

CONSTITUTION

Constitution of the People's Republic of China

(Full text after amendment on March 14, 2004)

Chapter I General Principles

Article 1 The People's Republic of China is a socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants.

The socialist system is the basic system of the People's Republic of China. Disruption of the socialist system by any organization or individual is prohibited.

Article 2 All power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people.

The National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at various levels are the organs through which the people exercise state power.

The people administer State affairs and manage economic and cultural undertakings and social affairs through various channels and in various ways in accordance with the provisions of law.

Article 3 The State organs of the People's Republic of China apply the principle of democratic centralism.

The National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at various levels are constituted through democratic elections. They are responsible to the people and subject to their supervision.

All administrative, judicial and procuratorial organs of the State are created by the people's congresses to which they are responsible and by which they are supervised.

The division of functions and powers between the central and local State organs is guided by the principle of giving full scope to the initiative and enthusiasm of the local authorities under the unified leadership of the central authorities.

Article 4 All nationalities in the People's Republic of China are equal. The State protects the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities and upholds and develops a relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all of China's nationalities. Discrimination against and oppression of any nationality are prohibited; any act which undermines the unity of the nationalities or instigates division is prohibited.

The State assists areas inhabited by minority nationalities in accelerating their economic and cultural development according to the characteristics and needs of the various minority nationalities.

Regional autonomy is practised in areas where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities; in these areas organs of self-government are established to exercise the power of autonomy. All national autonomous areas are integral parts of the People's Republic of China.

All nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own folkways and customs.

Article 5 The People's Republic of China governs the country according to law and makes it a socialist country under rule of law.

The State upholds the uniformity and dignity of the socialist legal system.

No laws or administrative or local regulations may contravene the Constitution.

All State organs, the armed forces, all political parties and public organizations and all enterprises and institutions must abide by the Constitution and other laws. All acts in violation of the Constitution or other laws must be investigated.

No organization or individual is privileged to be beyond the Constitution or other laws.

Article 6 The basis of the socialist economic system of the People's Republic of China is socialist public ownership of the means of production, namely, ownership by the whole people and collective ownership by the working

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people. The system of socialist public ownership supersedes the system of exploitation of man by man; it applies the principle of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his work”.

In the primary stage of socialism, the State upholds the basic economic system in which the public ownership is dominant and diverse forms of ownership develop side by side and keeps to the distribution system in which distribution according to work is dominant and diverse modes of distribution coexist.

Article 7 The State-owned economy, namely, the socialist economy under ownership by the whole people, is the leading force in the national economy. The State ensures the consolidation and growth of the State-owned economy.

Article 8 The rural collective economic organizations apply the dual operation system characterized by the combination of centralized operation with decentralized operation on the basis of operation by households under a contract. In rural areas, all forms of cooperative economy, such as producers', supply and marketing, credit and consumers' cooperatives, belong to the sector of socialist economy under collective ownership by the working people. Working people who are members of rural economic collectives have the right, within the limits prescribed by law, to farm plots of cropland and hilly land allotted for their private use, engage in household sideline production and raise privately owned livestock.

The various forms of cooperative economy in cities and towns, such as those in the handicraft, industrial, building, transport, commercial and service trades, all belong to the sector of socialist economy under collective ownership by the working people.

The State protects the lawful rights and interests of the urban and rural economic collectives and encourages, guides and helps the growth of the collective economy.

Article 9 All mineral resources, waters, forests, mountains, grasslands, unreclaimed land, beaches and other natural resources are owned by the State, that is, by the whole people, with the exception of the forests, mountains, grasslands, unreclaimed land and beaches that are owned by collectives as prescribed by law.

The State ensures the rational use of natural resources and protects rare animals and plants. Appropriation or damaging of natural resources by any organization or individual by whatever means is prohibited.

Article 10 Land in the cities is owned by the State.

Land in the rural and suburban areas is owned by collectives except for those portions which belong to the State as prescribed by law; house sites and privately farmed plots of cropland and hilly land are also owned by collectives.

The State may, in the public interest and in accordance with law, expropriate or requisition land for its use and make compensation for the land expropriated or requisitioned.

No organization or individual may appropriate, buy, sell or otherwise engage in the transfer of land by unlawful means. The right to the use of land may be transferred according to law.

All organizations and individuals using land must ensure its rational use.

Article 11 The non-public sectors of the economy such as the individual and private sectors of the economy, operating within the limits prescribed by law, constitute an important component of the socialist market economy.

The State protects the lawful rights and interests of the non-public sectors of the economy such as the individual and private sectors of the economy. The State encourages, supports and guides the development of the non-public sectors of the economy and, in accordance with law, exercises supervision and control over the non-public sectors of the economy.

Article 12 Socialist public property is inviolable.

The State protects socialist public property. Appropriation or damaging of State or collective property by any organization or individual by whatever means is prohibited. **Article 13** Citizens' lawful private property is inviolable.

The State, in accordance with law, protects the rights of citizens to private property and to its inheritance.

The State may, in the public interest and in accordance with law, expropriate or requisition private property for its use and make compensation for the private property expropriated or requisitioned.

Article 14 The State continuously raises labour productivity, improves economic results and develops the productive forces by enhancing the enthusiasm of the working people, raising the level of their technical skill, disseminating advanced science and technology, improving the systems of economic administration and enterprise operation and management, instituting the socialist system of responsibility in various forms and improving the organization of work.

The State practises strict economy and combats waste.

The State properly apportions accumulation and consumption, concerns itself with the interests of the collective and the individual as well as of the State and, on the basis of expanded production, gradually improves the material and cultural life of the people.



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The State establishes a sound social security system compatible with the level of economic development.

Article 15 The State practises socialist market economy.

The State strengthens economic legislation, improves macro-regulation and control.

The State prohibits in accordance with law any organization or individual from disturbing the socio-economic order.

Article 16 State-owned enterprises have decision-making power with regard to their operation within the limits prescribed by law.

State-owned enterprises practise democratic management through congresses of workers and staff and in other ways in accordance with law.

Article 17 Collective economic organizations have decision-making power in conducting independent economic activities, on condition that they abide by the relevant laws.

Collective economic organizations practise democratic management and, in accordance with law, elect or remove their managerial personnel and decide on major issues concerning operation and management.

Article 18 The People's Republic of China permits foreign enterprises, other foreign economic organizations and individual foreigners to invest in China and to enter into various forms of economic cooperation with Chinese enterprises and other Chinese economic organizations in accordance with the provisions of the laws of the People's Republic of China.

All foreign enterprises, other foreign economic organizations as well as Chinese-foreign joint ventures within Chinese territory shall abide by the laws of the People's Republic of China. Their lawful rights and interests are protected by the laws of the People's Republic of China.

Article 19 The State undertakes the development of socialist education and works to raise the scientific and cultural level of the whole nation.

The State establishes and administers schools of various types, universalizes compulsory primary education and promotes secondary, vocational and higher education as well as pre-school education.

The State develops educational facilities in order to eliminate illiteracy and provide political, scientific, technical and professional education for workers, peasants, State functionaries and other working people. It encourages people to become educated through independent study.

The State encourages the collective economic organizations, State enterprises and institutions and other sectors of society to establish educational institutions of various types in accordance with law.

The State promotes the nationwide use of Putonghua [common speech based on Beijing pronunciation--Tr.].

Article 20 The State promotes the development of the natural and social sciences, disseminates knowledge of science and technology, and commends and rewards achievements in scientific research as well as technological innovations and inventions.

Article 21 The State develops medical and health services, promotes modern medicine and traditional Chinese medicine, encourages and supports the setting up of various medical and health facilities by the rural economic collectives, State enterprises and institutions and neighbourhood organizations, and promotes health and sanitation activities of a mass character, all for the protection of the people's health.

The State develops physical culture and promotes mass sports activities to improve the people's physical fitness.

Article 22 The State promotes the development of art and literature, the press, radio and television broadcasting, publishing and distribution services, libraries, museums, cultural centres and other cultural undertakings that serve the people and socialism, and it sponsors mass cultural activities.

The State protects sites of scenic and historical interest, valuable cultural monuments and relics and other significant items of China's historical and cultural heritage.

Article 23 The State trains specialized personnel in all fields who serve socialism, expands the ranks of intellectuals and creates conditions to give full scope to their role in socialist modernization.

Article 24 The State strengthens the building of a socialist society with an advanced culture and ideology by promoting education in high ideals, ethics, general knowledge, discipline and the legal system, and by promoting the formulation and observance of rules of conduct and common pledges by various sections of the people in urban and rural areas.

The State advocates the civic virtues of love of the motherland, of the people, of labour, of science and of socialism. It conducts education among the people in patriotism and collectivism, in internationalism and communism and in dialectical and historical materialism, to combat capitalist, feudal and other decadent ideas.

Article 25 The State promotes family planning so that population growth may fit the plans for economic and social development.

Article 26 The State protects and improves the environment in which people live and the ecological environment. It prevents and controls pollution and other public hazards.

The State organizes and encourages afforestation and the protection of forests.

Article 27 All State organs carry out the principle of simple and efficient administration, the system of responsibility for work and the system of training functionaries and appraising their performance in order constantly to improve the quality of work and efficiency and combat bureaucratism.

All State organs and functionaries must rely on the support of the people, keep in close touch with them, heed their opinions and suggestions, accept their supervision and do their best to serve them.

Article 28 The State maintains public order and suppresses treasonable and other criminal activities that endanger State security; it penalizes criminal activities that endanger public security and disrupt the socialist economy as well as other criminal activities; and it punishes and reforms criminals.

Article 29 The armed forces of the People's Republic of China belong to the people. Their tasks are to strengthen national defence, resist aggression, defend the motherland, safeguard the people's peaceful labour, participate in national reconstruction and do their best to serve the people.

The State strengthens the revolutionization, modernization and regularization of the armed forces in order to increase national defence capability.

Article 30 The administrative division of the People's Republic of China is as follows:

(1) The country is divided into provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government;

(2) Provinces and autonomous regions are divided into autonomous prefectures, counties, autonomous counties, and cities; and

(3) Counties and autonomous counties are divided into townships, nationality townships, and towns.

Municipalities directly under the Central Government and other large cities are divided into districts and counties. Autonomous prefectures are divided into counties, autonomous counties, and cities.

All autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties are national autonomous areas.

Article 31 The State may establish special administrative regions when necessary. The systems to be instituted in special administrative regions shall be prescribed by law enacted by the National People's Congress in the light of specific conditions.

Article 32 The People's Republic of China protects the lawful rights and interests of foreigners within Chinese territory; foreigners on Chinese territory must abide by the laws of the People's Republic of China.

The People's Republic of China may grant asylum to foreigners who request it for political reasons.

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