

CPC national congress shows more openness, transparency

American journalist Sarah Wendt was surprised to find a media-friendly environment at the ongoing Party congress in Beijing, as opposed to the perceived "media-averse" atmosphere at her home Washington D.C.

Thursday was the second day of the 19th National Congress of Communist Party of China. Wendt and her colleagues arrived early at the Great Hall of the People, which overlooks Tian'anmen Square at the heart of Beijing.

For the second day in a row, a group of 20 delegates met with the press at the "delegates' passage" at the hall, answering questions from interested reporters.

"There is great access and openness at the Party congress, whereas in the United States, the administration is closed in a way that they don't want media attention or criticism," she said.

"The delegates' passage is a good format to have preliminary interviews with the delegates before going into longer discussions," Wendt said.

The delegates' passage is a new addition at the 19th CPC National Congress, drawing on experience from the annual parliamentary sessions in the past years, in which ministers meet the press to answer questions.

About 2,300 delegates have gathered for the twice-a-decade CPC congress, but the number of journalists covering the supremely important political event is even more, at over 3,000.

"The aim is to provide more chances for the delegates to meet with the media," said Zhang Qiang, deputy director of congress press center.

A total of 70 delegates are expected to receive interviews at the passage. Their interactions with reporters are broadcast live on state television and various Internet portals.

On Thursday, the interviewees included CPC history researcher, aircraft carrier pilot, computer engineer, teacher, cleaner, farmer and anti-corruption official.

Topics touched on Party governance, environmental protection, scientific innovation, and personal stories of grassroots delegates.

Ling Jiefang, writer and a five-time delegate to the Party congress, warned against slackness in the fight against corruption.

"If we look back in the history of China, there has never been a comparable amount of effort to fight corruption like we've seen in recent years. There has never been a CPC-led people's war against corruption like we are having

now," said Ling coming from Henan Province.

"The congress report said the anti-corruption battle shall never cease. If there were any slackness in the effort, corruption might bounce back and there would be negative consequences," he said.

Besides the passage, there are press conferences and open discussions in delegations with the presence of reporters. Starting Thursday, press conferences are held at the press center.

"The Party congress has become more open and transparent, which reflects the growing confidence of the ruling party of a large country like China," said Dong Guanpeng, director of the media and public relations institute at the Communication University of China.