

Report to the Central Committee on the National Secretaries' Meeting of Provincial and Municipal Consultative Committees

June 13, 1951

To: Chairman and the Secretariat,

The National Secretaries' Meeting of Provincial and Municipal Consultative Committees, convened with the approval of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), was held concurrently with the National Secretaries' Meeting convened by the Government Administration Council. Both meetings conducted similar discussions on the political report, confidentiality issues, and the united front work of government organs.

The meeting of provincial and municipal consultative committee secretaries focused in greater detail on the work of various levels of consultative committees and drafted seven specific proposals, which are to be submitted to the Standing Committee for review. Among these, the **nature of consultative committees and their relationships with other entities** emerged as a **fundamental issue**.

Based on materials from various regions and discussions during the meeting, **two tendencies** were identified regarding this fundamental issue:

1. **One tendency** views the consultative committee as a kind of **state power organ**, functioning as both an **administrative and legislative body**, with the suggestion that a **vertical structure** should be established from the central to local levels. Some even believe that the consultative committees should hold **leadership authority** over the democratic parties and people's organizations.
2. **The other tendency** treats the consultative committee as a **subordinate branch of government departments**—in some areas, local governments issue commands directly to the committees, or include them in the **organizational structure** of government departments. Others regard consultative committees as **optional** and insignificant bodies, arguing that since political consultation can take many forms, the committees are neither essential nor important.

After thorough discussion, the meeting generally agreed on the following understandings:

1. **Consultative committees are political organizations for the united front and political consultation.**
All parties, groups, and individuals participating in consultative bodies (such as the CPPCC and its National Committee, as well as people's representative meetings and consultative committees at various levels) must adhere politically to the **Common Program and all related agreements**—these are binding and not to be violated. However, any participant who fundamentally disagrees with important resolutions has the **freedom to withdraw** from the consultative body.
Organizationally, participants maintain their **independence**. Therefore, the relationship between the CPPCC committees and democratic parties or people's organizations is **not one of direct leadership**. All matters must be handled through **consultation and agreement**, not through orders.
2. **There is no leadership relationship between consultative committees and the people's governments at the same level.**
Consultative committees are **bodies through which the government regularly consults and seeks advice**, and thus share a close relationship with the government. Both sides should

proactively contribute to the function of consultation and suggestions. However, consultative committees themselves are **not organs of state power**—they are **neither administrative nor legislative bodies**.

Their **nature is similar to that of people's representative meetings**, but they are **not the same as people's representative meetings acting on behalf of a people's congress**.

3. **Consultative committees are not subordinate to government departments**, and government agencies should **respect the status and authority** of the consultative committees.
4. **Consultative committees acting as local representatives of the CPPCC National Committee** should be regarded as **subordinate bodies of the National Committee**. Aside from this, consultative committees at all levels may exchange experiences and offer advice to each other, but these relationships must **not form a vertical leadership structure**.
5. **Consultative committees are far from insignificant**—they are a **key link in the united front**. They embody a **broad united front relationship** internally, and all major **political and policy-related issues** should generally be deliberated through them. Matters concerning multiple democratic parties and people's organizations should also, wherever possible and depending on the willingness of the parties involved, be addressed through the consultative committees (though not necessarily always). The consultative committee is a **creative institution suited to the characteristics of China's New Democratic Revolution**. It is **important, indispensable**, and has the potential for **long-term existence**.

Based on the above consensus, the meeting adopted a document titled **“Opinions on the Work of Consultative Committees in Various Regions”**. [1]

After this document is reviewed and approved by the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee, it will be published and implemented. Attendees generally felt the opinions laid out were **clear and practical**, and would help **make local consultative committee work more comprehensive and consistent**, making this a **valuable document**.

Although the work of local consultative committees has yielded **some results**, there is a common shortcoming of **infrequent and fragmented work**.

This is reflected in **many temporary campaigns**, but **few regular plans**.

There is more effort in **supporting government work**, but **less in engaging the public, supporting democratic parties, democratic individuals, and people's organizations in united front work**.

One major cause is the **lack of working institutions and full-time personnel**, for which the meeting has made specific proposals. But the **more decisive reason** is that **some provincial and municipal Party committees and governments do not place enough importance on or offer adequate support to consultative committees**.

It is recommended that, after final approval by the CPPCC National Committee Standing Committee, the **Central Committee issue an internal directive** on the matter.

Please advise if this course of action is appropriate.

Li Weiha

June 13, 1951

Note: [1] Refers to the document titled *“Opinions on the Work of People's Representative Consultative Committees in Various Provinces and Cities.”*