

China once again came under the global spotlight on October 18, when the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) opened in Beijing.

In a report delivered at the opening session, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the 18th CPC Central Committee, painted a promising outlook for the future of the world's second largest economy. He spelled out a two-stage development plan for the country in front of more than 2,300 delegates.

According to Xi, the CPC will basically realize socialist modernization in the first stage from 2020 to 2035 before developing China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful after another 15 years.

"China is now the world's second largest economy with increasing influence on the world stage. Its future development affects not only China itself, but also the world at large, as China is always committed to shared development and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind," said Shi Taifeng, a delegate to the 19th CPC National Congress.

New era thought

Theories come from practice and they, in turn, guide practice. This is a law through the course of the development of Chinese society and humanity as a whole.

A main function of the CPC's national congress is to summarize and advance the Party's theory on development. At this year's congress, the Party's new theories combined are defined as Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

Xi's report brings clarity to certain issues, including the overall goal and the plan of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics. More importantly, it specified that the leadership of the CPC is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the greatest strength of the system, calling the Party "the highest force for political leadership."

Xi said the thought should act as a guide to action for all Party members and for all Chinese people to achieve national rejuvenation, and should be adhered to and steadily

developed on a long-term basis.

What deeply impressed Shi was Xi's remark that socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. "This is a new historic juncture in China's development," Xi said.

"The judgment is a historic contribution made by the 19th CPC National Congress, as it is about the direction and path of China's future development," said Shi, who is also secretary of the CPC Ningxia Hui Autonomous Regional Committee. "Based on this, the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era delivers new theories, new thoughts and new strategies for China's development in all aspects. During the process, the strong leadership of the CPC is especially important."

In fact, the content of the thought can be found in previous speeches by Xi. It has already benefited China and beyond.

Xian Hui, a delegate to the 19th CPC National Congress and Chairwoman of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, sees the thought as a summary of the governance concepts, thoughts and strategies put forward by Xi in the past five years, as well as a development of the CPC's guiding ideologies of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development.

New mission

A correct comprehension of the connotations of the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is important for China and other members of the international community to understand the direction of China's development and seize opportunities arising from it.

Xi said in his report that this new era will be an era of building on past successes to further advance the cause of the CPC and the country, and of continuing in a new historical context to strive for the success of socialism with Chinese characteristics. "It will be an era of securing a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects, and of moving on to all-out efforts to build a great modern socialist country. It will be an era for the Chinese people of all ethnic groups to work together



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and work hard to create a better life for themselves and ultimately achieve common prosperity for everyone. It will be an era for all of us, the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation, to strive with one heart to realize the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation. It will be an era that sees China moving closer to center stage and making greater contributions to mankind," said Xi.

His remarks indicated that China will adhere to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics under the leadership of the CPC; it will realize the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation; and China's peaceful development, prosperity and revival are beneficial to humanity.

But the new era also brings challenges. The CPC has clearly realized that, as socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, the principal contradiction facing Chinese society has evolved to that between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life, while previously it was the gap between the ever-growing material and cultural needs of the people and underdeveloped social production.

The main reason for the CPC to redefine the principal social contradiction is that science and technology progress is transforming China from a big manufacturing country to a manufacturing power,

whose productivity is no longer "backward," said Zhou Tianyong, Deputy Director of the Institute for International Strategy at the Party School of the CPC Central Committee.

In his report, Xi explained the change. He said China has seen the basic needs of more than a billion people met, has basically made it possible for people to live decent lives, and will soon bring the building of a moderately prosperous society to successful completion. The needs to be met for the people to live a better life are increasingly broad. Not only have their material and cultural needs grown; their demands for democracy, the rule of law, fairness and justice, security and a better environment are increasing.



Party leaders attend the opening session of the 19th CPC National Congress

Xi said while China's overall productive capacity has significantly improved and in many areas leads the world, the problem is that the country's development is unbalanced and inadequate. This has become the main constraining factor in meeting the people's increasing needs for a better life.

In the eyes of some Western media outlets and individuals, the CPC has always restricted the development of democracy, the rule of law, and fairness and justice; yet Xi's report demonstrates that these values are pursued by the CPC.

The Party is aware of the changing social contradiction, and is trying to address it. That is why it was written into the report to be de-

liberated at the Party congress.

As the principal social contradiction has changed, so will the CPC's historical mission. The report noted that realizing the great dream of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the CPC's historical mission in the new era. The mission, according to the report, demands a great struggle with many new historical features, a new great project in Party building, and a great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

To carry out the great struggle is to safeguard the security and interests of the country and the people, maintain social stability and promote economic development.

The report said all Party members must do more to uphold Party leadership and the Chinese socialist system, and resolutely oppose all statements and actions that undermine, distort or negate them.

More must be done to protect the interests of the people and firmly oppose all moves that damage their interests or create a divide between the Party and the people. The Party must also devote its energies to the contemporary current of reform and innovation, and resolutely address deep-rooted problems, Xi said.

He also called for efforts to safeguard China's sovereignty, security and development interests, and to staunchly oppose all attempts to split China or undermine its ethnic unity, social harmony and stability. This includes guarding against all kinds of risks, and working diligently to prevail over every political, economic, cultural, social and national difficulty and challenge.

The report also stressed that the Party as a whole must continue to uphold and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics.

"The great struggle, great project, great cause and great dream are closely connected and are mutually reinforcing. We must see that as history progresses and the world undergoes profound changes, the Party remains always ahead of the times; that as history progresses and we respond to risks and tests at home and abroad, the Party remains always the backbone of the nation; and that as history progresses and we continue to uphold and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics, the Party remains always a powerful leadership core," said Wang Yongkang, Secretary of the CPC Xi'an Municipal Committee in northwest China's Shaanxi Province.

New plans

China has two Centenary Goals, which are to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all aspects by the time the ►►



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Delegates react to General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee Xi Jinping's report at the opening session of the 19th CPC National Congress



Delegates to the 19th CPC National Congress are interviewed by the media at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on October 19

CPC celebrates its centenary in 2021, and to turn China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious by the time the People's Republic of China celebrates its centenary in 2049.

In his report, Xi gave a more detailed roadmap for accomplishing the second goal.

The report noted that in the first stage from 2020 to 2035, China will build on the foundation created by the moderately prosperous society with a further 15 years of hard work to see that socialist modernization is basically realized. After efforts of another 15 years from 2035, the country will be fully modernized.

In the course of realizing the two Centenary Goals, China will further supply-side structural reform, accelerate the building of an innovative country, revitalize the countryside, promote regional economic integration, improve the socialist market economy system, and pursue opening up on all fronts.

"Unleashing and developing the productive force is a fundamental task of socialism. These measures will undoubtedly inspire creativity and vitality throughout society, and bring about more efficient, fairer and more sustainable development of higher quality," Shi said.

The report stressed the very purpose of developing socialist democracy is to give full expression to the will of the people, protect their rights and interests, spark their creativity, and strengthen institutional guarantees to ensure the people run the country.

It detailed the six aspects of China's socialist democracy: upholding the unity of Party leadership, the people running the country, and law-based governance; strengthening institutional guarantees to ensure the people run the country; giving play to the important role of socialist consultative democracy; advancing law-based governance; deepening reform of Party and government institutions and the system of government administration; and consolidating and developing a patriotic united front.

Xi said, "The political system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is a great creation of the CPC and the Chinese people. We have every confidence that we can give full play to the strengths and distinctive features of China's socialist democracy, and make China's contribution to the political advancement of mankind."

On people's livelihood, the report said "to lead the people to a better life is our Party's abiding goal."

It is the CPC's responsibility to make ev-

ery Chinese citizen share the development outcomes after the country made tremendous achievements in the economy. Toward this end, the report proposed measures such as giving priority to developing education, improving the quality of employment and raising incomes, strengthening the social security networks, eliminating poverty, and implementing the Healthy China initiative to improve people's wellbeing.

Also in the report is a decision to promote ecological progress and build a beautiful China. For this purpose, it proposed measures like promoting green development, solving prominent environmental problems, intensifying the protection of ecosystems, and reforming the environmental regulation system.

All these plans, without exception, embody China's new development concepts of innovation, coordination, eco-friendliness, openness and inclusiveness.

Shared future

The Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is not exclusive to China. It can benefit other countries that want to accelerate their own development. In the words of Xi, "The path, the theory, the system, and the culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics have kept developing, blazing a new trail for other developing countries to achieve modernization. It offers a new option for other countries and nations who want to speed up their development while preserving their independence; and it offers Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to solving the problems facing mankind."

Over the past few years, Xi has proposed to build a community of shared future for mankind on various international occasions, and it has also been incorporated in a UN resolution.

The world is undergoing profound development, transformation and adjustment, but peace and development remain the call of our day. Meanwhile, the trends of global multipolarity, economic globalization, IT application and cultural diversity are advancing; changes in the global governance system and the international order are speeding up; and international forces are becoming more balanced.

And yet, global economic growth lacks energy, the gap between rich and poor continues to widen, conflicts arise often in some regions, and unconventional security threats like terrorism, lack of cybersecurity and climate change continue to spread.

"We call on the people of all countries to work together to build a community of



The 19th CPC National Congress attracts more than 3,000 journalists from home and abroad

shared future for mankind, to build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity," Xi said in the report.

He also pointed out that to make new and greater contributions to humanity is the CPC's abiding mission.

Some people regard China's endeavors, like the Belt and Road Initiative and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, as challenges to the current international order. However, it can be seen from the report that the initiatives are consistent with China's adherence to the fundamental national policy of opening up and its commitment to actively promoting international cooperation in a responsible way.

China resolutely opposes trade protectionism, actively supports the multilateral trading system, and promotes the establishment of free trade areas and of an open and

inclusive world economy.

Meanwhile, China will continue to insist on the diplomatic principles of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit, and uphold its fundamental foreign policy goals of preserving world peace and promoting common development.

The report said that China will continue to play its part as a major and responsible country, take an active role in reforming and developing the global governance system, and keep contributing Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to global governance.

"China's development does not pose a threat to any other country. No matter what stage of development it reaches, China will never seek hegemony or engage in expansion," Xi said. ■

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