

President Xi raises four aspirations during the 20th anniversary of MSAR



On 20 December 2019, the Macao Special Administrative Region celebrated the 20th anniversary of its establishment, in the presence of President Xi Jinping, who visited Macao and attended a series of celebratory activities. During the 20th Anniversary Celebration of Macao's Return to the Motherland cum Inauguration Ceremony of the Fifth Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region, President Xi delivered a keynote speech and raised four aspirations. He strongly believed Chinese people, including Hong Kong and Macao citizens, have the wisdom and capability to better implement the principle of "One country, two systems" by refining the systems and achieving better governance.

President Xi Jinping and his entourage landed at Macau International Airport in the afternoon on 18 December, and were received by Chief Executive Chui Sai On and Mrs Chui, who both went on board the airplane for a greeting. Upon disembarking, President and Mrs Xi (Madame Peng Liyuan) received welcoming flowers from a primary school boy and girl from the Workers' Children High School, and shook hands with principal officials of the MSAR Government while walking down the red carpet. President and Mrs Xi waved to the crowd, which comprised about 400 university, secondary and primary school students, waving national flags, MSAR flags and silk flowers.

President Xi made a short speech before leaving the airport apron. He expressed his delight about again visiting Macao, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Handover, and extended warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Macao on behalf of the Central People's

Government and all ethnic groups of the motherland. He pointed out that Macao had made proud achievements and progress over the 20 years since its reunification with the motherland, which are facts that Chinese people and the Central People's Government take pride in. He also said the MSAR Government had diligently followed the principle of "One country, two systems", and the conclusions regarding all its features serve as lessons meriting attention. President Xi said that it took everybody's effort to paint the bright future of Macao. During his stay in the following few days, he would be happy to exchange ideas on topics of mutual concern with all walks of life in Macao, he added.

President Xi visits Macao and recognises the SAR's achievements in urban development

In the morning of 19 December, President Xi, accompanied by Chief Executive Chui Sai On, visited the Areia Preta Integrated Government Services Centre in the Northern District, and inspected various service zones, taking a closer look at the public services concerning people's livelihoods and warmly interacting with residents.

First, President Xi was given a briefing by the Secretary for Administration and Justice Chan Hoi Fan, and then visited the Identification Services Bureau service area to watch a demonstration of the self-service machine, and listened to staff explaining the specifications and functions of old and new versions of Macao resident identity cards and passports at the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform Complex. During the visit, President Xi talked to some residents in the service queues, and checked whether the application service was convenient for them. At the Social Security Fund service area, President Xi listened to a briefing on Macao's social security system for the elderly, and cordially interacted with some senior citizens who were among the service users.

President Xi then headed to the Premier School Affiliated to Hou Kong Middle School, to meet primary students who had written letters to him earlier. He visited the students' exhibition and popular science projects, and sat in on a demonstration history lesson. He expressed his expectations that the MSAR Government and all schools will shoulder the responsibility of patriotic education, and his wish that the young people of Macao will become pillars of Macao and the country.

Afterwards, President Xi proceeded to the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform Complex beside Nam Van Lake, to see an exhibition on the platform development and another on the commercial products of Portuguese-speaking countries. The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Leong Vai Tac, gave an introduction of the construction of the platform. President Xi recognised Macao's successful fulfilment of its functions as a service platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, and specifically noted the high development potential of Portuguese-speaking countries.

President Xi also communicated in Putonghua with 11 overseas students, from Malaysia, Korea, Cape Verde, Brazil and Portugal, to learn about their schooling in Macao, and expressed his wish that they study happily and effectively and seize good opportunities in future to apply what they have learned. President Xi also visited an exhibition centre, focusing on Macao's urban development and construction. He recognised Macao's success in urban development since the Handover, and expressed his expectations for Macao's future.

Five highlights of “One country, two systems”

At a welcome dinner hosted by the MSAR Government in the evening of 19 December, President Xi pointed out that the past 20 years since Macao’s Handover had seen the city’s fastest economic development and biggest improvement in people’s livelihoods, as well as the strongest shared national pride and dignity among Macao people.

President Xi praised the Government and the whole community for their commitment to the principle of “One country, two systems” and its implementation which is integrated with Macao’s actual situation, leading to five major achievements in “One country, two systems”, namely: “Loyalty to our country and to Macao” has become the core value of society of Macao; a firm adherence to the Constitution and the authority of the Basic Law; smooth running of an executive-led administration; proactive integration of Macao’s development with the country’s overall development plan; and the Macao SAR has become more inclusive and harmonious, enhancing its social solidarity. The implementation of “One country, two systems” with Macao characteristics will see even greater success, and Macao people will be able to make even more contributions to realise the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation, President Xi added.

President Xi puts forward four aspirations at the inauguration of the new-term MSAR Government

At 10am on 20 December, the 20th Anniversary Celebration of Macao’s Return to the Motherland cum Inauguration Ceremony of the Fifth Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region commenced, with an atmosphere of grandeur, at the Macao East Asian Games Dome. Mr Ho Iat Seng, the Chief Executive of the fifth Macao SAR Government, made his oath of office, administered by President Xi. President Xi subsequently administered the oaths of office, led by Mr Ho Iat Seng, of the principal officials and the Prosecutor General of the fifth Government. Afterwards, members of the Executive Council were sworn into office, with their oaths administered by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng.

President Xi, in his keynote speech, summarised Macao’s successful implementation of “One country, two systems” with “four important lessons”, and raised four aspirations.

First, he urged Macao to keep abreast of the times, and further improve public governance by adapting to the new dynamics and requirements of modern social governance. Tasks included: pressing ahead with public administration reforms to raise effectiveness; making the rule of law the guiding principle in public governance and constantly improving the underlying legal systems; and harnessing technology to expedite the development of a smart city, foster scientific decision-making, and enable precise social governance and highly efficient public services.

Second, President Xi urged Macao to break new ground and press ahead with sustainable economic development. Macao should develop holistic long-term plans, keeping in mind the goal of becoming “One Centre, One Platform and One Base”; focus on key projects conducive to economic diversification and integrated with Macao’s practical conditions, and support the projects with government policies as well as human and financial resources; and seize opportunities arising from national strategies such as the “Belt and Road” initiative and the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, fully demonstrating Macao’s strengths and thereby enhancing

competitiveness. President Xi drew special attention to the development of Hengqin, urging the Macao SAR to fully collaborate with Zhuhai in developing the area, which could provide space for – and inject fresh impetus into – Macao’s long-term development.

Third, President Xi hoped that the MSAR Government would continue putting the people first, and further improve their well-being by enhancing public infrastructure related to transportation, energy supply, environmental protection, information exchange and urban security, addressing the people’s needs and social development requirements, thereby improving the living environment and raising the quality of life. President Xi also urged the Government to actively respond to people’s concerns regarding housing, healthcare and support after retirement, and pay more attention to helping and supporting the underprivileged. It is important to continuously raise the standards of education and build an education system that meets high standards, thereby creating even better conditions for the growth of the young.

Fourth, President Xi hoped that Macao would persist in its inclusiveness and further promote social cohesion and stability. He urged Macao people to uphold the core value of loving the country and Macao; build the broadest consensus for social development; and strengthen community organisations by preserving the good tradition of social unity and negotiated agreement in the city; manage social conflicts to safeguard social harmony; and demonstrate Macao’s advantage as a focal point of Chinese and western cultures by promoting international arts and cultural exchanges.

Striving for change and innovation with concerted efforts to paint a bright future for Macao

At his inauguration speech, Mr Ho Iat Seng, the Chief Executive of the fifth Macao SAR Government said the new administration will build on its successful experience in “One country, two systems” over the past 20 years, to further implement “One country, two systems” with Macao characteristics that match Macao’s actual situation.

Macao’s achievements in the economy and construction during the past 20 years have provided a solid foundation for its future development. The strong aspiration for development and good way of life among the Macao people is giving the city a powerful impetus for growth. Against the huge national backdrop of deepened reform and a fully extended opening-up policy, the “Belt and Road” initiative and the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is providing Macao with substantial development opportunities. Fostering the building of “One centre, one platform, one base”, strengthened regional cooperation – especially the innovative mechanism for joint development of Hengqin together with Zhuhai, as well as the diversification of Macao’s economy, have set the fundamental orientations for Macao’s future development. The role of Macao as a bridge between China and the west, in particular between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, with its varied cultural colours, has given the city a unique advantage in development.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng believed that with the support and guidance of the Central People’s Government, as long as Macao properly grasps its development foundation as well as its development momentum, orientations and opportunities, and presses forward with innovation and development with concerted efforts, the city is destined to see even brighter prospects, and the mission of “One country, two systems” will see even more glorious success. Macao is sure to be developing and prospering hand in hand with the motherland, realising the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation.