

Comment

DAILY

中国日报

EDITORIAL

Comment extension

LONGER LIFE EXPECTANCY AND an aging population, extending the viable choice for the government. Plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the Party of China it was agreed there is an issue.

The vice-minister of human resources and labor on this on Tuesday, he said that the content and the policy will be published and implementation, which will be in different professions.

Necessary for the government to adjust its range of an increasingly aging society. In China, the senior residents above the age of 60 million, about 14.8 percent of the total population this year, and the figure is expected to reach 20 percent by the year 2020 and more than 400 million people will account for 30 percent of the

Advanced age will yield multiple benefits such as pensioners, reducing the rapid growth of workers and keeping the labor-age population for stable economic development. Policy is drawn up there will need to take into the repercussions for workers and can be careful consideration of the measures to ensure that the new policy does not affect the lives of workers in different jobs.

Workers in the Chinese mainland in the face of labor regulations, men who do not work on certain risky occupational positions and women at 45, while those male workers with serious diseases may retire at 50. These measures are not easy to find out, may affect their retirement to a later age. Government employees and other white-collar workers need to be solicited before a policy is implemented to retirement to a later age.

It is possible to please all, but it should be as fair as possible to the most. It will hopefully help offset the negative impact of an aging society also need to be fair.

Celebrate cities

At the session, a UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on human settlements, designating Oct 31 as World Cities Day.

It provides a good opportunity for countries to cooperate on urbanization and jointly promote sustainable urban development, said the Daily on Wednesday.

World Cities Day dates back to Oct 31, 2010 on the closing day of the World Expo. A day be designated as a special day to share ideas and practices for sustainable urban development at the Shanghai Expo.

Urbanization is also the history of human civilization. Urbanization is a universal trend as well as for countries to advance modernization. Statistics show the income level of a country is related to its rate of urbanization.

Statistics, more than 50 percent of the world's population live in cities, and it has been estimated that the world will witness 3.1 billion new people and 2.9 billion will come from

Developed countries show that when the urbanization reaches 40 to 60 percent, social and economic face a series of challenges, such as air pollution and degradation of the environment.

In the world, the fate of a country's development hinges on whether the urbanization process can be

LIU YANDONG

Join our hands to develop the Confucius Institutes

Editor's Note: The 8th Confucius Institute Conference was held in Beijing from December 7 to 8, 2013. Liu Yandong, vice-premier of the State Council of China and chair of the Council of Confucius Institute Headquarters, attended the opening ceremony and delivered a speech which is presented here in full.

Dear Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends: Good Morning! Chinese and foreign delegates from Confucius Institutes across the world are assembled here today for the grand opening of the 8th Confucius Institute Conference. I share your delight and excitement. Today happens to be the "Great Snow" on the Chinese lunar calendar. As the proverb goes, a heavy snowfall is indicative of a year of bumper harvest. This is a sign that the great cause of Confucius Institutes will be even more flourishing, and the people-to-people exchanges between China and other nations will be more productive. Here, on behalf of Chinese government and Confucius Institute Headquarters, I would like to extend our warmest welcome and greetings to friends all over the world.

I returned from my visit to the United States and Ethiopia just one week ago. When I was in the US, I co-chaired the 4th round of China-US High Level Consultation on People-to-People Exchange with US Secretary of State John Kerry. A series of new programs has been identified for further exchanges, and the continued support to Confucius Institutes features prominently on the list. I also visited the Confucius Institute at George Washington University. I was impressed by its beautiful facilities and the eagerness of young students there to learn Chinese. When I was in Ethiopia, I visited the Addis Ababa Confucius Institute and felt in person how the local people were opening their arms to this new Institute. The highlight was my meeting with President Mulatu Teshome. As part of our friendly and extensive discussions, he recounted in fluent Chinese his days as a student at Peking University and Beijing Language and Culture University. I was pleasantly surprised and profoundly touched.

Over the last few years, I have been to over 20 Confucius Institutes. Wherever I went, I could feel the strong emotional bond that ties the local communities with the Confucius Institute. With the growing presence of the Confucius Institutes, seeds of communication, understanding, harmony and friendship are sowed. They have taken root and now are blossoming and yielding fruits. Chinese language and culture are introduced to countries of the world and in turn their languages and cultures have also found a ready audience in China. Splendid chapters are being written in the book of people-to-people exchanges between China and the world.

With the concerted effort of Chinese and foreign partners, Confucius Institutes enjoyed laudable achievements in the past year, especially in four aspects. 1). **The formulation and execution of the mid and long-term plan.** The Confucius Institute Development Plan (2012-2020) was published on the basis of extensive consultation with Chinese and foreign sides, laying out the overall goals and priorities over the mid and long terms. So far, Confucius Institutes around the world have drafted or finalized their own development plan and are making encouraging progress as they go along to implement it. 2). **New breakthroughs in building teaching faculties.** The Headquarters has been supporting a number of overseas universities in establishing an academic major

in humanities and social sciences. 4). **Piloting the concept of Confucius Institute Regional Center.** The Headquarters this year established the first Confucius Institute Regional Center in the US as it has the largest number of Confucius Institutes. Preparations are underway for opening a Latin American Confucius Institute Regional Center in Santiago, Chile. This new initiative has the potential to deliver multiple benefits. It facilitates information sharing and resource pooling among Confucius Institutes in the same geographic region and serves as a coordinated platform for interactions with local governments and diverse sectors in the communities. It can also boost the teaching quality of Confucius Institutes. Going forward, we will re-examine our initial experiences and establish more such centers as we see fit to better serve Confucius Institutes in different geographic regions.

It has been nine years since the first Confucius Institute was founded in 2004. Now 440 Confucius Institutes and 646 Confucius Classrooms are established in 120 countries and regions throughout five continents, totaling over one thousand. However it all started from scratch. Over the years this cause has evolved and scaled up in the number of people it touches as well in the academic quality it delivers. The worldwide desire to learn Chinese is ably served by this great endeavor. In the meantime, the friendship and mutual understanding between people in China and elsewhere are advanced. This impressive outcome would not have been possible without the hard work and perseverance of you in the audience, without the local host universities and communities where Confucius Institutes find their homes. I would like to take this opportunity to express my most sincere thanks to all of you here. May I also ask you to send my best regards to all of those you know who have supported the development of the Confucius Institute.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

This year marks the 35th anniversary of China's reform and opening up. 35 years ago, China made a historic choice. Since then, a land of ancient heritage has been reinvigorated, and a country home to 1/5 of the world's population integrated into the community of nations. China's economy has expanded 142 times in last 35 years, per capita income in urban and rural areas up 71 and 59 times respectively. Recently, at the 3rd Plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, comprehensive review was conducted to take stock of the experience and achievements since the beginning of the reform and top level designs and systematic deployments were formulated to deepen the reform in new historical circumstances. The renewed agenda covers economic, political, cultural, societal, ecological and other spheres. Close to 300 major reform measures are specified in 60 chapters in 16 categories. It is unprecedented in its scope and resolve. The guiding objective of this round of reform is to develop and improve the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, and modernize China's governance system and capability. The centerpiece is the deepening of the market economic system reform to properly address the relationship between the government and the market with the market playing the decisive role in resource allocation and the government better fulfilling its due roles. We will accelerate the socialist market economy, advance political democracy, promote nourishing cultures, foster social harmony and build ecological civilization so that all people will benefit from development inclusively in a greater and more equitable way.

have become entities of shared interests and even shared destiny. The realization of the Chinese Dream will bring about not just wellbeing for the people in China, but also greater opportunities for world prosperity and win-win cooperation. The people of China hope to achieve their Chinese Dream while joining hands with people around the world to achieve the world dream of global peace and prosperity.

The Confucius Institute as an effective vehicle for cultural exchanges and an important platform for reinforcing international friendships is where the Chinese Dream, the dreams of all countries and the world dream come to converge. On May 30, President Xi Jinping wrote a congratulatory letter for the establishment of Confucius Institute at the University of California Davis in the US. President Xi stated that learning languages and cultures enhances mutual understanding and friendship and contributes to state relations. He urged the involved parties to engage in close cooperation to make the Confucius Institute a successful endeavor to add to education exchanges and bilateral relationship between the two countries. President Xi's words are more than kind wishes intended for the Confucius Institute at UC Davis alone. They should also resonate with all Institutes as encouragement and expectations. The government and people of China will continue the unwavering support to Confucius Institutes.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

Before the conference was opened, the Council of Confucius Institute Headquarters had a very productive two hour meeting. Chinese and international members of the Council commended the work in the past year and the plan for next year. They also unanimously approved the theme for this year's conference and the topics for the concurrent sessions. They hold the view that this year's conference is different from the previous ones in that it highlights successful case studies and experience sharing with a sharp focus on teaching quality. I believe the conference will be a resounding success with your participation, serving as an important milestone as Confucius Institutes embrace a new era of development. Next I would like to make a few observations regarding the year in front of us:

1. Strengthen Chinese language teaching and enlarge coverage. The mission of Confucius Institutes is first and foremost to meet the needs of foreigners interested in learning Chinese language. The scope of Chinese language teaching must be scaled up with attention to quality assurance. Special effort must be made to train and develop head teachers. Support needs to be given to more foreign universities so that they can launch new academic majors to recruit local students as future Chinese language teachers. Production of effective teaching materials needs to step up, and great support should be given to Confucius Institutes to develop their own localized textbooks that are informative, engaging and adaptable. Modern information technologies such as web based techniques and digital media must be leveraged to lead the way in innovative teaching methodologies. In the last two years, MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) has become a global trend. Many education specialists believe we are in for a revolution as it has the potential to make premium education resources universally accessible, multiply the output of teaching faculty and engage the interest of learners. Confucius Institutes must seize the opportunity presented by MOOC as a way to deliver higher quality and more accessible Chinese language teaching to a wider range of potential learners.

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will provide a good opportunity for countries to cooperate on urbanization and jointly advance sustainable urban development, said the Daily on Wednesday.

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Statistics show, more than 50 percent of the world live in cities, and it has been estimated that by 2050 the world will witness 3.1 billion new urban dwellers, among them 2.9 billion will come from developing countries.

Developed countries show that when urbanization reaches 40 to 60 percent, social and economic will face a series of challenges, such as air pollution, degradation of the environment. In the 21st century world, the fate of a country's development and the future of humanity hinges on whether the ongoing process of urbanization can be

managed well. For the woes cities are facing today, different remedies, and sharing experiences with one another would illuminate the way ahead.

China is on the fastest and biggest urbanization drive, and it wants to share its audacious ideas and experiences in this regard with the rest of the world. World Cities on the road to people-oriented and quality-

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Promoting China's people-to-people exchanges with the world is an important dimension in the overall reform agenda. China will further open up culturally to present its culture to the global arena. China is also eager to learn from other countries and hope to bring in talented people, technologies and management expertise for the benefit of cultural development. We will encourage social organizations, Chinese companies and other organizations to take part in the development of Confucius Institutes and people-to-people exchanges. The high level commitment and full support of the Chinese government is bound to create new impetus for Confucius Institutes.

At the moment, the people of China are rallying around the Chinese Dream, a vision for the full achievement of a well-off society and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. President Xi Jinping laid out that Chinese Dream is a dream for better education, job security, higher income, dependable social securities, better health care, decent housing and a sound ecosystem. The pursuit of a happy life is an aspiration shared by people across China and beyond. An ancient Chinese axiom "all living creatures grow together without harming one another; all ways run parallel without interfering with one another" captures aptly this common desire. In today's global village, countries in the world are so closely knit that they

...people of China hope to achieve their Chinese Dream while joining hands with people around the world to achieve the world dream of global peace and prosperity.

The Confucius Institute as an effective vehicle for cultural exchanges and an important platform for reinforcing international friendships is where the Chinese Dream, the dreams of all countries and the world dream come to converge. On May 30, President Xi Jinping wrote a congratulatory letter for the establishment of Confucius Institute at the University of California Davis in the US. President Xi stated that learning languages and cultures enhances mutual understanding and friendship and contributes to state relations. He urged the involved parties to engage in close cooperation to make the Confucius Institute a successful endeavor to add to education exchanges and bilateral relationship between the two countries. President Xi's words are more than kind wishes intended for the Confucius Institute at UC Davis alone. They should also resonate with all Institutes as encouragement and expectations. The government and people of China will continue the unwavering support to Confucius Institutes.

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2. Strive for greater sophistication in people-to-people exchanges. As China becomes increasingly visible on the international scene, there is growing desire throughout the world to see China in an authentic and unbiased way. The Confucius Institute as the platform of diverse cultural exchanges has unique advantages in presenting China as what it really is. Confucius China Studies Program will continue to run to recruit young scholars to come to China to study towards doctoral degrees in social sciences and humanities. "Understanding China" Fellowship and "Young Leaders" Fellowship will be offered to fund research and study tours to China. Support will be given to Confucius Institutes and their host universities to encourage the translation and publication of works on Chinese culture, and to a number of research oriented Confucius Institutes to engage in academically rigorous Chinese studies. Confucius Institutes are also expected to facilitate the transfer of cultural achievements from foreign countries to China and recommend talents, technologies and management expertise for China to consider and adopt as part of two way exchange to promote the cultural inclusiveness and diversity.

I want to share a story with you. In April last year, I attended the unveiling ceremony of the Confucius Institute at the University of Ulster in the UK.

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more space for public participation in the environmental decision-making process.

Although the authorities have institutionalized public participation in government decision-making process and provided legal protection to private property, in practice public participation, particularly at the local level, is still highly contested and negotiated.

So it is in the interest of the government and all stakeholders to inform and involve the public in a systematic way at an early stage of the decision-making process and prevent situations where the public has no other option but to take to the streets with the potential for violent clashes between protesters and law enforcement officers.

The issue has been in focus at the current European Union-China Environmental Governance Program, a multimillion-euro cooperation program between the European Commission and the Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection. The overall lessons learned from a European context show that public participation is an important element for the successful environmental planning process.

Going beyond just simple communication and provision of information, international experiences show that the most successful and effective examples of public participation involve the public as a partner in the decision-making process, leading to further empowerment of the public in the long term. Techniques available for effective public participation in environmental planning have evolved over the past two to three decades and

or to provide a transparent and non-aligned viewpoint on various issues, including environmental planning. "Future Search" is a technique meant to shed light on a common problem to generate visions about the possible "future" and to jointly discuss how these visions can be realized.

Similarly, but by taking a long-term approach, the method of "Scenario Analysis" anticipates future developments of society and evaluates strategies for responding to these developments. The "Consensus Conference" developed in Denmark has been used to assess emerging technologies (such as nuclear energy or genetic modification) and their impacts. It is, therefore, relevant for environmental planning and assessment.

And "Deliberative Opinion Polling" is especially suitable for situations where the public may have little knowledge or information about a certain issue.

Nevertheless, decision-makers in many countries, including Europe and China, still hold the outdated opinion that public participation is either an obstacle to implementation of large projects or simply a matter of effective communication and information dissemination. This attitude is based on the belief that "authorities" already know what the best solution is and the public needs only to be convinced. In this case, it is not a matter of participation but one of persuasion.

Regardless of the participation method applied, a number of generally accepted principles for effective participation include an early involvement of

and even cancellation of projects can be avoided. Very importantly, through the constructive input of the public, "blind spots" in project planning overlooked by experts can be identified and addressed in time.

The EU-China Environmental Governance Program identified specific steps that could be taken to meet the needs of the plenum document and to close the gap with international standards and practices of public participation. They include adopting cutting-edge methods and instruments for public participation and using them in the Chinese context.

Capacity building is also necessary for local planning in China and for environmental authorities to improve their understanding of the conditions and procedures of practicing the chosen participation methods. Training of expert facilitators, who understand the importance of maintaining neutrality in public involvement sessions and are skilled in implementing the participatory methods and techniques, is another important element.

Finally, participatory stakeholder workshops should be held at the national and provincial levels on emerging issues related to controversial technologies to address long-term environmental challenges, such as nuclear waste management, shale gas fracking or carbon capture and storage.

Patrick Schroeder works for EU SWITCH-Asia Network Facility, and Li Wanxin is a professor at the City University of Hong Kong and Tsinghua University.

JOIN: Write new chapters in people-to-people exchanges

FROM PAGE 8

The Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland Jonathan Bell made a request. His wife's great grandfather Joseph Hunter came to Yingkou, China with his wife in the spring of 1869. Mrs. Hunter died from a disease the next year. But Mr. Hunter continued to practice and teach medicine in northeastern China for as long as 15 years before he passed away in Shanghai. Mr. Bell wondered whether China could assist him in the search of the records of Mr. Hunter's life and work in China and the location of Mrs. Hunter's burial place. I instructed Hanban to follow up on his request. Hanban worked together with Shenyang Normal University and Dalian University of Foreign Languages for this assignment. It took a dedicated search team more than six months to find the location of Mr. Hunter's clinic and residence in Yingkou. But unfortunately the tomb of Mrs. Hunter has not been located yet. Mr. Bell as a Chairman of the Board of the Confucius Institute at the University of Ulster is here at this conference. What this story shows is that Confucius Institutes and the exchanges they have made indeed can create miracles where strangers are connected and hearts are joined.

3. Make Confucius Institute a cultural brand to enhance traction and adhesion. Confucius Institutes belong to China and even more so the world that have become an instantly recognizable brand in cultural exchanges between China and other countries. Frequent and engaging cultural events are the hallmark of a successful Confucius Institute. In recent years, Confucius Institutes' cultural events combining Chinese and local elements have been quite a sensa-

tion in their communities. Next year we are going to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Confucius Institute, which I believe features prominently on the calendar. Many Confucius Institutes have proposed the creation of Confucius Institute Day as a common occasion for festivity. In the second half of this year, the Headquarters staged events marking the Confucius Institute Day in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium and Slovenia, which are well received by the local communities. These trial runs have given us a great amount of experiences for the global roll out of Confucius Institute Day next year. We will adhere to the principal of voluntary participation and frugality to organize Confucius Institute Day events that reflect local uniqueness as a way to enhance the profile and influence of Confucius Institutes and grow the sense of identity and belonging in our big family.

4. Strengthen administration to guarantee the development of the Confucius Institute. As a Chinese proverb says: a flock of geese will not fly without their head bird; a formation of foot soldiers will not be brave without their general. The development of an excellent administrative and managerial team especially one with topnotch directors is foundational to the success of Confucius Institutes. Chinese and local Confucius Institutes directors have been working conscientiously and made valuable contributions to their Confucius Institutes' growth. Now confronted with new challenges, we will continue to prioritize the development of Confucius Institute directors by institutionalizing and standardizing the training requirement. We will also facilitate the exchanges and collaboration between directors from

different countries. Confucius Institute directors are expected to become more able and skilled to serve at their leadership position and be a role model. Following the Confucius Institute Development Plan, the Headquarters is preliminarily considering the establishment of the Academy of Confucius Institute Director for rotated training of directors and head teachers. The Academy will also be a research facility to host foreign sinologist coming to China. The Academy will have a council as its decision making body and hire leading Chinese and foreign experts as its trainers. I believe with the full support from the university presidents, Confucius Institute directors and all parties, the Academy will be first class and become a home to Confucius Institutes in China and a center of excellence for cultural studies and people-to-people exchanges.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,
Confucius Institutes are the fruits born out of sincere cooperation between Chinese and foreign partners. It is an unprecedented innovation in China's history of international exchanges. I want to conclude by quoting from the *Book of Changes*: If two persons are of the same mind, their sharpness can cut through metal. Let's join our hands and unite our passion and perseverance to make the Confucius Institute an even greater success to promote international exchanges and contribute to the prosperity and cultural advancement for the human society.

A new year is just around the corner, I would like to give you my best wishes. I wish you a happy new year, good health and prosperity. Please also send my best regards to teachers and students at your Confucius Institutes or Confucius Classrooms.

drive? TWO strategies can be dialed for that. The first is the wide use of structuralism by these countries in the 1950s and 1960s, which made the government's role supreme and ignored the role of the market in resource allocation. As a result, the heavy industries built with government resources performed poorly, further widening the gap between the developing and the advanced economies. The second is the prevalence of neoliberalism in the 1970s and 1980s that overemphasized the market's role and neglected that of the government in resource allocation, creating a far worse crisis.

The few economies that realized their development goals have one thing in common: they built an efficient market and an effective government at the same time.

Only an efficient market can establish an efficient price signal, which leads to full and free competition. And only an effective government can improve the infrastructure to promote technological innovation and upgrade industries, which are prerequisites for economic development. In short, the market and the government both play key roles in a country's economic development.

An effective government is extremely important for countries in transition such as China. First, the lifting of preferential policies for enterprises and industries that do not enjoy any comparative advantage could lead to their collapse. And only an effective government will be able to maintain such policies. Second, countries in transition usually invest all their financial resources in advanced capital-intensive industries, which for want of finance and logistics are plagued by poor infrastructure. And only an effective government can coordinate and complete the superstratum system to help the market realize stable and healthy development in the long run.

China's economic development history since the opening-up in the late 1970s proves the importance of the government. In the initial stages, the government applied a dual-track system, providing certain protection measures and subsidies to large State-owned enterprises, and allowing the market (with the help of private capital) to play a key role in labor-intensive and small-scale traditional industries.

Also, the government has made continuous efforts to improve the infrastructure and provide more institutional guarantees. As a result, the Chinese economy has seen an average growth of 9.8 percent in the past 34 years, which is unprecedented in history.

But at the same time, the rapid growth has exacted a heavy price: widening income gap and corruption, making deepening of reforms all the more important.

China is no longer a country of extreme poverty. In 1978, China's per capita income was only \$155. But it reached \$6,100 in 2012, making China a middle-income country. So the government needs to change some of the preferential policies and encourage more competition. Which means the market should play a more important role in the economy and the government should take stricter measures to protect property rights and the environment, and to solve external issues. If the relationship between an effective government and efficient market can be properly handled, China will enjoy smooth economic development with 8 percent annual growth for another 20 years and enter the high-income group.

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