

19th CPC NATIONAL CONGRESS

Leading Group targets deeper reform

Focus on resolving problems paves the way for greater development

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The Central Leading Group for Deepening Overall Reform, which turns 4 in December, has built an effective framework to tackle deep-seated problems and clear the way for greater development of China.

Headed by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, the group was established on Dec 30, 2013. Since then it has convened 38 meetings and approved more than 300 documents to achieve remarkable progress, observers said.

The group's efforts have boosted global confidence in China's lasting, robust growth as it works toward coordinating various departments, removing institutional barriers, reinforcing policy implementation and the Party's supervision over the reform process, experts and diplomats said.

China Daily surveyed the frequency of certain words and phrases in official releases of the Leading Group's 38 meetings. The word "reform" was used most often, mentioned more than 1,400 times. "Piloting", "supervision", "innovation" and "responsibility" were also among the top words used.

The Leading Group, aimed at fixing loopholes and tapping greater potential for development, has six affiliated groups working on different areas — the economy and ecology; democracy and the legal system; culture; social areas; building up the Party; and discipline and inspection.

The group's first meeting convened in January 2014. Xi has chaired each of its meetings and has made important remarks, official releases show.

The meetings are attended by various figures necessary to implement reforms, such as members of the Leading Group and key officials of relevant Party and State departments, the releases said.

The group schedule is packed at each meeting, with members attending briefings presented by officials involved in specific tasks. It also analyzes and researches subjects at hand, reviews or approves documents and authorizes pilot projects.

A wide spectrum of issues is addressed at each gathering. The most recent meeting on Aug 29 reviewed and approved six docu-

ments, ranging from agriculture-related funds, compensation for damage to ecology, supervision in village affairs to judicial system buildup.

Many landmark policies introduced by the group have brought greater convenience to the everyday lives of the people.

A guideline was approved at the group's 11th meeting, in April 2015, on piloting comprehensive reform at urban public hospitals. A pilot program at county-level hospitals was quickly initiated in October of that year.

Taking action

Han Baojiang, director of the economics department of the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, noted that the Leading Group "takes action like thunder" to cover areas that directly shape the public good, such as medical services, elderly care, food safety and the environment.

Reforms undertaken in recent years have addressed harder, deeper issues as more manageable ones were tackled before, and "the scope and depth of the reforms are unprecedented", Han noted.

The reform measures have won public support as they boost equality and allow the fruits of development to be better enjoyed by the public, Han said.

The Party's spearheading reforms have attracted global attention as the world closely watches its potential influence on China's opening-up.

Russian Ambassador to China Andrey Denisov said he tries to "follow Chinese newspapers, articles about economic reform", and the Leading Group is "effective" as it offers a "very important agenda".

The Leading Group's influence on reform and its guiding role can be seen by a recent comment made by Minister of Agriculture Han Changfu on Sept 29.

Eighteen of the past 38 Leading Group meetings touched on reforms in rural areas, reviewed 24 reform plans regarding agriculture, issued key documents covering topics like property rights, and have established pillars supporting agricultural reforms, the minister said at a media briefing in Beijing.

The agenda of all the meetings, taken as a whole, shows long-term vision and a strong sense of priorities.

Analysts observed that annual tasks were laid out at the first meeting of each year, and a review of what was achieved was made at the year-end meeting.

Also, the first meeting of the year convened right after each year's plenary session of the CPC Central Committee elaborated on how to effectively carry out the latest reform measures decided by the session.

Zhu Lijia, a professor of public management at the Chinese Academy of Governance, said the group's implementation and supervision of reforms have been a major highlight, as "great ideas could be an empty slogan forever without effective implementation". Behind such efforts is China's strengthened awareness of the rule of law, which "allows the reform to develop in a constant, regulated and healthy manner".

Zhu noted that the Leading Group introduced its working rules and priorities for its annual missions at its first two meetings before it embarked on specific tasks, showcasing a strong sense of priorities and rule-based governance.

When chairing the 31st meeting on Dec 30, Xi summarized that a slew of major reform solutions were issued and realized in the past three years, major breakthroughs were made in reform measures on a range of key areas and sections, and the overall framework for deepening reform was "basically established".

Fast implementation

Rwandan Ambassador to China Charles Kayonga said "the speed" of the implementation is impressive as policymakers resolve issues through the Leading Group. A great lesson for other countries is China's "focus on the main objectives", he added.

The diplomat highlighted the Party's progress in eradicating poverty and combating corruption.

The leadership is "focused on resolving problems" as it achieves "mobilizing all national resources" to solve these challenges and it is also cooperating with the rest of the world, Kayonga said.

Looking to the next five years, Li Tuo, a professor at the Chinese Academy of Governance, said although upcoming reform measures have yet to be unveiled in detail, restructuring the economy will be more advanced as China has benefited from this already.

The 20 most frequently used words in official releases of the past 38 meetings of the Central Leading Group for Deepening Overall Reform chaired by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and head of the Leading Group

