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The CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the "Opinions on the work of the opening-up of education in the new era"

To create a new phase of the opening-up of education of better quality and at a higher level

Recently, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the "Opinions on the work of the opening-up of education in the new era"(hereafter referred to as the "Opinions"), and sent out notes to require all regions and ministries/departments to earnestly implement the "Opinions" in light of realities.

The foci set by the "Opinions" are: to fully implement the spirit of the 18th CPC National Congress and the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Plenary Sessions of the 18th CPC Central Committee, to take Deng Xiaoping's theory, the important thoughts of the Three Represents, and the Scientific Concept of Development as guidance, to earnestly implement the spirit of the series of important speeches delivered by CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping, to adhere to the "Four Comprehensives" Strategy, to fully implement the Party's educational policies to serve the CPC and the state as the purpose, to co-ordinate domestic and international situations, to co-ordinate development and safety affairs, to further expand opening-up, to strengthen the education of China, to promote people-to-people exchanges, to constantly improve the quality of education and the country's soft power and international influence of China, to provide strong support to achieve the "Two Centenary Goals" and the Chinese Dream of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The "Opinions" aim to adhere to the principle of "focusing on the central task, serving the overall interests, taking the initiative, being inclusive and open, enhancing the level, developing in intension, and promoting equal cooperation and security assurance". The working objectives set by the "Opinions" are that by 2020: China's study abroad service system is basically sound; the quality of Study-in-China improves significantly; the efficiency of cross-border education improves significantly; the breadth and depth of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in education develops effectively; the capacity of participation in developing international rules in the field of education increases greatly; the level of standardization and legalization of the education opening-up improves significantly; people's needs for diverse, high-quality education are better met; and the overall economic and social development are better served.

The "Opinions" set out the following priorities:

Firstly, accelerating the development of inbound and outbound study-abroad, improving the quality of inbound and outbound study-abroad. Optimizing outbound study-abroad services through improving the working mechanism of “selection, dispatch, administration, return and service”, to regulate overseas study markets, to enhance the full chain of the overseas Chinese student administration system and to optimize the services of study-abroad. To build the "Study in China" brand through improving the arrangements of source countries and majors of students studying in China. Through strengthening the implementation of the action plan of study-in-China, to build a professional service system of study-in China. Through increased efforts to implement the action plan of inbound and outbound study-abroad, to accelerate the cultivation of five categories of talented personnel including top-notch creative talents, people specialised in less-commonly used languages, personnel of international organisations, national and regional research talents, and outstanding foreign talents coming to China.

Secondly, improving the institutional mechanisms, and enhancing the level of cross-border education. By improving the access system, reforming approval systems, carrying out evaluation and accreditation, strengthening exit mechanisms, strengthening information disclosure, establishing mechanisms for sharing successful experiences, focusing on speciality construction for disciplines of natural science and engineering that are urgently needed, introducing foreign high-quality resources, to enhance the overall quality of joint program/institute. By encouraging Chinese higher education institutions and vocational colleges to work with Chinese enterprises to go abroad and to encourage social forces to participate in establishing programs and campuses in foreign countries to steadily push forward the establishment of Sino-foreign cooperation in education in foreign countries.

Thirdly, strengthening the high-end leads, and enhancing the strength and innovation of China's education. Through introducing the world-class universities and first-class disciplines, to develop the joint cultivation of top-notch talents and joint scientific research, to strengthen the building of frontier and weak disciplines, to learn from the advanced management experience of the world-renowned universities, to improve institutions' internal governance structures, to speed up the building of a modern university system with Chinese characteristics, to facilitate the building of China's world-class universities and first-class disciplines. By supporting higher education institutions to participate in major international scientific programs and scientific projects to build up a number of high level international joint laboratories and joint research centres, to recruit high-level scientific and innovative talents globally to promote international collaborative innovation in science and technology among higher education institutions. By selecting outstanding young teachers and academic leaders of Chinese higher education institutions as visiting scholars to study and exchange at high-level foreign higher education

institutions to accelerate the introduction of elite teaching faculties of world-class universities, to improve the system of teachers' professional standards, to promote the accreditation of foreign teacher's teaching qualification, and to accelerate the building of high-level faculty.

Fourthly, enriching Sino-Foreign People-to-People Exchange, and increasing understanding between people. Through integrating and building high-level intergovernmental educational consultations, practical cooperation among educational professionals, platforms of students and teachers' friendly exchanges, to improve the relevant mechanism of Sino-foreign people-to-people exchange, to create a number of significant projects under China-foreign people-to-people exchanges, to actively develop education for international understanding, to strengthen the construction of people-to-people exchange mechanisms. By deepening language cooperation and exchange with foreign countries, to reinforce the mutual assistance in the promotion of Chinese language and less-commonly used languages learning, to promote language interoperability with foreign countries to expand inter-governmental language-learning exchange programmes, to jointly develop language connectivity shared courses with more countries, and to promote the language interoperability between Chinese languages and foreign languages. By telling "good Chinese stories and spread the good China's voice" as an important content of China's opening-up of education, to synthesize the patriotism of overseas Chinese students and scholars, to actively promote China's development achievements, fulfilling promotional roles of foreign students and scholars studying in China and foreign teachers in actively promoting China's concepts.

Fifthly, promoting win-win cooperation in education. By strengthening cooperation with international organisations, to establish and improve the mechanism for bilateral and multilateral meetings of Education Ministers, to promote sub-regional educational cooperation and exchanges, to promote the construction of university alliances, to further promote in-depth cooperation between sister cities and sister schools, to deepen bilateral and multilateral cooperation in education. By improving the voice and representation of developing countries in global education governance, to select and recommend outstanding talents to work in international organisations, to improve education cooperation mechanisms among BRICS countries, to further expand education cooperation opportunities with international organisations, to actively engage in global education governance. Through playing an important role of providing education aid in "South-South Cooperation", to increase support for developing countries, especially the least developed countries, to speed up the construction of overseas education training centres and educational bases of foreign aid, to actively carry out integrated education aid of quality teaching instruments and equipment, overall teaching programs and supporting teaching staff, to carry out international education aids with the focus on "investing in people, supporting people, and benefitting people."

Sixthly, implementing the "One Belt One Road" education initiative, and promoting educational cooperation with the countries along the Belt and Road. To strengthen the work of education interoperability and talent cultivation and training, to match the development needs of the countries along the Belt and Road, to promote joint initiatives with the countries along the Belt and Road to achieve win-win cooperation. To expand the scale of Chinese government scholarships, to establish the "Silk Road" Chinese Government Scholarship, to fund 10,000 new students from the countries along the Belt and Road to study or undertake training in China each year. To commend international figures, teams and organisations that have made outstanding contributions and have an important impact in the common development of the "One Belt One Road" educational cooperation and exchange and regional education.

The "Opinions" require vigorously improving the level of governance of education opening-up by the following means:

Firstly, improving the arrangements of education opening-up. To strengthen pragmatic cooperation with major powers, neighbouring countries, developing countries, and multi-lateral organisations, to fully fulfil the important role of education in the "One Belt One Road" initiative, and to form a focus on prioritising and win-win cooperation for education opening-up. To support the eastern region of China to enhance the overall level of education opening-up, to take the lead in building up Chinese-featured and world-class modern education, to support central and western regions of China to continue to expand the scale and depth of education opening-up, to guide border areas to leverage their geographical advantages, and to promote education cooperation and exchanges with neighbouring countries, to form an education opening-up pattern suited to local conditions and characteristics.

Secondly, improving the quality assurance. To facilitate bilateral and multi-lateral mutual recognition of academic qualifications in the Asia-Pacific region, to support UNESCO to set up a world-wide mechanism of mutual recognition of qualifications. To strengthen cooperation with international organisations, and to actively engage in the research and development of quality standards for international education. To closely align with the "Made in China 2025" initiative, to develop vocational education curriculum with international advanced standards, and to actively participate in the development of international standards for vocational education. To participate in international student assessment tests, and to improve China's capability of education quality assessment and supervision. To further advance the separation among functions of regulation, administration and evaluation, to form an integrated quality assurance system of government regulation, school self-discipline and social evaluation.

Thirdly, strengthening the theoretical support. To improve the layout of national and regional research bases, to strengthen international studies. To support higher education institutions,

research institutes and social forces to carry out research on education opening-up strategies. To support partnership between think tanks in universities. To improve statistics and publication mechanisms in the development of education opening-up. To establish expert advisory bodies in education opening-up, to set up research data platforms, and to build a sound decision-making mechanism.

Fourthly, strengthening supervision and management. To strengthen the building of a supervision and management system, to improve the regulatory regime, and to form highly efficient and reliable comprehensive regulatory system and supervision forces. To define industrial regulatory requirements for study-abroad intermediary service agencies (education agents), to improve the mechanism of overall evaluation, complaint handling, information disclosure, market exit and market-entry banning for education agents, to establish a healthy and orderly overseas study market.

The “Opinions” set the requirements of strengthening the organization and leadership of education opening-up initiatives as follows:

Firstly, strengthening and improving CPC’s leadership for the work of education opening-up. To improve the leadership system and working mechanism of education opening-up, to fully fulfil the leading role of the CPC committee at all levels in setting strategic objectives, personnel cultivation, cadre management for the work of education opening-up. To create innovative ways of working, to strengthen and improve the CPC construction work at Sino-foreign jointly-run educational institutions, and to speed up the cultivation of a number of outstanding management personnel in cross-border education. To strengthen the building of cadre teams in cross-border education.

Secondly, improving the working mechanism. To establish and improve the operational framework of education opening-up with features of clear responsibilities, division of work and collaboration, efficient and orderly operation among government, schools and social forces. The CPC committees and governments at all levels should take a leading role in coordination, to set the work of education opening-up in the agenda. To improve inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, to strengthen provincial governments’ functions of coordination, supervision and management in education, to have teachers and students play a main role in schools, to encourage the establishment of regional and industry-interscholastic alliances, and to strengthen the organisation construction of the cross-border education industry.

Thirdly, improving safeguard measures. To enlarge financial investment, to provide more support to talents in terms of fund usage and management, to give more autonomy to schools, and to support students and teachers’ internships abroad, to carry out teaching experiments according

to the provisions of overall fund arrangement. To improve policy regimes of Study-in-China and Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools.

Fourthly, creating a positive atmosphere. To increase publicity and efforts to interpret education opening-up policies. To enrich forms of propaganda, to fully fulfil the role of new media and mainstream media in publicising China international. Chinese Embassies and Consulate Generals overseas to take the initiative to enhance communication and links with local media, and strive to create a positive atmosphere of public opinion in favor of education opening-up.