**Xi Jinping’s Speeches On Socialist Democracy and the System of People's Congresses**

**These are excerpts from Xi Jinping’s statements on upholding and improving the system of people’s congresses and ensuring that the people run the country between December 2012 and June 2023.**

**I**

We must uphold the idea set forth in the Constitution that all power in the country belongs to the people. We must extensively mobilize and organize the people to exercise state power through people’s congresses at all levels and manage state and social affairs and economic and cultural programs through various channels and in various ways in accordance with the Constitution and law; work together to build the country, develop the economy and achieve shared prosperity; and become the masters of the country, society and their own destiny. On the basis of the principle of democratic centralism, the system of state power and the standards of action defined in the Constitution, we should have people’s congresses exercise state power in a unified way; ensure that there is both an appropriate division of labor and mutual coordination between decision-making, executive and oversight powers; ensure that state organs exercise their powers and perform their duties in accordance with statutory mandates and procedures; and ensure that they organize all their programs in a unified and effective manner.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting of the people from all walks of life in Beijing to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the current Constitution (December 4, 2012)*

**II**

Sixty years ago, the founders of the People’s Republic of China, together with more than 1,200 deputies elected to the National People’s Congress (NPC), convened the First Session of the First NPC, and adopted the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, thus establishing our country’s fundamental political system—the system of people’s congresses. This was an epoch-making event in the political history of both China and the world, as China, a country with more than 5,000 years of history and a population numbering in the hundreds of millions, established a new type of political system in which the people run the country.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the National People’s Congress (September 5, 2014)*

**III**

China’s implementation of the system of people’s congresses represents a monumental innovation in the history of human political institutions, which has been made by the Chinese people. It reflects all the painful lessons drawn from China’s political life since modern times began. It is the result of Chinese society’s dramatic transformation and development over more than a century, and the inevitable choice made by the Chinese people who had finally become masters of the country and taken control of their own destiny.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the National People’s Congress (September 5, 2014)*

**IV**

The key to the people’s congress system’s strong vitality and marked advantages is that it is deeply rooted in the people. The name of our country and the names of our state organs at all levels start with “the people,” which indicates the basic orientation of China’s socialist government. The more than 2.6 million deputies to people’s congresses at various levels must faithfully represent the interests and will of the people, and participate in the exercise of state power according to law. State organs at all levels and their employees, regardless of their function, are ultimately working in service of the people. We must ensure that this basic orientation never wavers or weakens.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the National People’s Congress (September 5, 2014)*

**V**

In the design and development of a country’s political institutions, it is imperative to make sure that past and present, theory and practice, and form and content all cohere with one another. It is important to proceed according to national conditions and realities, keeping in mind our long-established heritage as well as the development path we’ve taken, the political experience we’ve gained, and the political principles we’ve formed, while also considering the demands and issues of the day. It is impossible to break with the past and inconceivable to expect that a political system can be just imported from somewhere else. Political systems are intended to regulate political relations, establish political order, promote national development, and maintain national stability. They cannot be judged in abstraction without regard for their specific social and political conditions, nor can they be homogenized or made to conform to a single model. There is a view that our system is deficient because it lacks some of the elements found in other countries’ systems, and that we should imitate these systems to make up for that deficiency. Others believe that the elements of our system that are absent from other systems are superfluous and should be scrapped. Both views are reductive, one-sided, and therefore incorrect.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the National People’s Congress (September 5, 2014)*

**VI**

The extent to which a political system may be considered democratic and effective, depends on whether leadership transitions are lawful and orderly; whether the people administer national, social, economic, and cultural affairs in accordance with the law; whether people can freely express their demands; whether various sectors of society can participate effectively in national political affairs; whether state decision-making is rational and democratic; whether talented people from various sectors can enter the systems of national leadership and administration through fair competition; whether the governing party exercises leadership over national affairs in accordance with the Constitution and the law; and whether the exercise of power is subject to effective constraints and supervision.

Bir siyasi sistemin ne ölçüde demokratik ve ne ölçüde etkili ve işler sayılabileceği, liderlik/hükümet geçişlerinin yasal ve düzenli olup olmadığına; halkın ulusal, sosyal, ekonomik ve kültürel işleri yasalara uygun olarak yönetip yönetmediğine; halkın taleplerini özgürce ifade edip edemediğine; toplumun çeşitli kesimlerinin devletin siyasi işlerine etkili bir şekilde katılıp katılamadığına; devletin karar alma mekanizmasının rasyonel ve demokratik olup olmadığına; çeşitli sektörlerden yetenekli kişilerin adil rekabet yoluyla ülkenin liderlik ve yönetim sistemlerine girip giremediğine; iktidar partisinin devlet işlerine liderliğini Anayasa ve yasalara uygun olarak yürütüp yürütmediğine ve iktidarın etkili kısıtlama ve denetime tabi olup olmadığına bağlıdır.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the National People’s Congress (September 5, 2014)*

**VII**

The key to developing socialist democracy is to amplify our strengths and unique qualities, rather than diminishing them. We must uphold the core role of the CPC in exercising overall leadership and coordinating overall initiatives, enhance its capacity to govern in a sound, democratic, and law-based manner, and ensure that the Party leads the people in governing the country effectively, so as to prevent the people from ever becoming leaderless and disunited. We must uphold the principle that all state power belongs to the people, guaranteeing not only law-based democratic elections but also law-based democratic decision-making, management, and oversight, so as to avoid a situation where politicians make wild election promises they will not deliver on in office. We must uphold and improve the system of CPC-led multiparty cooperation and political consultation, and strengthen cooperation and coordination between various social forces, so as to avoid endless political wrangling and factional strife between different parties. We must uphold and improve the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and consolidate socialist ethnic relations of equality, solidarity, mutual assistance, and harmony, so as to enable people of all ethnic groups to live in peace, work for a common cause, develop in harmony, and guard against estrangement and conflict. We must uphold and improve the system of community-level self-governance, develop community-level democracy, and ensure that the people directly exercise their democratic rights in accordance with the law, so as to prevent a situation in which the people have only nominal and superficial rights. We must uphold and improve the system and principles of democratic centralism and urge all state organs to enhance their capacity and efficiency, bolster coordination and cooperation, and forge strong synergy in national governance, so that we are not getting in each other’s way and wasting energy on internal rivalries.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the National People’s Congress (September 5, 2014)*

**VIII**

China’s state system—a people’s democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on an alliance of workers and farmers—must be manifested in the elections for CPC committees, people’s congresses, and CPPCC committees and the change of government. In the above-mentioned events, we must ensure the proportion of representatives of the masses and prevent Party and government officials and business leaders from crowding out the quota that should be given to the basic masses by deceptive means. In the socialist China led by the CPC, political power is not distributed according to status, wealth, or connections; it belongs only to the people.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the Seventh Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (January 6, 2017)*

**IX**

We are following the path of socialist political advancement with Chinese characteristics, and our people’s democracy is a whole-process democracy, which means that all major legislative decisions are based on procedures and subject to democratic deliberation, and each decision is produced by way of a rigorous democratic decision-making process.

*—Excerpt from remarks during an inspection in Gubei Community Center, Hongqiao Sub-district, Changning District, Shanghai (November 2, 2019)*

**X**

At the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee, it was clearly stated that law-based governance and law-based exercise of state power begin with compliance with the Constitution. Our emphasis on governing the country and exercising state power on the basis of the Constitution is fundamentally different from the so-called constitutionalism of the West and a clear distinction needs to be made. Governing the country and exercising state power on the basis of the Constitution includes remaining firmly committed to the leadership of the CPC, and upholding the state system of a people’s democratic dictatorship and the political system of people’s congresses, all of which are written in the Constitution.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the Central Conference on Comprehensively Advancing Law-based Governance (November 16, 2020)*

**XI**

Over the 60-plus years since its inception, and particularly over the 40-plus years of reform and opening up, the people’s congress system has provided an important institutional guarantee that has allowed our Party to lead the people in creating miracles of rapid economic development and long-term social stability.

Practice has shown that the people’s congress system is a sound system that accords with China’s national conditions and realities, embodies our country’s nature as a socialist nation, ensures that the people run the country, and provides safeguards for national rejuvenation. Created by the people under the CPC’s leadership, it is a great invention in the history of political institutions, and it is an entirely new political system of major importance in the history of China’s political development and even in that of the world.

*—Excerpts from a speech at the Central Conference on People’s Congress Work (October 13, 2021)*

**XII**

Under the CPC’s leadership, the people’s congress system adheres to the basic tenets of Marxist theory of the state, adapts to the state system of a people’s democratic dictatorship, and effectively ensures that China advances along the path of socialism. Under this system, all power of the state belongs to the people, the people’s position as masters of the country is protected to the greatest extent, and the unity between leadership by the CPC, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance is upheld, thus ensuring that China escapes the historical cycle of rise and fall of political orders. Under this system, major political relationships that influence the nation’s future are properly managed, social programs operate under the effective unified organization of the state, national unity and ethnic solidarity are maintained, and vigor, stability, and order prevail in the country’s political life.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the Central Conference on People’s Congress Work (October 13, 2021)*

**XIII**

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the Central Committee has implemented a national rejuvenation strategy against a backdrop of global change on a scale which has not been seen in a century. Taking into account the strategic requisites of upholding and improving the Party’s leadership and consolidating the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, it has continued to advance theoretical and practical innovations in the people’s congress system and put forward new concepts, ideas, and requirements, which are focused on the following aspects.

First, we must uphold the CPC’s leadership. We must uphold the core role of the Party in exercising overall leadership and coordinating the efforts of all sides, uphold the Central Committee’s authority and its centralized, unified leadership, and ensure that our Party’s theories, guidelines, principles, policies, decisions, and plans are fully and effectively implemented in the work of the state. We should provide the support and safeguards that bodies of state power need to carry out their work in accordance with the Constitution and the law and in an active, independent, and coordinated manner. We must strengthen and improve the leadership of our Party so that we become better at using statutory procedures to turn the Party’s propositions into the will of the state and to ensure that candidates recommended by Party organizations assume leadership positions in bodies of state power, and so that we become better at using bodies of state power to exercise the Party’s leadership over the country and society. This will allow us to safeguard the authority of the Party and country and uphold the unity of the entire Party and country.

Second, we must use a system of institutions to ensure the people run the country. We must remain committed to a people-centered approach, uphold the principle that all power of the state belongs to the people, and support and ensure the people’s exercise of state power through people’s congresses. We should improve democratic institutions, create more forms of democracy, and expand channels for democracy, and we should protect the people’s rights to equal participation and development, so as to promote a whole-process people’s democracy that is broader, fuller, and more robust.

Third, we must advance law-based governance on all fronts. We must follow a path and develop a system of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics and build a socialist nation under the rule of law. We should carry forward the spirit of socialist rule of law, advance all undertakings and initiatives of the country in accordance with the Constitution and the law, safeguard social fairness and justice, respect and protect human rights, and make sure that all of the country’s initiatives are on a legal footing.

Fourth, we must uphold democratic centralism. We must ensure that the people exercise state power in a unified manner through people’s congresses and that people’s congresses at all levels are formed through democratic elections, are responsible to the people, and are subject to their oversight; that administrative, supervisory, adjudicatory, and procuratorial organs at all levels are created by people’s congresses, accountable to them, and subject to their oversight; that there is both an appropriate division of labor and mutual coordination between decision-making, executive and oversight powers; that state organs exercise their powers and perform their duties in accordance with statutory mandates and procedures; and that local governments fully exert their initiative and enthusiasm under the unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, so as to ensure that all undertakings are advanced under the unified and effective organization of the state.

Fifth, we must keep to the path of socialist political development with Chinese characteristics. The core of maintaining the unity between leadership by the Party, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance is upholding the CPC’s leadership. The people’s congress system is a foundational political system for upholding this unity; it ensures that the CPC leads the people in effectively governing the country in accordance with the law. We can learn from other countries’ political achievements, but we will never blindly copy Western political systems and models.

Sixth, we must work to modernize China’s system and capacity for governance. The people’s congress system is an important component of the system of Chinese socialism and of China’s system of governance. We must uphold and improve the system of institutions through which the people run the country, continue to improve the institutions, standards, and procedures of socialist democracy, and do better at translating our institutional strengths into effective governance.

*—Excerpts from a speech at the Central Conference on People’s Congress Work (October 13, 2021)*

**XIV**

After our Party’s 18th National Congress in 2012, we deepened our understanding of the laws governing the development of democracy and put forward the important concept of whole-process people’s democracy. Whole-process people’s democracy in China has not only a full complement of institutional procedures but full participation in practice. China’s state system is a people’s democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and farmers; its system of state power is the system of people’s congresses; and its basic political systems are the system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC, the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and the system of primary-level self-governance. Through these, China has consolidated and developed the broadest possible patriotic united front, it has formed a comprehensive, extensive, and well-coordinated system of institutions that guarantee the people run the country, and it has put into place diverse, open, and orderly channels for democracy. This allows the entire people to engage in law-based democratic elections, consultations, decision making, management, and oversight and to manage state and economic, cultural, and social affairs in various ways and forms and in accordance with the law. China’s whole-process people’s democracy successfully integrates process-oriented and results-oriented democracy, procedural and substantive democracy, direct and indirect democracy, and democracy of the people and the will of the state. It is a democracy that covers every link and every sector in every way possible—democracy at its most extensive, most genuine, and most effective. We will continue to promote the development of whole-process people’s democracy, seeing that the principle of the people running the country is embodied explicitly and practically in the Party’s national governance policies and measures, in all aspects and levels of the work of Party and state institutions, and in the efforts to realize people’s aspirations for a better life.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the Central Conference on People’s Congress Work (October 13, 2021)*

**XV**

The system of people’s congresses is an important institutional vehicle for realizing China’s whole-process people’s democracy. Under the leadership of the CPC, we must expand the people’s orderly political participation and strengthen legal protection for human rights to ensure that the people enjoy extensive rights and freedoms as prescribed by law. We must ensure that the people are able to exercise their electoral rights in accordance with the law, and that people’s congress deputies are elected democratically. We must see to it that the people’s rights to information, participation, expression, and oversight are fulfilled in all aspects of the work of people’s congresses, and that the people’s voice can be heard in every stage of the work of the Party and the state from decision-making to implementation and oversight. We must improve democratic platforms and vehicles of people’s congresses through which the will of the people can be expressed, refine working mechanisms for absorbing popular sentiment and drawing together the wisdom of the people, and advance consultations carried out by people’s congresses, especially legislative consultations. In this way, we will see that social conditions and popular opinion are integrated as part of the fundamental interests of the majority. We should enhance our study of and public communications on Chinese socialist democracy and the people’s congress system, elucidate the features and strengths of China’s political system, and share our story of democracy.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the Central Conference on People’s Congress Work (October 13, 2021)*

**XVI**

The election of deputies is the foundation of the system of people’s congresses and an important manifestation of the people acting as masters of the country. We must closely integrate democratic elections, consultations, decision-making, management, and oversight, and continue to develop whole-process people’s democracy, so as to better ensure that the people run the country. We must strengthen oversight of the entire process of election and resolutely investigate and punish misconduct, so as to ensure that elections are conducted in a clean and upright manner and that the election results are satisfactory to the people.

*—Excerpt from a speech when voting to elect new deputies to the district people’s congress in Beijing (November 5, 2021)*

**XVII**

We must strengthen the institutions through which the people run the country. We must uphold and improve our country’s foundational, basic, and important political systems, expand democratic channels, and diversify the forms of democracy, so as to ensure that people participate in various ways in the management of state, economic, cultural, and social affairs in accordance with the law. We will support and ensure the people’s exercise of state power through people’s congresses, and we will ensure that people’s congresses at all levels are formed through democratic elections, responsible to the people, and subject to their oversight. We will support and ensure that people’s congresses and their standing committees lawfully exercise the powers of enacting laws, conducting oversight, making decisions, and appointing and removing officials. We will improve the system under which people’s congresses conduct oversight of administrative, supervisory, adjudicatory, and procuratorial organs, and we will uphold the unity, sanctity, and authority of the law. We will see that deputies to people’s congresses are better able to carry out their work and that they strengthen ties with the general public. We will improve working mechanisms for drawing on public opinion and pooling the wisdom of the people and ensure that local legislative outreach offices are well-run. We will intensify reform and development of trade unions, Chinese Communist Youth League organizations, women’s federations, and other people’s organizations and give full play to their role as bridges connecting our Party and the people. We will follow a Chinese path of human rights development, actively participate in global human rights governance, and promote all-around advancement of human rights.

*—Excerpt from a report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (October 16, 2022)*

**XVIII**

We must strengthen confidence in our political system, firmly stay on the path of socialist political advancement with Chinese characteristics, and uphold and improve the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We must remain committed to the leadership by the CPC, to the state system of people’s democratic dictatorship, and to the political system of people’s congresses, all of which are mandated by the Constitution. Under no circumstance will we copy the models or practices of other countries.

*—Excerpt from an article “Writing a New Chapter in the Practice of China’s Constitution in the New Era: Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Enactment of the Current Constitution” (December 19, 2022)*

**XIX**

We must actively develop whole-process people’s democracy, uphold the unity between the leadership by the CPC, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance, and improve the system of institutions through which the people run the country. All these will help fulfill the will of the people, protect their rights and interests, and fully inspire their enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the First Session of the 14th National People’s Congress (March 13, 2023)*

**XX**

The integration of the basic tenets of Marxism with the best of China’s traditional culture has enabled us to retain both the theoretical and cultural initiative, effectively applying it to the path, theory, and system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. From this perspective, we can observe that the systems of people’s congresses and political consultation established by our Party reflect the Chinese concept of the people being the foundation of the state, the idea of universal participation in governance, the tradition of collaborative and consultative governance, and the political wisdom of being all-inclusive and seeking common ground while setting differences aside. China’s implementation of a system of regional ethnic autonomy within a unitary state, rather than a federal system, is adapting itself to the underlying development trend of the Chinese nation toward internal cohesion and unity amid diversity. It also carries on the Chinese tradition of striving for great unity in the country to see all regions sharing common customs and practices amid rich diversity and all people coming together as one family. The integration of the basic tenets of Marxism with the best of China’s traditional culture is yet another manifestation of our commitment to freeing the mind. It allows us to fully harness the precious resources of fine traditional Chinese culture to explore future-oriented theoretical and institutional innovations within a broader cultural framework.

*—Excerpt from a speech at the Meeting on Cultural Inheritance and Development (June 2, 2023)*

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