



# *XIAMEN*





Xiamen, China

**X**iamen is a coastal city in southeast China. It is the second largest city in Fujian province, spanning 1,516 square kilometres. Founded in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century by the Ming dynasty, the city was established as a major seaport and commercial centre. With its historical roots in trading, the city has earned fame as an industrial powerhouse but continues to attract tourists with its charm. In 2004, the Xiamen Municipal People's Government won the UN-Habitat's Scroll of Honour for its efforts in ensuring that everyone has adequate shelter with its Economy Housing Project. In this issue of **URBAN SOLUTIONS**, **Liu Keqing**, the mayor of Xiamen, writes about the continuing efforts to make Xiamen a liveable city for its residents.



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In 2011 and 2012, Xiamen was ranked the top city in the Lien Chinese Cities Service-Oriented Government Index, which tracks citizens' and businesses' satisfaction with public services in more than 30 Chinese cities. The Nanyang Technological University, which launched the Index in 2010, praised Xiamen as one of the leading liveable cities in China. Being the mayor of Xiamen, I feel greatly honoured.

Xiamen, located on the southeastern coast of China, is known as a popular tourist destination with port scenery among foreign friends. Ten years ago, Xiamen was granted the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour Award for providing "a decent roof over everybody's head". Since then, numerous awards, such as that of being a garden city, have been conferred upon us. Encouraged by the honours, we place highly on our agenda the goal of promoting a better life for our citizens.



<sup>01</sup> Xiamen Port is the first 100-million-ton port on the west bank of the Taiwan Straits.

<sup>02</sup> A street scene in Gulangyu, which is a car-free islet.



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### **Preserving the Environment**

Xiamen is richly endowed by nature. The government, businesses and organisations invest large amounts of money each year and take firm measures to preserve such an environment. These include banning motorcycles in urban areas, eliminating the use of pollutive honeycomb briquettes (charcoal bricks used for cooking and heating), stepping up city cleaning services and green space planning, and switching from gasoline to natural gas for cars.

Our drinking water is 100% qualified while the non-hazardous treatment rate of domestic garbage has reached 94%. Nearly 50% of the city is covered in green. Our air quality is much higher than the national average as well.

Openness and inclusiveness make up the core spirit of Xiamen. With over 600 foreign organisations of various kinds located here, Xiamen is an important gateway for international exchanges. Traditional culture has merged with modern civilisation, especially on Gulangyu Islet, a small island famous for its piano playing culture and being home to a dozen of consulates general in the past.

01 Beautiful public parks contribute to the high quality of life of Xiamen residents.





Xiamen people are amicable and caring. Deeply attached to this city, each one of them contributes to building a safe and sweet home for all by observing the law and helping the ones in need.

Xiamen will never pursue economic growth at the expense of the environment. To this end, we have replaced energy-consuming and high-polluting industries with high-tech and high-efficiency ones. The industrial businesses are being relocated, making place for the service industry, including tourism.

### **A Better Life for Citizens**

The per capita GDP in Xiamen has exceeded US\$10,000. The economic growth rate ranks among the top in China. The comprehensive energy consumption rate is approaching that of developed countries. Xiamen has realised simultaneous progress in development speed, quality, effectiveness and people's income.

Our people's desire for a better life is what we shall fight for.

Xiamen has taken the lead, among Chinese cities, to establish a universal healthcare system, low-income social security and low-income housing programmes. We also provide a health information system and natural disaster insurance for all. Compulsory education is made free in public schools as a step to balance educational resources. The government is clean and efficient. Its governance is scientific and law-based. All these have made Xiamen an attractive place for foreign talent.

In the future, we will continue to value both economic progress and environmental protection, and develop Xiamen into a model city that demonstrates beautiful China and the Chinese dream. We would like to join hands with other cities in the world in the efforts of building liveable cities.

<sup>01</sup> A panoramic view of Xiamen island.

<sup>02</sup> Education for Xiamen's children is both compulsory and free.



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**Liu Keqing**, born in May 1955 in Zhouning County, Fujian Province, joined the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 1975. He has an on-the-job postgraduate degree. He was previously Vice Head of Zhouning County, Head and Secretary of the Putian County CPC Committee, Assistant to the Mayor of Putian Municipality, Vice Mayor of Putian Municipality, Deputy Director General and then Director General of Fujian Provincial Department of Land Resources, Vice Secretary and then Secretary of Zhangzhou Municipal CPC Committee, and Director General of Standing Committee of Zhangzhou Municipal People's Congress. Mr Liu now serves as Vice Secretary of Xiamen Municipal CPC Committee and Mayor of Xiamen Municipality. Since taking office as Mayor of Xiamen, Mr Liu has been striving to promote balanced development. He proposed to create a green environment for Xiamen, enhance people's living standards, expand Xiamen's international presence and build an international liveable garden city and tourist destination.