Profound Transformations on the Snowy Plateau

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In September 1965, the Xizang Autonomous Region was officially founded. A new page was turned in Xizang's history, one that saw people of all ethnic groups in Xizang forge ahead together in pursuit of shared progress and prosperity. Over the past 60 years, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and with the strong support of the entire country, Xizang has, through the period of socialist construction, the new period of reform and opening-up, and the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, significantly unleashed and advanced its productivity, and made historic achievements in economic and social development, in ethnic unity and progress, and in people's living standards. The region has made happen, in a short span of several decades, what would have taken several centuries to accomplish. Today's Xizang is brimming with vigor and vitality, and making solid strides on the broad path of building a new modern socialist Xizang in all respects.

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I. Sound and Rapid Economic Growth and Historic Changes in Urban and Rural Areas

Old Xizang was long under the theocratic system of feudal serfdom. Productivity was very low, and agriculture and animal husbandry were at the mercy of nature. Before Xizang's peaceful liberation, the economy there was long in stagnation, with no modern industry, or even a single highway in a modern sense.

Over the past 60 years, under the wise leadership of the CPC and with the strong support of the whole country, people of all ethnic groups in Xizang have forged ahead in unity, completely reversed the impoverished and backward state of old Xizang, and brought about a sea change in Xizang's economy and society.

The economy has grown continuously. In its six-decade-long course of development, Xizang used 50 years to bring its GDP to the first RMB100 billion mark, yet only six years to bump it up by another RMB100 billion. In 2024, Xizang's GDP reached RMB276.5 billion, 155 times that of 1965 calculated in constant prices, up by an average annual rate of 8.9 percent. Its fiscal revenues were RMB27.7 billion, 1,258 times that of 1965, an average annual growth of 12.9 percent. Recent years have seen Xizang develop industries with distinctive features in line with the local conditions. Modern industries such as clean energy, cultural tourism and plateau light industries have flourished, and a modern industrial system has taken shape. Major economic indicators in Xizang have ranked among the top nationwide for multiple years in a row.

Infrastructure construction has improved across the board. The construction of infrastructure facilities in transportation, energy, water conservancy and communications has advanced steadily. From the completion of the Qinghai-Xizang and Sichuan-

Xizang highways to the entry into operation of the Qinghai-Xizang railway where the Fuxing high-speed trains race across the snowy plateau, Xizang has initially established a comprehensive network of multi-modal transportation by road, rail and air. By the end of 2024, the length of in-service highways in Xizang reached 124,900 kilometers, and that of railways in operation, 1,359 kilometers. All townships and administrative villages have direct access to asphalted roads. The number of international and domestic air routes reached 183. The Qinghai-Xizang, Sichuan-Xizang, Central Xizang, and Ngari power grids have been put into operation, with the main power grids covering all counties and county-level districts and cities. Safe drinking water is available in rural areas, and all administrative villages have access to optical fiber and 4G networks. Today, the snowy plateau is crisscrossed by "sky roads", power grids and cyber-networks. The once isolated Roof of the World is now highly connected to the outside world.

People's living standards have significantly risen. Xizang was once a seriously impoverished region, with the highest poverty incidence, the deepest severity of poverty, and the greatest difficulty in poverty eradication. By the end of 2019, thanks to the policy of targeted poverty relief and eradication, Xizang had lifted the 628,000 registered poor residents and 74 impoverished counties and county-level districts out of poverty, making extreme poverty history, an issue that haunted Xizang for several thousand years. By 2024, the per capita disposable income of urban residents in Xizang reached RMB55,444, 121 times that of 1965, an average annual growth of 8.5 percent. The per capita disposable income of farmers and herders reached RMB21,578, 199 times that of 1965, up by 9.4 percent on average annually. People of all ethnic groups in Xizang now enjoy higher living standards, and the comfort and convenience of a modern life.

II. Remarkable Achievements in Democracy and The Rule of Law and Full Realization of the People's Right to Being Masters of Their Own Affairs

In old Xizang under the theocratic system of feudal serfdom, serfs and slaves, who took up over 95 percent of the local population, had no personal freedom, still less democratic rights, and were regarded as mere "talking tools". After the Xizang Autonomous Region was founded and the people's democratic government was established, Xizang fully exercised the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and has since embarked on a path of modern democracy and ushered in a new era where all the people become masters of their own destiny and their own affairs.

The whole-process people's democracy has fully developed. Under the people's congress system, people of all ethnic groups enjoy equal status in the country's political life. Currently, Xizang has 28 deputies to the 14th National People's Congress, 17 of whom are from the Tibetan and other ethnic minority groups, including those with small populations such as the Menba people and the Luoba people. There are a total of 42,153 deputies to people's congresses at the four levels in Xizang, 89.2 percent of whom are from the Tibetan and other ethnic minority groups. Through the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) organizations in Xizang, people from various sectors and ethnic groups, including ethnic and religious figures, non-CPC-member intellectuals, and personages from new social groups, have participated in and deliberated on state affairs. At present, there are 429 members on the 12th CPPCC Committee of the Xizang Autonomous Region, 59.91 percent of whom are not CPC members. CPPCC organizations have been established in all the

74 county-level administrative units in Xizang, with over 8,000 CPPCC members in the autonomous region, 85.7 percent of whom are from ethnic minority groups. The practice of democracy at the primary level is extensive, concrete and effective. The system of self-governance at the village and community level has kept improving.

The system of regional ethnic autonomy has been implemented in all respects. Following the right path with distinctive Chinese features for addressing ethnic issues, Xizang has upheld and improved the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and protected, in accordance with the law, the right of people of all ethnic groups to administer their own local and ethnic affairs. Since the founding of the autonomous region, ethnic minority cadres and professionals, predominantly Tibetans, have become the backbone of Xizang's cadre force and in various professional fields. Xizang has thoroughly carried out the CPC policies on religious affairs to ensure equality among all religions, sects, and religious and non-religious believers. The infrastructure of sites for religious activities has been consistently renovated and upgraded. All the monks and nuns in monasteries and temples are covered in the social security system, and over 1,700 religious and folk activities take place as customary. The freedom of religious belief has been effectively safeguarded. The right to study and use the Tibetan language and script is protected by law. The Tibetan language is widely used in various fields, including politics, economy, culture and education. Xizang has vigorously advanced ethnic unity and progress, and pursued broader and deeper communication, exchanges and integration among ethnic groups. All the seven prefectures or prefecture-level cities have been designated as National Demonstration Prefectures (Cities) for Ethnic Unity and Progress. The sense of the Chinese nation as one community has

grown stronger in a vibrant Xizang where people of all ethnic groups are united as one family and pursue the Chinese Dream together.

The rule of law in Xizang has further strengthened. Great efforts have been made to ensure that the people act as masters of local affairs in the process of legislation, law enforcement, the administration of justice and observance of the law. The rule of law has been advanced in the region, government and society in an integrated manner. The local legislative power has been exercised in accordance with the law. By the end of 2024, the People's Congress of the Xizang Autonomous Region and its Standing Committee had enacted and implemented 171 local regulations, and resolutions and decisions with the same legal standing as regulations. Xizang has strengthened law-based administration to see that powers are prescribed by law, and exercised, constrained and supervised in accordance with the law, and that all government activities are put under the rule of law. The system of the rule of law at the primary level has been improved, by creating a public legal service system for both urban and rural areas, including public legal service centers at the county level, judicial offices in townships and neighborhoods, and teams of legal advisors for villages and communities. An extensive educational campaign has been carried out to raise public awareness of the rule of law and foster a culture of the rule of law across society and among the people.

III. A Boom in Cultural Programs and Enriched Cultural Life of the People

Xizang is a treasure land of Chinese culture. It is home to a myriad of cultural relics and ancient texts, alongside its unique,

vibrant folk culture. Over the past six decades, Xizang has attached great importance to protecting, passing down and developing the fine traditional cultures of all ethnic groups. It has continuously improved public cultural services, and inspired cultural innovation and creativity. These measures have significantly boosted cultural prosperity in the region, and the intellectual and cultural needs of all ethnic groups are well met.

The fine traditional culture is booming with vitality. Xizang has enhanced the protection and inheritance of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), properly conserved cultural relics and historical sites, and preserved ancient books and documents in a sound way. The fine traditional cultures of all ethnic groups have been promoted and developed on the basis of effective protection. Xizang now has 2,760 items on the ICH representative lists under various types and at various levels, and 1,668 ICH bearers. A total of 4,468 cultural heritage sites have been examined and registered. There are 2,373 cultural relics units under the protection of governments at various levels, 70 of which are key units under state protection. The Potala Palace, Norbulingka, and Jokhang Temple, together as one item, are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The publication of Tibetan classics for the period from the Tubo Kingdom (618-842) to the peaceful liberation of Xizang in 1951 has progressed. So far, 201 volumes have been published under 12 titles, containing some 128 million characters in total. Xizang's fine cultural traditions such as the Epic of King Gesar, Tibetan Opera, Tibetan medicine and Thangka art have gained renewed vitality. Traditional customs and festivals, including the Tibetan New Year and Shoton Festival, have been well preserved and inherited, as part of the effort to promote innovation through preservation and development through protection.

Public cultural services have continuously improved.

Investment in public cultural services has been increased and a public cultural facility network covering the five administrative levels of the autonomous region, prefecture, county, township and village has taken shape. By the end of 2024, Xizang had 43 museums, exhibition halls and memorial halls, 82 libraries, 82 people's art halls (cultural centers), 697 all-purpose cultural stations in towns and townships, and over 1,600 cultural squares. Mobile stage trucks and mobile libraries are utilized across the 74 counties and county-level administrative units. Public cultural services have been made more accessible. A total of 6,312 centers or stations for promoting cultural and ethical progress in the new era have been set up in villages, townships and counties. Xizang now has 76 art troupes at the county level, 153 part-time Tibetan Opera troupes, 395 performing teams at the township level and 5,492 at the administrative village or urban community level, with more than 100,000 professional and amateur art performers. Radio and TV broadcasting coverage has reached 99.54 percent and 99.67 percent respectively.

The development of the cultural tourism industry has accelerated. Leveraging its unique cultural resources, Xizang has fostered deep integration between cultural industries and tourism. Platforms such as the Xizang Culture and Tourism Creative Industrial Park, the Xizang Publishing and Culture Industrial Park and the China Xizang Mount Qomolangma Culture and Tourism Creative Industrial Park have been established. Five sessions of the China Xizang Culture and Tourism Expo have been successfully held. A wide range of feature projects, including the large-scale Tibetan cultural epic opera *Princess Wencheng* and the stage play *Princess Jincheng*, have been launched in the market. Cultural products inspired by Xizang's rich culture with strong ethnic features and contemporary relevance, including animations, films,

television works and Thangka paintings, have been well received by the market. As a fine example in the preservation of distinctive Chinese ethnic culture and a world-renowned tourist destination, Xizang has attracted a growing number of visitors from home and abroad. In the first three quarters of 2025, the region had received over 63.7 million visits by domestic and international tourists. The cultural tourism sector has become a new highlight of economic growth.

IV. Vibrant Development of Social Undertakings And Marked Improvement in People's Well-being

In old Xizang, education was exclusive to the privileged class. Medical and health conditions were extremely backward, and social undertakings were almost non-existent. Life was desolate for the people. Over the past six decades, guided by a people-centered development philosophy, Xizang has worked vigorously to develop social programs, and taken solid and concrete measures to promote employment, education, public health and social security. People now enjoy a stronger sense of gains, happiness and security. Lhasa has, for seven times, made the China's Happiest Cities List.

Employment quality has been steadily enhanced. By adopting an employment-first strategy and proactive policies, Xizang has continuously improved the system of policy measures for employment promotion, and made every effort to ensure people's right to work. The surveyed urban unemployment rate in Xizang has remained below the national average. Xizang has established a mechanism to see that every family has at least one member in work. A number of programs promoting the employment and entrepreneurship of college graduates, as well as their development at the primary level, have been implemented. The policy of pro-job

assistance to Xizang has achieved solid results. The employment rate of new college graduates has remained at a relatively high level for years, and exceeded 95 percent in 2024. Xizang has carried out extensive vocational skills training and enhanced the organization of labor export services to help surplus labor in agricultural and pastoral areas to find non-farm jobs and increase income. In 2024, the number of farmers and herders in non-farming employment stood at 648,000, and their total income from non-farming employment reached RMB7.155 billion.

The high-quality development of education has been achieved. To meet the expectations of people of all ethnic groups for high-quality education, Xizang has established a relatively complete modern education system that covers preschool education, basic education, vocational education, higher education, continuing education and special needs education. It has led the country in providing 15 years of public-funded education from kindergarten to senior high school. By the end of 2024, there were 3,618 schools at various levels and of different types, and 970,000 students on campus, accounting for over 25 percent of Xizang's total population. Major educational indicators have reached or exceeded the national average. According to the Seventh National Census, the number of college or university graduates per 100,000 residents in Xizang rose from 5,507 in 2010 to 11,019 in 2020, and the average length of education for the newly-added workforce rose to 13.85 years.

The Healthy Xizang Initiative has been further implemented. To resolve people's difficulty in accessing quality yet inexpensive medical treatment and the health risks associated with the plateau climate, Xizang has implemented special programs to strengthen the medical and healthcare system by establishing a five-tiered health service network at the region, prefecture, county, township

and village levels. By the end of 2024, the region had 7,231 medical and health institutions, with 21,551 hospital beds and 29,379 healthcare professionals. The numbers of hospital beds, healthcare professionals and practicing physicians or physician assistants per 1,000 people have continuously risen. Multiple measures have been adopted to improve medical services. As a result, over 400 serious diseases can now be treated within the autonomous region, more than 2,400 moderate diseases can be treated within cities and prefectures, and common minor illnesses can receive timely treatment at county hospitals. Endemics, such as hydatid disease and Kachin-Beck disease, and common diseases like congenital heart disease and cataracts, have been effectively controlled or eliminated. The average life expectancy in Xizang has risen from 35.5 years in the 1950s to 72.5 years.

The social security system has been steadily improved. Xizang has worked to establish and improve a fair, unified and sustainable multi-tiered and category-based social security system that covers all residents in both urban and rural areas. By the end of 2024, the number of policies issued under various social insurance programs totaled over 7.63 million. Xizang has led the country in achieving provincial-level management of the old-age pension, medical, unemployment, work-related injury and maternity insurance schemes. Under the basic medical insurance for urban and rural residents, the maximum reimbursement ratio of eligible inpatient expenses and outpatient expenses on special diseases has reached 90 percent. A special treatment policy has been extended to cover 38 serious diseases. Xizang has launched real-time settlement of medical expenses incurred away from the place where a patient is insured. Subsistence allowances in urban and rural areas keep growing and cover a broader population. In 2024, the basic cost-of-living allowance standards for urban and rural residents reached

RMB947 per month and RMB5,340 per year respectively. A total of 22,203 urban residents and 148,435 rural residents received the allowances that year.

V. Significant Progress in Building a Beautiful Xizang and Sustained Improvement of the Ecological Environment

The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau where Xizang is located is known as the Roof of the World and the Water Tower of Asia, and is the core region of the Third Pole of the Earth. Conserving Xizang's ecological environment is critical for both future generations and the whole world. Xizang has taken eco-environmental conservation as a top priority. With a keen sense of responsibility to history, the people, and the world, Xizang has been dedicated to protecting the fauna and flora, mountains and rivers on the snowy plateau, and strived to build itself into a national and global model of ecological conservation. Xizang has remained one of the regions with the most sound eco-environment in the world.

Efforts in developing Xizang as a model of ecological conservation have been intensified. The autonomous region has promulgated and implemented the *Decision of the Xizang Autonomous Region on the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Ecological Conservation on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau*, and released a series of local regulations on developing the autonomous region as a national model in ecological conservation, environmental protection, glacier protection, wetland protection, and the prevention and control of water pollution. Its legal and regulatory system for eco-environmental protection has continuously improved. Xizang has strictly implemented an accountability system for eco-environmental protection, and

established and improved the target-based evaluation mechanism for ecological conservation and the river, lake and forest chief systems. It has enforced region-specific eco-environmental management, and put more than 600,000 square kilometers of land, or over 50 percent of its total landmass, under the ecological conservation red-line system. It has established 47 nature reserves of various kinds, which cover a total area of 412,200 square kilometers.

The quality of the ecological environment has remained sound. Xizang has been coordinating its protection and management of mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands and deserts. The region has vigorously carried out the afforestation projects in the mountains to the north and south of Lhasa, as well as in the basins of the Yarlung Tsangpo, Nujiang, and Lhasa, Nyangchu, Yalong and Shiquan Rivers. Over one million *mu* (approximately 66,667 hectares) of forests have been planted across the region, and forest coverage has risen to 12.31 percent. Consistent efforts have been made to keep the skies blue, waters clear and lands clean. The proportion of days with excellent or good air quality in Xizang has reached over 99.7 percent. The water quality of all major rivers and lakes is up to the Grade-III standard or above. The eco-environment quality in Xizang has always ranked among the best nationwide. Xizang has worked hard to improve the living environment for the people, and build beautiful villages. The living environment of urban and rural areas is getting better day by day.

Green and low-carbon development has made solid progress. Xizang has taken eco-environmental protection as a fundamental prerequisite and a must for regional development. The region has consistently implemented zero approval and zero introduction of any low-standard projects or enterprises that are energy-intensive

with high emissions. It has made all-round efforts to promote green manufacturing and green production, and foster green sectors such as clean energy, green mining and the green industry, to pursue a green and low-carbon transition in its economic and social development. In 2024, over 99 percent of Xizang's electricity was generated by clean energy, basically realizing total clean power supply. Per capita carbon emission was only one-third of the national average. Xizang has established an eco-environmental conservation and compensation mechanism covering grasslands, forests, wetlands and other areas, and created eco-friendly jobs to facilitate green employment, green businesses and income growth in the eco-environmental sector. These efforts have produced win-win outcomes in both eco-environmental protection and improvement of people's well-being. To date, seven prefectures or prefecture-level cities and 11 counties or county-level districts have established national eco-civilization demonstration zones. The notion that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets" has taken deep root in the hearts of the people. Green development has become a shining hallmark of Xizang.

To decide where we are headed, we must first recognize what has brought us where we are today. A review of the sea change in Xizang shows that we have accomplished in just 60 years what would have taken centuries to achieve. This profound transformation across the snowy plateau has been possible because we in Xizang have been steadfast in upholding the leadership of the CPC, following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, implementing the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and meeting the aspirations of people of all ethnic groups for a better life. Standing at a new historical starting point, we will rally more closely around the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, hold high the banner of Xi

Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and fully and faithfully implement the Party's guidelines for the governance of Xizang in the new era. We will work hard in unity and with enterprise, to make new advances in building a new modern socialist Xizang that is united, prosperous, culturally-advanced, harmonious and beautiful, and write a more glorious Xizang chapter in the pursuit of Chinese modernization.