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SPC encourages mediation to resolve disputes

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China's Supreme People's Court issued a new regulation Tuesday to encourage parties involved in conflicts to mediate for resolution.

The regulation is in response to a rapid increase in lawsuits during the past two years.

It clarifies transitional procedures for parties to cease actions in the people's courts and turn instead to industrial or community mediation.

The move is an attempt to bring social organizations into play at an action's early stage to ease public discontent and prevent aggravation of resentment and tension. It is in accord with the new objective of a harmonious society outlined by the Communist Party of China and the government.

According to the court's statistics, lawsuits for criminal, civil affairs and administrative issues submitted to courts around the country in 2007 increased by 7 percent from 2006 to 5,550,062 cases. The courts handled 6,288,831 lawsuits in 2008, 13.31 percent up from 2007.

"Entering a transitional period of development, Chinese society is encountering an increasing number of new contradictions and problems it has never before experienced," said court spokesman Sun Jungong Tuesday.

"Mediation bodies need to be strengthened to make a bigger contribution to the resolution of disputes," he said.

The regulation means agreements achieved in arbitration or mediation by administrative bodies, mercantile organizations and industrial groups will have the same force in law as those judged by the people's courts.

"The courts at all levels should guide mediation and arbitration methods in a scientific, fair and rational way as well as act as supervisors and executors of agreements," said Jiang Huiling, vice director of the SPC's judicial reform office.

(Xinhua News Agency August 5, 2009)

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