

[Audits help money get to the poor](#)

Inspection and audit efforts to prevent the improper use of poverty relief funds have paid off, said the top poverty relief official.

Liu Yongfu, director of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, made the comment on Tuesday during a news conference at the fifth session of the 12th National People's Congress.

"In 2013, we audited poverty relief funds used in 17 counties, where 15 percent of the money was improperly used," Liu said. "In 2016, we audited 30 counties and the ratio was down to only 3 percent."

He said the country's disciplinary watchdog unearthed about 16,000 cases related to improper use of poverty relief funds in 2016, leading to more than 19,000 people being punished. A hotline set up by the office has received more than 10,000 phone calls in the past two years.

"Previously, the majority of problems were related to corruption and waste. Now, the main problem is many of the funds are kept in the account unused," Liu said.

"More problems are now found in townships and villages instead of cities and counties."

He said the government will also help grassroots officials improve their ability to "spend the money well". Each county is encouraged to set up a database so that the funds and projects are subject to public supervision.

China lifted 12.4 million rural residents out of poverty last year as part of the central government's campaign to lift the remaining poverty-stricken people out of poverty by 2020. There are still 43.3 million people living below the poverty line of 2,300 yuan (\$335) in annual income, according to National Bureau of Statistics.

Last year, China managed to increase the average per capita annual income of rural residents living in registered poor areas to 8,452 yuan, an increase of 8.4 percent compared with 2015, according to the bureau.

[Chinese federation holds Women's Day gathering](#)



A gathering celebrating International Women's Day is held in Beijing, capital of China, March 7, 2017. The All-China Women's Federation held a gathering attended by Chinese women from various circles and foreign diplomats here on Tuesday ahead of International Women's Day. (Xinhua/Zhang Yuwei)

The All-China Women's Federation held a gathering attended by Chinese women from various circles and foreign diplomats here on Tuesday ahead of International Women's Day.

The federation has carried out the decisions made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and pushed forward reform to better serve women over the past year, said the federation's president Shen Yueyue in a speech.

Shen, who is also vice chair of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, said the federation will unify and lead the country's women to follow the Party and make new contributions to welcome the 19th CPC National Congress, slated for later this year.

China is willing to work together with women worldwide in building a community of shared future, she added.

More than 1,000 people were present at the event to observe International Women's Day on March 8.

80% of Chinese women feel gender discrimination at work

More than 80 percent of women in China experience gender discrimination at work, according to a survey carried out by one of China's largest job sites.

In the survey released just ahead of International Women's Day by Zhaopin.com, 81 percent of the female respondents say that they feel gender discrimination at work. About 22 percent of them say the discrimination is "serious," 59 percent say the discrimination is "moderate," and only 2 percent of female respondents say they experience no discrimination at all.

The survey is based on answers from 128,576 respondents, 43 percent of whom are female.

About 74 percent of the male respondents say that they feel gender discrimination at work, slightly less than their female counterparts.

Working females who hold higher qualifications experience more discrimination, the survey found. About 43 percent of the female respondents who have a master's degree or higher report "serious gender discrimination," compared to 12 percent of women who graduate from high school, 18 percent of women who graduate from junior college, and 28 percent of women who have only attended college.

Working women have also reported gender discrimination in promotion. More than 80 percent of the female respondents say they have experienced discrimination in promotion, 25 percent report "serious discrimination," while only 3 percent say they feel no discrimination at all.

Among all the respondents, 59 percent of men say they had their first promotion after working for two years, compared to 49 percent of women – 10 percent less than men. And 72 percent of all the respondents say their immediate superiors are male while only 28 percent are female.

NPC deputy: Second child families should enjoy subsidies



Ye Tingfang

Families with a second child should enjoy subsidies, tax free or rebated individual income tax, Sun Xiaomei, professor from China Women's University and a deputy of the National People's Congress (NPC) recently proposed.

Sun submitted the proposition during the ongoing two sessions, namely, the NPC and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) which opened at the beginning of March.

Families with a second child need subsidies and preferential policies to alleviate the economic costs, Sun explained.

She advised the country to prioritize the rights of second-child families by securing their privileged access to low-rent houses or low-costs housing, extra medical reimbursements and insurance, the exemption of children's tuition in universities and preferential maternity leave to relieve the mothers from extra working hours.

Initiated 10 years ago by Ye Tingfang, a translator as well as a former CPPCC member, out of concern for China's diminishing demographic dividends, the right to have a second child won an overwhelming mandate in 2016, putting an end to the decades-long one-child family-planning policy.

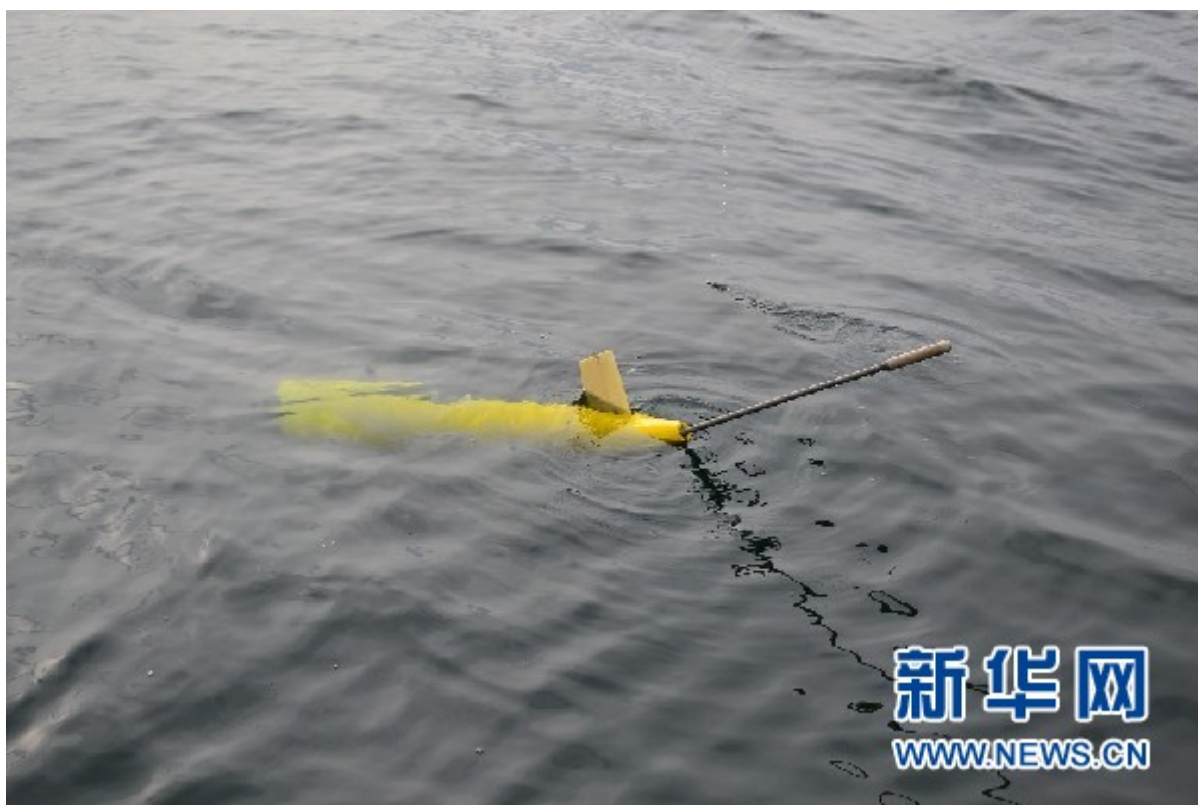
The average birth rate in China per couple was 1.2 from 2010 to 2015, indicating a sharp decline of 36 percent in birth of every generation. The demographic aging draws considerable concern among the deputies and members in the two sessions.

Huang Xihua, a NPC deputy, advised the country to lower the minimum legal

marriage age from 21 for females and 22 for males, to 18.

“It is not an advocacy for early marriage, but a move to protect the rights of young people,” Huang said.

Records broken at ocean's lowest depth



Records broken at ocean's lowest depth [File photo/Xinhua]

Amid deputies attending the annual meetings of the top legislature and the top political advisory body, Chinese scientists have broken two world records at the ocean's lowest depth – the Mariana Trench, a scythe-shaped clef in the western Pacific Ocean seafloor that plunges nearly 11 kilometers deep.

China became the first country to collect the artificial seismic stratigraphy of the Challenger Deep, the deepest section of the trench measured at more than 10 kilometers, the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Geology and Geophysics said on Friday. The stratigraphy is used to study the Earth's movement, layers and geologic history.

China also set a new world diving record for underwater gliders at 6,329 meters with Hai Yi, a glider designed by the academy's Institute of Automation in Shenyang, Liaoning province, the academy said on Sunday. The previous recorder holder was a US glider at 6,000 meters.

“These experiments prove that China's deep-sea exploration technologies have reached an advanced level,” the academy said in a statement.

“Data collected from these experiments are invaluable to the study of continental movement and its transformation,” said Qiu Xuelin, a researcher at the academy’s South China Sea Institute of Oceanology.

Both experiments were carried out by Chinese scientists onboard the academy’s Explorer-I TS03 scientific surveying ship. They departed Sanya, Hainan province, en route to the Mariana Trench on Jan 15.

Upon arrival, they deployed 60 ocean-bottom seismometers to collect data for the stratigraphy on Jan 25. Some seismometers had sunk to 10,027 meters, the academy said, which is enough to submerge Qomolangma (8,850 meters), known as Mount Everest in the West.

These instruments can capture sound waves generated by earthquakes or human activities. These waves, combined with the motions of the Earth, can provide details about the geometry of the Earth’s structure, said Wang Yuan, an engineer at the academy’s Institute of Geology and Geophysics.

The glider is an autonomous underwater vehicle designed to survey marine conditions, such as temperature, salinity and currents, across large bodies of water.

Apart from breaking the world record, Hai Yi also completed 12 observation missions across 130 kilometers of water. The data it collected from the abyssal sea is “valuable for oceanologists studying the region”, the academy said.

It took Chinese scientists 13 years to design and build the Hai Yi and its variants, it said, adding that there are more than two-dozen types, covering use in shallow sea, deep sea and abyssal sea.