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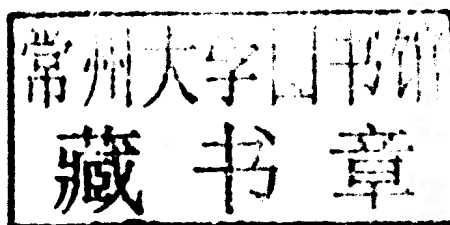
FOR THE PEOPLE

Volume Civil Affairs

FOR THE PEOPLE

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GENERAL PREFACE

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Development is an eternal theme of human society. All the peoples of the world have struggled to find their own distinctive ways to explore a development road suited to their national conditions. Along this road of development, they have accumulated valuable experience. The road a country takes towards development decides the future direction of that country's social and economic development. The series of books published under the common title *Scientific Development in China* show that China has, under the guidance of the Concept of Scientific Outlook, made great achievements over the past decade since 2002 in such fields as the economy, justice, education, environmental protection, transportation, housing, ethnic policies, and poverty reduction. China has succeeded in enhancing its national strength and improving the quality of life for its people. Full of revealing facts and data, the series of books show how China has adhered to the Concept of Scientific Outlook in national economic and social development, an outlook which best suits the realities of China. The Concept of Scientific Outlook keeps up with the prevailing trends of the times, and it will lead China towards a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

China's scientific development takes economic construction as the main focus of its work and it lays great emphasis on the need for coordinated development. According to the principle of scientific development, upholding development is the top priority, and efforts must be made to continuously emancipate and develop the productive forces of the nation, so as to promote sound and rapid economic development and meet the growing needs of the people and economic development. In the meantime, efforts must be made to focus on the work of coordinated development in five fields such as urban and rural development, regional development, economic and social development, harmonious development between Man and

Nature, and domestic development and the program of reform and opening up to the outside world. While pressing ahead with economic development, efforts will be made to take into account all aspects of development requirements, so as to bring into full play various socio-economic sectors to bring about all-round social and economic development.

China takes scientific development as the means of transforming the development mode and stresses the need for sustainable development. Now, China is making efforts to optimize its economic structure, improve its overall quality and efficiency, and to accelerate the construction of a resource-saving, environmentally friendly society, so as to enhance the sustainability of social and economic development.

China's scientific development takes the interests of the people as its starting point. It emphasizes the strength and role of the people, and works towards allowing the people to share common benefits. By fully mobilizing the enthusiasm, initiative and creativity of the broad masses of the people, efforts are made to mobilize and organize hundreds of millions of people to devote themselves to the practice of scientific development, so that the fruits of development could be shared by the broad masses of the people. In the meantime, efforts are made to improve the people's ideological and moral qualities and scientific and cultural qualities, continuously improve the quality of life and health of the people, and work to ensure all of the Chinese people enjoy all aspects of economic, political, cultural, and social rights and interests.

The development road that China is following will be enormously beneficial to the Chinese people. What is more, it will make a significant contribution to human development and progress!

FOREWORD

The civil administration work, a basic part of the Government's social management and public services, is closely related to people's lives and social stability. With the advent of the new century, the Chinese Government has unveiled a number of important policies and made a series of major decisions and arrangements to guarantee the basic livelihood of the people, promote the grassroots democracy and social autonomy, and improve the basic social services. The Chinese people are leading a much better life today.

Disaster mitigation and relief work has achieved the major breakthrough. The State Council has promulgated the Natural Disaster Relief Ordinance, amended the National Natural Disaster Relief Emergency Plan, and worked to improve all levels of emergency response plans and supporting measures and increasingly perfect the disaster mitigation and relief emergency response system and the integrated coordination mechanism. China has effectively combated against the major natural disasters such as the snow and ice disaster in Southern China, the earthquakes in Wenchuan of Sichuan and Yushu of Qinghai, and the Mud-rock Flow in Zhouqu of Gansu. China has substantially increased the relief input, continuously improved the relief standard, and continuously increased the relief projects. The relief material reserve network covering the whole country has been basically formed, and the living assistance, transfer and relocation of affected people have become more timely and efficient. In addition, the disaster prevention and mitigation has achieved some significant progress.

New social relief system has been basically established. The system of subsistence allowances has fully covered the rural and urban areas and achieved the overall development; the support of households entitled to five guarantees in the rural areas was included in the financial security scope for the first time; the system of medical assistance has been comprehensively established, and the trial work of implementing the medical assistance system for the major and serious diseases has been widely carried out; the interim relief has been promoted in 26 provinces; and has basically formed the multi-project and multi-purpose social assistance system covering urban and rural areas, with the minimum living standard and five guarantees as the basis, the

special assistance as the support, and the temporary relief as the auxiliary. The level of social assistance has been significantly improved. The financial investment at all levels has achieved the rapid growth, and reached 164.7 billion Yuan in 2011. China has significantly improved the relief standards and continuously improved the informatization and standardization of social assistance management. The number of objects receiving the permanent assistance is more than 8100.

Social welfare system covers more people. China has gradually promoted the system of allowance for the living of the elderly and the pension services for the needy elderly, continuously improved the preferential policies for the elderly, rapidly increased the pension institutions and beds, and expanded the pension services to all the old people. The new modes of pension services such as the mutual aid and the patient trusteeship have continuously emerged. China has initially established the pension service system with the home as the base, the community as the support, and the institution as the supplement, and the matching fund guarantee and service provision; has improved the system of guaranteeing the welfare of the disabled; has established the national security system for orphans, strengthened the social security for the other difficult children, and comprehensively improved the level of safeguarding the child welfare. The welfare lottery and charitable causes have achieved the leap-forward development.

The work of supporting the army and giving the special care and treatment to the demobilized army men has achieved the innovative development. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has revised the Military Service Law, and the State Council and the Central Military Commission have promulgated the Regulations Concerning the Resettlement of Demobilized Soldiers to carry out the free education, training and soldiers' decommissioning compensation system, and the new resettlement system mainly depending on employment support and combining multiple forms has been basically established. The State has lifted the assistance and security level in a comprehensive manner, increased the assistance standard for family martyrs, and expanded the scope of assisted families in order. The State has smoothly carried forward the takeover and resettlement of retired cadres, and injured, sick, disabled and

decommissioned servicemen, and continuously innovated the resettlement security system and service mode. The State has strengthened the praise for martyrs in a comprehensive manner. The State Council and the Central Military Commission have published the Regulation Concerning the Praise of Revolutionary Martyrs, established the martyr praise fund system, and implemented the project to protect scattered martyrs' commemorate facilities. The work to support family members of servicemen and martyrs has developed innovatively.

The autonomy of the general mass has developed in depth. The system of general mass autonomy has been upgraded to a basic political system. The autonomy practice of "four democracies" has pressed ahead in a comprehensive manner, and the direct election has come true in over 98 percent of the villagers' committees and more than 30 percent of the residents' committees; the democratic decision-making by villagers has been implemented generally, the consultative procedural mechanism of communities has been continuously, and the democratic management of courts and buildings has kept developing; the disclosure and supervision village affairs have been continuously strengthened; and the treatment of "headache villages" has basically completed. The autonomous organization and the autonomy mechanism have changed for the better. The age structure, educational level and capacity of the members of the villagers' committees have been obviously improved, and the financial security has been further reinforced. The construction of the community service system has accelerated.

Community organizations have further played their role. The social organization registration administration system has been continuously innovated and refined, and the registration administration system featuring "uniform registration, performance of respective responsibility, coordination & collaboration, responsibility level by level, and supervision according to the law" is now taking shape. The cultivation, development and supervision of social organizations have been strengthened without cease, the favorable policies have been refined continuously, the practices – for example, the government transfers functions to social organizations, buys services, and build incubation bases – have gradually spread, and the CPC construction, credit construction and capacity building of the social organizations have kept strengthening the social organizations have played

an important role in expanding the social participation, promoting economic development, offering public services, innovating public service, developing charity, philanthropy, science, technology and culture causes, and enriching people's life.

Management and service of special social affairs have kept strengthening. China has prudentially carried forward the adjustment of the administrative zoning, and evidently enhanced the efficiency of regional public services. The aid system for wandering and begging groups has realized a significant reform. China has established and improved the aid and protection system for wandering juveniles, and cumulatively aided and protected 12.87 million wandering juveniles. China has carried forward the standardization of marriage registration, basically realized the national network of marriage registration information, and enhanced the compliance and efficiency of the registration service to benefit people. China has continuously deepened the funeral reform, and benefited more than 500 million people with the favorable basic funeral service. China has established the professional social work mechanism, the social professional work talents have exceeded 200,000 people, the volunteer team has kept expanding, and the professional social work and volunteer service have vibrantly grown.

Amid the constant economic and social development, the public will continuously have new expectations of a better and happier life. In future, the work of civil affairs will, for the purpose of satisfying the growing service demand from the public and the society, continue to improve the security policy for people's livelihood, continuously lift the level of securing people's basic livelihood, tangibly create more benefits for the public, solve problems of the public in livelihood, and make a new contribution to building a comprehensive well-off society, and accelerating the socialist modernization.

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Part I

Safeguarding and Improving People's Livelihood



Chapter I Social Relief

Section 1 Basic Living Allowance System for Urban and Rural Residents

The basic living allowance system for urban and rural residents (hereinafter referred to simply as “basic living allowance system”) is a new social relief program under which the government provides differential subsidies to the impoverished population whose per-capita household income falls below the local minimum living standard. It is based on a relief method of direct cash transfer payments based on an assessment of the family's economic situation, complies with the universal concept of social relief as well as embodying government responsibilities in addressing the poverty problem. It is one of the Chinese government's most significant innovations in the fight to eliminate poverty. The system embodies new thinking on anti-poverty efforts by formulating a poverty relief mode with Chinese characteristics capable of effectively guaranteeing the basic living standards of urban and rural residents with special difficulties.

I. Contents of the Basic Living Allowance System for Urban and Rural Residents

Since the reform and opening-up program began, the Chinese government has gradually established and improved the socialist market economy system, resulting in a variety of economic and social management systems being reformed. With system reform of employment, income distribution and enterprise restructuring, and as well as separation of the social security functions of businesses and institutions, the government is undertaking a greater responsibility in social relief to deal with drastic growth in the number of impoverished population needing direct State assistance. This made it vital for the government to reform the conventional social relief system and strengthen its inclusiveness and fairness.

The core of basic living allowance system is to guarantee the basic living standard of poverty-stricken population by providing direct cash payments. Upon the establishment of a comprehensive system, the Chinese government will continue its efforts in mechanism innovation, operation normalization and improvements in line with the principle of “ensuring the basic livelihood of the needy” and “ensuring open, fair and impartial implementation of the basic living allowance system”.

1. Formulate a basic living allowance standard. According to the regulations, the basic

living allowance standard is formulated, published and implemented by county or city-level governments. However, provincial governments can also formulate the standard for rural areas in a uniform manner. The basis for formulating this includes the cost of food, clothing, water, electricity (coal, gas), etc. For rural residents, it is calculated on a yearly basis due to the seasonal characteristics of agricultural production; for urban residents, it is calculated on a monthly basis. Local governments may appropriately adjust the standard on a yearly basis in line with the price variation of daily necessities and the socioeconomic development level.

To deal with the circumstance of a sudden rise of food prices where the basic living allowance cannot be adjusted in a timely way, the central government also established an interaction mechanism under which temporary price subsidies will be paid when a sudden rise of daily necessities exceeds a critical point; where the price still remains high after a certain period of time, the standard will be adjusted so that temporary subsidies need no longer be paid. Based on local conditions, it is up to local governments to decide the critical point of price hike and the term for granting temporary subsidy.

2. Granting compensatory relief. The specific amount of basic living allowance is directly related to the average income of a household receiving the relief. In principle, the relief is granted in line with the difference between the average income of the household and the basic living allowance standard. A household without any source of income can enjoy the full allowance. Average household income is defined as the average income of all family members. Basic living allowance is granted in a socialized manner, i.e. county-level civil administrations are responsible to review and approve the residents entitled to basic relief allowances, and county-level financial departments are responsible to raise funds and distribute this to banking institutions in accordance with national treasury management system. With the household as the unit, residents entitled to basic living allowances can draw basic living allowances from the banking institutions using a bank card or deposit book.

3. Raising basic living allowance funds. Local governments are responsible for the implementation of the basic living allowance system, especially the primary financial responsibilities. To ensure the smooth implementation of the system in underdeveloped regions, the Central Government established the basic living allowance subsidy system, implemented for urban residents since 1999 and for rural residents since 2007. The Central Government covers around 61 percent of total financial expenditure for both rural and urban allowance funds, and local finances cover about 39 percent. However, these percentages are not fixed.

4. Survey of economic conditions. As the basic living allowance has to be applied of a family basis, any applying household is subjected to a survey of its economic condition, so as to ensure per-capita income is below the basic living allowance standard published by the local government and the financial conditions of the household meet relevant conditions stipulated by it. The social relief administration usually verifies the economic condition and actual living standard of the applicant household by door-to-door interview, interview with neighbors, verification by correspondence, community review, etc. In recent years, more and more regions make decisions by obtaining information on the applicant and his/her family members on housing, car, social insurance, income and financial conditions provided by relevant financial departments and institutions, and this has greatly improved the accuracy of relief entitlement.

5. Classified implementation. This means granting additional allowances to guarantee the basic living standard of people with special difficulties among those entitled to the basic living allowance. Generally speaking, full subsidies will be granted to the "three-without-residents" (residents without sons or daughters, without self-care capability and without source of income), residents with severe handicaps, critically ill patients unable to work, etc., in accordance with the local basic living standard, or provide relief subsidies appropriately above the basic living allowance standard; in terms of seniors, chronically ill people and minors and



students at the compulsory education stage of single-parent families, etc, a certain proportion of additional basic living allowance will be granted according to the local basic living allowance standard in addition to the normal basic living allowance. County-level governments decide the additional proportion of grant. The classified implementation of basic living allowance plays a significant role in guaranteeing the basic living standard of residents (with special difficulties) entitled to the basic living allowance.

6. Enhancing dynamic management. The targets of the basic living allowance are undergoing dynamic change. When the per-capita income of a household with entitlement increases, the basic living allowance will decrease correspondingly; if it exceeds the local basic living allowance standard, the household will be deemed as no longer eligible; if the per-capita income of the household falls, the basic living allowance will be increased correspondingly. To improve the employment prospects for those entitled to the basic living allowance, the government has also created a mechanism of interaction between urban basic living allowance and employment and convergence of rural basic living allowance and poverty relief, and strengthened support for the employment of residents entitled to an allowance. For urban residents able to work and enjoy the conditions of working, the social relief administration may request them to register at the sub-district offices or labor and social security institutions of communities before applying for the basic living allowance, and receive free occupational training and recommendation; for those that have been employed, the necessary employment cost will be deducted when calculating household income. In addition, the social relief administration will carry out regular evaluation of household income, and adjust the treatment of allowance recipients accordingly.

7. Temporary emergency relief. The basic living allowance system ensures the basic living standard for urban and rural residents, but funds cannot meet the needs arising from an emergency, sudden accidents or injuries. Therefore, the government also established a temporary emergency relief system. Should there be a fire, drowning, traffic accident and other accidental causes of injuries, residents with special difficulties may apply to the government for temporary relief if no direct compensatory source can be found. Temporary relief adopts one-time cash payment, and the emphasis is on solving temporary living difficulties.

8. Expanding special relief. To help the urban and rural recipients in regard to their housing, medical care, education, etc, the government has also gradually established some special relief systems to meet specific difficulties. To solve the difficulties in paying for medical care, it established a medical relief system with coverage expanded from rural residents entitled to basic living allowance and residents enjoying "five guarantees" to seniors, critically ill patients and members with severe handicaps in low-income households; to cope with the difficulties in housing, the government established a low-end housing system, to provide housing assistance to low-income households including residents entitled to a basic living allowance with low-rent housing plus rent subsidiaries; to solve problems in education, the government provides special monetary assistance for the schooling of children in poverty-stricken urban and rural households.

II. Current Situation of Implementing the Basic Living Allowance System for Urban and Rural Residents

Basic living allowance system provides an institutional guarantee to impoverished residents in rural and urban areas. With the full coverage of the basic living allowance in the past decade, the Chinese government continues to increase financial inputs. The population covered by the program is increasing every year and becoming stable, and the aid level has risen continuously.

1. Urban and rural basic living allowance scale is becoming stable. By the end of 2001, 11.707 million urban residents were covered nationwide, and the number grew to

22.46 million in 2003; by 2011, it hit 22.768 million. The number of rural residents entitled to payments were relatively limited before full establishment of the basic living allowance system, standing at only 3.05 million in 2001 and 12.091 million in 2006; the number hit 34.519 million in 2007 after full establishment of the system; it grew gradually year after year, stabilizing at 53.135 million in 2011. The nationwide proportion of residents enjoying basic living allowance rose from 1.2 percent in 2001 to 5.6 percent in 2011, and universal coverage was basically realized.

2. Constant growth of government relief fund inputs. Altogether, 4.63 billion Yuan of

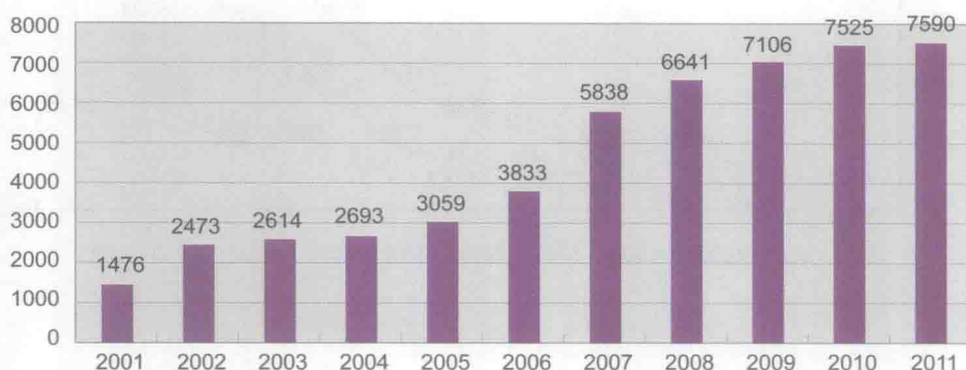


Fig 1 Variation of Number of Urban and Rural Residents Entitled to Basic Living Allowance (Unit: 10,000 Persons)

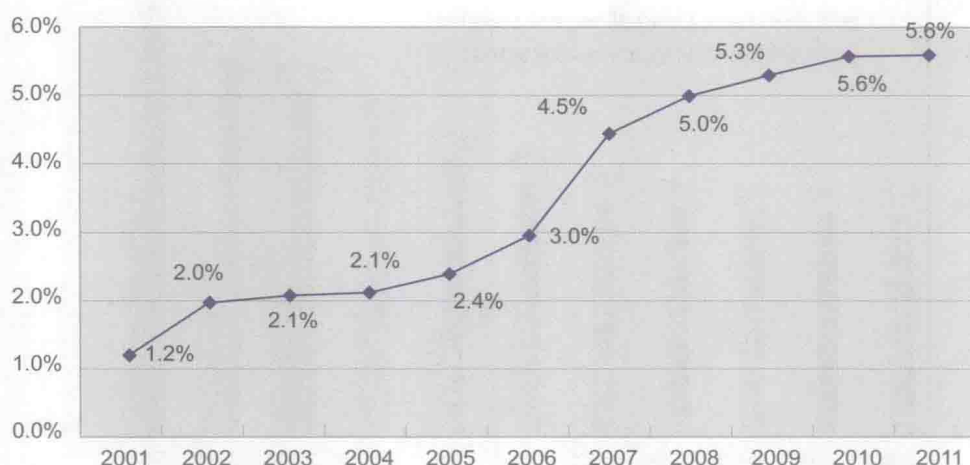


Fig 2: Variation of the Proportion of Residents Entitled to Basic Living Allowance Nationwide

urban and rural basic living allowance funds were expended nationwide in 2001, including 4.16 billion Yuan for urban residents and 470 million Yuan for rural residents; in 2007, expenditures were 38.64 billion Yuan, including 27.74 billion Yuan for urban residents and 10.9 billion Yuan for rural residents; by 2011, the figures were 132.76 billion Yuan in total, an increase of 27.7 times compared to 2001, including 65.99 billion Yuan for urban residents and 66.77 billion