

Participatory Planning and Urban Anti-poverty - China's Experience

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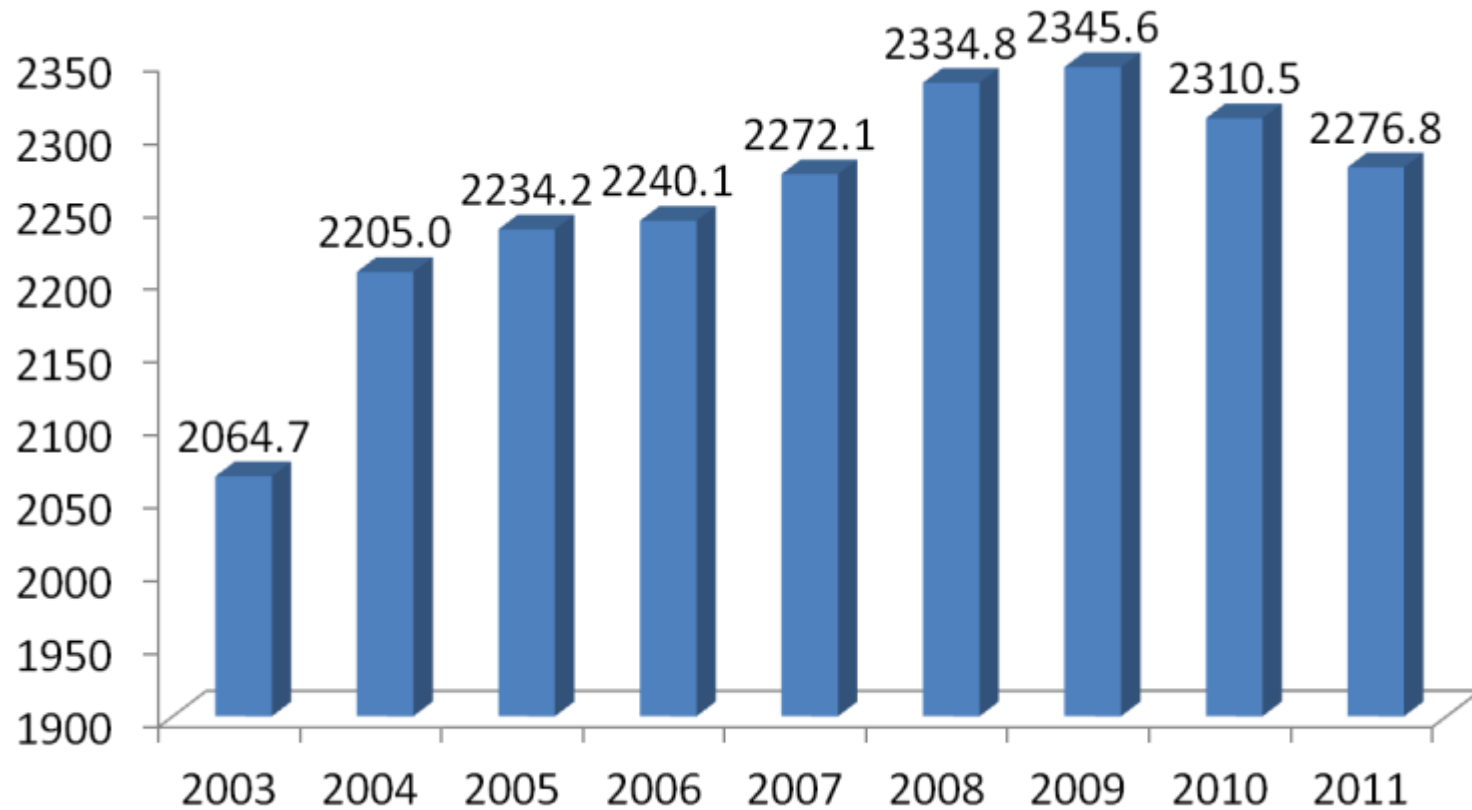
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

I. China's urban poverty and progress in anti-poverty

(I) China's current urban poverty

- In recent years, the scale of China's urban poverty keeps expanding and the situation of urban poverty has become increasingly prominent.
 - The World Bank (1993): From 1981 to 1990, China had an urban poverty-stricken population of 500,000 – 3,900,000 and the average poverty rate was 0.5%.
 - "Urban Blue Book" 2011: In 2009, China had an urban poverty-stricken population of 50 million.
 - According to the urban minimum living standard (a relatively low poverty line), in 2011, 11.457 million households and 22.768 million people were covered by the urban minimum living security system.

Number of the people covered by the urban minimum living security system (ten thousand)



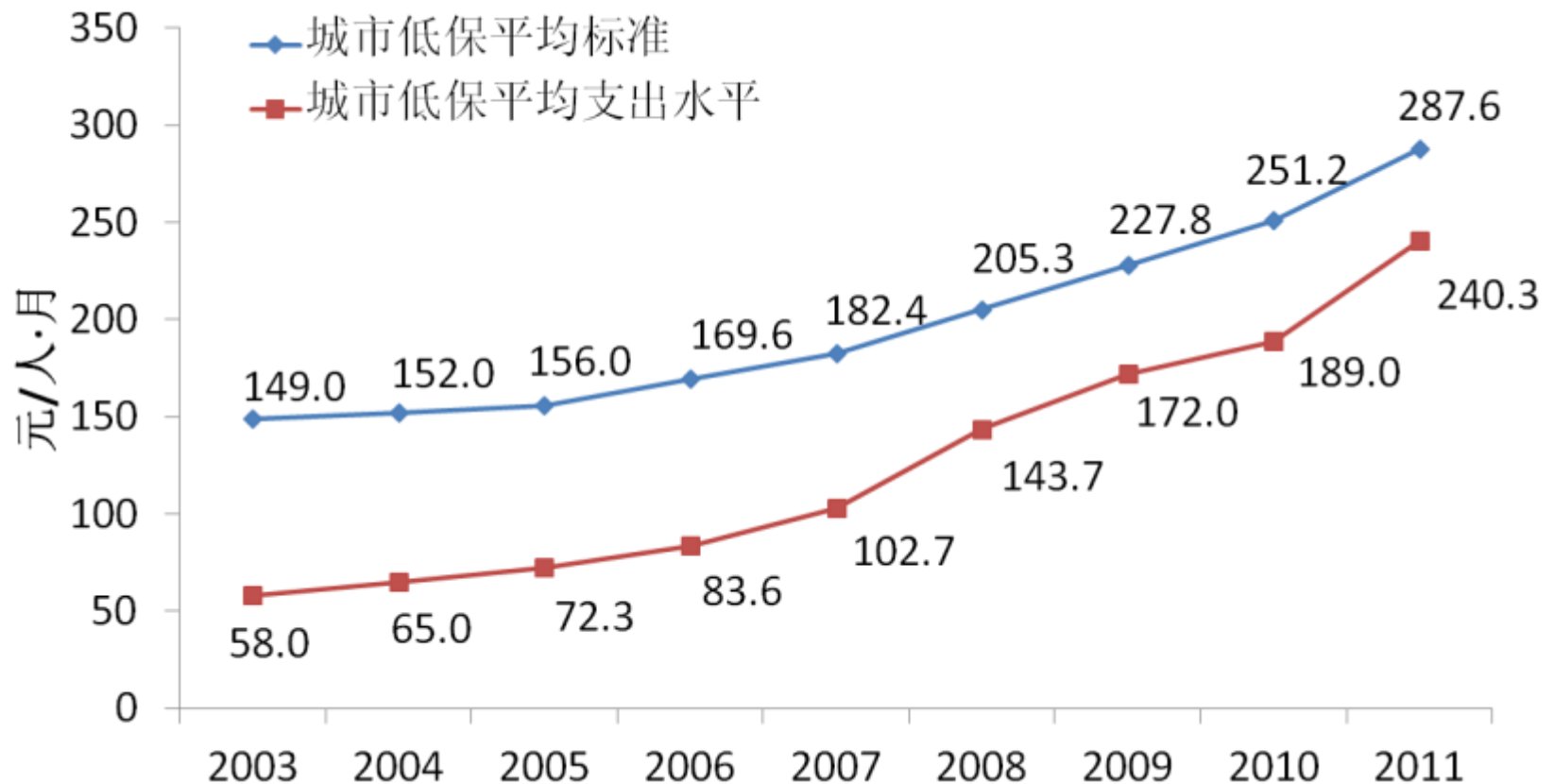
(II) The history of China's urban anti-poverty

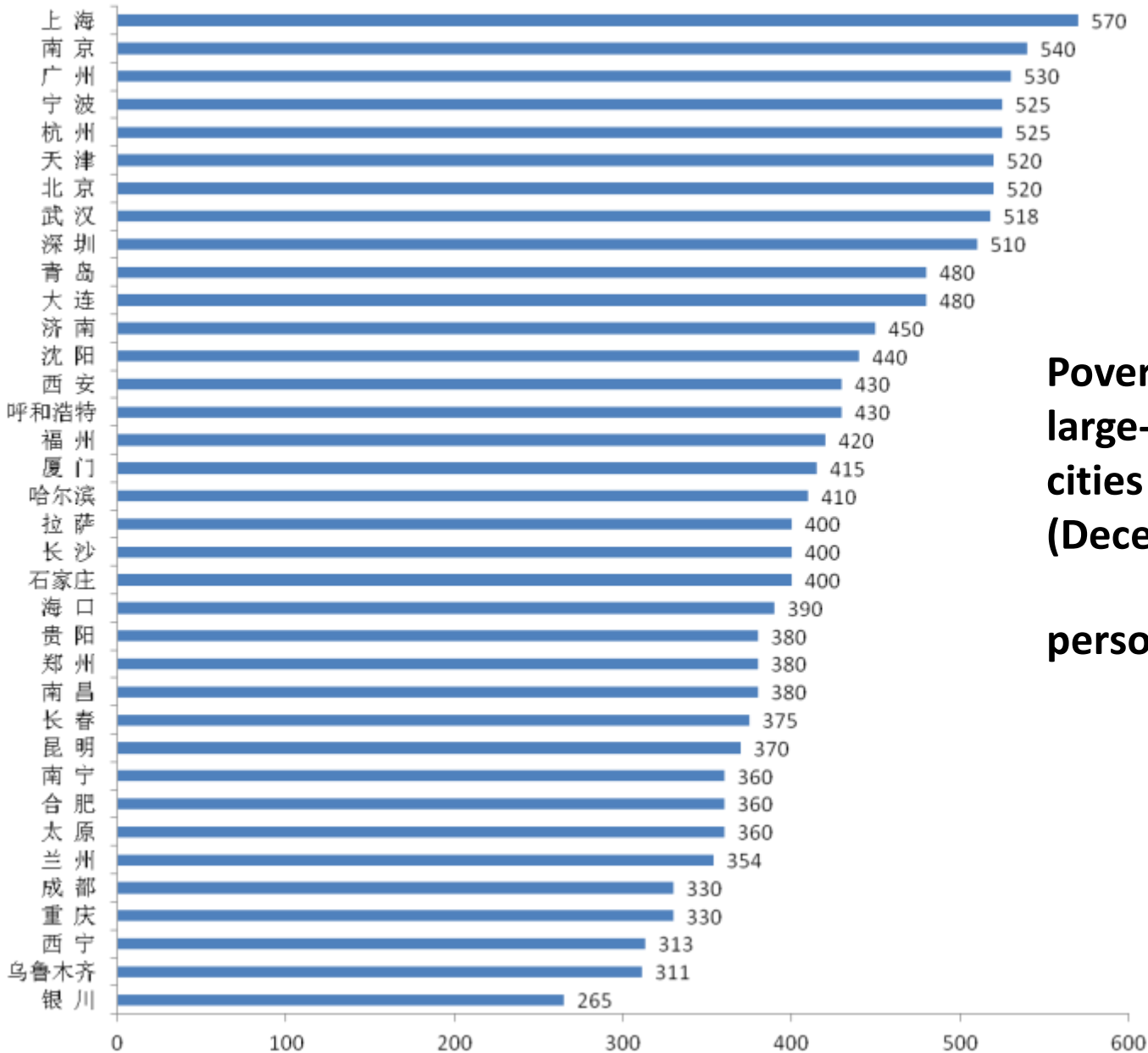
- **Phase I: In the 1990s, China gradually set up three lines for urban poverty relief**
 - **Urban minimum living security system:** The pilot program was launched in Shanghai in 1993 and then the system was gradually implemented nationwide
 - **Two relief lines for laid-off workers:** The basic livelihood guarantee (now canceled) and unemployment insurance for laid-off workers
- **Phase II: In the 21st century, China's urban anti-poverty entered into the stage of consolidation, integrated management and social participation**
 - Various cities have implemented a series of special aid projects in health care, housing, education, justice, employment, disaster relief and the rescue of vagrants and beggars, further improved the temporary relief and social mutual aid system, and **established a comprehensive, multi-level basic living security – based social assistance system, supplemented by special rescue, emergency assistance and social solidarity.**

II. China's main practices of urban anti-poverty

(I) Establish the urban minimum living security system

From 2003 to 2011, China's average urban subsistence allowance standard and average expenditure on urban subsistence allowance respectively grew by 93.0% and 314.3%.

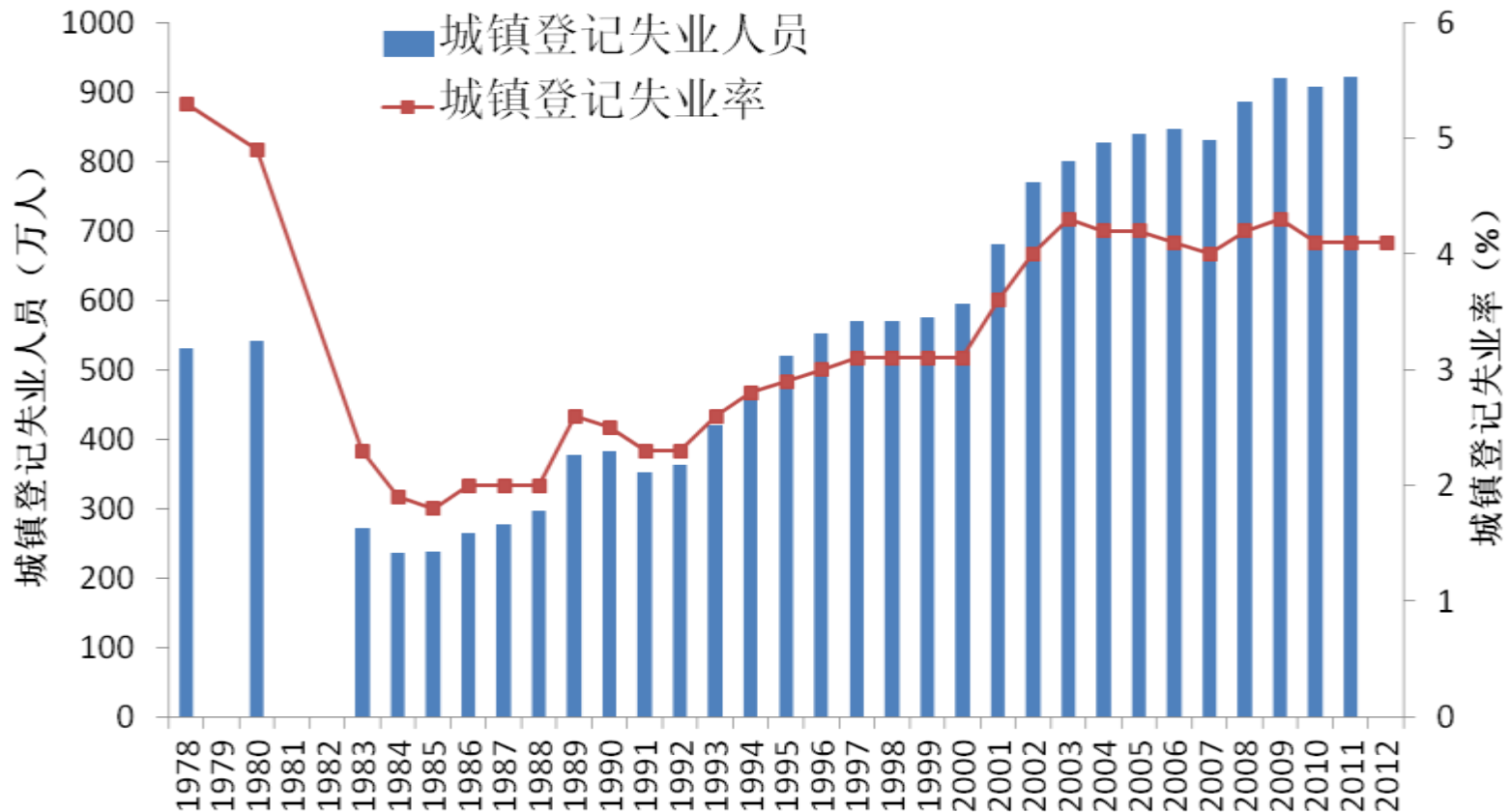




**Poverty lines of 36
large-and-medium-scale
cities in China
(December 2012, Yuan/
person • month**

(II) Improve the employment support and unemployment insurance system

China's urban registered unemployment rate stands at 4% and urban registered unemployed is 9 million or so. Based on the survey, however, the unemployment rate is estimated to be 8% -10%.

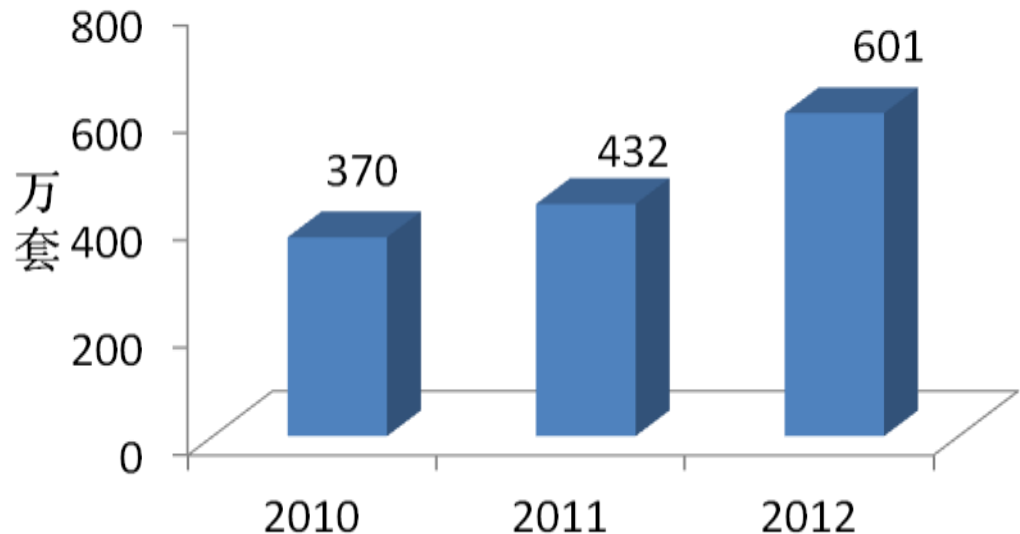


(III) Improve the urban housing security system

- **Accelerate the construction of affordable housing:** As of the end of the "12th Five-year Plan" period, the coverage rate of China's urban affordable housing is expected to reach 20% or more and China will basically solve the housing problem of urban medium and low-income families.
- **Build affordable housing in various forms based on the different needs and affordability of the urban medium and low-income groups,** such as the low-rent housing, public rental housing, affordable housing, houses of "two limits" and Shantytowns resettlement housing

- **Strengthen the reconstruction of villages in the city and shantytowns**
- Shenzhen, Jinan and Nanning began to **include migrant workers into the affordable housing system.**

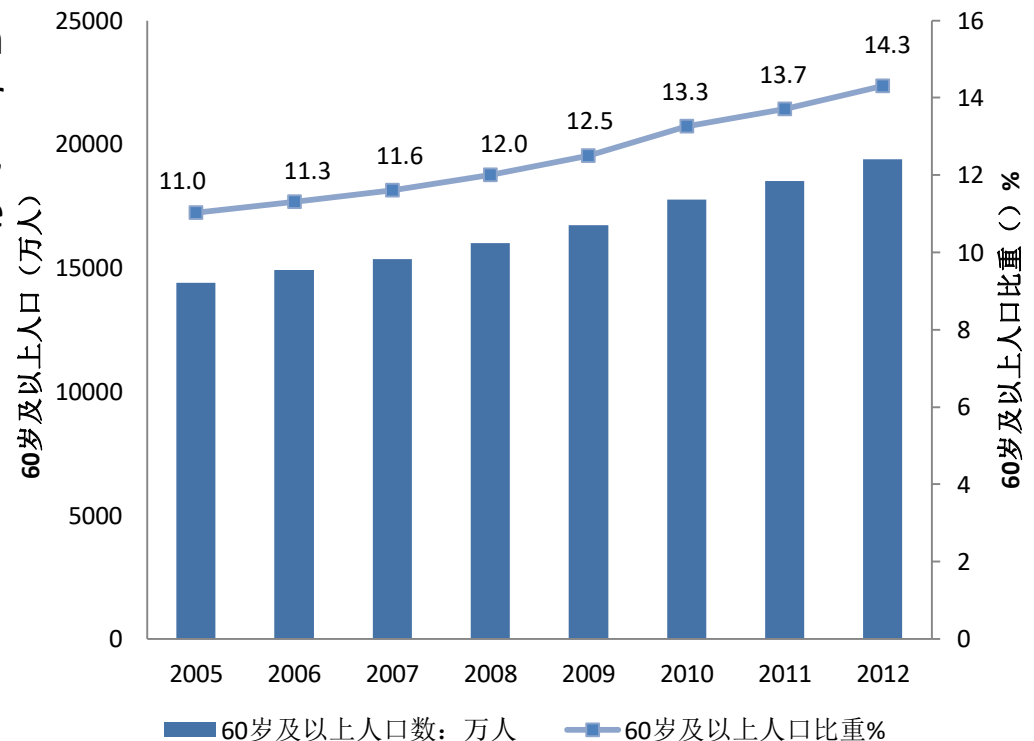
建成各类保障性安居工程住房



(IV) Improve the special group relief system

- **Education of migrant workers' children**
- **Urban elderly population service issue**
 - In 2010, China's urban population aged 60 and over reached 78.29 million, accounting for 11.7% of the total urban population.
- **Rescue for the disaster-affected people and the disabled**

Proportion of people aged 60 and over in China's population



III. China 's urban participatory poverty reduction program and the effects

- **What is participatory planning?**
 - It is the process for the public to participate in the whole process of planning by legitimate means and express their wishes through a two-way communication and consultation dialogues, and thus influence the planning.
- **Progress of participatory planning in China**
 - After the founding of New China, we have been using the Soviet-style closed top-down planning system, not taking into account public opinion.
 - After the 1990s, the Western participatory theory and practice were introduced to China, but slow progress was made in practice.
 - In the 21st century, through the cooperative anti-poverty projects between international NGOs and local government, **participatory poverty alleviation has been gradually introduced to rural poverty reduction** and achieved remarkable results.
 - Through implementing the Canadian aid project, Jinzhong of Shanxi introduced participatory rural poverty reduction into the relocation, farming, micro-credit and other anti-poverty projects, and all the poverty-stricken villages of the city, forming a comprehensive multi-level participatory poverty reduction system.

– In recent years, China began to explore public participation in urban planning

- China's urban planning: **Change from passively allowing public participation to actively seeking the participation of all parties**
- **Passive public participation:**
 - Mainly through **publicity, opinion soliciting, media report, planning exhibition and planning promotional materials, etc.**
- Active public participation mainly involves community environmental protection, community management, etc.
 - **Stop pollution projects to prevent environmental poverty:** In 2007, the citizens of Xiamen, Fujian "took a walk" on the street to protest against the PX Chemical Project with an investment of 10.8 billion Yuan in Hailun of Xiamen. Finally, the project was moved to Zhangzhou. On May 4, 2013, nearly 3,000 citizens of Kunmin gathered at Nanping Square to protest against PX refinery project.
 - **Participate in community building to strengthen community cohesion.**

Main problems in China's participatory urban planning

- **Legal protection and institution building need to be improved**
 - No workable guidelines, no clear and workable regulations on the content, extent and scope of public participation
- **Limited capacity of public participation, inadequate training by government**
- **Lack of institutional mechanism for public participation**
 - It is a kind of spontaneous individual behavior without legal protection. An official third party not intervened by the government is responsible for and participate it the planning on behalf of the public.
- **Limited scope and extent of public participation**
 - In the reconstruction of villages in the city and shantytowns, the public mainly participated in the publicity after project construction instead of the whole process of planning.
 - In the areas of urban minimum living security, social relief and security housing construction, public participation is very limited.

IV. Ideas and Measures to Promote Urban Participatory Poverty Alleviation

- China has entered into the **new stage for simultaneous implementation of rural anti-poverty and urban anti-poverty**
- We should **implement diversified strategies based on the actual situation** and different needs of the poor in urban anti-poverty. The pro-poor policies should involve employment, housing, social security and rights protection.
- While continuing government-led anti-poverty work, we should learn from the successful experience of rural participatory poverty alleviation, actively create conditions to attract social forces and international organizations to get involved in anti-poverty activities, **implement participatory poverty reduction and explore the establishment of a long-term sustainable anti-poverty mechanism.**

- **Establish a comprehensive urban poverty line monitoring index system**
 - The situations of various cities in China are quite different, so it is not suitable for China to establish a unified urban poverty line.
- **Learning from the experience in participatory poverty reduction in rural areas, we should coordinate urban and rural anti-poverty management mechanisms.**
- **Participatory rural poverty reduction mode:**
 - Active participation of the poor, government's empowerment to the people;
 - Achieve standardized and institutionalized democratic participation in the program in the whole process of project selection, implementation and supervision to promote self-development capacity of the poor.
 - **Establish a unified management system for urban and rural anti-poverty**
- **Employment-oriented poverty reduction in economic development**
 - Implement the **employment-oriented economic growth strategy, pay attention to human capital and social capital investment of the poor**, attach importance to job training, education subsidies, nutrition improvement and community building, and improve the income distribution system.

- **Continue to improve the urban social security system in China**
 - Gradually raise social security standards, properly deal with the problem of the convergence of urban and rural social security, and **include migrant workers and unemployed college graduates into the coverage of social security.**
- **Attach importance to the space guiding role of participatory planning in urban anti-poverty**
 - **Conduct comprehensive control of regional centralized poverty and attach importance to the implementation of participatory planning in urban anti-poverty:** Implement the community-based comprehensive poverty reduction, taking into account employment, education, health care, hygiene and the improvement of supporting facilities.
- **Establish diversified anti-poverty mechanisms and strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of pro-poor policies**
 - Break the single top-down government antipoverty thinking, gradually promote the participatory poverty reduction model and establish diversified anti-poverty mechanisms
 - Develop a feasible evaluation index system and strengthen the monitoring and evaluation to achieve dynamic tracking of anti-poverty policies

Thank you!