



## Chinese Leaders: Science is Key to Future

To push for the nation's economic transition and industrial upgrading, Chinese leaders have pledged greater commitment to the research and application of science and technology (S&T).

In a show of unprecedented importance, both Chinese President XI Jinping and Premier LI Keqiang addressed the opening of an event at the Great Hall of the People on May 30, 2016 that combined the nation's three top-level science conferences with more than 4,000 scientist and science official attendees.

President XI said the central government's commitment is aimed at making China a leading power in science and technology by the middle of the century, or around the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the People's Republic of China. He stressed the role of science and technology as a bedrock that "the country relies on for its power, enterprises rely on for victories, and people rely on for a better life".

"Great scientific and technological capacity is a must for China to be strong and for people's lives to improve," XI said, calling for new ideas, designs and strategies in S&T.

In his speech, Premier LI noted that China's overall research and development input will keep rising to account for 2.5% of its GDP in 2020, from the current 2.1%.

Their talks were warmly applauded by researchers from different sectors. ZHU Baoliang, a specialist in economic forecasting with the National Information Center, said China cannot continue to rely on human input for growth considering such demographic challenges as a rapidly aging society and looming labor shortage.

In the past 30 years, about 30% of China's economic growth has been obtained from innovations, ZHU said. By contrast, developed countries derived 70% of their growth from innovations. He therefore called for more policy reforms to provide incentives for the talent needed in research and innovation.

CHEN Saijuan, dean of the National Key Laboratory of Medical Genetics, said she was inspired by President XI's pledge for a better administrative and budgetary management system to serve Chinese scientists.

JIANG Haomin, chief researcher of Baosteel Group Corp, welcomed President XI's promise that scientists may own shares, stock options and dividends. This is the



way to enable science and the economy to work more closely with each other, he said.

CHEN Baoming, who is director of the Institute of Comprehensive Development under the Chinese Academy of Science and Technology for Development, said all the nine research fields listed in the *Outline of National Strategies for Innovation-Driven Development*, released on May 23 by the Ministry of Science and Technology, are the ones most likely to yield major achievements and breakthroughs.

For instance, without the right technology, China would have difficulty maintaining security in food supplies and ecological balance. Without the next-generation information technologies, China would not have been able to tap the full potential of its enormous domestic market. As for renewable energies, China has already made an impressive start, but only with more key innovations can it develop a solid market advantage, CHEN said.

The three top-level science conferences held in Beijing from May 30 to June 3 included the National Conference on Science and Technology, the biennial Conference of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering, and the National Congress of the China Association for Science and Technology. (Based on a report by China Daily)