

## Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of Socialist Consultative Democracy

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Socialist consultative democracy is a unique form and unique advantage of China's socialist democracy, an important embodiment of the Party's mass line in the political field, and an important part of deepening political restructuring. In order to fully implement the guiding principles of the 18th CPC National Congress and the Third and Fourth Plenary Sessions of the 18th CPC Central Committee, we will promote the extensive, multi-tiered and institutionalised development of consultative democracy, build a socialist political civilisation, and modernise China's governance system and capacity. We hereby make the following suggestions on strengthening the construction of socialist consultative democracy.

### 1. The Significance of Strengthening Consultative Democracy

Consultative democracy is an important form of democracy in which, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, all sectors of the masses conduct extensive consultation before and during the implementation of decisions, striving to form consensus on major issues concerning reform, development and stability, and practical issues concerning the vital interests of the people.

(1) History of development. Socialist consultative democracy is an impressive creation of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people. It arises from the long-term practice of the Communist Party of China leading the people in carrying out revolution, construction and reform. At the 18th CPC National Congress and the third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, we made a profound summary of China's experience and laws in constructing socialist democracy, and made major strategic plans to improve the system of socialist consultative democracy and promote its extensive, multi-tiered and institutionalised development. Consultative democracy in China has a profound cultural, theoretical, practical and institutional basis, which enriches the forms, expands the channels, and increases the content of developing China's socialist democracy.

(2) Significance. At present, China is at the decisive stage of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. We face a number of challenges: the new situation of a profound adjustment of the structure of interests in the process of reform and opening up; new changes in which the old and new contradictions in society are entwined; a new

situation of pluralistic ideas under the conditions of a market economy; and new challenges in terms of competition among different political development paths in the world. In this situation, strengthening the construction of consultative democracy will expand orderly political participation by citizens, better realise the people as masters of the country, promote scientific and democratic decision-making, advance the modernisation of the national governance structure and governance capabilities, promote the resolution of conflicts and promote social harmony and stability, maintain flesh-and-blood ties between the Party and the masses, and consolidate and expand the Party's ruling foundation. It is conducive to giving full play to the superiority of China's political system and enhancing the confidence in the path, theory and system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

## 2. The Guiding Theory, Basic Principles, Channels and Procedures for Strengthening Consultative Democracy

(3) Guiding Theory. To strengthen the construction of consultative democracy, we must implement the spirit of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and the Third and Fourth Plenary Sessions of the 18th Central Committee, and hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Guided by the important thoughts of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development, we will thoroughly implement the spirit of general secretary Xi Jinping's important speech. We will uphold and improve China's fundamental and essential political system, establish through rational procedures and integrated sectors a consultative democratic structure, and promote the extensive and multi-level systematisation of consultative democracy. We will inject new vitality into the development of China's socialist democratic politics and pool wisdom and strength to realise the 'two centenary' goals and the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

(4) Basic principles. To strengthen consultative democracy, we must uphold the organic unity of the leadership of the Party, the position of the people as masters of the country, and the rule of law, the implementation of democratic centralism, and unflinchingly follow the path of socialist political development with Chinese characteristics. We should focus on the central task and serve overall interests, promote sustained and sound economic development, and maintain social harmony and stability. We will continue to act in an orderly, active and prudent manner in accordance with the law, and ensure that consultative democracy is structured, regulated, and orderly. We should adhere to

consultation before and during the implementation of decision-making to enhance the scientific nature and effectiveness of decision-making. The masses' right to be informed, to participate, to be heard, and to supervise will be better protected through extensive participation at multiple levels. We should seek common ground while reserving differences, be rational and inclusive, and improve the quality and efficiency of our consultations.

(5) Consultation channels. We will continue to focus on strengthening consultation among political parties, the government and the CPPCC. We will actively carry out consultation among people's congresses, people's and grassroots organisations, and gradually explore consultation among social organisations. We should give full play to the advantages of various consultation channels, do a good job in coordination and cooperation, and constantly strengthen and improve the socialist consultative democratic system. All types of consultations should be conducted in a reasonable way according to their own characteristics and actual needs.

(6) Consultation procedures. Based on the actual situation and in accordance with the requirements of being scientific, reasonable, standardised, orderly, easy to operate and according to the requirements of democratic centralism, we should formulate the consultation plan, clearly define the topics and contents of the consultation, determine the personnel involved in consultation, carry out the consultation activities, and pay attention to the feedback on results of the consultation, so as to ensure the orderly, practical and efficient activities of consultation.

### 3. Continuing to Strengthen Consultation between Political Parties

We should give full play to the advantages of the socialist political party system with Chinese characteristics, adhere to long-term coexistence, mutual supervision, sincere cooperation, and sharing weal and woe. We should strengthen political consultation between the CPC and the democratic parties, work together well, and consolidate and develop harmonious relations between political parties.

(7) We will continue to explore ways to standardise consultation between political parties. We should improve the form of consultation meetings, and hold special consultation symposiums on important principles, policies and major issues of the Party and the state, presided over by leading comrades of the CPC Central Committee. A consultation forum on important personnel arrangements should be held at the preparatory stage and

presided over by the leading comrades of the CPC Central Committee, seminars on research and consultation on important research topics of the democratic parties will be held, chaired by leading comrades of the CPC Central Committee, and relevant departments will be invited to participate. According to working needs, they shall hold consultation symposiums to communicate ideas, exchange views and circulate important information, which shall be presided over by the comrades in charge of the CPC Central Committee or entrusted to the departments concerned. We will improve the form of meetings between leading members of the CPC Central Committee and leading members of the democratic parties. We will improve written communication and consultation between the CPC central Committee and the central committees of the democratic parties.

(8) We will improve the system under which the central committees of democratic parties make suggestions directly to the CPC Central Committee. Every year, the central committees of the democratic parties will directly submit their opinions and suggestions to the CPC Central Committee in the form of investigative and research reports, suggestions, and so on. Comrades in charge of the central committees of the democratic parties may, in their own names, report directly to the CPC Central Committee and the State Council and make suggestions. Members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee may, according to need and through unified arrangements, invite leading comrades of the central committees of the democratic parties to participate in investigation and research on domestic matters, and in relation to important foreign affairs activities.

(9) We will strengthen the mechanism for ensuring consultation between political parties. We will improve the mechanism of informed and clear administration, provide pertinent materials regularly by relevant departments, organise special reports, and assist democratic parties to optimise the selection of topics for investigation and research. We will strengthen ties between relevant government departments, judicial organs and democratic parties, and invite democratic parties to attend relevant meetings, participate in special investigations, and inspection and supervision work as appropriate. We will improve the consultation and feedback mechanism, and the CPC Central Committee will deliver consultation opinions over to relevant departments for processing, and the relevant departments will provide timely feedback on their implementation. We will support the democratic parties in strengthening their consultative capacity.

Personages without party affiliation are an important part of political consultations. Associations of Industry and Commerce are united front people's organisations and non-governmental chambers of commerce. Relevant departments should provide good liaison services for non-party personages and associations of industry and commerce to participate in consultations.

Party committees of all provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government) and cities (regions, prefectures and administrative divisions) should make specific arrangements for Party consultations in light of their actual conditions.

#### 4. Actively Developing National People's Congress Consultations

(10) We will deepen consultation in legislative work. In formulating legislative programs and work plans, we need to listen to the views and suggestions of all sectors of society. We will improve the mechanism for coordinating the drafting of laws and regulations, and strengthen communication and consultation between the special committees and working committees of the NPC and relevant parties. We will improve mechanisms for legislative demonstrations, hearings, and evaluations, and explore ways to establish mechanisms for state organs, public organisations, experts, and scholars to examine and consult on major interests involved in legislation. We will expand ways for citizens to participate in legislation in an orderly manner, and improve mechanisms for soliciting public comments on draft laws and regulations and for receiving feedback on their adoption. We should conduct extensive and in-depth research, examination and consultation on draft laws and regulations with complex legal relationships and major differences of opinion, and, on the basis of essential consensus in all aspects, submit them for a vote in accordance with the law.

(11) We will give full play to the role of NPC deputies in consultative democracy. We will improve the system for soliciting opinions of deputies to people's congresses on the drafting of laws, regulations, and rules, increase the number of deputies to people's congresses who attend meetings of their standing committees as non-voting delegates, and better enable deputies to play their role in legislative consultations. We will improve the quality of deputies' proposals and suggestions, and relevant parties should strengthen communication and consultation with deputies to make them more effective. We will establish and improve liaison offices and online platforms for deputies and keep them in close contact with the masses.

We will encourage grassroots people's congresses to conduct consultations in accordance with the law in the course of performing their duties, explore ways of conducting consultations, and enrich the content of such consultations.

## 5. Making Solid Progress in Government Consultation

We will strengthen government consultation to promote effectively scientific, democratic, and law-based decision-making, increase transparency and public participation in decision-making, address the most immediate and practical interests of the people, transform government functions, and improve the government's governance capability.

(12) We will explore ways to formulate and publish a list of items for consultation. The government will explore ways to formulate and publish a list of items for consultation in accordance with laws, regulations and actual work conditions. Communication and consultation shall be conducted on items in the list. For matters not listed, communication and consultation shall be conducted according to actual needs.

(13) We will make our consultations more comprehensive and targeted. We will ensure extensive public participation and strengthen communication and consultation with NPC deputies, CPPCC members, non-communist parties, personages without party affiliation, and associations of industry and commerce. For professional matters we will adhere to expert consultation and demonstration. If it involves major issues of economic and social development, major public interests or major livelihood issues, we will listen to the opinions and suggestions of all sectors of society and involve the public, especially stakeholders, in the consultations. If the interests of a specific group are involved, communication and consultation with relevant people's organisations, social organisations and representatives of the masses shall be strengthened.

(14) We will improve the government's consultation mechanism. We will make government information public and create conditions for all parties to participate in government consultations. We will improve the mechanism for soliciting opinions and giving feedback. When enacting legislation, we will listen widely to opinions when defining items for legislation and when carrying out legislation, and provide timely feedback on the adoption of opinions. We will standardise hearing mechanisms, make public hearings in accordance with the law, and make relevant information public in a timely manner. We will establish a sound decision-making consultation mechanism,

improve consultation procedures, and improve consultation quality and credibility. We will improve the mechanism for contacting deputies to the people's congresses and deputies to the CPPCC committees in handling their bills and proposals, establish and improve the accounting system, incorporate the handling of suggestions and proposals into the government's annual work plan for oversight, and progressively make the results public.

## 6. Further Improving CPPCC Consultations

We should give full play to the role of the CPPCC as an important channel and specialised consultative organ for consultative democracy, adhere to the two major themes of unity and democracy, promote the development of systems of political consultation, democratic oversight, and participation in and deliberation on state affairs, and constantly improve the institutionalisation, standardisation, and procedures of consultative democracy of the CPPCC.

(15) We will make clear the main contents of CPPCC consultations. They primarily include major national and local policies and as well as important issues in political, economic, cultural and social life, the common affairs of parties participating in the work of the CPPCC, the important internal affairs of the CPPCC, and other important issues related to the Patriotic United Front.

(16) We will improve CPPCC meetings and other forms of consultation. We will improve the way in which the CPPCC conducts consultations through meetings, appropriately increase the number of meetings of the standing Committee and consultations on specific topics, and improve the system of consultation forums. On a more flexible and frequent basis, we will conduct thematic and drafting consultations with all sectors of society, and explore new forms of online and remote consultation. We will increase the proportion of collective proposals, improve their quality, and establish a consultation mechanism for assigning, handling, and supervising proposals. Opinions and suggestions will be provided through consultation meetings, proposals, inspections, resolutions, and information reflecting social conditions and public opinion, thus actively enabling democratic supervision functions.

(17) We will strengthen effective coordination between CPPCC consultations and the work of the Party Committee and the government. We will standardise the mechanism for proposing topics for consultation, conscientiously implement the provisions for proposing

topics by Party committees, people's congresses, governments, democratic parties, and people's organisations, and explore ways for topics to be jointly proposed by sectors of society and members of the committee. The formulation of annual consultation plans shall be standardised and discussed on special topics at meetings of the Standing Committee of the Party Committee and included in the annual work priorities of the Party Committee. We will improve the system of being informed about and clear about government affairs, and keep relevant departments informed of relevant situations on a regular basis to facilitate and create conditions for CPPCC members to perform their duties. We will standardise the participation of Party Committee and government leaders and department heads in CPPCC consultation activities. We will improve the mechanism for the adoption, implementation and feedback of the outcomes of the consultations.

(18) We will improve the system of the CPPCC. The National Committee of the CPPCC will study and formulate specific opinions on standardising political consultation, democratic supervision and participation in the deliberation and administration of state affairs. We will carry out in-depth investigations and studies and make appropriate adjustments to the CPPCC sectors when conditions are ripe. We will improve the mechanism for recommending and nominating committee members and optimise their composition. To study and formulate guiding opinions on the management of CPPCC members. We will establish and improve liaison agencies and systems for CPPCC members.

## 7. Conscientiously Conducting Consultations Among People's Organisations

We will carry out consultations on the Party's mass work under the new circumstances, better organise and involve the masses in public affairs through contact with deputies, effectively reflect the will and interests of the masses, and give full play to the role of people's organisations as a bridge and link between the Party and the government and the masses.

(19) We will establish and improve the working mechanism for mass organisations to participate in consultations through various channels. With regard to practical issues involving the immediate interests of the people, especially those concerning the protection of the rights and interests of specific groups, the relevant departments shall strengthen consultation with the relevant people's organisations. The CPPCC should give full play to the role of people's organisations and members from their sectors, actively facilitate the participation of people's organisations in consultation, inspection, research



and other activities, and keep closer ties between the special committees and people's organisations.

(20) We will organise and guide consultations among the masses. People's organisations should improve their work mechanisms for directly contacting the masses and promptly conduct consultations on issues concerning the immediate interests of the masses with whom they have contact. We will expand our contact channels and work areas, include emerging social groups in our work, and make our consultations more extensive and representative. We will actively play a leading role in liaison services for social organisations in relevant fields, and build a platform for communication and exchange between relevant social organisations and Party committee and governments.

## 8. Making Steady Progress in Grassroots Consultations

A large number of decisions and work involving the interests of the masses mainly take place at the grassroots level. In accordance with the requirements of consultation with and for the people, we should establish and improve the coordination and linkage mechanism for grassroots consultative democracy, steadily carry out grassroots consultation, better solve the popular masses' actual difficulties and problems, resolve conflicts and disputes in a timely manner, and promote social harmony and stability.

(21) We will promote consultation among towns, townships and street-communities. We will organise relevant parties to carry out consultations on local urban and rural planning, engineering projects, land acquisition and demolition, and livelihood issues that are strongly reported by the people. We will strengthen the guidance of towns, townships and street-communities for consultation activities among administrative villages and communities. For important decision-making matters that cross administrative villages or communities, the townships, street-communities and even counties (cities, districts and sub-districts) will organise consultations as required.

(22) We will promote consultation between village administrations and communities. We will adhere to the system of meetings of village (residents) and village (resident) representatives, and standardise the rules of procedure. We will actively explore forms of consultation such as village (residential) public opinion councils, village (residential) people's management councils, and discussion meetings. We will attach importance to the participation of stakeholders, social organisations, migrant workers, and village (residential) units. Issues or matters that cannot be resolved through consultation or have

major disputes shall be submitted to the meeting of the village (residents) or the meeting of the representatives of the village (residents) for decision.

(23) We will promote consultation among enterprises and public institutions. We will improve the democratic management system in enterprises and public institutions in the basic form of congresses of workers and staff. We will open channels for employees to express their reasonable demands, and improve the communication and consultation mechanism for employees at all levels. We will actively promote collective consultation between trade unions on behalf of workers and enterprises on important decision-making matters such as adjusting and standardising labour relations. We will gradually improve the tripartite consultation mechanism on labour relations represented by labour administrative departments, trade unions, and enterprises.

We will explore ways to carry out consultations among social organisations. We will uphold the leadership of the Party and the administration of the government in accordance with the law, improve the working mechanism and channels of communication with relevant social organisations, and guide social organisations to conduct consultations in an orderly manner so as to better serve society.

#### 9. Strengthening and Improving the Party's Leadership over the Construction of Consultative Democracy.

Leadership by the Party is the most essential feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics. To strengthen consultative democracy, we must uphold the Party's leadership, give full play to the Party's role as the core of leadership in commanding the overall situation and coordinating all parties, keep to the right direction, form strong synergy, and ensure orderly and efficient development.

(24) We will attach great importance to building consultative democracy. Party committees at all levels should fully understand the significance of strengthening consultative democracy, incorporate the construction of consultative democracy into their overall work plans and important agendas, and exercise unified leadership, unified planning, and unified deployment of all types of consultative democratic activities within their scope of responsibility. We should ensure that consultation takes place before and during the implementation of decision-making, adjust decision-making and work according to the opinions and suggestions of various parties, and ensure that the outcomes of consultations are implemented in a systemic way, so as to ensure that

decision-making and work better conform with public opinion and with reality. Communist Party leaders should lead by example, take the lead in learning the theory of consultative democracy, become familiar with the working methods of consultative democracy, grasp the working rules of consultative democracy, strive to become active organisers, powerful promoters, and conscientious practitioners in strengthening the construction of consultative democracy. By promoting consultative democracy, the Party's leadership can be improved, its leadership strengthened and its ruling position consolidated.

(25) We will establish and improve the working system for building consultative democracy under Party leadership. We will establish a leadership system and working mechanism under unified leadership of the Party Committee, the division of responsibilities among all parties, and active participation by the public. Party committees at all levels should follow the principle of democratic centralism, adhere to the unity of centralism based on democracy and democracy under centralised guidance, ensure that consultations are conducted in an orderly manner and in accordance with the law, and prevent consultation without making a decision, and making decisions without implementing them. We will strengthen overall planning and coordination, carefully study and formulate consultation plans, and resolve major issues concerning the development of consultative democracy. We will support the people's congresses, government, CPPCC committees, political party organisations, grassroots organisations, and social organisations in conducting consultations in accordance with laws, regulations, and their respective statutes, and promote consultation activities in a planned and step-by-step manner. We will strengthen oversight and inspection of the implementation of consultative democracy.

(26) We will support and encourage exploration and innovation in constructing consultative democracy. Consultative democracy is a process of constant development. Party committees at all levels should strengthen leadership, organisation and coordination, encourage exploration and innovation, conduct extensive consultation through various channels, discussions, demonstrations, hearings, publicity, evaluations, consultations, internet and public opinion polls, and establish and improve various forms of consultation. We should respect the initiative of the masses, concentrate on refining and summarising practical experience, and make it an institutional standard in due course. We will strengthen the development of new types of think tanks with Chinese characteristics, and establish a sound decision-making and consultation system. We will strengthen theoretical research on consultative democracy and continue to enrich and

develop the theoretical system of socialist consultative democracy. We will study and formulate inner-Party laws and regulations on building consultative democracy.

(27) We will create a favourable atmosphere for constructing consultative democracy. Party committees at all levels should consciously make consultative democracy a priority in all areas and continue to consult more on issues, matters arising, and work undertaken. We will improve the system of inner-Party democracy and use inner-Party democracy to drive and promote consultative democracy. The publicity departments of Party committees and the major news media should strengthen the correct guidance of public opinion, popularise the knowledge of consultative democracy, publicise the theory and practice of consultative democracy, establish advanced models for the construction of consultative democracy, and give full play to its exemplary and leading role.

Relevant departments in all regions shall, in accordance with the present opinions and in light of the actual conditions, formulate specific measures for their implementation.