

Lawyers discuss remedies to curb falling fertility rates

Zhu Yuting

CHINA'S falling fertility rate and aging population in Shanghai have triggered discussions among local lawyer members of the city's political advisory body.

The number of babies born in Shanghai in 2020 was about 127,600 compared with 169,000 the previous year. A total fertility rate of 2.1 is healthy for a country, but the average number of children per female is currently 1.3 in China.

"We can offer more options such as allowing unmarried women to freeze their eggs," said lawyer Qiu Suo from Shanghai AllBright Law Offices who unveiled her draft proposal during a press conference held by Shanghai Bar Association.

The egg freeze proposal was for consideration at the Fifth Plenary Session of the 13th CPPCC Shanghai Committee, which kicked off on Wednesday.

The city's leading lawyers, CPPCC members and NPC members had heated discussions and shared their proposals for 2022's annual political sessions.

Their suggestions about fertility rate also addressed housing, the birth

approval certificate, social welfare, restrictions on household registration, and women's employment issues.

"Giving more holidays to women having babies but no more holidays to their partners will intensify employment discrimination for women," said lawyer Hu Guang from Shanghai MHP Law Firm.

"The solution is to give men the same leave as women, and also improve social welfare for women," he said.

On the other hand, lawyer Xu Shanshan, from Zhong Lun Law Firm's Shanghai office, said that to counter the low birth and fertility rates the city should relax household registration for children born overseas.

Lawyer Tong Lin from Hengdu Law Firm suggested improving public welfare facilities, such as the number of baby-care rooms and barrier-free facilities in public places, to give couples a more comfortable environment to bring up a baby.

In addition to the fertility-rate issue, the lawyers also made proposals on housing problems, impunity rules for minor offenders, pet-dog management and other hot topics.



Lawyer Hu Guang from Shanghai MHP Law Firm.



Shanghai showed good balance in various aspects such as basic and applied research, government and enterprise investment, and R&D investment by state-owned enterprises and private enterprises and foreign enterprises.

Shanghai Mayor Gong Zheng

said at the ongoing sixth session of the 15th Shanghai People's Congress

Better synergies between industries, digital economy



Ding Yining

THE digital economy and synergies between industry segments has drawn attention from members of this year's Shanghai Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference's annual session.

Chen Jinlong, a member of the Shanghai Committee of the China Association for Promoting Democracy, said the digital era instills new momentum for the cultural, tourism and shopping sectors.

Embedding digital technologies into the commercial services and tourism sector could allow Shanghai to become a role model for enhancing a consumption center.

He proposed more incentives to stimulate cross-industry development that would increase the appeal of major business districts.

Retailers are forging ahead to offer digital technologies enabling new service and leisure spending.

Starbucks, which set up its

Chinese headquarters in Shanghai, launched a new service earlier this week for customers to order meeting space and semi-open office areas at select stores.

The company also plans to add coffee-related community activities in the future as well as birthday parties and pet gatherings.

For the value of data to be fully unleashed, PwC Asia Pacific and China Chairman Raymund Chao suggests that the city government should encourage companies to disclose data assets as part of their financial filings to help risk assessment and management decisions.

For the asset value of specific industry data, he proposes creating a pricing mechanism for different types of data.

The Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang's Shanghai Committee put forward a joint proposal to encourage district-level authorities to offer incentives to industry-leading digital players as well as small and emerging companies.