

**2019 China Poverty Reduction International Forum:  
Joint Efforts on Knowledge Sharing, and To Promote Global Poverty Reduction Governance  
16 October 2019**

This annual International Poverty Reduction Forum serves as a platform to share and disseminate knowledge on poverty reduction in the PRC and the rest of the world. This forum has been regularly organized by International Poverty Reduction Center in China (IPRCC), China International Internet Center (CIIC), World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the UN Rome-based agencies (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and World Food Programme). This year's theme was "Joint Efforts on Knowledge Sharing and to Promote Global Poverty Reduction Governance". Over 190 delegates from 14 countries, 13 international organizations, governments, academia, private sector, and media attended the forum. Participating countries included Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, the PRC, Egypt, India, Italy, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Seychelles, and Uruguay.

### **Highlights**

Following are key highlights of the forum:

- Winners of the First Global Solicitation and Challenge Prize on Best Poverty Reduction Practices were announced, and the Second Global Solicitation was launched. The solicitations were aimed to encourage countries and institutions to compile and summarize projects that have successfully eradicated poverty into short cases that can be easily shared with the international community. The first solicitation was launched in 2018 by the 7 forum organizers. At the closing date over 820 poverty reduction cases from around the world were received. Of these 110 cases were selected as best practices. These best cases would be showcased and disseminated on IPRCC's Global Poverty Reduction Online Knowledge Sharing database.
- The PRC's remarkable economic growth in the past 4 decades has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. The scale of pulling 850 million people out of poverty in such a short period of time is unprecedented in mankind's fight against poverty. And the PRC's goal to eradicate absolute poverty by 2020 is 10 years ahead the target set in the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. What's even more remarkable is that the world's achievement in eradicating poverty has much to do with the PRC's success—the PRC alone accounted for three-quarters of the global poverty reduction from the 1980s to now according to WB.
- Governments need to remain steadfast in their efforts to reduce poverty and much can be learned from experiences of the international organizations working in the PRC. Despite the progress made in reducing global poverty, the number of people living in extreme poverty remains high and progress has been uneven in all regions. According to the most recent estimates in 2015, 10% of the world's population still lived on less than US\$1.90 a day, compared to 11% in 2013. At this rate and given the slow future global growth, poverty reduction may not decline as fast enough to reach the target of ending extreme poverty by 2030. Still, many successful poverty reduction approaches can be found in the PRC. For example, IFAD's Public-Private-Producer Partnership (4P) model of sustainable agricultural value chains in Shiyan, Hubei, and FAO's Farmer Field School of interactive and participatory learning by doing model in Rong'an, Guangxi.

- Besides economic growth, 3 factors are key to the PRC's success in eradicating poverty according to WB. They are: (i) strong political support; (ii) the setting up of a dedicated organization to fight poverty, and strong planning. The PRC has issued 4 overarching plans for poverty alleviation since 1978; and (iii) deliberate and progressive targeting of resources to the neediest.
- Four key challenges remain in the PRC's fight against poverty after 2020 according to Changsheng Zuo, State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, and Shaohua Chen, Xiamen University. First, identifying relative poverty and refocusing eradication efforts from extreme poverty to relative poverty. Second, maintaining current achievements in poverty reduction without the risk of people falling back to poverty. Third, tackling disparities between urban and rural areas, eastern and western regions, normal and vulnerable people, including women, children, and older people. Fourth, reducing the dependence of poverty eradication efforts on increasingly constrained fiscal and public resources.
- More broadly, 3 strategies are important to combat poverty in developing Asia according to Guanghua Wan, Fudan University. First, equal opportunity must be ensured for all to contain rising inequality. The impressive achievement in poverty reduction has been almost completely accounted for by growth. However, due to the rising inequality, if GDP growth slows down, the effect of poverty reduction efforts will be weakened. Second, food security must be maintained by providing sufficient supply, accessibility, affordability of food to all. Food insecurity directly threatens the survival of the poor, particularly the landless and the urban poor. Third, insurance market must be developed to manage climate change via adaptation and mitigation. Flooding and storm are the two most common natural calamities in Asia. These shocks affect household welfare, particularly that of the poor. If not well managed they can easily undermine other poverty reduction efforts.
- Three governance factors are identified as crucial to poverty reduction according to Bruno Carrasco, ADB. First, improving service delivery through better access and quality, and empowering local communities to have a greater voice. Second, promoting digital technology and e-governance which enable better use of data and analytics for better solutions. Third, better targeting of resources/expenditure through improved data collection and monitoring, conditional cash transfers, and expanded social protection.
- Social assistance should emphasize investment to build human capital to promote sustainable poverty reduction according to Karin Schlegel, ADB. Addressing poverty through consumption support directed at poor households is essential in the short term to protect people from destitution. But making a lasting exit from poverty requires a longer-term approach that builds people's human capital and productive capacity, especially through better education and health. Raising the human capital of children is especially effective. Conditional cash transfer programs provide incentives for poor parents to invest in their children's human capital, including pre-natal care, school enrolment and attendance, regular health checks, and parenting seminars. Cash plus programs are a relatively new social assistance instrument aimed at working age adults in the household. They provide a holistic package of consumption support, asset transfer, training, access to bank account, and coaching and mentoring.
- Participants spoke highly of the forum as a platform to exchange experiences and lessons, and on the online platform for sharing and learning about successful poverty reduction cases. Some hope that future site visits could be organized for first-hand witness of successful projects. There was also much interest on poverty alleviation cases in mountainous areas in Laos PDR and Myanmar.

**Next Steps**

The 110 cases won the first global solicitation will be published as a book in 2020. The next forum is scheduled in 2020 where winners of the second solicitation will be announced.

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