

‘East-west cooperation’ urged in poverty alleviation



President Xi Jinping visits Hui ethnic group Hai Guobao's home in the Yuanlong Migrant Village of Minning Town in Yinchuan, capital of northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, July 19.

During his three-day visit to Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in July, General Secretary Xi Jinping of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), also Chinese president, reiterated China's 2020 poverty alleviation targets and stressed precision in targeting and helping the poor.

Poverty relief is a priority for China for the next few years. As the country aims to build a "moderately prosperous society in an all-round way" by 2020, over 55 million people should be lifted out of poverty.

Poverty alleviation through east-west cooperation

In Ningxia, a less developed area with a high concentration of ethnic minorities in northwest China, President Xi presided over a symposium on poverty alleviation in the capital city of Yinchuan on July 20.

Xi stressed at the meeting the time-honored practice of "cooperation between paired eastern and western regions in poverty alleviation" and urged developed regions in the east to continue helping their partner regions in the west better fight poverty.

Pairing and cooperation between eastern and western regions in poverty relief is conducive to coordinated development and common prosperity, Xi said.

China has used the strategy for 20 years, and the widening gap between the east and west has been

curbed, said the president, hailing "significant progress" in poverty alleviation in poor western areas and old revolutionary base areas.

Xi also stressed precision in targeting and helping the poor, not only financially, but also in education, culture, health, science and technology.

Officials will be assessed not only on how much effort they make but also on whether their measures are effective, said Xi.

No region or ethnic group should be left behind

During his trip, the president visited villages, businesses, a mosque, and a revolutionary education base to learn about people's lives.

Xi checked poverty relief work in villages in Guyuan City, talking with villagers and urging Party members to take the lead in poverty alleviation efforts.

No region or ethnic group should be left behind in China's drive to build a moderately prosperous society by 2020, Xi said.

In Yuanlong Migrant Village in Minning Township, Yongning County, Yinchuan City, Xi said to a villager: "I hope your family will live a better and better life."

The village was built 20 years ago with Xi's suggestion when he worked in Fujian Province. Its population has since expanded from 8,000 to over 60,000.

Xi inspected an incubator park established with cooperation between Ningxia and Zhejiang

Province, encouraging more businesses to join poverty relief efforts in western China.

Since he took office, Xi has attached great importance to poverty relief. For four consecutive years, Xi Jinping's New Year inspection tours have taken him to the frontlines of China's war against poverty.

During the 2016 Spring Festival, he visited Jiangxi Province. Xi visited Gansu Province in 2013, north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in 2014 and northwest China's Shaanxi Province in 2015.

Religious and social harmony

Ningxia is home to many Chinese Muslims and people from the Hui ethnic minority group. The president called for religious harmony and unity between the Han ethnic group and various ethnic minority groups.

More efforts should be made to "direct religious figures and believers to respect and abide by the law, resolutely guard against illegal infiltration via religious means and promote religious and social harmony," he said.

"No matter whether it's local or imported, our country's religions have been deeply imprinted into the Chinese civilization, with a history of more than 5,000 years, and have been deeply integrated into our social life," Xi said during his visit to Xincheng Mosque in Yinchuan on July 19.

While education on national unity and progress should be

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enhanced, Xi also called for accelerating economic and social development in regions mainly inhabited by ethnic minority groups so as to promote unity and cohesion.

Religious circles should interpret Islamic doctrine in positive ways, publicize latest achievements in interpretation, foster religious personnel, especially among the middle-aged and the young, and better serve and guide believers, Xi added.



President Xi Jinping asks about the growing and sale of local vegetables in Yaomo Village of Pengbao Town in Guyuan City, northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, July 18.



President Xi Jinping talks with local Muslims at Xincheng Mosque in Yinchuan, northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, July 19.

Li’s Ulan Bator tour gives a push to cooperation



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (L) meets with Mongolian President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, July 14.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang paid an official visit to next-door neighbor Mongolia from July 13 to 14. He also attended the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit in the Mongolian capital of Ulan Bator from July 15 to 16, putting forward China’s proposals for boosting dialogue and cooperation between the two continents.

Cementing bilateral ties

In a signed article published by Mongolia’s major news outlets ahead of the visit, Li lauded China-Mongolia relations as being the “best ever” in history. This is Li’s first trip to Mongolia since he took office in 2013 and the first official visit by a Chinese premier to the country in six years.

During talks with his Mongolian counterpart Jargaltulga Erdenebat, Li said China will work with Mongolia’s new government in continued efforts to consolidate mutual trust in politics and to maintain exchanges between high-level officials so as to deepen cooperation in all respects.

China stands ready to dovetail its Belt and Road Initiative with Mongolia’s Steppe Road

program, said Li, adding that his country is also willing to start a feasibility study on a free trade pact with Mongolia.

Moreover, China wishes to make further progress with Mongolia in such fields as the processing of farm and pasture products, housing and infrastructure. He also suggested that both sides strengthen financial cooperation and expand currency-swap scale in order to enhance people-to-people exchanges.

Following the talks, Erdenebat and Li witnessed the signing of 15 cooperation agreements ranging from trade and infrastructure to radio and TV broadcasting.

For years, China has been Mongolia’s largest trading partner and largest source of foreign investment.

Strengthening inter-regional cooperation

With the theme of “partnership for the future through connectivity,” this year marks the 20th anniversary of the ASEM Summit.

“As the ASEM enters its third decade, all members should bear in mind the mission of building a new type of comprehensive partnership,” Li said in a keynote speech at the summit.

He called for an innovative approach to Asia-Europe cooperation, urging all parties to share the idea of a community of common destiny and to conduct dialogue and further cooperation.

The premier also called for concerted efforts to create new cooperation methods. Cooperation between Asia and Europe should be guided in a more pragmatic direction and economic and trade cooperation in particular should be enhanced, he said.

He pointed out that China’s Belt and Road Initiative is receiving a very positive response from an increasing number of countries.

In addition, Li called for the establishment of a stronger foundation for people-to-people cooperation between Asia and Europe, pointing out that more dialogue is needed between different civilizations.

Winning support on thorny issue

In response to certain nations’ attempts to stir up tension and interfere in the South China Sea issue in the summit, Li expounded China’s stance of non-acceptance of and non-participation in the arbitration proceedings at an informal meeting.

He stated that China remains committed to settling the South China Sea disputes via dialogue and consultation with countries directly involved on the basis of historical facts and in accordance with international law, so as to safeguard peace and stability in the South China Sea.

Vietnamese Prime Minister said his nation respects China’s stance on the arbitration, adding that the disputes should be solved peacefully through negotiations.

Lao Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith noted that Laos supports China’s stance over the South China Sea issue and stands ready to work with China to maintain peace and stability in the region.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen echoed that his country supports a settlement of the South China Sea disputes through dialogue and consultation between countries directly concerned.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev also said that Russia supports China’s principles on resolving the disputes and opposes the internationalization of the South China Sea disputes or any interference from forces outside the region.



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (C, front) poses for a group photo with other leaders during the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, July 15.

H1 economic growth in line with expectations

China’s economy expanded 6.7 percent year on year in the first half of 2016, indicating that the government’s policies meant to counter economic slowdown are paying off.

Such steady growth laid a solid foundation for the world’s second largest economy to achieve its full year growth target.

Economic growth steady

China’s GDP reported a steady 6.7 percent growth year on year in the first half of 2016 to reach 34.06 trillion yuan (US\$5.08 trillion), according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on July 15.

The service sector expanded 7.5 percent year on year in the first half, accounting for 54.1 percent of the overall economy, up 1.8 percentage points from a year earlier. This growth rate also outpaced a 3.1-percent increase in primary industry and 6.1 percent in secondary industry.

Retail sales of consumer goods grew 10.3 percent, property investment rose 6.1 percent, fixed-asset investment grew 9 percent and fiscal revenue grew 7.1 percent.

In June, foreign direct investment (FDI) into the Chinese mainland rose 9.7 percent year on year, and China’s exports in yuan-denominated terms rose 1.3 percent year on year, while imports dropped 2.3 percent.

The stabilization suggested “the infrastructure-centric stimulus strategy, supported by a mixture of monetary accommodation and fiscal expansion has had some degree of success,” said Julia Wang, an economist with HSBC Greater China.

Downward pressure remains

“We must be aware that domestic and external conditions are still complicated and severe and that the downward economic pressure remains,” warned NBS spokesperson Sheng Laiyun.

It is noteworthy that the growth of fixed-asset investment slowed further to 9 percent in the first half of 2016, the lowest growth rate in years, and private sector fixed-asset investment growth fell again to 2.8 percent during the period, from an already weak 3.9 percent in the first five months.

Overcapacity in traditional industries, entrance barriers for private companies in some sectors and limited access to loans have caused the slowdown in private sector investment, said Sheng.

Meanwhile, a potential deceleration in global demand also pointed to downside risks. Data showed that China’s exports in U.S.-dollar terms fell 4.8 percent year on year in June, while imports were down 8.4 percent.

The shake-up of Britain’s departure from the European Union and rising geopolitical tensions worldwide are posing further challenges for China’s foreign trade.

China’s exports may face relatively large downward pressure in the third quarter as global demand is likely to remain sluggish, warned General Administration of Customs spokesperson Huang Songping.

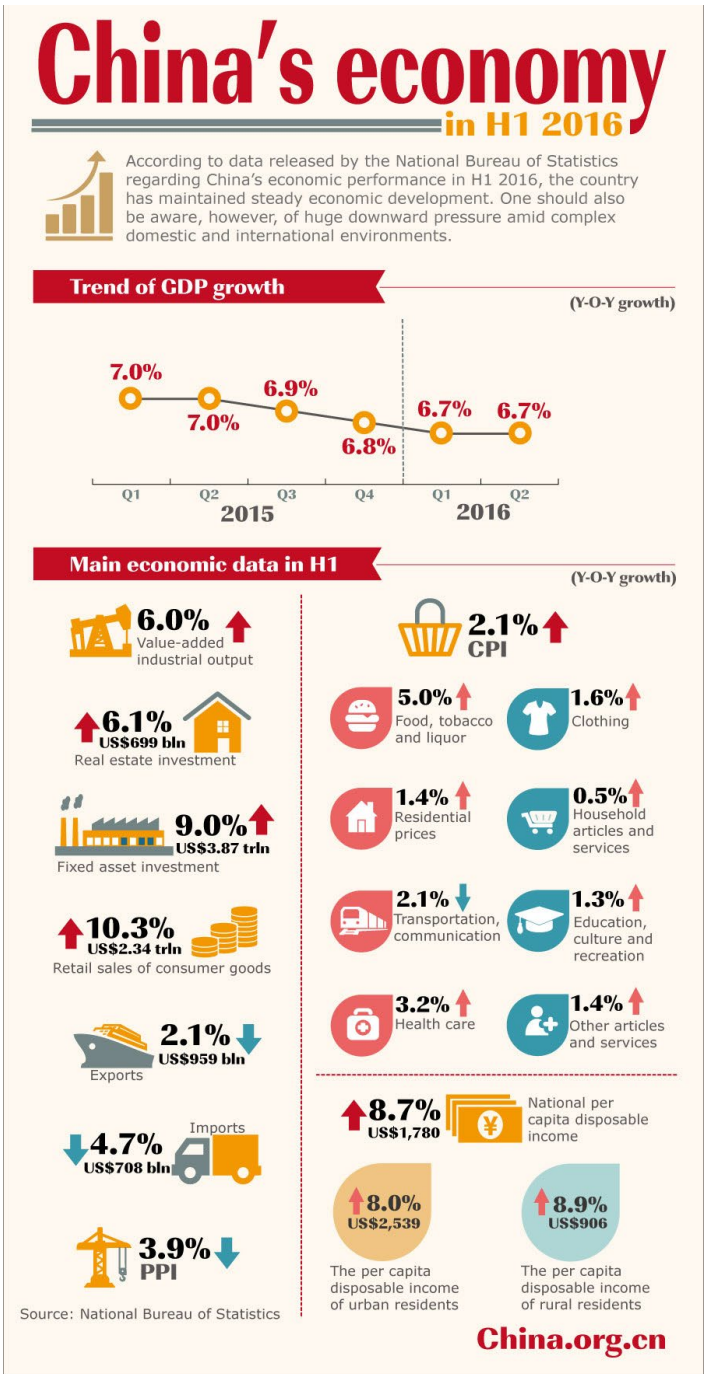
Targets within reach

With reforms on all fronts, and especially with the supply-side structural reform advancing and new growth engines picking up steam, economic stabilization will continue despite all the downward risks, noted Sheng.

His words were echoed by Premier Li Keqiang, who was confident that China will achieve its main full-year development targets.

“New economy is vibrant, new business forms are booming, and new growth momentum is accumulating,” he said in a keynote speech at the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit, adding that China’s current government debt ratio is low while the household savings rate is high, with still ample policy tools available.

“While GDP growth remained decent in the second quarter, in the



second half of the year it will be challenged by the loss of momentum in real estate construction and subdued prospects for exports and corporate investment. Thus, the achievement of the government’s overly ambitious growth target of between 6.5 and 7 percent will rely on further macroeconomic stimulus,” analyzed Louis Kuijs, head of Asian economics at Oxford Economics.

Love in a silent world



Zhou Juan practices sign language in front of a mirror.

"As a teacher, I can only be satisfied with myself when I fulfill my duties conscientiously," said Zhou Juan, a teacher from a special education school in Liangping County, southwest China's Chongqing Municipality.

Zhou started her career as a teacher in 1994. Her first job was teaching left-behind children at a rural primary school in Liangping County. In her neighborhood, almost all middle-aged adults went to work in big cities, so many students in the school were looked after by other family members and lacked parental love. Besides teaching them, Zhou also showed great care for her students' life.

In Zhou's class, some students had to walk a long way to school. She discovered that on sunny days, the kids were always wet with sweat, and that when it rained their trousers would be covered with mud. To make them comfortable at school, Zhou put some spare clothes and shoes in the classroom so that they could change into clean clothes after reaching the school.

Moreover, Zhou discovered that the left-behind children usually got upset on their birthdays, because on such a joyful occasion they would miss their parents more than any other time. To cheer the children up, Zhou tried all means possible to hold celebrations for them. She also asked the kids to call their parents and thank them for working hard so far away from home. Under heavy work pressure, some of the parents had already forgotten the birthday of their children, and the phone calls reminded them of the long-lost warmth of family.

In 2001, a student was injured accidentally at home and couldn't walk. The child didn't want to lag behind in his studies, but his grandparents were too old to take him to school every day. When Zhou heard the story, she invited the student to live with her. For almost a month, she carried the child on her back to and from school, changed the dressing for his wound, washed his clothes and cooked delicious foods for him.

Unfortunately, in 2004, a tragedy struck Zhou. In mid-May, she suddenly couldn't hear clearly because of a buzzing sound in her ear, but due to the approaching final examination she didn't go to hospital immediately. When she finally got the time to see a doctor, she was told that she had missed the best time for treatment and that her deafness was irreversible.

The illness struck a heavy blow to Zhou, as it could have ended her career as a teacher. She cried a lot after the diagnosis, but she finally

decided to pull herself together and face her fate head on.

After her illness, the school offered to move her to an administrative post, but she refused. She bought an expensive hearing aid and asked the headmaster to allow her to continue teaching. "I'm physically handicapped, but it doesn't matter, because what's really awful is the feeling of being trapped," she said.

In the autumn term of 2008, Zhou was transferred to the county's special education school. It was a boarding school with more than 90 students living on campus. Zhou had to teach the children basic living skills like washing dishes and making beds. Some of the kids were mentally challenged and incontinent. Whatever mess they made, Zhou would make them clean immediately. When Zhou was on night shift, she usually grasped her cell phone tightly in hand, so as not to miss her alarm. Every two hours, she would take a tour through the dormitories, tucking children in and helping those who tended to wet beds go to the toilet.

Compared with other children, it's very difficult to teach deaf children and mentally challenged children. Many people told Zhou not to take the job too seriously, but she didn't listen. "As a teacher of special education, I must be responsible for the children. All my efforts are worthwhile if they can grow up self-dependent."

Of all her duties, teaching phonics to children with hearing impairment was the most difficult. Zhou had to teach 20 students in a class individually and let them touch her throat to feel the sound vibrations. Yet, due to their illness, the students couldn't understand her well and would quickly forget what they had learnt. Zhou could do nothing but start from the beginning. The repetition at work was frustrating, but Zhou persevered. "Children are our future. Teaching children with special needs will help them have a brighter future," she said.

In recent years, with the spreading of her story, Zhou has become famous. On July 1, she was honored by Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is also the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, during the celebration of the Party's 95th anniversary in Beijing.

But the awards mean little compared to the happiness she feels seeing her students grow up independently. Although her deafness is worsening, her students' success has motivated her to stick to her post.



Zhou Juan communicates with a student in sign language.

Getting to Know **CHINA** through **KEYWORDS**

Targeted approach to alleviating poverty:

At the closure of the Central Economic Work Meeting on December 11, 2014, the central leadership floated the idea of a targeted approach to alleviating poverty.

[More>>](#)

New Asian security concept:

President Xi Jinping advocated common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in Asia at the Fourth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia.

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Major events in July

July 8: Xi meets UN chief

Keywords: UN, Ban Ki-moon

President Xi Jinping called for further cooperation with the United Nations when meeting with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, on his 10th visit to China.

July 12: China earmarks disaster relief funds

Keywords: disaster, flood

The Chinese government has allocated 560 million yuan (US\$83.67 million) to disaster relief efforts in four flood-affected provinces, including Anhui, Hubei, Hunan and Guizhou.

July 13: Li underscores trade, investment facilitation with EU

Keywords: EU, trade

Premier Li Keqiang called for reciprocal opening-up and improved trade and investment liberalization and facilitation between China and the EU at the 11th China-EU Business Summit.

China issues white paper on settling disputes with Philippines

Keywords: white paper, South China Sea

The Chinese government issued a white paper titled "China Adheres to the Position of Settling Through Negotiation the Relevant Disputes Between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea."

July 24: '1+6' roundtable meeting held in Beijing

Keywords: IMF, WTO, OECD, World Bank, FSB, ILO

Premier Li Keqiang met with leaders of six major international economic and financial institutions in a "1+6" roundtable meeting in Beijing.

July 26: Chinese president pledges support for WHO

Keywords: WHO, Margaret Chan

President Xi Jinping met with World Health Organization (WHO) director-general Margaret Chan, pledging further support for the United Nations' public health arm.