

1953

Speeches/Documents

Title: The elections and the national census GAC, Directive on National Census and Registration

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Description:.

At its 20th meeting, the CPGC adopted the resolution "to convene in 1953 the various grades of hsiang, hsien, and provincial (or municipal) people's congresses elected through universal suffrage, and then to convene, on this basis, the ACPC." In order to ensure that all citizens of China who reach the age of 18 shall take part in the election according to law, it is necessary to make a good job of registration of the electors, while the registration of electors will have to be based on registration of the population. Therefore, simultaneously with the election work a national census and registration of population should be carried out in order to facilitate the election work and to furnish accurate figures of population for the economic and cultural construction of the State. In order to complete this work, the following directives are given in addition to promulgation of (specific) measures for national census and registration and distribution of forms:

1. The national census and registration must be carried out in coordination with and simultaneously with the registration of voters. In order to avoid duplications and omissions, it is hereby directed that the 2400 hours of June 30, 1953 (20th day of the 5th moon of the lunar calendar year) be taken as the standard time for computing the census records. All census and registration should be brought to completion by the end of September. All hsien and municipal chu, as well as municipalities without subdivision into chu, should submit the total returns of the population in their districts to provinces and municipalities before the end of October; all provinces, municipalities and administrative units under direct jurisdiction of the CPG should submit the total returns of the population in the districts under their jurisdiction to the CPG before November 15.
2. Organs charged with the task of taking census and making Office is to be set up by the Ministry of the Interior in conjunction with relevant organs for exercising centralized guidance over the national census and registration of population. At provincial (or municipal) levels, provincial (or municipal) census and registration offices are to be set up by the bureaus of civil affairs in conjunction with relative departments. In hsien, municipal chu and municipalities without subdivision into chu, census and registration offices are to be set up under the leadership of local people's governments. The census and registration offices shall be subject to the leadership of the election committees at the same levels and form a component part of the operating organs of the election committees at the same levels.
3. In order to make a good job of the census and registration of electors, all cadres engaged in election work should take part in the work and, in addition, local people's governments of all levels should, according to practical needs, mobilize an appropriate number of teachers, students, cadres of people's bodies and other personnel to take part within a certain time limit in the local census and registration work and compilation of returns,
4. All census and registration organs as well as all personnel engaged in this work should make a study of the measures and forms for national census and registration, maintain the principle that the work should be comprehensively and exactly done without duplication or omission, and make a good job of census and registration.
5. Before carrying out census and registration of population, a broad publicity campaign should be started in order to enable the people to understand thoroughly the significance and purpose of the census, thereby to evoke warm response and support from the people.
6. Census and registration stations should be set up during the period of the census. For the convenience of the people, arrangements may be made whereby either the heads of households will come to the stations for registration or, if necessary, investigators may visit each household. In the

countryside in particular, slack hours of farming should be utilized and agricultural production should not be hindered.

7. Expenses incurred for census and registration of population shall be entered into the election budgets of the various levels and defrayed by the Treasury. The census and registration forms should be subject to centralized planning according to the forms set by the State Statistical Bureau and should be printed by provinces, administrative offices or hsien according to different circumstances. The census and registration of population is a very arduous task. All grades of people's governments must strengthen leadership and exercise serious check-up and supervision to ensure the smooth completion of the national census and registration.

Note

The population of China had never been accurately determined by count of noses prior to the decision of the GAC to conduct a thorough-going national census in conjunction with the registration of voters for the first elections. Curiously, the Central Election Committee directed that electoral districts be set up before rather than after the census an anomaly in terms of American experience, where the principal constitutional purpose of the decennial census is to establish a basis for apportionment. The explanation of Teng Hsiao-p'ing also points out the value of the census as a means of maintaining control of "counterrevolutionary" or unfriendly elements of the population. By combining census-taking with registration of voters, Communist China assures that there will be no unregistered voting eligible; hence, announced "percentages" of votes may closely parallel the total electorate of a constituency.