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Corruption in construction business targeted

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China will launch a two-year anti-corruption campaign in construction business, in which money-for-power deals and commercial bribery cases are reportedly increasing.

According to a document jointly issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council on Wednesday, the authorities voiced the resolution in combating corrupt officials in charge of the country's booming construction projects.

"Corruption has been restricted to a certain extent with the market economy getting more mature and supervision further enhanced," the document said.

But corruption cases still occur continually in some sectors as some officials abused their powers to acquire personal gains, and some local governments even wasted taxpayer's money to build lavish buildings.

"Such slack behavior severely harms public interests and damages the relations between officials and the public," the document said.

The document required local governments to further regulate the working procedure of land management and make more efforts in checking up bidding of land.

Government departments should make self-examination and those who refused to make self-examination or tried to cover up problems will be punished, it said.

The document called for enhanced supervision over key links of the government construction projects, including the use and management of funds, the approval of land use, the evaluation on the construction's energy saving and environment protection as well as the insurance for safety of the construction.

"All the departments involved should be responsible for ensuring that public fund is used in an effective, safe and clean way," it said.

To prevent officials abusing powers to earn personal profits, the document urged local governments to establish a transparent information system on construction projects and listen to more opinions from experts and the public.

A team of officials from 19 government departments and headed by the discipline watchdog of the CPC Central Committee will be established to supervise local government's implementation of the document.

Premier Wen Jiabao has stressed that clean governance amid the economic downturn and urged tougher scrutiny over projects that were closely related to people's livelihoods, such as urban construction.

Behind Wen's remarks, China has unveiled a 4-trillion-yuan (about 585 billion U.S. dollars) package of investment mainly in the infrastructure area as proactive fiscal stimulus amid the global economic downturn.

In recent years, Chinese prosecutors have found a high incidence of commercial bribery in infrastructure and real estate projects, in which government officials were often involved.

Last year, China found 2,687 government officials had been guilty of corruption, malfeasance and infringement to people's rights. Prosecutors investigated 10,315 cases of commercial bribery committed by government officials.

(Xinhua News Agency August 20, 2009)

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