

Historical Witness to Ethnic Equality, Unity and Development in Xinjiang

The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China

September 2015, Beijing

First Edition 2015

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Foreword

China is a unified and multiethnic country. Xinjiang has been home to several of China's ethnic peoples since ancient times. Over the long course of history the ethnic groups in Xinjiang have maintained close relations with each other, trusting and depending on each other and sharing weal and woe together. They have worked hard to build Xinjiang, to safeguard border stability, national unification and ethnic unity, and to promote the development and progress of China.

Under the unified state leadership, implementing regional autonomy in areas where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities is a basic political system of China. It is an important step on the correct path towards resolving ethnic problems in a Chinese manner and an institutional guarantee that the path will be followed. Implementing the system of ethnic regional autonomy in Xinjiang is a measure that accords with the prevailing situation in China and with the realities of life and the needs of Xinjiang. Doing so has acted as a bulwark to national unification and to the equality, unity and development of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang.

Since the peaceful liberation of Xinjiang in 1949, and the founding of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in 1955 in particular, Xinjiang has seen continued improvement in its standard of living, comprehensive progress in various areas, stability in the overall situation of society, and positive momentum for development. All this has been made possible by strong support from the state and other parts of the country, as well as by the concerted efforts of all of Xinjiang's ethnic groups.

In 2010 and 2014, the central government held two meetings to discuss work related to Xinjiang, resulting in a steady improvement of the guiding principles and strategies for governing Xinjiang, ushering in a new era in the economic and social development of the region.

The development and progress witnessed in Xinjiang has been achieved by all the peoples of China - including the various ethnic groups in Xinjiang - working together in pursuit of a common goal. It gives a vivid expression to the progress made by China's ethnic groups towards achieving common prosperity, and marks the successful implementation of China's system of ethnic regional autonomy in Xinjiang.

I. Implementing the System of Ethnic Regional Autonomy

Located in China's northwest, Xinjiang was documented as forming part of China's territories as early as 60 BC, and went on to become an integral part of the unified and multiethnic country. In light of the actual local conditions, the central governments in successive dynastic periods adopted various different forms of governance in this region. During the process of creating and developing a unified and multiethnic country, all the ethnic peoples of Xinjiang developed close ties and became integrated as one.

Known for their hard working, wisdom and bravery, the ethnic groups of Xinjiang created a distinctive multiethnic culture, which became an important part of overall Chinese culture. Xinjiang also became a key gateway connecting China with the rest of the world and disseminating diverse cultures.

After the First Opium War (1840-1842), China was gradually reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, and the ethnic peoples of Xinjiang suffered oppression under the foreign aggressors, feudal forces and exploiting classes, falling to the bottom of society.

By the late 1940s, most of the arable land in the farming areas of southern Xinjiang, Ili and Urumqi had been seized by a handful of landlords, leaving very little to the majority of peasants. In the remote villages inhabited by Uygur peasants in southern Xinjiang, a small number of serf owners' estates existed in relatively complete form. The overlords of these estates owned their serfs from head to toe, and the serfs were forced to work their masters' lands without payment and to perform all kinds of domestic chores. In the pastoral areas of northern Xinjiang, remnants of the feudal clan system were evident in that the nobility and the clan chiefs not only held large herds of livestock, but also enjoyed all kinds of feudal privileges.

Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, Xinjiang lagged far behind the rest of the country in economic and social development, and the ethnic peoples there lived in dire poverty and were deprived of basic human rights.

Founded in 1921, the Communist Party of China (CPC) took as its mission the search for a right path to realize national independence and the liberation of the people, including the ethnic peoples of Xinjiang. In its early days, the CPC sent some of its members to Xinjiang to carry out revolutionary work. During the Chinese people's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang lent their support to the cause of resistance through various means under the leadership of the CPC. A number of revolutionary youth, influenced by progressive ideas, actively mobilized the peoples of Xinjiang to fight against reactionary and backward forces. The common call of history convinced them that only the CPC could save China - a prerequisite for the consensus against which Xinjiang later greeted its peaceful liberation.

In September 1949, Xinjiang was liberated peacefully, thanks to the efforts made by people of all ethnic groups there. On October 1, together with all their fellow countrymen, the ethnic peoples of Xinjiang witnessed the founding of the People's Republic of China. After liberation, Xinjiang kept its provincial system.

On December 17, 1949, under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee and the CPC Xinjiang Bureau, the Xinjiang provincial people's government was established. Represented by deputies from all ethnic groups and social sectors in Xinjiang, and with Burhan al-Shahidi as chair, this opened a new leaf in the development of a new people's democratic government. Under the leadership of the CPC, and with the strong support of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, the provincial government of Xinjiang led the local ethnic peoples in successfully quelling revolts, suppressing bandits and putting down reactionary armed rebellions. The uprising troops of the former regime and ethnic armed forces were regrouped.

In line with the principles of equality, unity, and mutual assistance for ethnic groups, the peoples of Xinjiang became the masters of the region, and for the first time elected deputies to the people's congresses at all levels. The democratic reform that followed, with rural land reform at its core, abolished feudal land ownership and distributed land to the deprived local peasants, putting an end once and for all to centuries of oppression and exploitation for the working people of Xinjiang.

The People's Republic of China has upheld ethnic equality, unity, common prosperity and development of all ethnic groups as the basic principles in solving ethnic problems and handling ethnic relations. It made it a state policy to practice ethnic regional autonomy in areas where people of ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities. When the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, the ethnic peoples of Xinjiang mainly comprised the Uygur, Han, Kazak, Hui, Kirgiz, Mongolian, Xibe, Tajik, Manchu, Uzbek, Russian, Daur and Tartar, with the Uygurs boasting the largest population. Each of these ethnic groups was characterized by living in homogenous communities of its own, or by living together with or mixing with other groups, and the various peoples maintained close and extensive relations - a continuation of the traditional lifestyle. The practice of ethnic regional autonomy in Xinjiang has ensured the democratic rights of all ethnic peoples in the region, making them the masters of Xinjiang. It is also of great significance in strengthening the harmonious relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance of the various

ethnic groups, safeguarding national unification, accelerating economic development, and promoting social progress in Xinjiang.

On August 22, 1952, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Program of the People's Republic of China for Implementing Ethnic Regional Autonomy, the second session of the first people's congress of all ethnic groups and walks of life was held in Xinjiang Province, passing the Resolution on Executing the Program of the People's Republic of China for Implementing Ethnic Regional Autonomy and forming a preparatory committee for exercising ethnic regional autonomy in Xinjiang Province on September 10.

In its official written reply on December 22, 1953, the Government Administrative Council of the Central People's Government approved the Measures for Exercising Ethnic Regional Autonomy in Xinjiang Province, initiating the preparatory work for establishing autonomous areas in Xinjiang in an orderly fashion. By 1954, with the approval of the central government, Xinjiang had completed the preparations for the establishment of autonomous areas at or below the prefecture level, establishing five autonomous prefectures, i.e., Bayingolin Mongolian, Bortala Mongolian, Kizilsu Kirgiz, Changji Hui and Ili Kazak, six autonomous counties, i.e., Yanqi Hui, Qapqal Xibe, Mori Kazak, Hoboksar Mongolian, Tashkurghan Tajik and Barkol Kazak.

The establishment of these autonomous prefectures and counties laid the foundation for the establishment of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. In accordance with the Program of the People's Republic of China for Practicing Ethnic Regional Autonomy, the CPC Xinjiang Bureau made proactive and prudent preparations for establishing the autonomous region. The 21st meeting of the Standing Committee of the First National People's Congress passed on September 13, 1955 the resolution to establish the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to replace the former Xinjiang Province, with the former areas under the jurisdiction of the Xinjiang Province being put under the jurisdiction of the newly established autonomous region.

In September 20-30, 1955, the second session of the First People's Congress of Xinjiang Province was convened in Urumqi. The meeting approved the Report on Preparatory Work for the Establishment of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region along with some other instruments, and elected a 41-member People's Committee of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, with Seypidin Ezizi (Uygur) as chair, and Gao Jinchun (Han), Memetmin Iminof (Uygur) and Patihan Sugurbayev (Kazak) as vice

chairs. On October 1, 1955, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was officially founded.

The establishment of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region marked the full implementation of the system of ethnic regional autonomy in Xinjiang. Under the leadership and care of the central government and with the strong support and help from other provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, the people of the various ethnic groups in Xinjiang plunged into the construction of Xinjiang in a massive scale.

In 1984, the state promulgated and put into effect the Law of the People's Republic of China on Ethnic Regional Autonomy, establishing ethnic regional autonomy as a basic political system of the state, thereby providing a powerful legal basis for all ethnic peoples in Xinjiang to fully exercise their right of autonomy based on the principle of safeguarding national unification.

In May 2010 and May 2014, the central government held two meetings to specially discuss work in relation to Xinjiang, emphasizing the importance of upholding and improving the system of ethnic regional autonomy, and calling for efforts to build a socialist Xinjiang featuring unity and harmony, prosperity and vigor, civility and progress, and peace and contentment for its people. The various undertakings of Xinjiang had entered a new stage of development.

II. Upholding Ethnic Equality and Unity

Since its establishment in 1955, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has remained committed to supporting and improving the system of ethnic regional autonomy. It has implemented China's ethnic policies, endeavored to promote the unity and common prosperity of various ethnic groups, and developed and consolidated the new type of socialist ethnic relations of equality, unity, mutual assistance and harmony.

The principle of equality among all ethnic groups has been upheld. All ethnic groups in China, regardless of the sizes of their population and levels of development, are equal. They enjoy equal rights and are required to fulfill the same obligations in accordance with the law. The establishment of the system of ethnic regional autonomy served to protect the legitimate rights and interests of ethnic minorities and safeguard the equal rights and interests of individual citizens. People of all

ethnic origins in Xinjiang are ensured an equal legal status. They enjoy the rights to vote and stand for election as prescribed by the Constitution and the law, the right of equal participation in the administration of state affairs, the right of religious belief, the right to receive education, the right to use their own spoken and written languages, the right to inherit and carry on the traditional culture of their own ethnic groups, etc.

The region has focused on eliminating ethnic misunderstandings carried over from the past; it has firmly opposed any form of ethnic oppression or discrimination, and outlawed any action that might sabotage ethnic unity or incite ethnic separatism. In addition to respecting and protecting the rights and interests of all ethnic peoples within their jurisdiction, governments of ethnic autonomous areas at various levels shoulder at the same time the responsibility of safeguarding national unification, ethnic unity and social stability.

Internal affairs of the ethnic autonomous areas are administered independently. Home to more than a dozen major ethnic groups, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is the only autonomous region in China with three levels of autonomous administrative divisions (region, prefecture and county). It boasts five autonomous prefectures, six autonomous counties and 42 ethnic townships. The people of each ethnic autonomous area elect their own deputies to the people's congress and form the self-government organs of power to exercise the right to manage their own internal affairs. In the composition of deputies to the people's congresses and the appointment of officials, the region's self-government organs at each level have always adhered to the principles of equal participation and common management. In 2014, the 550 deputies to the 12th People's Congress of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region came from 14 ethnic groups, with 66 percent being ethnic minorities themselves, three percentage points higher than the proportion of the total population of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang. Of nine chairperson and vice chairpersons of the Standing Committee of the current regional people's congress, six are citizens of ethnic minority origins. In Xinjiang now, the heads of the autonomous region, all the autonomous prefectures and all autonomous counties are citizens from the ethnic group(s) exercising regional autonomy in the areas concerned. Moreover, an overwhelming number of the heads of other prefectures, cities and counties are citizens of ethnic minority origins. Ethnic groups in Xinjiang also enjoy the right of equal participation in the administration of state affairs. Of 60 deputies from Xinjiang who attended the 12th National People's Congress in 2014, 38, or over 63 percent, were ethnic minorities. There are many people of ethnic minority origins from Xinjiang holding leading posts in central and state organs.

According to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Law of the People's Republic of China on Ethnic Regional Autonomy, ethnic autonomous areas have the right to enact autonomous and separate regulations to adapt the provisions of the state law, administrative regulations and local regulations in accordance with their local conditions. These stipulations have played an important role in safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of the ethnic minorities and promoting economic and social development in ethnic autonomous areas.

All ethnic groups are guaranteed the right to use and develop their own spoken and written languages. Xinjiang is a region of multiple spoken and written languages, of which there are ten principal ones. The region has enacted the Regulations for Work Concerning Spoken and Written Languages in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which provides a legal basis for the extensive use of the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities in such fields as justice, administration, education, news media, publishing, radio, movies, television programs, the Internet and daily life. Government organs in handling public affairs and various other organizations in recruitment and promotion tests all use the language(s) of the ethnic groups exercising autonomy in a given area. Seven languages are used as teaching languages in primary and secondary schools in the region, five languages are used in broadcasting and television programs, and six languages are used in publishing books, audio-visual products and electronic publications.

The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language rules that the standard spoken and written Chinese language is Putonghua (a common speech with pronunciation based on the Beijing dialect) and the standardized Chinese characters. The autonomous region encourages ethnic minorities to study the standard spoken and written Chinese and offers appropriate courses in primary and secondary schools, and it also encourages ethnic minority peoples to study one another's languages so as to enhance mutual understanding and communication. Since 2010, the autonomous region has required that newly recruited civil servants must acquire basic skills in both the standard and ethnic languages before they enter the service, and that they must be provided with opportunities of and conditions for bilingual training.

The customs of ethnic minorities are respected and the freedom of each ethnic group to maintain or reform its own customs is protected. In 2004, the region formulated the Halal Food Regulations of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to protect the halal dietary customs of the relevant ethnic groups, which stipulated that departments in charge of ethnic affairs of the people's governments at/above the

county level are vested with the responsibility of supervising and exercising control over the production and supply of halal food within areas under their jurisdiction. The region also renders support to and guarantees the production and supply of special supplies to ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities which have the tradition of inhumation (ground burial) are exempt from the government requirement for cremation, and are allotted special plots for cemeteries. Major festivals of the ethnic minorities are also made official public holidays in Xinjiang. The region encourages all ethnic groups to respect one another's customs while encourages following more scientific, civilized and healthy customs in relation to food, clothing, shelter, transportation, weddings, funerals and etiquettes.

Candidates of ethnic minority origins are selected and cultivated as officials and professionals. A large number of administrative officials and technical professionals from ethnic minority groups have been fostered through training courses and working at the grassroots level, or through work exchanges or job rotation. In 1955, the number of ethnic minority officials in Xinjiang was 46,000, which increased to 417,000 in 2014, accounting for 51.4 percent of the total officials in the region. When selecting leading officials and recruiting civil servants, the autonomous region implements more flexible policies such as setting a recruitment ratio and offering directional recruitment and bonus points in favor of ethnic minorities, so as to make sure that a certain number of ethnic minorities join the civil service. The proportion of ethnic minority civil servants in the total recruitment increased from 29.9 percent in 2009 to 48.3 percent in 2014.

Special support has been given to professional personnel of ethnic minority origins. Since 1992, the state has put in place a special program to train professionals of ethnic minority origins in key areas of science and technology by way of holding training courses, advanced studies, exchanges and being placed on more challenging posts, etc. and by the end of 2014 the region had trained in total 3,917 middle- and high-caliber professionals of ethnic minority origins badly needed in Xinjiang.

In key areas of science and technology, Xinjiang has established and implemented a fund for special training of science and technology talents of ethnic minority origins since 2000. The number of ethnic minority technical professionals in Xinjiang increased from 124,300 in 1985 to 294,400 in 2014, and the proportion rose from 34.43 percent to 58.37 percent of the total number of such people in the region. The number of ethnic minority professionals with academic titles equivalent to professor and associate professor reached 21,100 in 2014.

The ethnic regional autonomy provides an institutional guarantee to ethnic unity. The region's population totaled 5.1 million in 1955 while by 2014 it had increased to over 23.2 million, of which 14.6 million were ethnic minorities, making up 63 percent of the total. The region has carried out all kinds of educational programs advocating ethnic unity, paying particular attention to education of the youth, as evidenced by courses on ethnic unity and knowledge about the various ethnic groups offered in various institutions of learning - from primary schools to universities. In Xinjiang, unremitting efforts have also been made in holding activities promoting ethnic unity and progress. To advocate ethnic unity and counter acts undermining it, the autonomous region has since 1983 held seven meetings awarding those making outstanding contribution to ethnic unity and progress, and commending units and individuals who have excelled in this regard. To date, the State Council, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region have commended 1,304 model units and 2,272 exemplary individuals. Since 1983, the region has held an "educational month of ethnic unity" each May, carrying out intensive and extensive public publicity on ethnic unity. In 2009, the region promulgated the Regulations of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Ethnic Unity Education, further regulating ethnic unity education activities in order to call people of all ethnic groups to safeguard ethnic unity. By the end of 2010, the region had enacted the Measures for the Administration of Commendation of Role Models Contributing to Ethnic Unity Activities (Trial). The region encourages all members of ethnic groups to strengthen contact, exchange, integration and mutual support mechanisms, and advocates that primary or secondary school students of all ethnic groups study in the same classes and schools. It has become an important ideological guarantee for ethnic unity that "the Han Chinese cannot live without the ethnic minorities, the ethnic minorities cannot do without the Han Chinese, and no any one minority group can live without the other minority groups."

Along with the region's economic and social development in recent years, increasing mobility has been witnessed in the population of different ethnic groups in Xinjiang. There has been a rising trend in the urbanization and scattered living of ethnic minorities (who used to live in remote rural areas in concentrated communities - ed.), and as such the contact and exchange among them have grown ever closer. In work, study and entertainment as well as shared community life, people of different ethnic origins have enhanced their friendship and mutual understanding.

III. Constantly Strengthening the Foundations of Development

Over the past six decades, Xinjiang's economy has achieved steady and rapid development, which has accelerated the region's modernization and laid a solid foundation for improved standards of living and progress in various social programs.

Marked improvement has been observed in Xinjiang's overall strength. Its gross regional product (GRP) was only RMB1.2 billion in 1955 and RMB3.9 billion in 1978. In 2014, it reached RMB927.3 billion, a 116-fold increase over that of 1955 in real terms, with an annual growth rate of 8.3 percent, or 0.2 percentage point higher than China's average during the same period. Over the years between 2010 and 2014, the average annual growth rate of Xinjiang's GRP was 11.1 percent, 2.5 percentage points higher than the national average. It ranked the fourth of all the country's province-level divisions - its highest ever placing as compared to the 30th in 2009. Xinjiang's per-capita GRP rose to RMB40,648 in 2014 from RMB241 in 1955, about a 24-fold increase in real terms, and a 5.6-percent annual growth. Xinjiang's fiscal revenues and expenditure, no more than RMB170 million and RMB180 million in 1955, grew to RMB128 billion and RMB332 billion in 2014. Over the period from 2010 to 2014, Xinjiang collected a total of RMB454 billion in fiscal revenues, and spent a total of RMB1,308.8 billion.

The gap between urban and rural areas has gradually been narrowed. When the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was founded, it had only few cities like Urumqi, Kashi (Kashgar), Yining (Ghulja) and Hami (Kumul). Its rural areas remained a closed natural economy. There was a yawning gap between urban and rural areas. After six decades of construction and development, enormous improvement has been observed in the production and living conditions of both urban and rural residents. The ratio of urban to rural population was 15.1:84.9 in 1955. By 2014, it had changed to 46.07:53.93. The ratio of urban residents' income to that of rural residents decreased from 3.2:1 in 2009 to 2.7:1 in 2014, narrower than that in the 11 other provinces and autonomous regions of western China. As Xinjiang's new model of urbanization develops fast, more and more rural residents are moving to the cities and enjoying a modern city life.

The economy of the various areas of Xinjiang is developing in a coordinated way. For historical reasons and due to different conditions, Xinjiang's northern and southern parts, which are divided by the Tianshan Mountains, varied sharply in development. Following the launch of reform and opening-up drive in 1978, Xinjiang decided to first develop the economic belt along the northern slopes of the Tianshan Mountains. Development then extended to other parts and propelled the economic

growth of the whole region. In 2014, the gross product of the economic belt reached RMB638.7 billion, accounting for 68.9 percent of Xinjiang's total. The state and the autonomous region have also attached great importance to the development of southern Xinjiang, which is mainly populated by ethnic minorities. Since 2010 in particular, Xinjiang has actively encouraged the development of the southern Xinjiang petroleum, natural gas and chemical industry belt and made strenuous effort to support the development of poverty-stricken areas there by giving them a high priority in funding and projects. The average economic growth rate of the four southern Xinjiang prefectures (Hotan, Aksu and Kashi prefectures, and Kizilsu Kirgiz autonomous prefecture) increased from 10.5 percent in 2009 to 11.2 percent in 2014. A steady growth has been seen in the economic strength of southern Xinjiang, so has a constant improvement in the local people's standards of living.

The economic structure is being steadily optimized. Xinjiang's economy represented a typical pattern featuring traditional agriculture and husbandry as the main component. The ratio of added-value of the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors was 54.4:26.1:19.5 in 1955, and the workforce distribution among the three sectors was 86.9:6.1:7.0. By 2014, the two ratios had improved to 16.6:42.6:40.8 and 45.4:16.0:38.6. A modern industrial structure, with the agricultural sector as the base, manufacturing sector as the spearhead, and service sector as an important component, had taken shape in Xinjiang. After 1978, Xinjiang has stepped up the adjustment of its pattern of ownership. It gave full play to the leading role of public ownership, forming a system of state-owned pillar industries such as petroleum, non-ferrous metals, chemical engineering, steel and coal, as the mainstays, thus having guaranteed the sustained, steady and coordinated growth of the national economy. Meanwhile, it has encouraged, supported and guided the development of the non-public sector. The number of individually owned businesses reached 720,000 in 2014, as compared to the mere 4,168 in 1978. In 2014, private investment in fixed assets was around RMB407 billion, contributing 48.2 percent of the total. Non-public industrial enterprises witnessed a growth rate 5.4 percentage points higher than the industrial sector as a whole, and contributed 33.8 percent to the increment of industrial enterprises with an annual sales revenue of RMB20 million or more.

The infrastructure has become more and more complete. In 2014, 175,500 km of highways were open to traffic, of which 4,316 km were expressways, five times more than in 2009, and Xinjiang had risen to the 12th place among all province-level administrative divisions in the country from the 27th in 2009. A total of 135,000 km of roads served the traffic in rural areas, linking 99.93 percent of towns and 98.71 percent of administrative villages. Some 98 percent of roads between towns and 85

percent of roads between administrative villages were concrete or asphalt ones that meet national standards and requirements. Rail transport in Xinjiang has developed from scratch. In 2014, the overall length of track reached 5,760 km. The region's first high-speed rail between Urumqi and Lanzhou has opened to traffic. A trunk rail network, stretching from east to west and from north to south, connects Xinjiang with other parts of China and with countries in Asia and Europe. In 1978, Xinjiang had only one civil airport and nine regional air routes. By 2014, it had in operation 16 civil airports, and 115 air routes totaling 160,000 km. Thus, Xinjiang now boasts the most airports and the longest air routes in operation of all China's province-level administrative divisions.

Water conservancy projects have led to a great improvement in working and living conditions. Xinjiang had 538 reservoirs with a total storage capacity of 16.908 billion cu m in 2014, as compared to three with a total storage capacity of 52.34 million cu m in 1949. Since 2010, key water conservancy projects bearing on daily life have taken priority in Xinjiang; they included high-efficiency water-saving projects in agriculture, "settlement of herdsmen" water projects, and safe drinking water projects in rural areas. By 2014, high-efficiency water-saving irrigation extended to 27.7 million (1.85 million ha) of farmlands, topping the whole country. Xinjiang had improved irrigation over 3,984,900 (265,660 ha), increased the area of forage land by 3,720,800 (248,053 ha), achieved a net increase of 3.03 million tons in fine forage and hay, and provided water sources for forage lands to safeguard the settlements of 106,000 herding families. Xinjiang's rural areas had a total of 1,315 water works of different sizes, which provided safe drinking water to 11.3 million people, or over 96 percent of the rural population. This has effectively held in check the spread of local infectious and frequently occurring diseases caused by water source pollution.

The power industry is developing rapidly. The South Hami-Zhengzhou +-800 kv UHVDC Transmission Project, Xinjiang's first UHVDC transmission channel sending electricity out of Xinjiang, was put into operation in 2010, and the building of the supporting power projects of the Zhundong-Huadong +-1100 kv UHVDC Transmission Project has started. Xinjiang's 110 kv and 220 kv grids were connected to the 750 kv higher-grade trunk grid. In 2014, Xinjiang had installed power-generating capacity of 55 million kw, and produced 209 billion kwh of electricity. It sent 17.5 billion kwh to other parts of China through transmission lines totaling 65,656 km. The installed capacity using new energy made up 20 percent of the total. A pattern of power generation with thermal power as the mainstay and other forms of power like hydro power, wind power, gas power, photovoltaic power and biomass power in support, has taken shape.

Xinjiang has become an information society. Six decades ago telegrams and post were mainly carried by animals. Now, its communications industry has entered the modern information era. There is Internet coverage across most of the region. In 2014, broadband user numbers exceeded 3 million, and there were 91 mobile phones per 100 people. Around 98 percent of villages had phone line connections and 97 percent of administrative villages had broadband connections. Xinjiang has invested great efforts in raising the status of Urumqi as a regional inward and outward hub in international telecommunication services. Its voice and data services have cross-border connections with more than ten foreign countries, and are able to connect international call services to the whole of the country.

Solid progress has been made in opening up to the outside world. Since 1978, Xinjiang, with state approval, has created 17 first-class ports and 12 second-class ports, in addition to successfully holding 19 Urumqi Foreign Economic Relations and Trade Fairs and four China-Eurasia Expos. It has set up two national economic development zones in Kashi and Khorgos, and the International Center for Cross-Border Cooperation between China and Kazakhstan in Khorgos. Now, there are in Xinjiang 23 state-class industrial clusters. It trades with 186 countries and regions. A new pattern of all-round opening up has taken shape in the region. The value of Xinjiang's combined imports and exports grew from US\$51 million in 1955 to almost US\$27.7 billion in 2014, averaging an annual growth rate of 11.3 percent. Between 2009 and 2014, applied foreign investment grew at an annual rate of over 12 percent, the volumes of overseas contract business increased by an annual average of 26 percent, and investment outside China went up by an annual average of 25 percent.

The driving force of scientific and technological innovation has remarkably increased in Xinjiang's socio-economic development. Since its founding, Xinjiang has experienced constant increases in its financial input in science and technology, in the size of staff in scientific work, in the variety research platforms and in the number of research achievements, which have gradually led to the establishment of a system of scientific and technological innovation with distinct regional characteristics. The contribution made by scientific and technological progress to the development of agriculture has increased year by year, and improved crop varieties make up over 90 percent of total output. Industrial technology and new and high technology are developing rapidly. Xinjiang leads the country in railway traction transformer technologies, solar and wind power equipment research and manufacturing, and information processing in ethnic minority languages. It has made major technological

breakthroughs in the field of resources and environment technology, discovering the petroleum and natural gas reserves in the Tarim Basin. The technologies used in the Tarim Desert Highway and Shelter Forest Project meet the highest international advanced standards.

Steady progress has been made in environmental protection. The ecological system in Xinjiang is extremely fragile, with very limited environmental capacity. Oases account for only 5 percent of the region's total area. Over the past 60 years, and especially since 2010, Xinjiang has made ecological and environmental protection a top priority, insisting on sustainable development of resources and the eco-environment. It has devoted great efforts to protecting and building its ecological system, carefully balancing the interests of economic growth and environmental protection.

Xinjiang protects its environment in accordance with the law. It has drawn up detailed plans and regulations first to protect the environment. It enacted the Zoning Program of Major Functional Areas of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and amended or issued a series of local regulations, including the Regulations of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Environmental Protection, Regulations of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Environmental Protection in the Development of Coal, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Regulations of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region on Wetland Conservation of the Autonomous Region, and Regulations of Urumqi City on Air Pollution Prevention and Control. It now has 31 natural reserves of various kinds at or above the autonomous region level, 18 scenic spots, 52 forest parks, nine geoparks, one world natural heritage site, and 16 wetland parks. Fifty-four percent of its wetland areas are under protection, higher than the national average of 43 percent.

Xinjiang has intensified efforts in ecological and environmental protection programs. Since 2010, Xinjiang has planted or protected over 2,500,000 (166,667 ha) of forests by restricting access to mountain areas. Its total forest area and forest stock rank 14th and 12th in China. Now, belts of shelter-forests built to protect farmlands in all of Xinjiang's 82 counties and county-level cities have merged to form a network, 45 counties and county-level cities have reached the national standards in plains afforestation, and 95 percent of farmlands are effectively protected by the shelter-forests. The forest coverage in oases has risen from 15 percent to 23.5 percent, and a total of 3,258,000 (217,200 ha) of farmland has been returned to forest. Major projects for ecological protection have been launched, such as the Million Ecological

Economic Forest Project in Ili Valley and the Project for Prevention and Control of Desertification around Tarim Basin, restoring a total of 24.6 million (1.64 million ha) of degraded lands and enclosing 51.6 million (3.4 million ha) of grassland to prevent grazing. It has curbed water and soil erosion over more than 4,000 sq km of small river valleys. The Comprehensive Reclamation Project of Tarim River Valley has provided emergency water supplies to its lower reaches on 15 occasions, gradually restoring prosperity there. In 2014, water quality was good in 94 percent of major rivers and 67.8 percent of lakes and reservoirs, as compared to 88.3 percent and 43.3 percent in 2009. This is much higher than the national average level.

Xinjiang has put in a lot of work to tackle pollution. Joint prevention and control of air pollution has been carried out in areas like Urumqi and Kuytun-Dushanzi-Wusu. There has been a considerable improvement in the air quality of the regional capital, Urumqi. During 2014, the city had 310 days with good air quality, the best ever for 20 years. Xinjiang has piloted environmental protection in some lakes with good water quality, such as Bosten Lake, Sayram Lake, Ulungur Lake and Kanas Lake. In order to safeguard drinking water, it has made great efforts to protect 367 centralized drinking-water source areas, and comprehensively improved the habitat of 1,836 villages. Xinjiang encourages ecological progress through examples. It has built up two national model cities for environmental protection, 43 national-level eco-friendly prefectures, towns and villages, and 1,057 autonomous region-level eco-friendly prefectures, towns and villages.

IV. Improving Standards of Living for All

Since the founding of the autonomous region, and especially since the launch of the reform and opening-up drive, Xinjiang has enjoyed overall economic and social development, and people of the various ethnic groups in the autonomous region have all benefitted from the fruits of the reform and development. Since 2010, Xinjiang has stepped up efforts and input in improving the people's living standards, undertaking over 500 key projects in this regard over the past six consecutive "people's livelihood years," with the expenditure on improving the people's livelihood accounting for over 70 percent of the region's yearly total public spending. This has made these six years a period in which the people are benefitted the most and see the greatest improvement in their material well-being and cultural life.

Employment channels are constantly expanding. In 2014, the registered urban unemployment rate of Xinjiang was 3.2 percent. From 2010 to 2014, 2.5 million new

urban jobs were created, averaging a yearly growth of 500,000. In 2010, Xinjiang established a registration system for people with difficulties in finding work and for families of which no member was gainfully employed. By 2014, under this system Xinjiang had helped 29,000 members of these "zero-employment" families find jobs, cutting the number of zero-employment families by 26,000. From 2010 to 2014, Xinjiang provided jobs to 303,000 university graduates, with the employment rates of university graduates and university graduates of ethnic minority origins reaching 88.6 and 82.7 percent, respectively. By May 2011, it had virtually resolved the employment problems of 75,000 unemployed graduates of junior colleges and technical secondary schools who had registered before the end of 2009, of whom 84.6 percent came from ethnic minority groups. Some 1.66 million job opportunities were created for rural surplus labor in 2009. This figure increased to 2.85 million in 2014. During this five-year period, the relevant wage bill totaled RMB56.6 billion.

The life of the people has kept improving. In 2014, the per-capita disposable income of urban residents averaged RMB21,881, an increase of 51.2 fold over that of 1980, representing an average annual growth of 12.3 percent. This also represented an increase of more than RMB9,624 over that of 2009. The per-capita net income of rural residents was RMB8,114, increasing by 41.4 fold as compared with that of 1980, averaging an annual growth of 11.5 percent. This was an increase of more than RMB4,231 as compared with 2009. The Engel coefficient of urban and rural residents continued to decline, from 36.3 percent and 41.5 percent respectively in 2009 to 31.3 percent and 34.5 percent in 2014.

Living conditions of both urban and rural residents have continued to improve. In 2004, Xinjiang started an earthquake-resistant and comfortable housing project; and since 2010, it has launched projects of offering comfortable housing and enriching the people, settlement of herdsmen for developing animal husbandry, and urban affordable housing. By 2014, more than 4.8 million farmers and herdsmen and 2.07 million middle- and low-income urban residents had moved into new homes. The average floor space for an urban household was 85 sq m, and that of a rural household was 105 sq m. All urban households and 72 percent of rural households have been provided with facilities for heating. In urban areas, the water supply covered 96.3 percent of the population, and the centralized sewage treatment rate reached 78.6 percent. Sixty-three percent of domestic garbage underwent hazard-free treatment. In built-up urban areas, the green coverage rate was 34.9 percent, and per-capita green park area was 10.7 sq m. Projects to improve the communal environment in rural areas and demonstration projects of comprehensive

improvement of rural environment were launched, gradually bringing about a clean and neat village environment for more than 2 million farmers and herdsmen.

Continuous development has been seen in education. Since 2010, education in the region has ushered in a new period of rapid development. Over the past five years, education expenditure has exceeded RMB250 billion. In 2014, the proportion of education expenditure in the GDP increased to 6.47 percent. Xinjiang has 9,230 schools of various types and at all levels, with 4,734,800 students and 338,200 full-time teachers. From 2010 to 2014, the three-year kindergarten enrollment rate grew from 51 percent to 72.4 percent; the proportion of junior high school graduates getting enrolled into high schools increased from 74 percent to 91 percent, while the gross high school enrollment increased from 67 percent to 84 percent. The university and college admission rate grew from 64 percent to 79 percent, and the gross enrollment rate of higher education increased from 22 percent to 31 percent. This brought Xinjiang to a level of higher education take-up similar to the rest of the country. A full system of vocational education was in place, with 176 secondary vocational and technical schools providing for 219,500 students.

Bilingual education has undergone full development. As of the 1950s, ethnic minority students have gradually been offered bilingual courses, thus ensuing steady development in this regard. In 2014, a total of 269,400 Xinjiang students - from pre-school to high school - were receiving bilingual education, and the coverage of bilingual education in various forms reached 100 percent. From 2010 to 2014, the take-up of two-year pre-school bilingual education grew from 59 percent to 89 percent. Practice has proved that bilingual education has further promoted relations among different ethnic groups, in addition to improving the employability of the ethnic minorities.

The mechanism for guaranteeing education has improved. In tandem with the rest of China, Xinjiang has implemented the policy of "two exemptions and one subsidy" - exemption from miscellaneous fees and textbook fees, and subsidized living expenses for resident students, and abolishing tuition and miscellaneous fees for urban primary and middle schools and realizing free compulsory education. The policy of "three exemptions and one subsidy" has been implemented for high schools and secondary vocational schools in the four prefectures of southern Xinjiang, i.e., exemption from tuition, textbook and boarding fees, and subsidized living expenses for resident students, in order to realize 14-year free education there. A nutrition improvement program has also been implemented for all rural

students undertaking compulsory education, covering 36 counties and all junior high school classes specially set up in some cities in Xinjiang for minority students from remote impoverished areas. A system for subsidizing students from pre-school to higher education has been established, and its coverage even extends to students from Xinjiang studying overseas at their own expense, ensuring that students from all ethnic groups enjoy equal access to education.

Public health has been improved steadily. Through 60 years of development, total healthcare resources continue to expand, while the health service system continues to improve. As a major indicator of people's livelihood, since 2010, financial input in healthcare has kept growing. In 2014, Xinjiang boasted 18,873 medical and health institutions at various levels and of various types, manned by 153,417 health professionals. In the region, every 1,000 people averaged 6.22 hospital beds, 2.38 licensed (assistant) doctors and 2.60 registered nurses, a level higher than the national average. The health emergency response capacity has been significantly enhanced, and major epidemic and endemic diseases have been brought under effective control. Key health indicators have improved remarkably. From 2010 to 2014, the infant mortality rate fell from 2.66 to 2.16 per thousand, the maternal mortality rate went down from 43.41 to 39.27 per 100,000, and average life expectancy reached 72.35 years.

There has been a steady improvement in the provision of social security. In 2011, Xinjiang led the country in establishing systems of basic old-age insurance and basic medical insurance that gave overall consideration to both urban and rural areas and cover all the local population, providing everyone access to basic social security. The coverage of the new cooperative medical system for agricultural and pastoral areas was 99.7 percent. The coverage of the new rural social pension insurance reached 98.5 percent. Unemployment, work-related injury and maternity insurance systems have been extended to cover all occupational groups. In 2014, there were 33.5 million registrations in Xinjiang's various social insurance schemes, an increase of 10.73 million or 47 percent over 2009. The coverage of these insurance schemes exceeded 90 percent, essentially ensuring that all those in need of insurance are provided for.

For 10 consecutive years, Xinjiang has adjusted the basic pension for enterprise retirees, increasing the basic monthly pension from an average of RMB1,338 in 2009 up to RMB2,298 in 2014, a level of increase that tops the whole country. For four consecutive years, the unemployment insurance benefits have been increased, with

the per-capita average monthly unemployment insurance reaching RMB761 in 2014. The annual per-capita government subsidy for urban residents' medical insurance was raised from RMB120 in 2009 to RMB330 in 2014, RMB10 higher than the national average.

Social assistance has continued to strengthen. Subsistence allowances and other life assistance systems have been established. Life assistance plays an increasingly important role in underpinning security. The system of subsistence allowances covers both urban and rural areas, again ensuring that all of those in need of insurance are provided for. From 2009 to 2014, the monthly subsistence allowance for urban residents increased from RMB176 per capita to RMB329 per capita, while that of rural residents rose from RMB68 to RMB129. Subsidies for disabled servicemen and family members of revolutionary martyrs and servicemen doubled. For rural households enjoying the "five guarantees" (proper food, clothing, medical care, housing and funeral/educational expenses), subsidies for those living in nursing homes increased from RMB3,036 to RMB6,750 per year, and that for those living at home grew from RMB2,280 to RMB4,301 per year. In 2014, there were 1,726 old people's homes, with a total of 52,183 beds, averaging 20.6 beds per thousand elderly people. People over the age 80 now enjoy a basic living allowance and free medical check-up. The minimum basic living expenses for orphans supported by welfare institutions grew from RMB360 per month in 2009 to RMB900 per month in 2014.

Remarkable results have been achieved in poverty alleviation. In the 1990s, the state launched the Seven-Year Poverty Alleviation Program (to lift 80 million people out of poverty), during which Xinjiang had managed to solve the problem of providing food and clothing for 1.32 million impoverished people. From 2001 to 2010, Xinjiang solved the problem of shortages of food and clothing for 2.84 million people, thus entering a new stage of consolidation and development in this regard. From 2011 to 2014, Xinjiang carried out policies of regional development and priority poverty alleviation in the three prefectures of southern Xinjiang (Hotan, Kashi and Kizilsu), and in border areas and poor mountainous areas. Over these four years, special funds allocated for poverty relief totaled RMB10.1 billion, 12,000 poverty alleviation projects were implemented, poverty alleviation training was provided to 775,000 recipients, and poverty reduction programs were carried out in 1,902 poverty-stricken villages. Thanks to these efforts, Xinjiang's poverty-stricken population was reduced by 1.39 million, and marked improvement has been seen in the work and living conditions of farmers and herdsmen in the poverty-stricken areas.

V. Promoting cultural prosperity

Since the autonomous region was established in 1955, Xinjiang has attached great importance to culture, promoting the preservation, bequeathal and onward transmission of fine cultural traditions, and vigorously developing modern culture, in order to meet the ever growing cultural needs of the people of all ethnic groups and safeguard their equal cultural rights and interests.

Public cultural services have improved remarkably. In 1955, Xinjiang had only one public library and 36 cultural centers. In 1978, Xinjiang built its first museum. In 2007, with state support, Xinjiang launched two nonprofit cultural projects - the East Wind Project (to give books and publications free of charge) and the Rural Library Project (to provide farmers with books, periodicals, newspapers and audio and video products). In 2008 and 2012, Xinjiang started the Radio and TV Programs for Each Village Project and the Radio and TV Programs for Each Rural Household Project, both benefiting all local rural population. By 2014, every administrative village in Xinjiang had its own rural library.

Since 2010, the state and the autonomous region have provided a total of RMB1.5 billion to improve cultural infrastructure, launching the County-level Library and Cultural Center Renovation Project, the National Cultural Information Resources Sharing Project (constructing information centers to share Xinjiang's resources with other areas of the country), and the Town and Township Comprehensive Cultural Center Project, as well as the aforementioned Radio and TV Programs for Each Village Project and Radio and TV Programs for Each Rural Household Project. By 2014, Xinjiang had built 117 cultural centers, 107 public libraries, 82 museums (memorial halls) and 1,147 cultural activity venues, made radio and TV access to 3.46 million rural households, and completed the basic public cultural service system of four levels (the autonomous region, prefecture, county (city) and town (township)).

Cultural heritage has been effectively protected. Xinjiang has 113 cultural relic sites under state protection, and 550 under autonomous regional protection. The region boasts 128,894 individual items or sets of cultural relics. "Silk Roads: The Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor" has been designated as a World Heritage Site. Gaochang Ancient City Ruins, Jiaohe Ancient City Ruins, Beiting Ancient City Site, Kizilgaha Beacon Tower, Kizil Grottoes and Subashi Buddhist Temple Ruins are

the first group to be listed in the World Heritage Sites in Xinjiang. The autonomous region has collected and registered 11,194 copies of ancient ethnic minority books, and edited and published 140 of them. Sixty-six ancient ethnic minority titles have been included in the Catalogue of National Rare Ancient Books. Kutadgu Bilig and A Comprehensive Turkic Dictionary, masterpieces of the Karahan Kingdom, which were almost lost to posterity, have been translated into and published in both Uygur and Han Chinese. In 2009, the autonomous region launched the Uygur Historic and Cultural Preservation Project - Renovation of Dilapidated Buildings in the Old Kashi City Proper. By 2014, this project had received grants amounting to RMB3 billion, and old and dilapidated buildings for 31,000 households had been renovated.

Currently, Xinjiang has three projects on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding - The Art of Xinjiang Uygur Muqam, the Epic of Manas, and the Meshrep, in addition to 127 items of intangible cultural heritage of state class and 293 items of the autonomous regional class, as well as 64 representative trustees of intangible cultural heritages at state level and 459 at autonomous regional level. In 2010, Regulations of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on the Preservation of the Art of Uygur Muqam was promulgated, which was China's first separate regulations at provincial level designed to protect intangible cultural heritage. The autonomous region has collected more than 700 long folk poems of the Uygur, Kazak, Mongol, Kirgiz and other ethnic groups. Vigorous efforts have been made to preserve traditional ethnic cultural treasures, such as the Mongolian epic Janger, the Kazak's ballad singing Aytes, the Hui folk song Hua'er, the Tajik's Eagle Dance and the Xibe's West Moving Festival.

Literature and arts are prospering. Since the founding of the autonomous region, Xinjiang's folk and classical literature has been collected, collated, translated, published and studied. Writers, poets, translators, playwrights, performing artists, literary critics of all ethnic minority origins have rapidly matured, forming a multiethnic literary writing, performing and research contingent. Works of excellence have been staged, including Hello, Apandi (acrobatic show), Grand Bazaar (drama), Gherip-Senem (opera), Visitors on the Icy Mountain (musical), Love over the Tianshan Mountains (musical), and The Spring of Muqam (song and dance drama). A group of literary and art works have won the Best Works Award, the Lu Xun Literary Prize, the Gold Award of the National Ethnic Minority Theatrical Festival, Splendor Award and Lotus Award for Stage Arts of Excellence (the former for theatrical artworks and the latter for dance), the China Acrobatic Golden Chrysanthemum Award, the Steed Award (for ethnic minority writers), the Tianshan Literary Prize, and other national and autonomous regional prizes.

Press and publishing are making steady progress. In 2014, Xinjiang published 111 newspapers, including 51 in ethnic minority languages, and 199 periodicals, including 116 in ethnic minority languages and three in foreign languages. Xinjiang Daily, published in four languages - Uyghur, Han Chinese, Kazak and Mongolian - is the official provincial-level newspaper published in the largest number of languages in China. Xinjiang Economic Daily has been published in Urumqi. Urumqi Evening News (Uyghur edition) is China's first evening post published in ethnic minority languages. Kizilsu News (Kirgiz edition) is China's only newspaper published in the Kirgiz language. Qapqal News is the world's only newspaper published in the Xibe language. Xinjiang now has 13 publishing houses publishing books, audio and video products, and e-publications in six languages - Uyghur, Han Chinese, Kazak, Mongolian, Kirgiz and Xibe. Since 2010, the autonomous region has launched several major publishing projects, including Xinjiang's Library, Xinjiang Ethnic Literary Creation and Chinese-Ethnic Minority Language Translation Project, and Encyclopedia Sinica (Uyghur and Kazak editions). A group of excellent publications have won the Best Works Award, the China Government Award for Publishing, and other national awards.

The radio, film and television industries are developing rapidly. By 2014, Xinjiang had five radio stations, eight TV stations, 92 radio and TV stations, and 66 medium and short-wave radio transmitter and relay stations. Some 96.5 percent of the local population had access to radio, and 96.9 percent to TV. Xinjiang People's Broadcasting Station now provides 12 radio channels in five languages - Uyghur, Han Chinese, Kazak, Mongolian and Kirgiz, and Xinjiang TV provides 12 TV channels in four languages - Uyghur, Han Chinese, Kazak and Kirgiz. Radio programs from Xinjiang People's Broadcasting Station are available to the world through Xinjiang News Online (<http://www.xjbs.com.cn>) and CRI Online (<http://gb.cri.cn>). Xinjiang's radio and TV programs have been broadcast in Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Turkey. Xinjiang TV is the provincial-level TV station boasting the largest number of channels and broadcasts in the largest number of languages in China; its program signal covers the whole of the region, the capital cities of all provinces and autonomous regions, plus the Hong Kong and Macau SARs. In the last five years, Xinjiang has dubbed an annual average 5,500 episodes of ethnic minority films and TV plays, and a number of fine films, radio and TV programs have won the Best Works Award, the China News Award and the China Huabiao Film Awards.

New media is developing rapidly. Currently, Xinjiang has nearly 17,000 registered websites and 11.4 million netizens, and about 50 percent of the local population has access to the Internet. In 2014, the autonomous region opened a WeChat public account called "The Last Kilometer," which covers all parts of China and dozens of other countries and regions. This has become an important public platform to spread the voice of Xinjiang and discuss issues in relation to Xinjiang. The autonomous region, the various subordinating prefectures and counties have jointly developed a "zero-distance" Internet communication platform, which constitutes a new system of international communications.

Cultural exchanges with other countries are becoming increasingly lively. The autonomous region has sent delegations to more than 60 countries and regions, including the US, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Libya, to participate in academic exchanges, hold exhibitions of cultural relics and stage theatrical performances. Xinjiang has registered and founded publishing institutions in Turkey, Kazakhstan and the US. China Xinjiang International Ethnic Dance Festival, Chinese and Foreign Culture Week of China-Eurasia Expo, and China Xinjiang International Arts Biennale have become brand-name cultural exchange projects of considerable international influence.

Sports have been promoted. Xinjiang had 425 sports venues of various types in 1955. By 2014, it had more than 26,000. The autonomous region encourages people to participate in the nationwide fitness campaign. It has held 13 Sports Meets of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, eight National Traditional Ethnic Minority Sports Meets, various sports meets for senior citizens, and Paralympic sporting events. Rural sports are thriving. Xinjiang has established 7,726 Farmers' and Herders' Sports and Fitness Projects at village level. These sports events and fitness activities have been much appreciated by the local farmers and herders. By 2014, the autonomous region had identified and revived 629 traditional ethnic minority sports. The Uygur traditional tightrope-walking activity known as Darwaz is of great repute around the world.

Cultural and sports industries have maintained a sound momentum of development. By 2014, Xinjiang had established six state-class cultural industry demonstration bases, 20 cultural industry parks (zones) at the autonomous regional and prefectural levels, and 76 cultural industry demonstration bases at the autonomous regional level. In recent years, the region has been proactively experimenting with the professionalization and commercialization of sports; a group of professional sports clubs have been introduced and established, including Xinjiang Tianshan Snow

Leopard Football Club and Tianshan Women's Basketball Club. Sports events and the market for sports performances are flourishing; Taklimakan Rally and CBA (Chinese Basketball Association) matches in Xinjiang have been commercial successes. Xinjiang has fostered a sports and fitness market supported by grassroots clubs, and promoted distinctive mass sports events. Continuous development has been seen in the sports leisure market, represented by the China International Camping Congress and the International Desert Hiking Contest, and featuring in particular winter sports and air sports.

VI. Maintaining Social Harmony and Stability in Accordance with the Law

Ever since its founding, Xinjiang Autonomous Region has made constant efforts in strengthening rule of law, managing all affairs on the basis of law and remaining resolute in punishing violent terrorist crimes, in order to promote ethnic unity and achieve harmonious social development.

A distinctive local legislation system is now in place. According to the Constitution and state laws, the local legislature of the autonomous region enjoys both legislative power entitled to provincial-level administrative divisions and the power to enact regulations on the exercise of autonomy and separate regulations based on local special political, economic and cultural conditions. By the end of 2014, the autonomous regional people's congress and its standing committee had formulated in total over 150 local regulations, passed more than 30 regulatory resolutions and decisions, and approved 98 separate regulations and other local regulations submitted by the various subordinating autonomous prefectures and Urumqi. The autonomous region people's government had worked out over 320 administrative rules and regulations. The legislation covers various aspects, such as politics, economy, culture, education, religion, ethnic unity and social security. These local rules and regulations provide a legal guarantee to the legitimate rights and interests of all ethnic groups and promote the development of various undertakings of the region.

Further improvement has been seen in the capability and level of administration by law. The people's governments at various levels in the autonomous region uphold the supremacy of the Constitution and laws and has made continuous endeavor in innovating new forms of social management for the government to exercise administration, manage social affairs and administer economic and cultural undertakings in accordance with the law. They have established and improved in succession a number of administrative management systems, such as guaranteed service, full notification and conclusion within a time limit, in addition to annulling,

adjusting and reducing items subject to administrative examination and approval. Efforts have been made to promote and implement the system of appraisal, the system of life-long accountability for major policy decisions and a responsibility tracking-down system. The system of accountability in administrative enforcement of law has been put in practice. A record-filing and review system has been established for normative documents to correct illegal and improper abstract administrative acts in a timely manner. Administrative review applications have been handled in accordance with the law to resolve administrative disputes in an effective and timely manner. The people's governments at all levels have intensified efforts in administrative accountability, made greater endeavor in preventing and controlling risks of integrity in key sectors and links, and strengthened oversight by the general public and the media over the government and law enforcement departments. They have established mechanisms for the public to express their concerns in relation to their rights and interests. They have promptly handled administrative complaints and seriously investigated and punished those violating the discipline and regulations. A system of law-based administration, various systems of open handling of affairs and the system of information disclosure have all been set up and augmented step by step.

The level of impartial administration of justice has been steadily enhanced. The public security organs, procuratorates and courts have coordinated with and supervise one another and exercise their powers in accordance with the statutory jurisdiction and procedures. Tasked with maintaining social order and punishing crime, the public security organs perform their duties in accordance with the law and effectively safeguard state security and social stability. The procuratorates have earnestly performed their functions as the public prosecutors, striking severe blows at different types of criminal offences, thoroughly investigated and handled various white-collar crimes such as embezzlement, giving and taking bribes, malfeasance, and rights encroachment, exercise their function of legal supervision, and consciously subject themselves to the supervision of the people's congresses at various levels and the society at large in order to better ensure judicial justice. Observing the principles of upholding justice, administering justice for the people and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of the citizens, legal persons and other organizations, the people's courts have strengthened the function of adjudication supervision, handled an annual average around 300,000 cases of various types, established and improved a multi-party dispute settlement mechanism, a system of judicial aid and a mechanism of execution, and promoted information disclosure in relation to administration of justice. As a result, gradual improvement has been observed in the efficiency of justice administration and level of impartial administration of justice. In 2014, 86.85 percent of those standing trial

at courts of first instance gave up lodging appeals to courts at higher levels, and 34,378 judgment documents have been disclosed on www.court.gov.cn, so have 47,580 executed cases.

The contingent of law work has continuously strengthened. By 2014, courts in the autonomous regions had a total of 9,656 law workers, including 4,192 from ethnic minorities; the procuratorates had a total of 5,994 staff members, of whom 2,293 were from minority ethnic groups; and the public security organs have made constant efforts to integrate the police resources, resulting in a steady uplift in their professional and law enforcement capability. The law-enforcing administrative organs have made great efforts to strengthen their ranks, strengthened front-line forces at the grassroots level and the policemen and officers have displayed steady improvement in their competence and capacity to perform their duties. Proceeding from Xinjiang's reality, the legal service teams have extended the range of and improved the level of service. By the end of 2014, Xinjiang had a total of 1,503 legal service agencies of various types, employing 8,206 legal professionals. Of these, 435 law firms employed 4,092 lawyers; 125 notary offices were manned by 435 notaries; and 738 were community-level legal service offices which hired 2,601 legal service workers. There were 93 judicial expertise institutions with 813 judicial experts. There were also 112 legal aid agencies with 265 workers.

The autonomous region constantly promotes education and publicity concerning the rule of law. Since 1985, Xinjiang has implemented six five-year programs in spread of legal knowledge. In the course of carrying out these programs, due consideration has been given to the actual situation in Xinjiang, with major attention being extended to the publicity of such statutes as the country's Constitution, the Law on Ethnic Regional Autonomy, and the Marriage Law. Centering around the situation of combating terrorism, safeguarding stability and countering extremism in the region, in-depth publicity and education activities themed "anti-violence, rule of law and order" have been carried out to arouse the awareness of people of all ethnic groups there, aiming at laying a solid ideological foundation for combating terrorism and maintaining stability. The region has constantly worked out new ways in the publicity of and education in law-based governance to inspire a culture of rule of law. The media has also intensified its efforts in the public of rule of law. The www.fzsj.cn has turned out to be the first large website in the northwest region to promote the law, and a number of distinctive and influential radio programs and columns publicizing legal knowledge have been emerged, and they included "The Law and You" and

"Rule of Law Online." Solid progress has been made in promoting rule of law in Party and government organs, rural areas, urban communities, schools, enterprises and all social entities. In 2011, the Regulations of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Publicity and Education in Rule of Law were promulgated, making the work embark on law-based orbit. By 2014, 60 villages in the region had been named "National Model Villages of Democracy and Rule of Law," and two prefectures and 21 counties (county-level cities, urban districts) had been nominated as "National Model City for Promoting Rule of Law."

Violent and terrorist crimes are punished severely in accordance with the law. Since the 1990s, the three forces (ethnic separatism, religious extremism, and violent terrorism) working from bases both inside and outside China have planned and staged a series of incidents of terror and violence, such as explosion, assassination, poisoning, arson, assault and riot, in Xinjiang and elsewhere, causing great loss to the lives and property of innocent civilians of all ethnic groups. Of them, the July 5 riot in Urumqi in 2009 killed 197, injured over 1,700, and caused huge property damage. Again, the terrorist attack in Kashi's Shache County on July 28 claimed 37 lives and injured 13, with 31 vehicles being smashed or burned. These violent and bloody crimes show clearly that the perpetrators are anything but representatives of "national" or "religious" interests. They are a great and real threat to ethnic unity and social stability in Xinjiang.

Judicial organs in the autonomous region have always upheld the principles that everyone is equal before the law and any crime shall be punished; they strictly distinguish commonplace criminal offenses from violent and terrorist crimes and handled them accordingly to firmly maintain social equality and justice. The public security organs are on high alert for signs of violent attacks and terrorism, and respond with the utmost severity. Most terrorist groups have been knocked out at the planning stage. The people's procuratorates have performed, in accordance with the law, their functions of approving arrest, reviewing the evidence and indictment, and exercising earnest supervision over investigation and trial procedures. The people's courts administer justice strictly, severely punishing the ringleaders and felons of violent and terrorist crimes, and extending clemency to those who confess their crimes and help with investigations, on the premise that the defendants' litigation rights are ensured in accordance with the law. In the nationwide special movement to suppress violent and terrorist activities, some violent terrorist gangs have been smashed, and some fugitives have heeded to the advice of their families

and are inspired by the state policies to turn themselves in. The tendency of frequent eruptions of violent and terrorist attacks in Xinjiang has been somewhat checked.

VII. Respecting and Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief

Xinjiang is a region where several religions have existed side by side since ancient times. The religions in Xinjiang today include Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism and Orthodox Eastern Church.

Before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the relations between different religions were very complicated. In history, there were frequent conflicts between different religions and between different sects of the same religion. In the mid-10th century, the Islamic Kara-Khanid Khanate launched a religious war against the Buddhist kingdom of Khotan. Having lasted for more than 40 years, the war caused great damage to the society and economy of southern Xinjiang and dreadful sufferings to the people there. Buddhist believers were forced to convert to Islam, and Buddhist culture was almost totally destroyed in the area. During the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1912), Islam split into two hostile sects - Qara-taghlyq (black mountain) and Aq-taghlyq (white mountain), whose bitter feuds lasted for hundreds of years. Muslims were compelled to take side, either this or that, thereby forfeiting their religious freedom.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the policy of religious freedom is implemented together with the practice of the policy of ethnic regional autonomy; democratic reform of religious system and law-based management of religious affairs have helped the harmonious coexistence among different religions in Xinjiang. Citizens believing in or not believing in region have treated one another with respect and understanding, ushering in a new historical period of harmonious coexistence of the various religions in Xinjiang. It is then the people of all ethnic groups in the region have indeed got the right to freedom of religious belief.

Freedom of religious belief is a basic right bestowed by the Constitution on all its citizens. It is stipulated in the Constitution as follows: "Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief." The Law of the People's Republic of China on Ethnic Regional Autonomy clearly rules, "Organs of self-government in ethnic autonomous areas guarantee the freedom of religious belief to citizens of the various ethnic groups..."; "No state organ, public organization or

individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion..."; "The state protects normal religious activities." In addition, the State Council promulgated the Regulations on Religious Affairs in 2004, which stipulates, "Citizens enjoy freedom of religious belief..."; "The state protects normal religious activities, as well as the legal rights and interests of believers, religious organizations and venues for religious activities in accordance with the law."

The Chinese government is fully committed to a policy of freedom of religious belief, respecting its citizens' freedom to believe or not believe in religion. Citizens are equal before the law and must carry out the duties imposed by the Constitution and other laws, whether they believe in or not believe in any religion. Anyone who encroaches on the citizens' freedom of believing in or not believing in any religion shall bear legal liability, and citizens both believing in or not believing in any religion also bear legal liability for breaching the Constitution and the law.

The policy of freedom of religious belief has been fully implemented in Xinjiang. After the founding of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, people of all ethnic groups are guaranteed the right of freedom in religious belief. It is up to the person concerned to make his or her free decision to believe or not to believe in any religion, to believe in a religion in the past but not now, not to believe any religion in the past but believe one now, to believe in this or that religion and to believe in this or that sect of the same religion. All normal religious activities held by the believers either in religious venues or at their homes in line with customary religious practices are protected by the law, and no state organ, public organization or individual may interfere with such activities.

Xinjiang currently has 24,800 venues for religious activities, including mosques, churches, Buddhist temples and Daoist temples with 29,300 clerical practitioners, basically sufficient to meet the religious believers' needs for normal religious activities. In addition, the region has 112 religious organizations and eight religious colleges. In Xinjiang, 1,436 religious practitioners have been elected deputies to or members of people's congresses and the people's political consultative conferences at various levels. They have actively participated in deliberations and management of administrative affairs on behalf of religious believers, and in exercising supervision over the government in respect to the implementation of the policy of freedom of

religious belief. The lawful rights and interests of religious organizations are protected by the law.

Most people of Xinjiang's 10 major ethnic groups are followers of Islam, so there are all together in Xinjiang 24,400 mosques with 28,600 clerical personnel. Since the 1980s, the central government has allocated over RMB10 million to maintaining or repairing a number of key religious sites listed under the protection of the state and the autonomous region, including the Id Kah Mosque in Kashi, Juma Mosque in Hotan, Yang Hang Mosque in Urumqi, and Emin Minaret in Turfan. The Xinjiang Islamic Institute has trained 634 students since its founding in 1987, and since 2001 has held 132 training sessions for 28,665 clerical personnel. Since 2001, in order to train high-caliber clerics, Xinjiang has sent 70 people to visit Islamic institutions of higher-learning in Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other countries for further studies. In accordance with standard international practices, the Chinese government has implemented a policy for planning and organizing pilgrimages. Since the 1980s, more than 50,000 people from Xinjiang have made pilgrimages to Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

The normal requirements of religious believers have been satisfied. The government of the autonomous region has managed to do a better job in the religion-related work in view of the actual conditions of the various religions; it has shown full respect to citizens' right of freedom of religious beliefs and has kept opening up new legitimate channels for religious believers to correctly understand the ABC of the various religions, thus basically satisfying the reasonable requirements of the religious believers. By 2014, more than 1.76 million copies of religious classics, books, and magazines had been published, including the Quran, Selections from Al-Sahih Muhammad Ibn-Ismail al-Bukhari and Selected Works of Waez in Uyгур, Kazak, Han Chinese and Kirgiz languages, the "New Collections of Waez's Speeches" series in Uyгур, Kazak and Han Chinese languages, and the magazine China's Muslims. In 2013, the new Uyгур edition of the Quran was published and 230,000 copies were sold. By 2014, the number of Islamic publications available in Xinjiang's ethnic minority languages exceeded 20, which basically satisfies Muslims' demands to learn about the Islam and Islamic scriptures.

Xinjiang has strengthened management of religious affairs in accordance with the law. The state and the autonomous region, following the basic principles of "protecting the lawful, banning the unlawful, holding in check the extremist, resisting infiltration and punishing crime," exercise management of religious affairs, protect the freedom of religious beliefs and ensure the orderly holding of normal religious activities and protect the legitimate rights and interests of religious

organizations in accordance with the law and relevant regulations. The re-amended Regulations of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Religious Affairs were issued in 2014, indicating further implementation of the basic policy of protecting the citizens' freedom of religious belief as prescribed in the Constitution, in addition to emphasizing that religious activities must be carried out within the boundaries prescribed by the law and relevant regulations and that activities that harm national security and interests, public interests and the citizens' legitimate rights and interests in the name of religion must be banned.

Religious extremism has been firmly curbed in accordance with the law. Religious extremists advocate extreme ideas, incite religious hatred and resentment against other religions and "heretics," undermine Xinjiang's religious harmony and ethnic unity, deny the traditional Islam in Xinjiang, cause damage to its internal harmony and jeopardize the fundamental interests of Muslims. Extremist ideas distort and contravene Islamic theology, and the extremists bewitch Muslims, especially teenagers, with such heretical ideas as "the shahid (martyr) engaged in jihad (holy war) can live in the garden of Paradise," thus turning some individuals into extremists and terrorists whose thoughts are controlled and who are manipulated to frequently perform acts of violence and terrorism and kill innocent people of all ethnic groups, even their fellow Islamic clerics and Muslims. Many facts have revealed that religious extremism has developed into a real risk that has endangered national and ethnic unity, undermines religious and social harmony, menaces Xinjiang's lasting social stability and threatens the life and property safety of people of all ethnic groups. Suppressing religious extremism in accordance with the law is a just move that protects the fundamental interests of the state and the people, including Muslims themselves, and is also an important part of the international response to religious extremism. The autonomous region has always pursued the policy of freedom of religious belief, protected normal religious activities, worked hard against extremism in ensuring the life safety of the people, and effectively prevented spreading of religious extremism.

VIII. Promoting the Unique Role of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps

Founded in October 1954, the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) plays a key role in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. It assumes the responsibilities of reclaiming the wasteland and guarding the border areas commissioned by the state, and operates a unique administrative system that combines the functions of the Party, government, military and enterprise, with economic planning directly

supervised by the state. It is an organization that handles its own administrative and judicial affairs within the reclamation areas under its jurisdiction in accordance with the laws and regulations and those enacted by the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. By the end of 2014, the XPCC had had under it 14 divisions comprised of 176 regiments, and was exercising jurisdiction over an area of 70,600 sq km boasting a total population of 2,732,900, accounting for 11.8 percent of Xinjiang's total.

Inspired by the XPCC spirit of "loving the motherland, selfless devotion, hard work, and forging ahead with pioneering endeavors," over the past six decades the XPCC workers have, generation after generation, made strenuous efforts to turn the desolate Gobi wilderness from time immemorial into ecological oases, initiate Xinjiang's cause of modernization, build one after another large farms and industrial and mining enterprises, and establish quite a number of new cities and towns. The XPCC has made an indelible contribution to the development of Xinjiang by promoting unity among all the ethnic groups, maintaining social stability and consolidating border defenses.

The XPCC has played an important driving role for the development and progress of Xinjiang. Starting with establishing farms by reclaiming wastelands, the XPCC expanded its activities to running mines, building factories and roads, developing commerce and trade, and initiating undertakings in science, education, culture and healthcare with funds for construction and life it had accumulated by way of working hard and practicing economy. Its regimental agricultural and stock raising farms and subordinating enterprises not only have provided for their own needs, but also have paid taxes to the local governments in accordance with the law, in addition to planning and building in succession quite a number of transport and hydropower projects as well as industrial and mining enterprises for the local governments, for free. To support Xinjiang's industrial development, the XPCC has also transferred to the local governments, at no cost, a number of large-scale industrial, construction, transport, and commercial enterprises it had developed, making an important contribution to the modernization of the region. Since its founding, the XPCC has built eight county-level cities of Alar, Tiemenguan, Tumushuke, Kekedala, Shuanghe, Wujiaqu, Shihezi and Beitun, six administrative towns of Jinyinchuan, Caohu, Wutong, Caijiahu, Beiquan and Shihezi, and a large number of smaller towns on the regimental farms, facilitating the urbanization process in Xinjiang.

The XPCC has played an exemplar role in guiding the development of productive forces in Xinjiang. Fully exploiting its large-scale and group advantages in production

organization, the Corps has built a modern agricultural system featuring mechanized, intensive and massive-scale production which is unique to China's inland arid areas, leading the nation in agricultural water-saving irrigation, promotion of mechanized farming, and the building of modern agriculture demonstration bases; it has become a key national production base for quality cotton and specialty fruit. In 2014, the total sown area of farm crops under its management reached 1,327,900 ha, accounting for 22.2 percent of the total in Xinjiang. The total output of cotton was 1.6 million tons, making up 36.3 percent of Xinjiang's production and 26.6 percent of the national total, leading the country for years in per-unit yield, rate of mechanization and per-capita output. It also tops the country in both output and scale of production of water-saving irrigation equipment, tomato products and cotton textile spindles. Ninety-one items of its farm produce have been acknowledged as famous brands or reputed trademarks of China and Xinjiang.

The XPCC has promoted ethnic unity in Xinjiang. In Xinjiang, the divisions, regimental farms, enterprises and public institutions under the XPCC are extensively scattered in the various prefectures, cities, counties of Xinjiang, closely interwoven with the local administrative divisions and extensively involved in various aspects of the autonomous region's economic and social development. The Corps has earnestly implemented the Party's ethnic and religious policies, performing public service and offering practical help to the people of various ethnic groups. As early as 1959, it formulated the Twenty-Article Outline Concerning Support to the Army and Love for the People for Sincerely Serving the People of Various Ethnic Groups. In 1984, shortly after it was restored, the XPCC launched a co-construction mechanism between its grassroots-level units and local villages. During their interactions, the Corps' agricultural production units have kept imparting new technology and new crop species to local farmers, helping all local ethnic minorities to gain prosperity. The Corps' medical institutions have kept making medical-aid tours to the local villages and pasturing areas all year round, delivering medicines, treating the sick and preventing diseases. The Corps' performing art troupes also bring free shows to the local peoples.

The XPCC workers live in peace and harmony as neighbors with people of various ethnic groups in Xinjiang; they share mutual support and assistance. The Corps has provided various public services not only to its workers, but also to the local people, attracting people from all ethnic groups of Xinjiang and various other parts of the country to work, study, seek medical care, and start businesses in the XPCC, thus promoting ethnic unity, unity between the Corps and local governments, and integrative development of both XPCC and the local society, facilitating the formation of interwoven social development model for Xinjiang's ethnic groups and

laying down the social foundation for these ethnic groups to communicate and integrate. During the process of creating the unique XPCC culture, the Corps makes a due contribution to enriching the local cultures of Xinjiang by promoting cultural exchanges among the different peoples and enhancing their identity with the Chinese culture that features integrated diversity.

The XPCC has played a unique role in maintaining stability and defending border area. Always upholding principles of being both soldiers and civilians, and combining productive labor with military duties and the army with the people, the Corps has paid equal attention to productive work and military training; the hundreds of thousands of XPCC workers from 58 border regimental farms have guarded a 2,000-km section of China's borderlines to ensure the security of China's northwestern borders. In the face of severe and complex threats to social stability in Xinjiang, the various divisions, regiments, companies, enterprises and public institutions under the XPCC have established an emergency-response militia contingent. The XPCC has played a unique and irreplaceable role in maintaining social stability in Xinjiang, quashing violent terrorist activities and safeguarding the public.

It is the Chinese government's strategic plan to administer state affairs and ensure national stability and an important strategy to strengthen frontier governance to form, support and develop the XPCC; it is a major institutional innovation in maintaining stability in Xinjiang, safeguarding ethnic unity and national unification, and developing the border area; and it is an effective mechanism for the central government to support the localities, the more developed inland areas to support border areas, and the various ethnic groups to render mutual assistance. After decades of development, XPCC-built cities and regiment-built towns have gradually developed into the regional economic and cultural hubs, where all sorts of resources converge - population, capital, industry, talent, education and healthcare.

Upholding the national interests as its own interests and overall situation of Xinjiang its foremost concern, the XPCC has remained a key force in developing and building Xinjiang and bringing benefits to people of all its ethnic groups, as well as in safeguarding national unification and maintaining stability in Xinjiang. As such, it has always enjoyed support and help from the region's governments at all levels and the people of all the ethnic groups. In view of the new conditions and prioritizing the overall goal of lasting stability and peace in Xinjiang, the XPCC will give full play to its role in adjusting the social structure, promoting cultural exchange and facilitating inter-district coordination, further boost its strength, deepen XPCC-Xinjiang

integrative development, and endeavor to make still greater contributions to the development, progress, harmony and stability of Xinjiang.

IX. State Support and Assistance to Xinjiang

The CPC and the Chinese government have always attached great importance to the development of Xinjiang, and have continuously increased their support and assistance. Over the past 60 years, the state's financial grants to Xinjiang totaled almost RMB1.7 trillion. The state and other provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government have at different times provided support to Xinjiang in various forms, acting as a strong driving force to boost the region's economic and social development.

State support has laid the foundation for Xinjiang's development. From the founding of the autonomous region to the launch of the reform and opening-up drive, the state had, by way of job allocation and job transfer, encouraged intellectuals and technical professionals to go to work in Xinjiang, called on young adults, urban educated youth and workers in inland areas of the country to support frontier development and encouraged demobilized service people to stay in Xinjiang and assigned them jobs there, thus fostering a generation of builders who have been hard-working and pioneering and took roots in the border areas. They have made an invaluable contribution to Xinjiang's economic and social development, to the cultivation and defense of the border regions as well as national security.

The state has supported Xinjiang to boost its development by adopting quite a number of measures, such as checking and ratifying on a yearly basis its balance of total revenues and expenditures, and turning in to the state the surplus while having the deficiency to be made up by the central budget; raising the proportion of budget reserves for ethnic minority areas; implementing preferential policies for ethnic trade companies; and establishing various special funds like special allowance funds of education for ethnic minority areas, and ethnic minority area allowances. From 1955 to 1978, the state subsidized Xinjiang with RMB7.19 billion accumulatively. With hefty state funds, many major infrastructure and other industrial projects in the region have been completed, including the Lanzhou-Urumqi Railway and the Karamay and Tarim oilfields.

The state has strengthened both policy and financial support to Xinjiang. Since the adoption of the reform and opening-up policy, the state has kept intensifying efforts

to support Xinjiang in such fields as economy, education, science and technology, culture, medical services, ecological and environmental protection, and finance. From 1980 to 1988, the central budget provided a quota subsidy to Xinjiang with an average yearly increase of 10 percent. In 1994, when the state introduced tax revenue-sharing between the central and local authorities, it maintained the previous policies of providing subsidies and special allocations to ethnic minority areas. When it adopted transitional transfer payments the following year, it added special provision concerning the policy of transfer payments to ethnic minority areas.

The state has guided and encouraged businesses to invest in Xinjiang, and provided greater investment and financial support to Xinjiang. In 2005, it initiated pairing-assistance to the four prefectures and the three divisions under the XPCC in southern Xinjiang. In 2007, it promulgated the Opinions of the State Council on Further Boosting Xinjiang's Economic and Social Development.

The state has also trained and provided talents for Xinjiang. In the 1980s, it initiated a cooperative program between Xinjiang and more than 100 institutions of higher learning in other parts of the country, with the total enrollment eventually growing from 800 to 6,800. By 2014, these institutions had enrolled, accumulatively, 54,000 students of ethnic minority origins from Xinjiang, in addition to providing the autonomous region with 21,000 undergraduates and junior college graduates. In 2000, the state launched a program encouraging senior high schools in hinterland areas of the country to hold classes of students from Xinjiang, so far enrolling in total 70,000 from Xinjiang, 38,000 of whom have graduated, with 95 percent continuing their studies in colleges located in the developed provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. Since 2003, junior high school classes have been set up in some cities of Xinjiang, enrolling to date a total of 61,300 students from remote impoverished areas. Senior high school classes and secondary vocational classes were opened in 2011 in other parts of the country for Xinjiang students, which have thus far enrolled 13,200 students.

All of these senior-high-school and junior-high-school classes held in hinterland areas target mainly ethnic minority students from Xinjiang's farming and pasturing areas to offer them a better education. At present, more than 100,000 ethnic minority students are studying in nearly 600 schools in some 20 economically better

developed provinces, municipalities directly under the central government and autonomous regions.

In 1996, the state began to extend support to Xinjiang's development by way of selecting and sending officials to work in Xinjiang. By 2014, it had sent eight complements numbering more than 11,000 officials and professionals. In 2004, a new initiative involved sending qualified professionals with doctor's degrees to work in the region. By 2014, 11 groups of 81 persons with doctor's degrees had gone and worked in the autonomous region through this project.

The state has also implemented a number of other talent training policies, such as selecting and appointing officials of ethnic minority origins to temporary posts in central government offices or in areas with better developed economy to get training; holding Xinjiang classes in inland higher-learning institutions and senior high schools; implementing such programs as the "Program for High-Caliber Personnel from Ethnic Minorities" and "Light of the West" for the training of visiting scholars; and giving special policy support to the development of higher-learning institutions located in the ethnic minority areas or the master's and doctor's degree granting centers of ethnic colleges and universities in terms of graduate enrollment size, etc.

The new round of pairing-assistance has yielded notable results. The First National Meeting on Pairing-Assistance to Xinjiang was held in March 2010. At the meeting, the central authorities decided to pair off 19 provinces and municipalities directly under the central government with 82 counties (cities) in 12 prefectures in Xinjiang and the 12 divisions of the XPCC to render support to the latter.

Moreover, the state has adopted a number of special policies to support Xinjiang's development, and these include: as of January 1, 2015, ad valorem collection has been implemented for coal resources tax in Xinjiang at a rate of 6 percent; Xinjiang has been designated a key state-class comprehensive energy base and all-round efforts are called to improve the clean and efficient development, conversion and utilization of Xinjiang's energy resources; specific provisions have been made in eight aspects concerning officials and professionals coming to support Xinjiang's development, such as the scope and form of management authority, selection and rotation; a policy has been adopted to grant a two-year income tax exemption and three-year half pay for Xinjiang's enterprises listed in the "Catalog of Industries and Enterprises Enjoying Income Tax Preferences and Whose Development in Areas with Difficulties of Xinjiang (Trial)"; a policy covering 10 aspects of support to the two economic development zones in Kashi and Khorgos has been adopted; and differentiated industrial policies have been implemented for Xinjiang's 12 main

industries.

The state's financial allowances to Xinjiang in the 2010-2014 period reached RMB1,061.65 billion, or a 1.68-fold increase over that in the 1955-2009 period, which stood at RMB630.15 billion. By the end of 2014, the 19 provinces and municipalities directly under the central government, which have been involved in the pairing-assistance to Xinjiang, had provided RMB53.6 billion of funds and undertaken 4,906 aid projects in Xinjiang, in addition to even a larger number of so-called livelihood projects in terms of urban and rural housing improvement, personnel training, employment, public health and community organization, bringing tangible benefits to the local people and markedly enhancing the development of science, education, culture and public health as well as improvement of the situation in rural areas. Relying on the 6,482 cooperative projects brought by the provinces and municipalities rendering support to it, Xinjiang had brought in RMB827.7 billion of investment.

The Second Central Meeting on the Work of Xinjiang held in May 2014 proposed to adopt special policies in finance, investment, banking and personnel to mainly support the four prefectures in southern Xinjiang so as to further promote the coordinated development of different areas in Xinjiang.

Conclusion

Tremendous changes have taken place in Xinjiang over the past 60 years.

Under the firm leadership of the CPC and the central government, and with the generous support of the whole nation, the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang have unswervingly followed the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, pursued ethnic equality, unity and development, practiced the system of ethnic regional autonomy, and brought about enormous changes in all areas north and south of the Tianshan Mountains. Experience has proved that the combination of centralized national leadership with ethnic regional autonomy, and the combination of ethnic factors with regional ones fully accord with the prevailing situation in China and with the realities and needs of Xinjiang. It is the basic premise behind the drive for equality, harmonious co-existence and development of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and serves as an important guarantee that these goals will be realized.

Today, Xinjiang is standing at a new starting point for development. As a key region on the Silk Road Economic Belt, it functions as a major window on China's opening to the west. It is a transportation hub that links the continents of Asia and Europe, and a center of business and trade, finance, cultural and scientific exchange, and medical services. The Second Central Meeting on the Work of Xinjiang formulated the strategy of "governing Xinjiang in accordance with the law, stabilizing Xinjiang with unity, and building Xinjiang with a long-term goal." The people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang will seize this precious opportunity to unite their efforts in pursuit of further historic achievements.

To build a beautiful Xinjiang with efforts of all ethnic groups and realize the Chinese Dream is the common aspiration of the whole nation, including all the peoples of Xinjiang. A brighter future beckons.