



CHINA'S POVERTY ALLEVIATION OPERATIONS

HUANG CHENGWEI

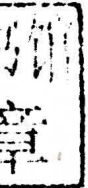


China Intercontinental Press

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图书在版编目（CIP）数据

中国扶贫行动：英文 / 黄承伟编著；何天纯，郭义译. -- 北京：五洲传播出版社，2014.11

ISBN 978-7-5085-2936-3

I . ①中… II . ①黄… ②何… ③郭… III . ①扶贫—中国—英文 IV . ① F323.8

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2014) 第 252004 号

中国扶贫行动（英文）

编 著：黄承伟
参加编写人员：王大军 周 晶 刘 欣 赵清清
译 者：何天纯 郭 义
责任编辑：宋博雅
封面设计：丰饶文化传播有限责任公司
内文制作：北京紫航文化艺术有限公司
出版发行：五洲传播出版社
社 址：北京市北三环中路 31 号生产力大楼 B 座 7 层
邮 编：100088
网 址：<http://www.cicc.org.cn>
电 话：0086-10-82007837（发行部）
印 刷：北京光之彩印刷有限公司
开 本：787 毫米 × 1092 毫米 1/16
印 张：15
印 数：1—3800
字 数：293 千字
版 次：2015 年 1 月第 1 版第 1 次印刷
定 价：118.00 元

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中国扶贫行动: 英文 / 黄承伟编著; 何天纯, 郭义译. -- 北京: 五洲传播出版社, 2014.11

ISBN 978-7-5085-2936-3

I. ①中… II. ①黄… ②何… ③郭… III. ①扶贫—中国—英文 IV. ① F323.8

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2014) 第 252004 号

中国扶贫行动 (英文)

编 著: 黄承伟

参加编写人员: 王大军 周 晶 刘 欣 赵清清

译 者: 何天纯 郭 义

责任编辑: 宋博雅

封面设计: 丰饶文化传播有限责任公司

内文制作: 北京紫航文化艺术有限公司

出版发行: 五洲传播出版社

社 址: 北京市北三环中路 31 号生产力大楼 B 座 7 层

邮 编: 100088

网 址: <http://www.cicc.org.cn>

电 话: 0086-10-82007837 (发行部)

印 刷: 北京光之彩印刷有限公司

开 本: 787 毫米 × 1092 毫米 1/16

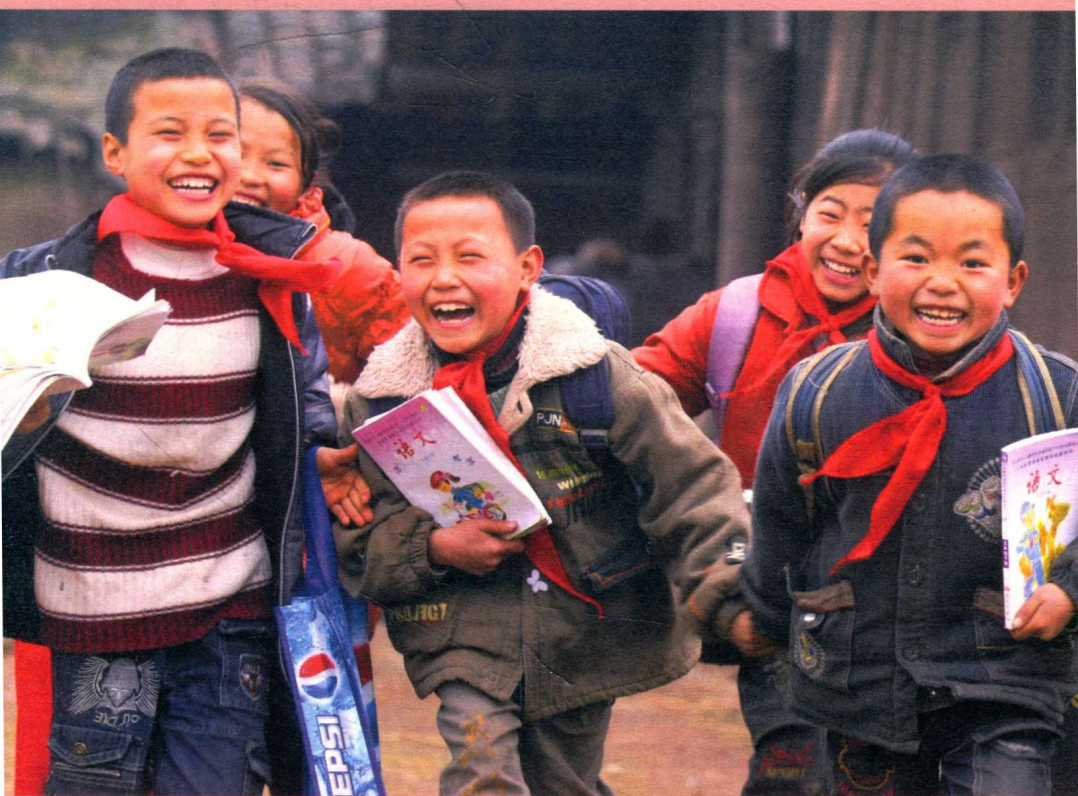
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PREFACE

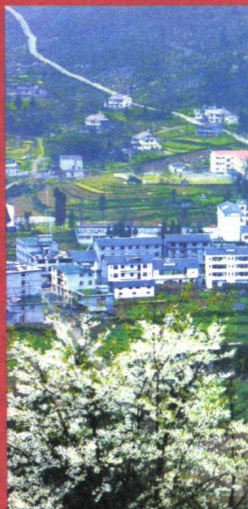
The government-led poverty alleviation efforts in China have fully exhibited the essential features of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and as an important part of China's socialist construction, it is crucial to the fulfillment of the goal of establishing an all-round affluent society. Ever since the reform and opening up policy was implemented in the late 1970s, China has scored remarkable achievements in poverty alleviation. Estimated against the international poverty reduction standard, China's impoverished population has reduced by 660 million, largely solving the problem of food and clothing for its rural population. According to statistics by the World Bank, the impoverished population has dropped by 723 million from 1981 to 2010 worldwide, 94.2% of which has come from China's poverty alleviation drive. Since 2005, there would have been little reduction in the world impoverished population if China were not included. China's poverty alleviation and development has effectively promoted the economic and social development in the impoverished areas, narrowing the regional gaps in development, and improving the production and living conditions of the impoverished people. China has blazed a new trail of poverty alleviation, a tremendous contribution to poverty reduction of mankind.

On the other hand, China is still facing a severe situation of poverty as a result of historical, natural and social factors. The first problem lies in its large impoverished population. According to the poverty reduction standard of a per capita annual net income of 2,300 yuan for farmers (equivalent to US\$1 a day at the constant price of 2010), there are still 82.49 million impoverished people in China's rural areas; calculated against the World Bank's standard of 1.25-US-dollar daily living expense,

there are still over 200 million impoverished people in China's rural areas. The second problem is the high degree of poverty. Not only are the impoverished population suffering from low income, but they are faced with difficulties in getting water supply, traffic, power supply, schooling, medical care and loans, etc. The third problem is the great difficulty in tackling the poverty issue. As China's impoverished population are distributed in the 14 contiguous poverty-stricken areas, 592 key counties and 120,000 poor villages with harsh production and living conditions, recurrent natural disasters and deficient infrastructure, the current volume of investment and support from the government can hardly solve the problem fundamentally. The existent poverty has become the short slab for China's ambition of building an all-round affluent society by 2020. The Chinese Government is now calling on renewed efforts in combating poverty by the Communist Party of China, the whole nation and all social sectors.

In reader-friendly language and a story-telling tone, this book gives a comprehensive and systematic introduction to the main policies, specific practices and major achievements of China's poverty alleviation and development, with chapters devoted to the history, the organizational framework and strategic system, the pooling of resources from different sectors, the all-round poverty alleviation mode with definite foci, the care for special communities, the stimulation of primary driving force, and the elimination of urban poverty. It is hoped that this book can be popular reader for people at home and abroad, especially our international friends, who are interested in China's achievements and experience in poverty alleviation and development as well as the challenges it is facing.

CHAPTER ONE



POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN CHINA



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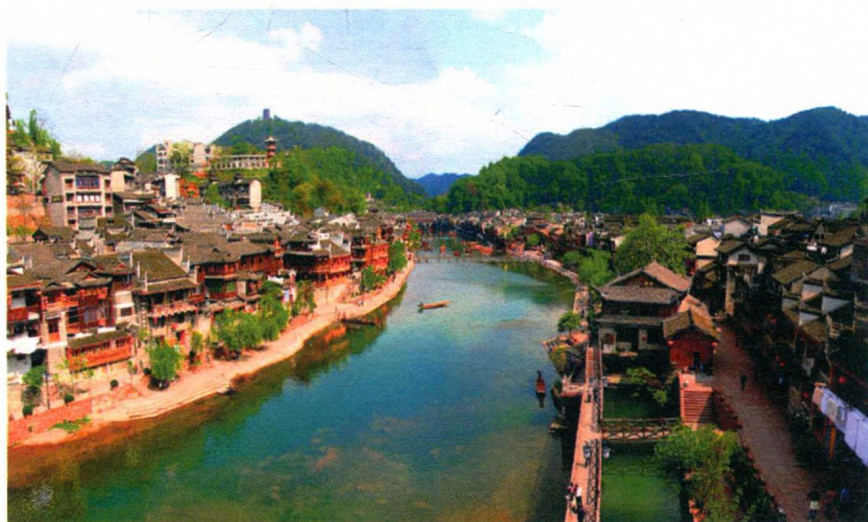


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Poverty alleviation—advancing in explorations

Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture is a mountainous area, which borders the provinces of Hubei and Guizhou and Chongqing Municipality, forming the “Northwest gateway” of Hunan Province. It is also a beautiful and mysterious land where scenic spots like the Southern Great Wall, the Mengdong River, and the ancient town of Fenghuang are located, and home to a host of world famous literary figures and singers. But it is an impoverished land where over 1.5 million people in the rural population lived under the poverty line in the early 1980s. This meant that 84% of its rural population were living in impoverished conditions. Therefore, poverty elimination has been the dream of generations of people living in this area.

The economic reforms in the early 1980s helped reduce rural poverty in Xiangxi Prefecture. The number of impoverished people dropped by an average of 15,000 from 1978 to 1983. By 1993, the



The ancient town of Fenghuang

impoverished rural population in Xiangxi Prefecture was reduced to 900,000, and in 2000 this figure further declined to a mere 230,000 living below the poverty line as a result of the government's Seven-Year Priority Poverty Alleviation Program. However, taking into account 900,000 new additions to the impoverished rural population, the total impoverished rural population now stood at 1.13 million.

Although the decline in the impoverished rural population in Xiangxi Prefecture was impressive with the poverty-stricken population almost halved from over 1.8 million in 1978 to just below 900,000 in 2010—which means almost a million people were lifted out of the vicious cycle of poverty in the past 32 years, the fact is that poverty still remains a serious issue.

Guided by the Central Government's development-oriented approach to poverty alleviation, the local government of Hunan has attached great importance to the elimination of poverty in the Xiangxi Prefecture. These efforts are supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Sinopec, Guangzhou Military Region Command, provincial organs and industries, and the six cities under the direct jurisdiction of Hunan Province. The Kuok Foundation (Hong Kong) built the first long-term pilot project for poverty alleviation on the Chinese mainland in Baojing County, Xiangxi Prefecture aiming at "achieving poverty alleviation and building a well-off and harmonious society". This created a poverty alleviation blueprint which is not only specialized but one that has also integrated the participation of industries and the society.

During the period from 1978 to 1983, when systematic reforms led to poverty alleviation through increasing productivity and improving the basic infrastructure in rural areas in Xiangxi, this was done through the adoption of the household contract responsibility system, reforming the pricing mechanism for agricultural products and the development of township and village enterprises.

As a result of the large-scale development-oriented poverty alleviation efforts from 1984 to 1993, the four pillar industries model was established alongside promoting the large-scale cultivation of ponkans in Xiangxi.



Ponkans grown in Xiangxi



Tea gardens in Xiangxi

During the period from 1994 to 2000, when the government's Seven-Year Priority Poverty Alleviation Program was carried out, Xiangxi Prefecture focused on the implementation of the "Six-Six Poverty Alleviation Program", which aimed to provide 600,000 impoverished rural people in Xiangxi with adequate food and clothes in six years.

From 2001 to 2010, 90 remote and extremely impoverished villages as well as 1,100 key villages were targeted for poverty alleviation. Poverty alleviation efforts were made through the development of industries, infrastructure, ecological energies and labor training.

The rolling mountains of Xiangxi once shunned modern civilization as well as fortunes. To create a path to the outside world, over two hundred Miao people in Shibawan Village in Jishou City, Xiangxi Prefecture had to overcome difficulties, and spend 1,500 days, working for more than 120,000 man-days, using over 11 tons of explosives and 48 drilling steels to construct a road on a massive cliff. The road has since ushered in various business opportunities for the whole village and helped the villagers make a fortune. It is the spirit of hard work and perseverance that made the poverty alleviation efforts in Xiangxi stand out.

In 2011, Xiangxi Prefecture was granted a special fund worth 280 million yuan from the Ministry of Finance, which marked a historical