

19th CPC NATIONAL CONGRESS | International perspective

Editor's note: The Communist Party of China started its 19th National Congress on Oct 18. In the run-up to the meeting, China Daily asked four prominent experts to provide their views on developments in China and the country's global leadership.

Remarkable story of progress

By **WANG MINGJIE** in London
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As a supporter of globalization and sustainable development, China is playing an increasingly important role in global economic governance, according to the head of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Angel Gurría, the OECD's secretary-general, said the nation's continued development and successful transition from a country with double-digit growth rates to one with more sustainable high single-digit rates has been its most notable achievement during the past five years.

He attributes China's smooth economic transition largely to a series of structural reforms and predicted that the country will remain the major driver of global growth for

the foreseeable future.

Gurría said the Belt and Road Initiative, proposed by President Xi Jinping in 2013, has the potential to accelerate the economic integration of Asia, Europe and Africa by improving connectivity, trade and investment.

One of the most visible changes in China, he said, is the abundance of internet-based services, including mobile payments and the sharing economy.

"These innovations have changed Chinese lives, well ahead of many other more economically advanced countries," he said.

Gurría said today's China is innovative, dynamic and flexible, but he warned that there are challenges ahead.

"A major challenge China will face in the coming years will be to accelerate structural reforms to the extent necessary to keep growth



Angel Gurría, secretary-general of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

rates at a relatively high level," he said, adding that growth will become increasingly reliant on productivity gains as the working population ages and shrinks.

He said a level playing field for private Chinese businesses, foreign companies and State-owned enterprises is crucial.

Speaking ahead of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Gurría said he has met Xi several times, and that the Chinese president's leadership and vision had left a deep impression. He hopes the important gathering will continue to support a leadership that gives impetus to the reforms and keeps the economy on a path of stability.

"We also look forward to seeing a reiteration of China's commitment to openness and economic globalization, as affirmed by Xi this year," said Gurría, who stressed that the OECD

stands ready to further strengthen its policy support for China's reforms, and to join hands to create better policies for both Chinese people and the world.

As a key contributor to global economic growth and as the world's most populous nation, China has become an indispensable partner in seeking common solutions to challenges, such as poverty and climate change, he said.

"The remarkable economic and social progress China has achieved over recent decades offers unique insights for other developing countries as they build capacity and institutions to improve living standards for their citizens," he said.

Gurría said he believes China is ahead of many more developed countries in laying the foundations for a more resource-efficient, low-carbon and highly digitized economy.

Nation's progress on HIV lauded

Veteran epidemiology professor is impressed by China's advances in disease control and prevention

By **WANG XIAODONG**
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For US epidemiology expert Roger Detels, China has made "huge" progress in combating outbreaks of infectious disease over the past four decades.

When he first visited the country in 1980, to assist with the training of public health professionals, few people in China were aware of the dangers of HIV/AIDS, he said.

"I am amazed by the changes that took place over the years. When I first came to China, the authorities' priorities were economic concerns instead of public health and the environment," said Detels, who is professor of the UCLA School of Public Health's epidemiology department, at the University of California, Los Angeles.

"Take HIV/AIDS prevention and control, for example. Now China has developed one of the largest HIV control and prevention programs in the world, and it has made itself a model for other countries in HIV prevention and control."

Although aged 81, Detels still visits China once or twice a year to assist with the training of professionals and conduct research. Since 1988 he has headed an HIV/AIDS research and training program at UCLA that works with health professionals from a number of Asian countries, including China.

The aim is for graduates to return to their home countries with the necessary skills to develop their own research programs that will meet international standards.

"When I first arrived in China, according to my observations, the government was reluctant to confront the HIV epidemic," Detels said.

"But the 2004 SARS epidemic provided the authorities with an impetus to play a greater role in the control and prevention of HIV/AIDS."

Following the outbreak of SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome, China improved its disease control and prevention systems at the national and local level, and developed a comprehensive reporting system for infectious diseases, such as HIV.



Roger Detels, professor of the UCLA School of Public Health's epidemiology department.

"This is the most impressive progress China has made, for me," said Detels, while also noting the nation's hygiene and infrastructure improvements, and the government's resolve to fight pollution.

"In many Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Kunming, the streets are spotless and there is no litter. They are cleaner than many cities in the

US, and many cities have better infrastructure than in the US," he said. "The efforts for environmental protection are also impressive. The majority of motor scooters are now electric so there is no pollution from emissions, and I have been told some cities are trying to switch to electric cars."

Despite losing track of the number of Chinese health professionals he has helped train over the years, Detels said there is nothing more rewarding than seeing one of his former students playing a vital disease prevention role in their home country.

"The most unforgettable thing for me is when my former students come back to China to make a difference in HIV control and prevention," he said.

"This is very rewarding for me, and the most exciting experiences are working with my Chinese colleagues."

He said China is now on the right track with its HIV/AIDS prevention and control programs, as it seeks to meet new challenges such as iden-

tifying those who do not know they are infected.

In 2011, Detels received an Outstanding Achievement in International Cooperation Programs on HIV/AIDS award from China's then ministry of health, which is now called the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

"I admire Dr Detels very much. He is a very diligent person and would start work at 6 am every day," said Wu Zunyou, one of Detels' former students and former head of the National Center for AIDS/STD Control and Prevention.

"He was among the first public health experts from the United States to come to China to help."

Wu studied under Detels at UCLA from 1991 to 1995, when he was awarded a PhD in epidemiology.

And though more than 20 years have passed, he is still grateful for his former teacher's help and guidance.

"My experience at UCLA changed my life and career forever. I not only learned about public health, it also changed my mentality and way of thinking," Wu said.