

UPHOLD THE UNITY AND COORDINATION OF REFORM DECISIONS AND LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS

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*Xu Anbiao**

Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law offers an in-depth explanation of the relationship between the reform and the rule of law. It creatively puts forward a series of important theories and arguments, dispelling misunderstandings about the two and resolving their practical dilemmas. It unifies the reform and the rule of law in an organic manner, providing the fundamental guidance and the scientific direction for properly handling their relationship.

I. SOUND LAWMAKING AS A CRUCIAL LINK IN HANDLING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE REFORM AND THE RULE OF LAW

General Secretary *Xi Jinping* emphasized that ‘we must promote the reform under the rule of law and improve the rule of law in the process of the reform ... We must ensure that reform decisions and legislative decisions are united and coordinated.’¹ He also stated that ‘sound lawmaking is a crucial link in handling the relationship between the reform and the rule of law’.² These remarks underscore the fundamental role of legislation in handling the relationship between the reform and the rule of law.

A. Upholding the Unity of the Reform and the Rule of Law Is a Profound Summary of China’s Experience in Reform and Opening up and the Construction of the Rule of Law

The reform and the rule of law have been intertwined since their inception, a fact particularly evident in the legislative field. In late 1978,

* Member of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People’s Congress, Member of the NPC Constitution and Law Committee, and Vice President of the China Law Society.

1 XI JINPING, SPEECH AT THE SEMINAR FOR PRINCIPAL LEADING CADRES AT THE PROVINCIAL AND MINISTERIAL LEVELS ON STUDYING AND IMPLEMENTING THE SPIRIT OF THE FOURTH PLENARY SESSION OF THE 18TH CPC CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND COMPREHENSIVELY ADVANCING THE RULE OF LAW (FEBRUARY 2, 2015), in EXCERPTS FROM XI JINPING’S DISCOURSES ON COORDINATED PROMOTION OF THE FOUR-PRONGED COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY, at 16 (Party Literature Research Office of the CPC Central Committee ed., Central Party Literature Press, 2015).

2 XI JINPING, SPEECH AT THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE CENTRAL LEADING GROUP FOR COMPREHENSIVELY DEEPENING REFORM (OCTOBER 27, 2014), in EXCERPTS FROM XI JINPING’S DISCOURSES ON COMPREHENSIVE LAW-BASED GOVERNANCE, at 51 (Party Literature Research Office of the CPC Central Committee ed., Central Party Literature Press, 2015).

the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) made the historic decision to implement the reform and opening up. In terms of advancing the rule of law, priority was given to formulating laws related to restoring the national system and initiating the reform and opening up. In July 1979, the Second Session of the Fifth National People's Congress (NPC) adopted seven laws in one sitting, marking the comprehensive resumption and the rapid development of the legislative work. Subsequently, the NPC and its Standing Committee enacted a series of laws that directly responded to the urgent needs of the reform and opening up, and the socioeconomic development. In December 1982, the Fifth Session of the Fifth National People's Congress adopted the *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* — the current *Constitution* — which comprehensively embodied the lines, principles, and policies established since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee. The accelerated legislative progress after 1979 was not only a requirement for restoring and strengthening the socialist democracy and the legal system but also an inevitable demand arising from the implementation of the reform and opening up policies. The promulgation of the *Constitution* and other relevant laws provided the essential legal foundations for advancing the reform and opening up. As the reform and opening up proceeded — from rural to urban areas, from coastal to inland regions, from the economy to science, education, and other institutional reforms, and from domestic vitality to external openness — they put forward epochal questions and offered rich practices for the construction of the rule of law. Legislation kept pace with these developments, responding in a timely manner and providing the strong institutional support.

Since the advent of the new era, the CPC Central Committee with Comrade *Xi Jinping* at its core has advanced the comprehensive deepening of reform and the comprehensive law-based governance, improved and developed the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and promoted the modernization of China's system and capacity for governance; it has also worked to establish a system of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics and to build a country of socialist rule of law. The system of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics is essentially the legal expression of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It serves as a crucial pillar for advancing the modernization of China's system and capacity for governance. The comprehensive deepening of reform and

comprehensive law-based governance are not only aligned in terms of their goals and tasks, but also share the same value orientation — namely, adhering to a people-centered approach, respecting the people's principal status, promoting their well-being, and upholding social fairness and justice. Upholding the unity of the reform and the rule of law reflects a profound understanding of the principles of the national governance.

B. Advancing Reform Under the Rule of Law and Fully Leveraging the Function of the Rule of Law to Ensure Steady and Far-Reaching Progress

Advancing the reform under the rule of law means promoting the reform on the track of the rule of law, in accordance with legally prescribed duties and powers, guiding principles, and procedural mechanisms. Since the reform inevitably entails adjustments to existing patterns of interests, the rule of law serves as a key means to balance social interests — it is the greatest common denominator in society. Pushing forward the reform in accordance with the law is conducive to predesigning reform paths and methods, stabilizing public expectations of the reform, and reinforcing the confidence in the reform. It also helps build the social consensus, defuse risks associated with the reform, and resolve conflicts that may arise during the reform process. Furthermore, it facilitates the confirmation and institutionalization of mature reform outcomes, thereby enhancing the depth and durability of the reform. In the early stages of the reform and opening up, there were relatively few legislative precedents or practical experiences to draw upon. Nonetheless, in 1979, the Second Session of the Fifth National People's Congress deliberated and adopted the *Law on Chinese-Foreign Equity Joint Ventures*, explicitly stipulating that the power to amend this law rested with the NPC itself. This move sent a clear signal to the world, demonstrating China's unwavering commitment to the reform and opening up. It provided foreign investors with a stable sense of predictability and charted a clear direction for the future exploration, deepening the reform, and expanding the opening up.

General Secretary *Xi Jinping* has emphasized that 'our reform and opening up has the direction, position, and principles'³ and that 'no matter how reform proceeds, there must be no wavering on the fundamental

3 XI JINPING, SPEECH DURING THE INSPECTION TOUR IN GUANGDONG PROVINCE (DECEMBER 7-11, 2012), in EXCERPTS FROM XI JINPING'S DISCOURSES ON COMPREHENSIVE DEEPENING OF REFORM, at 14 (Party Literature Research Office of the CPC Central Committee ed., Central Party Literature Press, 2014).

principles — namely, upholding the overall leadership of the Party, upholding Marxism, upholding the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and upholding the people’s democratic dictatorship’.⁴ The socialist system of laws with Chinese characteristics is an important carrier of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and reflects the direction, position, principles, and bottom line that reform must adhere to. Advancing the reform under the rule of law helps prevent the reform from deviating from the correct course, mitigates risks associated with the social transformation, and ensures the national security and the social stability.

Moreover, promoting the reform under the rule of law helps ensure the systemic, holistic, and coordinated nature of the reform. As the reform enters the critical phase and deep waters, many areas involve deeply entrenched interest structures, where even minor adjustments may have far-reaching implications. This calls for identifying the root causes of problems and devising solutions from the perspective of systems and mechanisms. The greater the resistance to the reform, the more powerful the driving force and safeguards required. In this context, it becomes all the more essential to apply the thinking and approaches of the rule of law to deepen the reform, promote the development, resolve conflicts, maintain the stability, and respond to risks.

C. Improving the Rule of Law Through Reform Embodies the Marxist Epistemological Principle and Provides an Effective Pathway and Broad Prospects for Advancing the Rule of Law

Law is part of the superstructure. To deepen the reform and opening up, it is essential to continuously transform elements that are incompatible between the production relations and productive forces, and between the superstructure and the economic foundation. The human knowledge originates from practice; it is through summarizing practice that one comes to understand the objective world, and such understanding then guides further efforts to transform the objective world. For a considerable period at the beginning of China’s reform and opening up, the legislative work followed the principle of ‘legislate when mature’, gaining experience through practice and then codifying this experience through legislation. The *Law on*

4 Xi Jinping Presides over a Symposium with Entrepreneurs and Experts, Emphasizing the Need to Focus on the Theme of Advancing Chinese Modernization and to Further Comprehensively Deepen Reform, People’s Daily, May 24, 2024, at 1.

Chinese-Foreign Equity Joint Ventures was a landmark piece of legislation symbolizing China's opening up to the outside world. Subsequently, the *Law on Wholly Foreign-Owned Enterprises* and the *Law on Chinese-Foreign Contractual Joint Ventures* were enacted to meet the demands of China's accession to the World Trade Organization and were amended multiple times in light of the Free Trade Zone pilot initiatives. In March 2019, on the 40th anniversary of the reform and opening up, the Second Session of the 13th National People's Congress adopted the *Foreign Investment Law*, establishing a new legal framework for managing the foreign investment through a system of pre-establishment national treatment and a negative list. Development sets the agenda, reform provides the solutions, practice yields experience, and legislation establishes the system — the reform and legislation thus interact positively and reinforce one another.

The comprehensive deepening of reform has had a broad and profound impact on the development of the rule of law and has created a wide range of demands for it while clarifying the key directions for its advancement. Comprehensively advancing law-based governance requires a profound transformation of thinking and governance models and is an integral part of the comprehensive reform. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee laid out a strategic plan for comprehensively advancing law-based governance, proposing more than 180 reform measures of the significant importance for law-based governance. These measures were incorporated into the overall reform agenda and were planned, implemented, and supervised in an integrated manner. The reform remains the fundamental pathway to solving prominent problems in the legal domain. For example, to meet public demands for fairness and justice, ensure impartial administration of justice, and address issues such as the judicial injustice and insufficient credibility of the judicial system, it is essential to deepen judicial system reforms. In the new era, a series of major reforms centered on the judicial accountability system have yielded notable results.

The formation and continuous improvement of the socialist system of laws with Chinese characteristics also indicates that legal issues involved in the reform are becoming more extensive. In areas where the rule of law remains underdeveloped and where laws are lacking, the reform often plays a pioneering role and guides legislative efforts. As the legal system expands to cover all sectors, the legal dimensions of the reform become more substantial, and the relationships between interests more complex. Especially

as the public awareness of the rule of law grows, there is an increasing need to carry out the reform under the rule of law. The foundational role of legislation must be fully utilized — to confirm reform outcomes, implement reform measures, regulate reform procedures, and define reform principles — thus better achieving the unity of the reform and the rule of law.

II. UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF XI JINPING THOUGHT ON SOCIALISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS FOR A NEW ERA, THE REFORM AND THE RULE OF LAW ADVANCES IN TANDEM AS DUAL DRIVING FORCES

General Secretary *Xi Jinping* emphasized that ‘All major reforms must be grounded in law. Where existing laws need to be amended, such amendments should come first — establishing the new before abolishing the old, and proceeding in an orderly fashion. For major reform initiatives that require the legal authorization, the necessary legal procedures must be followed.’⁵ Under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, China has been faithfully implementing constitutional provisions, principles, and spirits and following the pathways defined by the *Legislation Law* to manage the interaction between the reform and the rule of law. The reform and the rule of law have resonated in harmony and progressed in the same direction, producing valuable experience and practices.

A. Elevating Proven Reform Practices into Law to Confirm Experience and Achievements Through Legislation

For reform practices that have been proven effective and relatively mature through experience, elevating them into law in a timely manner is an important approach for legislation to proactively adapt to the needs of the reform and socioeconomic development. The deepening of the national supervisory system reform, a major political reform of overarching significance led by the CPC Central Committee with Comrade *Xi Jinping*

5 XI JINPING, SPEECH AT THE SECOND PLENARY SESSION OF THE THIRD PLENARY SESSION OF THE 18TH CPC CENTRAL COMMITTEE (NOVEMBER 12, 2013), in EXCERPTS FROM XI JINPING’S DISCOURSES ON COORDINATED PROMOTION OF THE FOUR-PRONGED COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY, at 73 (Party Literature Research Office of the CPC Central Committee ed., Central Party Literature Press, 2015).

at its core, involved the formulation of the *Supervision Law* as a key component, requiring adjustments and improvements in the top-level design of state institutions. Following the CPC Central Committee's decisions, the NPC Standing Committee successively adopted decisions in 2016 and 2017 to carry out pilot reforms of the national supervisory system in Beijing, Shanxi Province, and Zhejiang Province, and then to expand the pilot reforms nationwide. Based on the summary of pilot experience, legislative work on the *Supervision Law* was carried out concurrently. In June 2017, the NPC Standing Committee conducted the first review of the draft *Supervision Law*. In March 2018, following the adoption of a constitutional amendment at the First Session of the 13th National People's Congress, the *Supervision Law* was enacted, establishing a centralized, unified, authoritative, and efficient supervisory system. The enactment and implementation of the *Supervision Law* seamlessly aligned with the supervisory system reform. Subsequently, complementary laws such as the *Supervisory Officers Law* and the *Law on Administrative Discipline for Public Officials* were formulated, and the legal status of supervisory regulations was clarified, forming a complete system of supporting regulations for the implementation of the *Supervision Law*. In December 2024, the 14th NPC Standing Committee, in line with the CPC Central Committee's decisions, amended the *Supervision Law* in a timely manner to consolidate and expand the achievements of the national supervision system reform.

*B. Authorizing Experimental Reform Initiatives
Where Legislative Conditions Are Not Yet Mature*

In cases where legislative conditions are not yet mature and pilot implementation is necessary, authorization decisions must be made strictly in accordance with statutory procedures. Reform pilots are conducted in selected regions to ensure that reforms proceed lawfully and in an orderly manner within the framework of the rule of law. Such pilots must not arbitrarily break legal boundaries, nor should reform be delayed merely due to the lack of existing legal provisions. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the NPC Standing Committee has made over 50 authorization and reform decisions. These span a wide range of areas, including pilot free trade zones, administrative approval system reform, rural land system reform, financial system reform, judicial system reform, civil service

reform, social insurance reform, military officer reform, and reform of the Armed Police Force. These measures allow localized or sector-specific reforms to be trialed first, thereby accumulating replicable and scalable experience and providing essential legal safeguards and support. In October 2019, the NPC Standing Committee adopted a decision authorizing the State Council to temporarily adjust the application of certain legal provisions within the pilot free trade zones, specifically those related to the administrative approval in six laws, including the *Foreign Trade Law*.

In accordance with the requirements of these authorization and reform decisions, timely hearings and reviews of pilot progress are arranged. Responsible entities are urged to summarize experience, propose replication and scaling strategies, and coordinate legislative amendments based on lessons learned from reform practices to improve the rule of law. According to the *Legislation Law*, authorization decisions must specify a time limit. Upon the expiration of an authorization, reforms proven effective and suitable for the broader application should be promptly incorporated into the revised or new legislation. Reforms requiring further exploration may have their pilot periods extended or be included in new pilot initiatives. Those that prove unsuitable should be discontinued, and the relevant legal provisions reinstated. For example, the NPC Standing Committee issued a decision authorizing the State Council to temporarily adjust certain administrative approval provisions under 19 laws — including the *Customs Law* — in Guangdong Province, along with a follow-up decision to extend the authorization. Upon the expiration of the authorization period, 11 of those laws were amended, while the provisions of the remaining 8 laws were reinstated.

C. Promptly Amending or Repealing Laws and Regulations That Do Not Align with Reform Requirements

General Secretary *Xi Jinping* emphasized that ‘Existing laws and regulations that no longer meet the requirements of the reform must be promptly amended or repealed. We must not allow outdated legal provisions to become stumbling blocks to reform.’⁶ When current laws fail to meet the requirements of reform or the needs of the economic and social development, or when they conflict with reform decisions,

6 XI JINPING, *supra* note 1.

prompt revisions are necessary to pave the way for advancing related reform efforts. In recent years, China has undertaken systematic or targeted amendments to laws involved in reform measures. To ensure laws to keep pace with reform needs, legislative amendments have also been carried out in a ‘bundled’ fashion. This approach typically involves smaller revisions with narrow scopes and broad consensus, streamlining workflows and improving efficiency and coordination. It allows for quick and effective responses to evolving economic and social conditions and reform imperatives. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, bundled legislative revisions have significantly increased. As of June 2024, there have been 25 bundled revisions involving 155 laws. These revisions have largely focused on implementing the CPC Central Committee’s major strategic decisions and supporting key reform initiatives, such as the reform of streamlining administration, delegating powers, improving regulation, and upgrading services, improving the business environment, transforming government functions, and deepening reform of the Party and state institutions. For example, in September 2024, the NPC Standing Committee adopted the *Decision Regarding Gradually Raising the Statutory Retirement Age* and approved the State Council’s corresponding implementation plan, ensuring this major reform is carried out prudently and in an orderly fashion. Another case occurred in December 2013 and August 2014, when the NPC Standing Committee adopted bundled decisions to amend seven laws, including the *Marine Environmental Protection Law*, and five other laws including the *Insurance Law*. These amendments aimed to facilitate reform of the business registration system by eliminating or delegating certain administrative approval requirements previously stipulated by law, thereby advancing the reform of the administrative approval system and the transformation of government functions in accordance with the law.

D. Considering Legislative Issues During Reform Planning and Timely Proposing Legislative Needs and Recommendations

When formulating major reform decisions and initiatives, it is essential to simultaneously examine the associated legislative needs. This approach improves the speed, precision, and effectiveness of aligning legislative decisions with reform initiatives, thereby providing a solid legal foundation

for systematizing and coordinating reform efforts. For example, in 2018, the Third Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee deliberated and adopted the *Decision of the CPC Central Committee on Deepening the Reform of the Party and State Institutions*. In March of the same year, the *State Council Institutional Reform Plan* was submitted to the First Session of the 13th National People's Congress for deliberation and approval. During the process of researching and implementing the reform plan, studies on the legislative issues involved in the reform were launched simultaneously. Special task groups were organized to conduct the targeted research and promote implementation. Since the reform involved numerous laws and required extensive revisions, the timely coordination was crucial to ensure a smooth and orderly transition of institutional responsibilities and administrative functions prescribed by the law. This also helped prevent delays in the reform implementation and ensured the continuity in critical functions such as the workplace safety, emergency response, and social stability. To facilitate this process, the NPC Standing Committee adopted a decision regarding the adjustment of administrative agency responsibilities stipulated by the law in light of the State Council institutional reforms, clarifying the division of duties for newly established administrative bodies, the redistribution of existing functions, and the coordination between higher-level and lower-level agencies. This ensured seamless alignment between the reform and legislation. Meanwhile, based on priorities and urgency, legal amendments and drafting tasks were advanced in phases. In response to the reform of fire and rescue institutions, for instance, the *Regulation on Fire and Rescue Ranks* was enacted. In cases where institutional restructuring and responsibility adjustments were clear, bundled amendments were passed five times in a single reading, revising a total of 41 laws and over 300 provisions, thereby accelerating the legislative process.

The mutually reinforcing relationship between the reform and legislation is also reflected in how the legislative process refines and improves reform measures. In August 2019, the 12th Session of the 13th NPC Standing Committee adopted the newly revised *Medicinal Product Administration Law*. Drawing from pilot experience in certain localities involving the marketing authorization holder (MAH) system, the revised law supplemented and improved upon the trial practices by clarifying the organizational forms of MAHs, as well as their obligations, responsibilities, and rights — thus fully institutionalizing this key reform.

III. ADVANCING SOUND LAWMAKING IN AN ALL-ROUND WAY TO PROVIDE A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THE REFORM AND THE RULE OF LAW

In the new era and on the new journey, the comprehensive deepening of the reform and the comprehensive advancement of law-based governance require the effective integration of the reform and the rule of law, thereby placing new and significant responsibilities on the legislative work. To meet these demands, it is essential to comprehensively promote the sound legislation, continuously enhancing the systematic, holistic, coordinated, and timely nature of legislative efforts.

A. Upholding the Party's Overall Leadership over Legislative Work

Upholding the overall leadership of the CPC is the fundamental guarantee and foremost principle furthering the comprehensive reform and advancing the Chinese modernization. Legislation is a crucial political activity in the national governance. Ensuring the Party's overall leadership over the legislative work and resolutely safeguarding the authority and centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee are the inevitable conclusions drawn from the historical, theoretical, and practical logic of China's legislative development. Only in this way can the legislative work better serve and safeguard the comprehensive deepening of the reform and ensure the unity of the reform and the rule of law. It is essential to continuously improve the capacity for political judgment, thinking, and implementation, remain mindful of the country's fundamental interests, and fully implement the Party's leadership throughout all stages and aspects of the legislative process. Guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, it is necessary to thoroughly study and implement Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law and apply the new ideas, viewpoints, and conclusions that General Secretary *Xi Jinping* has developed on deepening reform comprehensively. In particular, we must gain a profound understanding of the 'Two Establishments', strengthen the 'Four Consciousnesses', reinforce the 'Four Confidences', and achieve the 'Two Upholds'. It is imperative to resolutely implement General Secretary *Xi Jinping*'s important instructions on the legislative work and fully carry out the major decisions and deployments of the CPC Central Committee. Legislative efforts must be aligned with reform initiatives, fulfill the major

legislative tasks set by the CPC Central Committee, and strictly adhere to the reporting procedures for major legislative matters. The spirit of the CPC Central Committee must be fully reflected in the legislative practice, ensuring that the Party's lines, principles, policies, and strategic decisions are implemented through lawful procedures and high-quality legislation.

B. Advancing Legislative Work in Alignment with the Needs of Comprehensively Deepening Reform and Promoting Chinese Modernization

It is essential to adopt a holistic perspective, proactively situating the legislative work within the overall framework of comprehensively deepening reform. The legislative planning and implementation should be actively aligned with the major reform decisions and deployments of the CPC Central Committee. Legislative efforts must be synchronized with reform decisions, respond to the rule-of-law needs of key reform areas and critical links, and take into account the necessity of enacting, amending, or repealing relevant laws associated with reform initiatives at the earliest possible stage. This ensures that legislative decisions and reform decisions are effectively integrated and mutually reinforcing. A deep understanding of the significance and overarching requirements of further deepening reform comprehensively and promoting Chinese modernization is required. Legislative efforts must follow the guiding ideology and core principles of the reform, stay focused on the overarching goals, and explore legislative reforms to support the broader systemic transformation. The *Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization*, adopted at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, outlines the reform tasks across economic, political, cultural, social, ecological, national security, defense, and military domains. It also proposes reforms related to strengthening the Party's leadership over reform, deepening the institutional reform of the Party building, and advancing the anti-corruption campaign, all of which involve corresponding legislative tasks. Explicit legislative projects include: compiling the Ecological and Environmental Code, enacting the Financial Law, the Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress, and the *Private Sector Promotion Law*, improving the *Law on Supervision by the Standing Committees of the People's Congresses at All Levels* and its enforcement mechanisms, amending the *Law on Supervision*, and introducing the Anti-Cross-Border Corruption Law. In addition, many

institutional and structural reform tasks require legislative enactments or revisions. The legislative work must remain closely aligned with the strategic initiatives of comprehensively deepening reform and advancing Chinese modernization. This entails reinforcing foundational frameworks, emphasizing priorities, distinguishing between levels of urgency, and strengthening the legislation in key areas, emerging sectors, and foreign-related domains.

In a certain sense, the reform often means creating new laws and amending or replacing outdated ones. Legislation serves as the ‘supply side’ of the institutional development, while reform acts as the ‘demand side’ for the legislative advancement. To ensure the effective coordination between the reform and legislation, it is vital to strengthen the research on the legal issues involved in the reform and respond through the timely legislative action. In practice, the CPC Central Committee places high importance on incorporating legislative considerations into the overall reform framework. When developing comprehensive reform plans and specific reform measures, legislative requirements are considered in tandem, and supporting legislation is proposed accordingly. Leading and participating departments in reform initiatives are expected to simultaneously consider associated legislative tasks when developing implementation plans and timelines. Relevant legislative items should be advanced in parallel with reform projects. This approach — integrating the legislation into the reform planning and synchronizing legislative progress with reform needs — has proven to be a successful model for achieving the unity of the reform and the rule of law.

C. Coordinating the Application of Enactment, Amendment, Repeal, Interpretation, and Codification to Advance Reform Measures and Consolidate Reform Achievements

First, importance must be attached to drafting new laws. It is important to proactively study and advance new legislative projects, swiftly filling legal gaps and strengthening weak links. On the one hand, the fundamental and comprehensive legislation in key areas should be advanced to support the improvement of the legal system and play a leading and driving role. On the other hand, attention should be given to ‘small-incision’ and ‘small, fast, and effective’ legislation, simplifying the complex by focusing on specific fields and concrete problems, accelerating the pace of legislation, and effectively improving the precision and timeliness with which legislation solves practical

problems. Second, amending laws must be given a prominent position. The revision of laws related to major structural adjustments, institutional reforms, or those with significant practical issues should be expedited, ensuring that reform outcomes are promptly reflected through legislative amendments. Third, laws, provisions, and regulations that are no longer compatible with reform or the socioeconomic development should be repealed. Repeal may take various forms — either replacing old laws with new ones, or abolishing specific provisions. For example, decisions have been made to repeal legal provisions and systems related to reeducation through the labor and custodial education, which serve as important measures for implementing the reform. In line with the reform principle of ‘always establishing new systems before abolishing old ones while attaching equal importance to efforts in both respects’, repealed laws should be accompanied by corresponding institutional alternatives and arrangements. Fourth, codification should be promoted in legislative fields where conditions are ripe. Following the successful enactment of the *Civil Code*, work is currently underway to compile an Ecological and Environmental Code. Depending on the theoretical readiness, legislative foundations, practical needs, and levels of consensus, other codification projects may also be expanded to include projects such as a Basic Administrative Code and an Education Code. These codification initiatives are of great significance for the systematic integration of the achievements for further deepening reform comprehensively. Fifth, the interpretative function of law should be actively utilized. Through the legal interpretation, meanings and applicable bases can be clarified, the new content can be assigned to existing provisions, and dormant clauses can be activated. This enhances the applicability and operability of the legislation and allows laws to flexibly adapt to reform needs. Sixth, legal reviews and clean-ups should be conducted in a timely manner. Timely legal reviews — whether of laws enacted over a certain period or in specific areas or sectors — can support the systematic implementation of reform initiatives and better uphold the unity and authority of the socialist system of laws with Chinese characteristics.

D. Improving the Legislative Framework and Leveraging the Advantages of the Legislative System and Mechanisms

In accordance with the requirements of the *Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform*

Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization adopted at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, it is necessary to improve the legislative work structure where the Party committee leads, the NPC dominates, the government provides the support, and all parties participate, further clarifying the responsibilities across different sectors and stages to form a concerted force for the legislative work. The Party's leadership over the legislation must be upheld by incorporating legislative tasks into the Party's key decision-making agenda, exercising the overall planning and coordination, and making critical legislative decisions. The NPC and its Standing Committee must play a leading role in the legislation by ensuring the scientific project initiation, strengthening the drafting of the foundational and comprehensive legislation, coordinating major issues during the legislative process, and prudently determining the timing and conditions for the passage of laws. Government departments must make full use of their advantages in supporting the foundational legislative work. The broad and orderly participation from all sectors should be expanded by extensively soliciting opinions and pooling the public wisdom.

The legislative framework connects both the legislative system and the legislative working mechanisms. It is essential to leverage the overall strengths of China's legislative system and motivate all legislative entities to actively engage. Supporting and refining provisions must be strengthened to ensure that laws are effectively implemented. In recent years, local legislative bodies have explored the collaborative legislation in areas such as the watershed ecological protection and governance, environmental pollution prevention, and integrated regional development. These efforts have yielded valuable experience in the inter-jurisdictional coordination of the work, systems, and legislative texts. Regional legislative collaboration should continue to be explored to enhance its effectiveness. Legislative working mechanisms refer to the interactive relationships among different actors during the legislative process, and legislative procedures serve as the primary vehicle for these interactions. These mechanisms and procedures are essential institutional arrangements to ensure the democratic, efficient, and high-quality legislation. Continuous efforts must be made to improve and optimize legislative procedures, establish efficient and streamlined legislative channels that meet reform demands, and improve the quality and effectiveness of the legislation.

Practicing the whole-process people's democracy in the legislation is

not only a key expression of the people's role as masters of the country, but also an inherent requirement of the legislative process and a vital part of improving the legislative framework. Efforts must be made to enhance the platforms and channels for the democratic expression and public opinion during the legislation, improve mechanisms to gather and incorporate the public input, and build local legislative outreach offices. The public's orderly participation in the legislation must be expanded to ensure that the voices of the people are heard at every stage, that each law embodies the public opinion and the collective wisdom, and that the people experience fairness and justice in every legal institution.

(Translated by Liu Yan)

(Edited by Li Jiesi)