

TWO SESSIONS

Poverty eradication on track

Goal is to have minimum annual income of 4,000 yuan nationwide by end-2020

By ZHAO XINYING
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China plans to lift 10 million people in rural areas out of poverty this year, a senior official said on Thursday.

That would leave about 6 million still awaiting to emerge from hardship in order to achieve the goal of eradicating poverty nationwide by the end of 2020.

More than 300 counties are expected to be taken off the list of impoverished areas this year, and the remainder will be delisted in 2020 if everything progresses well, Liu Yongfu, director of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, said at a news conference on the sidelines of the ongoing two sessions.

China has made great achieve-

ments in poverty alleviation over the past six years since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in November 2012. The number of people living in poverty has decreased from 99 million in 2012 to 16.6 million last year, Liu said.

Eight municipalities and provincial-level regions — Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Guangdong, Fujian and Shandong — have largely rooted out poverty.

Among the 832 impoverished counties nationwide, 28 were removed from the poverty list in 2016 and 125 in 2017. Another 280 counties have become richer last year and are expected to soon be delisted after final assessments, Liu said. The rest, fewer than 400, are targets for this year and next year.

Poverty alleviation has helped develop local industries, improve infrastructure, enhance public services and protect the environment, benefiting not only those formerly living in want, but all residents in rural regions, he added.

However, with only 20 months left to meet the end-2020 poverty eradication goal, Liu said special attention will be paid to the quality of poverty alleviation.

"We have very strict standards and processes for measuring exactly how and when people emerge from poverty. Also, for a county or village, the standard is that people living in extreme poverty should account for no more than 2 percent of the population in Central China and 3 percent in Western China," he said.

Part of the goal is that minimum annual incomes must reach 4,000 yuan (\$600) by 2020. And by that time, people shouldn't have to worry about being able to afford food or

basic clothing, and their needs in terms of medical services, education and housing should be met, he said.

In response to a question about whether a slowing economy and trade disputes will affect the country's poverty alleviation progress, Liu said the external environment may bring some uncertainty, but China will take measures to reduce the impact as much as possible and will achieve the goal of eradicating poverty by the end of 2020.

He said possible downsides may include some enterprises employing fewer people, making it harder for some impoverished people to find jobs. But these problems could be offset by other measures, such as developing industries in impoverished villages, thus helping them find jobs without having to migrate to big cities.

"You should believe that China has the capability and the measures (to meet the 2020 goal)," he said.



National People's Congress deputy Liu Guozhong (center), who is also governor of Shaanxi province, answers reporters' questions during the ongoing session of the NPC on Thursday in Beijing. XU JINGXING / CHINA DAILY

Shaanxi determined to fight red tape, root out corruption

By LI LEI
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Shaanxi province reiterated its resolution to fight excessive bureaucracy and root out graft, just months after the country brought to justice a large number of officials involved in massive villa projects built to the detriment of the environment.

While speaking on Thursday at a panel discussion during the ongoing gathering of the top legislature in Beijing, Liu Guozhong, governor of Shaanxi, pledged zero tolerance for corruption and misdeeds.

"We'll track down any sign of corruption, and hunt down anyone involved," he said.

The governor said he expects the political atmosphere in his province will improve over time as the anti-graft campaign goes on, and sustained efforts will be made to reinforce environmental protection within his jurisdiction.

Liu said 1,185 luxury villa units in the foothills of the Qinling Mountains have been demolished since July amid efforts to restore the ecological balance near a nature reserve on the outskirts of Xi'an, the provincial capital.

The mountains serve as a natural boundary between China's north and south, and are home to a huge variety of plants and protected animals.

The governor said another nine villa complexes along with about 300 hectares of land were confis-

“We'll track down any sign of corruption, and hunt down anyone involved.”

Liu Guozhong, governor of Shaanxi province

cated by the State. More than 200 hectares of land were returned to farmers, and another 176 hectares reforested.

The massive demolition beginning last summer was accompanied by the ouster of some of Shaanxi's most powerful figures, including Zhao Zhengyong, former Party secretary of Shaanxi, and Wei Minzhou, a former senior legislator in the province.

An inspection team from the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection — the nation's top anti-graft body — found that villas began to appear near the reserve long before Zhao's tenure as provincial Party chief, which ran from 2012 to 2016.

Local officials launched a high-profile campaign that year and tore down 202 illegal structures owned by farmers, but left the upscale villas untouched.

And apart from a failure to act in line with the central leadership's directives, People's Daily said the officials in question also approved additional real estate projects in the area.



Miao ethnic group deputy Shi Liping (center right) talks with Sui ethnic group deputy Song Shuixian (center left) at a meeting for Guizhou province at the ongoing session of the National People's Congress, which was open to reporters in Beijing on Thursday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Guizhou's efforts to improve lives paying off

By WANG ZHUOQIONG and YANG JUN

Luo Yinghe, a National People's Congress deputy and Party secretary of Xinmin neighborhood in Huishui county, Guizhou province, used to live in village with no access to clean water, roads or the internet.

His hometown is located in one of the most remote mountainous regions in the province. "We had to walk miles and miles over mountains just to buy some daily groceries," Luo said.

In 2016, Luo and 4,685 villagers from 58 villages moved to their new apartment buildings in an economic development zone in Huishui.

On the opening day of the Guizhou delegation meeting during the second session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on Tuesday, Luo said their lives have been greatly

improved thanks to the relocation projects.

Luo said about 2,156 relocated people have landed jobs at 263 enterprises in the zone and another 169 households have launched their own businesses.

In June, a new primary school and kindergarten for the relocated community in Huishui was opened, with an investment of 120 million yuan (\$17.88 million) and capacity for 1,900 students.

Luo said that last year, the average per capita income reached 4,800 yuan. The number of private vehicles increased to 380 from 120 in 2017.

The province, ranked first in the number of people being lifted out of poverty, has completed relocation of 1.32 million people so far, said Sun Zhigang, Party secretary of the Guizhou provincial committee at the

meeting open to reporters.

"This year, Guizhou aims to relocate another 560,000 residents in order to reach the target of 1.88 million people," said Sun. The priority is to help the new community residents enjoy a stable life and improve their incomes, he added.

The province's target in 2019 is to pull another 1.1 million people out of poverty, said Sun.

Meanwhile, the province's governor said that Guizhou has China's first big data pilot zone, and it has already adopted big data in lifting more people out of poverty.

Guizhou has attracted many internet giants including Huawei, Tencent, Alibaba and Apple to establish cloud computing and big data centers.

The province has employed big data technology to poverty alleviation and set up a platform to sup-

port accurate poverty reduction by mixing data and rural industry reforms, said Shen Yiqin, governor of Guizhou.

"We sell top-notch agricultural products from mountainous regions to the global market through the digital economy and big data technology," said Shen.

By promoting the cultivation of high-yield corn in villages in the province, the province has provided 6.67 million mu (445,133 hectares) of corn to the market.

Furthermore, the province has developed the country's first rural intellectual transportation scheduling system to help rural residents commute and deliver small packages.

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Hunan sets 'targeted, specific' measures to help poor

By ZHAO LEI
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Hunan province has established an effective and efficient set of measures for poverty alleviation, according to a top provincial official.

Du Jiahao, Hunan's Party secretary and head of the provincial legislature, said on Thursday that the provincial government has been sparing no efforts in implementing President Xi Jinping's instructions on targeted poverty reduction, and has worked out various methods to address poverty issues.

"We always keep Xi's instructions in mind and regard poverty alleviation as our political obligation," Du said during a panel discussion of the Hunan delegation to the ongoing second session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing.

In November 2013, Xi — who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission — visited Shibadong village in Hunan province, which was an impoverished community at that time. He called on governments at all levels to use measures that fit local conditions to alleviate poverty.

Du said that since then, Hunan has been sticking to the president's directive that poverty alleviation policies and measures must be targeted and specific.

He said that the province is focused on a proven approach that encourages and supports impoverished people to tap their local resources and seek opportunities in the market.

Provincial authorities are active

in helping unemployed, impoverished people find jobs in other provinces that have a huge demand for workers. Labor-intensive enterprises in certain industries are encouraged to establish factories in poverty-stricken areas.

Local governments in Hunan have also created and maintained many jobs that carry out environmental protection efforts such as forestry preservation and riverside patrols.

As a result of these efforts, Hunan has made remarkable achievements in poverty reduction, he said.

In 2018, the province lifted nearly 1.31 million rural residents out of poverty and removed 2,491 villages from the impoverished areas list. The rate of poverty in Hunan among the general population has also falling sharply.

Du said the province is deter-

mined to eliminate absolute poverty by 2020.

Poverty alleviation is a top priority on Xi's agenda. The president has visited all of the 14 regions with a high concentration of absolute poverty since he took office seven years ago. He has vowed to eliminate absolute poverty in China by the end of 2020.

In Xi's annual New Year's speech over the past several years, he has always mentioned his concerns for those in poverty.

The president has repeatedly asked local governments to carry out specific and targeted measures to help poverty-stricken people. He also requested wealthy provinces to assist less-developed areas by providing financial support and working together to nurture local industries.

What they say

The integrated development plan of the Yangtze River Delta enables Anhui province to become a key part of a national strategy. It signals that Anhui can seize the opportunity to be a gateway to access global resources.

Under the plan, Anhui will scientifically position itself and use its strength in scientific innovation and industrial development to seek future growth. A step ahead in scientific innovation can give us a strong edge in the path toward robust industrial development. We will strive harder to grow technological competitiveness and accelerate industrial transformation by leveraging our sound foundation in industrial robots, home appliances and other sectors. More efforts will also be made to seek balanced regional development.

Li Jinbin, Party secretary of Anhui

Integration into the Greater Bay Area can facilitate the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region's rapid development in various fields and create a win-win situation for both. The integration with and connection to the area is one of Guangxi's priorities in expanding openness and achieving coordinated growth. Guangxi is laying out various plans to comprehensively blend in with the area's development, and sectors including transport infra-

structure construction, industrial collaboration and human resource exchanges are of key importance. The region will boost construction of high-speed railways and expressways, and also build more ports to form a multi-dimensional transport system for Guangxi to quickly connect with the Greater Bay Area. Guangxi will focus on key industries and bring in the area's innovative technologies and new platforms to aid the region's industrial upgrade.

Lu Xinshe, Party secretary of Guangxi

Obvious improvements have been witnessed in the tourism market in Yunnan province since a pledge two years ago to crack down on disorder. A total of 780 complaints in Yunnan's tourism sector were received in 2018, down 53 percent year-on-year. Police in the province investigated more than 3,500 cases including overcharging tourists and 14 resulted in criminal prosecution with 47 individuals arrested. Meanwhile, Yunnan has been making efforts to introduce smart tourism, with one key approach being the introduction of the smartphone app "You Yunnan" or Travel in Yunnan. Tourists can find official travel information on 330 scenic spots through the app, and more than 140 of them provide real-time online tour guides. Tourists can also check in at airports in the province through facial recognition technology in the app.

Ruan Chengfa, Yunnan governor

