

《李克强：望地方政府行动起来促进经济增长》

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Premier Li Keqiang pressed local leaders on Friday to help the economy achieve its annual growth target, with momentum remaining weak in the middle of the year.

It was the third time in a month he had asked for more action at local level.

Li reminded officials of their "inescapable responsibility" to achieve this year's economic targets. "No delay in action is allowed," he stressed.

Both the central and local governments will have to work harder to focus on growth of the economy as their "number one priority", the premier said in Beijing after being briefed by eight provincial-level chief administrators on the economic situation in their areas. China has set a 7.5 percent economic growth target for 2014.

Some of the provincial authorities are traditionally main exporters, such as Guangdong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

Some of the others reported the lowest GDP growth in the first quarter, such as Heilongjiang, Shanxi and Hebei provinces.

Observers in Beijing said the mix of local representatives is significant because the central government wants the coastal provinces to maintain their growth rate by providing more help and services to local export businesses.

It also wants provinces that still depend on unprofitable heavy industries to speed up their transition along with growth in new industries.

This week, Guangdong province, which contributes more than 20 percent to China's overall merchandise trade globally, announced a local policy package to spur business growth.

Li said downward pressure on the economy remains quite heavy - "markedly so in certain areas" - even though there is still growth in GDP and in urban jobs, while inflation remains weak. There are risks and challenges that China cannot dodge, he said.

"Saying no to one-sided pursuit of GDP growth does not mean that we no longer care about GDP growth, nor have we ignored reasonable growth of the Chinese economy," he said.

Li asked governments to give more support to the real economy, especially leading companies in emerging industries, the private sector, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

The central government decided this week to send supervisory groups to look into the implementation of reform initiatives in the provinces.

The premier said China will also press ahead with reform, especially by streamlining administrative power to pave the way for companies to manage themselves through open-market competition.

More reform plans are being worked out at the top level.

On Friday, the Leading Group for Overall Reform discussed reform plans for finance, taxation and household registration systems. It also approved two documents on piloting reform of the judicial system and a plan to set up special courts dealing with intellectual property rights.

