to convene meetings, viewing them as a burden. At meetings, government officials either speak excessively or simply absent themselves. Afterward, the experience is not reviewed. A mountain of proposals is left unaddressed. As for how to establish a regular system for holding People's Congresses, how to plan the next meeting and how to hold it, and how the elected consultative or standing committees should function, there is often no thorough consideration.

Secondly, we must clearly understand the gradual approach to building a democratic regime: "Previous to the convening of universally elected local people's congresses, local people's congresses from all walks of life will gradually assume the functions and powers of the people's congresses." This is an unprecedented system for building democracy. It will develop from a full democratic content to a complete democratic form, unlike the old democracy, which simply emphasized a democratic veneer to conceal its deceptive nature. Some cadres, believing that the people's congresses are temporary, are eager to establish them. Naturally, if land reform has been thoroughly implemented and the people from all walks of life are fully organized, universal suffrage and the convening of people's congresses are appropriate. However, if the conditions are not yet met, why rush? Some cadres, imbued with the old democratic rules of elections and conference organization, even regarding opening and closing ceremonies, and inviting prominent figures to speak, believe that simply issuing a few general rules for the organization of conferences is insufficient. We must understand that form is created to embody content, and our general principles are also derived from experience. We do not reject methods that are more detailed than the general principles, but rather that the people should create them based on their actual needs. Detailed methods written in advance will inevitably make people feel overly restrictive when they are implemented and will not work.

Third, we must clearly understand that "the Chinese people's democratic dictatorship is the political power of the people's democratic united front of the Chinese working class, peasant class, petty bourgeoisie, national bourgeoisie, and other patriotic democratic elements. It is based on the worker-peasant alliance and led by the working class." This means that the working class must lead the people of the entire country in the construction of New Democracy and even socialism. Therefore, it must be able to unite them and advance together, so that everyone will have the desire to overcome their backwardness and strengthen their progressiveness, and strengthen their sense of responsibility as masters of the country. However, this is not yet the case in some places.

## **How to hold a good meeting?**

Chairman Mao said:

"We must earnestly convene people's congresses that are sufficient to unite all sectors of the people to work together. All important work of the people's government should be discussed and decided by the people's congresses. The representatives attending the people's congresses must be given full voice; any action to suppress the voices of the people's representatives is wrong." (Report from the Third Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China)

And he said:

"This work of summarizing experience and determining policy is undertaken by all of us together, by representatives of all ethnic groups, democratic classes, democratic parties, people's organizations, and democratic personages from all walks of life. Not only are members of the National People's Government Committee present here, but also many staff members of the Central People's Government, the People's Governments of the major administrative regions (military and political committees), and the provincial and municipal people's governments are participating in the discussions. Furthermore, representatives of the People's Congresses and Consultative Committees of all walks of life in the provinces and cities are also present, as are many specially invited patriotic figures. In this way, we can pool broad opinions, review past work, and determine future policy. I hope we will continue to adopt this approach, and I hope that the provincial and municipal people's governments (military and political committees) and the provincial and municipal people's governments will also adopt this approach. For the time being, our meetings are still advisory in nature, but in reality, the decisions we reach at these meetings will naturally be adopted and implemented by the Central People's Government, and they should be adopted and implemented." (Closing Remarks at the Second Session of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference)

This tells us that to hold a successful conference, we must attach great importance to it and complete the following series of tasks: Thorough preparation is essential before the meeting. Without preparation, it's impossible to create miracles in a meeting of hundreds of people held for just a few days. When a People's Congress of All Circles is first convened, a preparatory committee composed of representatives from all sectors must be established. Subsequent meetings must be convened through a consultative committee or standing committee to thoroughly discuss how the selection of representatives should accommodate the various democratic classes and individuals, whether the conditions for the issues under discussion are ripe, and how to report on the work.

Meetings are where the people participate in the governance of the country. We should fully promote democracy and listen to opinions from all sides, especially those that differ and are in the minority. We should absorb what is right and persuade what is wrong. Any refusal to accept criticism or any attempt to monopolize the meeting, preventing delegates from speaking freely or receiving appropriate responses, is wrong. These meetings are also where the people learn from each other and unite. We must guard against arrogance and impatience, and allow for debate and synthesis. This truly embodies democracy under centralized guidance and a centralized system based on democracy. Through each meeting, delegates and officials will learn something. Individual wisdom will become collective wisdom, and collective wisdom will become individual wisdom. As individuals improve, so will our work.

After the meeting, the resolutions must be resolutely implemented, and representatives must be organized to convey them to the people and help them implement them. At the next meeting, the

implementation of the previous resolution must be reviewed, praising the good and criticizing the bad.

Anyone who attaches importance to meetings and does the following will be sure to have a successful meeting: The more work you do, the more success you will have and the fewer shortcomings you will encounter.

We should pay attention to the differences between new and old districts, between provinces and counties and districts, and between villages and cities. We must avoid mechanically applying the experience of holding meetings in old districts, villages, or higher-level organizations to new districts, cities, or lower-level organizations. We should also pay attention to the differences between Han areas and areas where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities or where various ethnic groups live together. We must avoid mechanically applying the experience of establishing government in Han areas to those areas. Instead, we should base our work on the specific conditions of each region and each ethnic group, ensuring that the content and form meet the actual needs of the local people.

### **The village is the foundation**

The people's democratic system must penetrate deeply into the countryside and take root firmly before social construction as a whole can advance vigorously. Currently, the vast majority of rural residents face many pressing issues that require resolution. For the work of the higher-level people's governments to be implemented in the vast rural areas, it is essential to mobilize the masses. For example, when higher-level governments hand down tasks one after another, piling them onto a few local cadres, even if the trivial questionnaires are minimized, the work still exceeds the capacity of two or three individuals. This problem can only be solved by extensively developing democracy. In counties where regional representative conferences are well organized, the work is carried out not by just a few but by many people. Much of the work is done voluntarily by the masses, without the need for pressure. This brings joy to both the people and the cadres. Similarly, the coercive orders and certain erroneous practices of local cadres are extremely harmful and difficult to eradicate overnight. However, for example, in the 1945 Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region election materials, voters raised 48,078 issues in just 28 counties and cities. A further 19 counties reported 31,185 issues raised by voters, of which 26,637, or 85.4 percent, were resolved at the voters' meetings. Many of these issues criticized the work style of county and district officials. After these officials admitted their mistakes or corrected them, many were still elected, working much more enthusiastically than before. Those who were not elected felt humiliated, vowed to improve, and asked to be elected next time. This is a good example, complementing the shortcomings of higher-level government performance evaluation and oversight.

Even more than at the county or city level, village people's congresses should proceed from a focus on the actual needs of the people rather than solely on formalities or rules. The more directly they are concerned, the more interested they are, and the more likely they are to propose solutions. A well-resolved problem will inevitably lead to a good format. The county government should work with the representatives to implement the resolutions of the county people's congress (or people's congress), and should also involve active non-representatives in assisting in implementation, such as organizing regular or temporary committees. We must strive to overcome the rigid work styles of some county cadres, preventing them from hindering the development of county people's democracy. At the same time, we must ensure that they are thoroughly transformed through practical education in people's democracy. This is a crucial area of rural governance that requires careful attention.

Should districts become a higher level of government? Some advocate it, others oppose it. Our opinion depends on the specific circumstances. The divisions of counties or administrative villages vary widely from place to place. In some areas, district people's congresses are essential, otherwise rural development efforts would be hindered by fragmentation. In other areas, district-level county-level agencies are sufficient to guide and supervise the work of several counties, without requiring district people's congresses. In such areas, where districts are not considered a higher level of government, they should convene meetings of cadres from the counties or administrative villages they guide to promote and review their work. Representatives of local mass organizations or enlightened individuals may be invited to attend, listening to and consulting various opinions. This is not a people's congress, but rather a cadre meeting. It is not a definitive one, but a regular, established practice. During the land reform period in new districts or in the early stages of land reform, district people's congresses play a significant role and are generally necessary. However, once this period has passed, some may no longer be necessary. Each major administrative region and province can formulate measures based on current actual conditions to facilitate the dissemination of government policies and the expression of people's wishes, rather than making long-term or region-wide rigid regulations.

### **Urban construction issues**

In the past, villages surrounded cities, and people's democracy developed in the villages. Now that the country has been liberated, cities are leading the villages. Naturally, the urban people's democracy has developed from its infancy to maturity faster than in the villages. Most cities with a population of over 30,000 now have people's representative conferences of all walks of life, and many are exercising the powers of the people's congresses and have achieved success. Urban work should be centralized. Cities with smaller populations should not have district people's congresses under the municipal people's congress. However, in larger cities, the absence of districts reduces opportunities for people's participation in politics, and many matters are beyond the direct reach of the municipal people's government. Many large cities are currently developing district governments. However, it should be pointed out that urban districts, unlike rural districts, serve as auxiliary organs for the municipal government. There are some matters in cities that the district government cannot handle and must be handled directly by the municipal government. Therefore, the establishment of districts in large cities should enable the municipal government to serve citizens more responsively and thoroughly; it should not increase duplication or inconvenience.

The division of urban constituencies is also very different from that of rural areas. The interests of urban residents are more related to their occupations than to the regions where they live. Therefore, occupational representatives should be the primary ones, but there should still be regional representatives, especially in non-industrial cities. Grassroots representatives must have an appropriate proportion.

For market towns and cities or towns that are half city and half village, in order to communicate between cities and villages, their democratic systems should be improved first, and then their establishment can be equal to districts or equal to villages, depending on the specific circumstances.

Regarding the issue of establishing people's governments under the district and county people's political groups and the people's governments of large cities, it is planned to discuss at this meeting a document that appropriately points out the scope to be followed without hindering and inspiring people's creativity.

The county is important

Since the establishment of the People's Political Consultative Conference, the democratic system at the higher level has served as a model for the major administrative regions, provinces, and municipalities directly under the Central Government. Some provincial and municipal representative conferences are operating well and are making progress. While democratic systems at the lower level, such as the counties, are urgently needed, much remains to be developed. However, China's vast territory makes it impossible to dispatch capable cadres to assist everywhere. Furthermore, there are currently not enough cadres to undertake such work. Therefore, in addition to vigorously ensuring the successful holding of the People's Representative Conferences at the provincial and higher levels, the civil affairs departments of the provincial and regional governments should also prioritize the establishment of a democratic system at the county level. If county-level people's representative conferences are successfully conducted, it will be easier to establish them at the county level. Each province should dispatch capable personnel to select a few counties for exemplary trials, and based on the results and experience gained, apply them to other counties.

### **Land Reform and Government Establishment**

The material basis of feudal autocracy is the system of landlord ownership of land. Our reform of the feudal, exploitative landownership of the landlords has opened up the landownership of the peasants, thus eradicating the roots of feudal rule in the countryside and laying the material foundation for people's democracy. The superstructures of palace gentry, baojia, and jia system that have grown on the original feudal roots will not fall without being overthrown. They must be completely eradicated through campaigns against hegemony, liquidation, and the trial and suppression of feudal landlord reactionaries by the people's courts, as well as the deprivation of civil rights of feudal landlord reactionaries when necessary and in accordance with the law. The people's democracy that has sprouted from these new roots also requires nurturing soil and watering to grow rapidly. We must not separate land reform from the establishment of the government, as that would lead to a detour and waste much effort. Instead, the process of land reform should be the process of establishing the government. Vice Chairman Liu Shaoqi said, "Peasant associations should become the primary organizational form and executive organ of the land reform contingent. Peasant congresses, peasant association committees, and people's congresses at all levels should be the center of activity in land reform." Activists among honest peasants and the land reform cadres assigned to villages and towns by higher authorities should become the backbone of land reform. Provincial and municipal leadership bodies conducting land reform should establish close communication with villages and towns, maintain close contact with lower levels, and dispatch leaders or inspection teams to each level to effectively control the leadership of the movement. Starting from the county level, all land reform procedures and plans should be prepared in advance and submitted to the highest levels for approval before implementation. This is a series of people's democratic systems that are both democratic and centralized. Governments at all levels must master this aspect. Enabling the people to practice democracy in land reform and learn from experience is far more effective than simply formulating regulations and issuing notices.

In areas where land reform is incomplete, to thoroughly crush feudal forces, peasant associations should effectively exercise rural political power. The peasant representative assembly should elect the county people's government committee, laying the foundation for democratic politics and gradually transitioning to the election of the county people's government committee by the county people's congress. To prevent traitors from usurping power, the peasant associations themselves should first fully implement democracy. The peasant representative assembly should exercise the right of recall over the county people's government committee. The democratization of the peasant associations will guarantee the democratization of rural government.

We must acknowledge that China was originally a semi-feudal society. People born there are not very familiar with democracy. Some sections of the population have also adopted from the feudal ruling class some detrimental practices such as monopolizing responsibilities, giving orders, beatings, and detentions. We must also acknowledge that, although the old bourgeois democratic system was never implemented in our country, it did have an influence on some people, primarily intellectuals. However, we have advanced far beyond the old democracy. Sweeping away the remnants of feudalism and the influence of old democracy through the creation of a new people's democracy is no simple task. Civil affairs personnel at all levels should study the Common Program, especially the parts concerning government establishment, and learn from the experiences of the CPPCC and the National Committee. They should also study the documents issued by the Central People's Government on government establishment and typical examples of government establishment in various regions. Various short-term training courses should be held to train a group of personnel to assist counties or districts. Primarily, this should involve helping counties conduct typical experiments in government establishment, integrating principles with local realities and drawing new experience. This means training personnel through these experiments and new experiences. In addition to introducing and exchanging experiences, we can also organize migrant workers and intellectual cadres to visit counties or districts where the government construction work has been done well in a planned manner. The knowledge from here can be spread to there, educating both the people and the cadres.

All localities and people's governments at all levels that have not yet convened people's congresses of all walks of life should do so promptly. Those that have already convened should follow the general rules promulgated by the Central People's Government and establish a system of regular meetings and re-elections. Those who can exercise the powers of people's representatives should do so without delay. The new-democratic people's democratic life and system, which enables the masses to take charge of government, will soon shine forth with splendor in every corner of China and in every aspect of people's lives.