

EU-CHINA SOCIAL PROTECTION REFORM PROJECT

COMPONENT 3

SOCIAL PROTECTION REFORM PROJECT
PILOT SITE VOLUME



EU-CHINA

Social Protection Reform Project
中国-欧盟社会保障改革项目



**EU-CHINA SOCIAL PROTECTION REFORM PROJECT
COMPONENT 3**

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PILOT SITE
VOLUME**



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Building A Fullink Plaza, No. 18 Chaoyangmen Wai Street, Room 2308,

Chaoyang District, Beijing 100020, China

Tel: (86-10) 8530 6520

Project website: <http://www.euchinasrp.eu/>

This publication has been produced by the EU-China Social Protection Reform Project is co-funded jointly by the European Union and the Government of the People's Republic of China. The content is the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union or Ministry of Civil Affairs, P.R. China.



COMPONENT 3
SOCIAL PROTECTION REFORM PROJECT
PILOT SITE
VOLUME

Beijing, July 2019

Foreword

Component 3 of the EU-China Social Protection Reform Project implemented pilot sites experimentation in the final stage of the Project. The planning (research based), implantation and evaluation of the pilot sites was undertaken in 2018-2019. The research on the potential pilot sites goals and implementing methods was explored by the end of 2017 by Prof. Guan Xiping from Nankai University.

This publication is a form of complete package of reporting on the activities which were performed within Component 3 SPRP pilot sites in the frame of the EU-China Social Protection Reform Project.

The Volume covers all actions undertaken by the stakeholders involved mainly Ministry of Civil Affairs P.R.China, local offices of civil affairs in Da'An City, Jilin Province, Dachuan Dazhou City, Sichuan Province, Xincheng Hohhot City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Zhangjiagang City, Jiangsu Province and scholars affiliated to the Nanjing University Social Security Research Center.

This Volume consists of three main parts. First one provides the base line reports for four pilot sites – Da'An City, Dachuan District, Xincheng District and Zhangjiagang city. The baseline reports were coordinated by Nanjing University and local researchers from the field of social assistance. The main target was to present the status and main challenges of the local social assistance system before implementing the pilot experiments.

The second part refers to the Component 3 SPRP pilot site programmes which were agreed between Ministry of Civil Affairs and the local civil affairs offices responsible for social assistance.

The third part is a compendium of the main outputs of the pilots with special focus on the possible measures to be implemented based on the pilot site experiments as well more comprehensive policy recommendations on social assistance to the attention of policy makers.

The final part (Appendix) is providing the preliminary idea of the Component 3 pilot site implementation filed of interests.

Marzena Breza, PhD
EU resident expert

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CHAPTER 1.
C3 SPRP PILOT SITE - BASELINE REPORTS

**The Evaluation of Social Assistance
in the Comprehensive Reform Experimental Area of Da'an, Jilin**

Baseline Report

Lin Mingang, Jia Yujiao, Huo Xuan, Zhang Juan

July 2018

1. THE BASIC SITUATION OF DA'AN

The Da'an Experimental Area is located in Baicheng, Jilin province, under the jurisdiction of 5 street offices, 10 towns and 8 townships, with the registered residence population of about 430 thousand. There are 160 thousand urban registered people and 270 thousand rural ones. Da'an is a national-level poverty-stricken county. The total amount of public financial expenditure was 4.3 billion yuan in 2017, among which 3.94 billion was spent on people's livelihood, accounting for 92% of all. The per capita disposable income of residents in Da'an was 22 thousand for urban areas and 9.35 thousand for rural areas, respectively.

2. THE SCHEME CONSTRUCTION SITUATION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN DA'AN

2.1 The Minimum Livelihood Guarantee (Dibao)

Till June 2018, the total number of Dibaorecipients in both urban and rural areas in Da'an was 45.36 thousand (a total of 29.4 thousand households). Among them, 12.73 thousand recipients (a total of 8.56 thousand households) were from urban areas, accounting for 8.08% of all the urban registered population. Of all urban Dibao recipients, 13.08% were disabled and 8.35% were those with severe illness. 32.62 thousand recipients (a total of 20.84 thousand households) were from rural areas, making up 7.93% of the rural registered population. Of all rural recipients, 13.26% were disabled and 13.66% were those with severe illness.

The urban Dibao standard now is 480 yuan per month per person, representing 26.95% of per capita disposable income and 45.94% of per capita consumption expenditure of urban residents, with the average amount actually received being 335.05 yuan per month per person. The rural Dibao standard is 300 yuan per month per person, representing 40.33% of per capita disposable income and 49.02% of per capita consumption expenditure of rural residents, with the average amount received being 201.68 yuan per month per person. The rural Dibao standard is now equal to the rural national poverty line. However, the goal of eliminating the difference in social assistance between urban and rural areas in Da'an has not been achieved yet. The dynamic administration mechanism of Dibao standards and Dibao recipients have been basically implemented, and the sources of Dibao funds in Da'an mainly rely on the central government.

2.2 The Relief and Support System for People Living in Dire Poverty

In June 2018, the total number of people living in dire poverty was 1.75 thousand, among whom 122 were in urban areas, with all of them receiving relief and support out of institutions, and 1.63 thousand were in rural areas, with 195 receiving relief and support in institutions and 1433 out of institutions. The standard of relief and support in urban areas were 700 yuan per month per person and that in rural areas were 3520 yuan per year per person. In 2017, the amount of financial investment at various levels for this program in Da'an totalled 6.07 million yuan, with 1.12 million yuan in urban areas and 4.95 million yuan in rural areas. At present, the ratio of people receiving relief and support in institutions among those living in dire poverty with disability is 12.5% and there are 20 institutions in the whole city. In all the institutions, there are altogether 139 full-time staff and among them, 24 have achieved the professional qualification of social work, making up 17.27% of all the staff.

2.3 Medical Assistance

In 2017, governments at various levels invested a total of 10.08 million yuan in medical assistance funds for Da'an and subsidized 43 thousand people to participate in basic medical insurance, a total expenditure of 4.05 million yuan, with 93.37 yuan for each person. 8.85 thousand people received inpatient and outpatient medical assistance and the total expenditure was 9.74 million yuan, and the average standard of inpatient and outpatient assistance was 1.09 thousand yuan and 1.32 thousand yuan respectively.

2.4 Temporary Assistance

The targets of temporary assistance can be divided into family and individual, of which family assistance targets can be further divided into five categories. In 2017, the amount of financial investment at various levels was 5.45 million yuan in Da'an, and the average assistance standard was 1.23 thousand per person. All the targets of temporary assistance were locally registered.

2.5 The Staff of Social Assistance and Administration

Now, there are 402 staff in the township (street office) level of social assistance departments in Da'an, including 122 with junior college diploma or above, accounting for 30.35% of all, 30 people with education background or professional qualification of social work, making up 7.46% of all. That is to say, the professional level of grass-roots social assistance staff needs to be further strengthened. In 2017, Da'an held joint meetings of social assistance 14 times totally.

3. THE POLICIES OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN DA'AN

3.1 The Policy Content of Social Assistance

Since the issuing of the Interim Measures for Social Assistance, Da'an has continuously improved its existing social assistance system and introduced new programs. Through the system construction in recent years, Da'an has achieved a lot in the mechanism of social assistance standard determination and identification of assistance targets, guarantee of key targets, and the establishment of active discovery mechanisms for assistance targets. It has completed the establishment of the social assistance system, providing institutional guarantees for coordinating social assistance resources, giving full play to the effectiveness of social assistance work, and solving various difficulties encountered by people in need properly.

In addition, Da'an has actively carried out social assistance innovations, such as the establishment of the "Severe Illness Relief Fund in Da'an City" and the introduction of the "Temporary Measures for the Implementation of the Five Projects for the Assistance of Urban Destitute Households in Da'an".

3.2 The Administration of Social Assistance

In terms of social assistance administration, through the establishment of the joint conference system, the functions of the joint conference, the responsibilities of member departments and the rules of work have been determined. It has clarified the leading role of the civil affairs department in the construction of the social assistance system, further strengthened the organization and leadership of the basic livelihood guarantee for the needy, and consolidated the coordination and cooperation among various departments.

At the same time, the administration system of "one reception, all to coordinate" is established, and the division of responsibilities of relevant departments of social assistance has been clarified. Through the establishment of the social assistance "one reception" platform in the city and township (street office) level, a "green passage" for helping the needy was opened up.

In terms of social assistance supervision and inspection mechanism, Da'an follows the regulation of various social assistance programs strictly, and continuously strengthens the administrative control mechanism and accountability mechanism in the screening and approval of social assistance eligibility. Removing the barriers of the people's reporting and complaint system and putting all aspects of social assistance under the supervision of the whole society help prevent improper operations such as "cheating Dibao (Pianbao)" and "targetting relationship (GuanxiBao)" effectively.

4. THE EXISTING PROBLEMS AND MAIN CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN DA'AN

4.1 Tied Eligibility for Social Assistance and the Existing Problem of "Cliff Effect"

As Da'an is a national poverty-stricken county, its financial strength is weak, and the financial sources of social assistance are almost entirely dependent on central and provincial financial support, resulting in a relatively narrow coverage of social assistance. Special assistance programs,

such as medical assistance, education assistance, and employment assistance, are still tied to Dibao, and the marginal groups whose income is slightly higher than the Dibao line are excluded from these programs, leading to a “Cliff Effect” between Dibaorecipients and marginal groups.

4.2 The Inaccurate Identification of Social Assistance Targets and the Departmental Boundaries

Da’an has not yet established the household economic status check-up systems, and most of the information can only be checked up at the level of Da’an City. The information of applicants about their vehicles and financial assets cannot be obtained due to the existence of departmental barriers, and it is still in extensive administration in terms of identification and information verification. At the same time, considering the population distribution in Da’an, the focus of social assistance lies in the rural areas. Nowadays, a large number of rural young adults go out to work, which causes separation of registered and actual residences and further increases the difficulty of identifying the assistance targets.

4.3 The Weakness of Social Assistance Capacity and Lack of Local Social Forces

Constrained by its financial capacity, it is difficult for Da’an to fulfill various tasks of social assistance. In terms of government purchase service, although relevant policies have been proposed, the lack of local social forces and limited financial resources have limited the development of social assistance in Da’an, and it is urgently needed to introduce external forces.

Based on the above analysis, the future development direction of social assistance in Da’an should be to increase financial investment to promote the capacity and professional level of social assistance, cultivate social organizations or link external resources to participate in social assistance administration and services, break down departmental barriers as soon as possible, strengthen the top-level design to promote departmental information sharing, change the phenomenon of tied eligibility for social assistance, and explore new measures to identify the targets of social assistance and determine the assistance standards in order to implement classified and stratified assistance.

**The Evaluation of Social Assistance
in the Comprehensive Reform Experimental Area of Dachuan, Sichuan**

Baseline Report

Lin Mingang, Huo Xuan, Zhang Juan, Wang Jieling

June 2018

1. THE BASIC SITUATION OF DACHUAN

Dachuan is a municipal district in Dazhou City, Sichuan Province, under the jurisdiction of 52 towns and 2 street offices, with the registered residence population of about 1.12 million and permanent residence population of about 1.02 million. There are 307 thousand urban registered people and 801 thousand rural ones. The total amount of public budget revenue was 1.31 billion yuan in 2017.

2. THE SCHEME CONSTRUCTION SITUATION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN DACHUAN

2.1 The Minimum Livelihood Guarantee (Dibao)

In May 2018, the total number of Dibao recipients in both urban and rural areas in Dachuan was 78.99 thousand (a total of 46.41 thousand households). Among them, 15.49 thousand recipients (a total of 10.04 thousand households) were from urban areas, accounting for 5.04% of all the urban registered population and 63.50 thousand recipients (a total of 36.37 thousand households) were from rural areas, making up 7.93% of the rural registered population.

The urban Dibao standard now is 520 yuan per month per person, with the average amount actually received being 264 yuan per month per person. The rural Dibao standard is 330 yuan per month per person, with the average amount received being 150 yuan per month per person. That is to say, the goal of eliminating the difference in social assistance between urban and rural areas in Dachuan has not been achieved yet. Meanwhile, the dynamic administration mechanism of Dibao standards and Dibao recipients has not yet been fully implemented, and the sources of Dibao funds in Dachuan mainly rely on the central government.

2.2 The Relief and Support System for People Living in Dire Poverty

In May 2018, the total number of people living in dire poverty was 6.51 thousand, among whom 210 were in urban areas, with 12 receiving relief and support in institutions and 195 out of institutions, and 6301 were in rural areas, with 636 receiving relief and support in institutions and 5665 out of institutions. The ratio of people receiving relief and support in institutions among those living in dire poverty with disability was 10%.

2.3 Temporary Assistance

The objects of temporary assistance can be divided into three categories. The standards of assistance for these three categories are different, determined by the situation of the beneficiaries. Specifically, the standard of assistance for these three types is 300 yuan per household each time, 300-800 yuan (800 yuan) per household each time and 800-1500 yuan (including 1500 yuan) per household each time, respectively. Temporary assistance for each household can only be obtained once a year.

3. THE POLICIES AND INNOVATION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN DACHUAN

3.1 The Policy Content and Innovation of Social Assistance

In recent years, Dachuan has continuously enriched the content of social assistance policies. Based on the continuous improvement of the traditional Dibao system and relief and support for people in dire poverty, various special assistance programs have been introduced, and classified assistance scheme has been explored.

Among them, the ten livelihood assistance programs introduced in Dachuan are the most representative. These ten programs include fire disaster relief, natural disaster relief, family compensation for the death of a person due to a disaster, special disease assistance, the assistance for vagrants and beggars, assistance for the key entitled groups, old-age subsidy, special assistance

for the disabled, assistance for the poor psychopaths and temporary livelihood assistance. Different programs have different targets and different assistance standards have been defined according to their targets.

3.2 The Administration and Innovation of Social Assistance

Dachuan has made breakthroughs in the administration of social assistance, and attempts to achieve the goals of "active service" and "targeted assistance." The most obvious innovation, taking the "Internet+ Social Assistance" as a breach, is reflected in the establishment of the "the Big Platform of Social Assistance". The platform has strengthened the overall planning of resources for social assistance, simplified and optimized the social assistance process, and is considered as the bright spot of social assistance in Dachuan.

The administration of Social Assistance in Dachuan has several important characteristics. First, in the overall planning of social assistance resources, Dachuan has set up a system of departmental joint conferences. Under the premise of ensuring the conditions, the standard, and the main part of assistance unchanged, the civil affairs bureau takes the lead to integrate all 12 district-level departments and 40 assistance items into the "Centre of Benefiting and Aiding the People", and the center would help organize and classify different types of assistance items through the platform. In order to further improve the accuracy of recognition of qualifications for various social assistance programs, the Center has also established a verification office and included 27 departments that check the household economic status. All departments set up a service window in the Center and would allocate personnel to the center. The necessary information about social assistance reported by townships (street offices) would be assigned to relevant departments for examination and approval in a timely manner, and the linkages between various departments will be strengthened. Second, in terms of optimizing the social assistance process, all the items about social assistance are accepted by the townships (street offices), and all the township (street office) government affairs halls have a one-stop reception window for social assistance. Applicants only need to go once, that is, submit applications to the reception window and provide the residence booklet and ID card to complete the application, and the information verification and approval are completed by various departments on the a network of the big platform. The applicant can check the progress of the approval through WeChat and website, which helps save manpower, financial resources and time. Thirdly, in the supervision of social assistance, in order to increase the transparency of the work, Dachuan provide long-term publicity on the website and WeChat for all assistance procedures and results. The applicants can enter their ID number for real-time inquiries. At the same time, all the procedures of social assistance administration are supervised by the Disciplinary Commission. Each step of the work responsibility of social assistance administration is assigned to the each person. After the publicity, once the situation of public tip-offs arises, the relevant person will be investigated.

4. THE EXISTING PROBLEMS AND THE DIRECTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN DACHUAN

The main problems in Dachuan social assistance are: a gap between the Dibao standards in urban and rural areas and lack of scientific basis for the definition of assistance standards; the lack of participation of social forces and the single means of social assistance; the departmental boundaries and the household economic status check-up systems having not been fully established; the narrow coverage of social assistance, excluding those confronting with extreme difficulties like serious illness but whose income is above the assistance standard. Therefore, the direction of development of social assistance in Dachuan should be to: speed up the overall planning of urban and rural areas; promote the professional level of social assistance through introducing social forces to participate and diversify the means of assistance; break down departmental boundaries as soon as

possible and explore ways to share information across departments and change the ways of "request verification" to "real-time verification"; continue to expand the coverage of social assistance.

**The Evaluation of Social Assistance
in the Comprehensive Reform Experimental Area of Xincheng, Inner Mongolia**

Baseline Report

Lin Mingang, Bai Weijun, Wang Xiaodong, Jin Yuxi, Yang Shuang, Wang Kai

June 2018

1. THE BASIC SITUATION OF XINCHENG

The Xincheng Experimental Area is located in Hohhot, under the jurisdiction of 1 town and 8 districts. By June 2018, the registration population of the Xincheng Experimental Area was 580,000. The Xincheng Experimental Area is a Manchu community, meanwhile being inhabited by other ethnic minorities, such as Hui nationality and Mongolia nationality.

2. BASIC SITUATION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN XINCHENG

2.1 The Minimum Livelihood Guarantee (Dibao)

As of June 2018, there are 1,918 people and 3,069 households included in minimum livelihood guarantee system in the Xincheng Experimental Area. Among them, the urban population is 2,336 people (1,499 households) and the fund is 15,410,000 yuan; the rural recipients is 419 (828 households) and the fund is 4,240,000 yuan, respectively.

In June 2018, the urban minimum living standard was 670 yuan per month per capita, with the average amount actually received 518 yuan per month per capita, which accounted for 16.47% of the per capita disposable income of urban residents and 22.09% of the per capita consumption expenditure. The rural minimum living standard was 468 yuan per month per capita, with the average amount actually received 365 yuan per month per capita, which accounted for 29.63% of the per capita disposable income of urban residents and 32.16% of the per capita consumption expenditure. From the perspective of minimum living standards, the integration of urban and rural areas has been realized. Judging from the financial expenditure, the rural minimum living mainly burdened by local finances.

2.2 The Relief and Support System for People Living in Dire Poverty

Judging from the support of special hardship people, Xincheng supports 91 poverty-stricken people, of whom 48 for centralized support and 33 for scattered support. In 2017, the basic living standard for urban destitute people is 1400 yuan/month, and the basic living standard for rural poverty-stricken people is 8496 yuan/year. From the perspective of financial funding, the figure is 1,294,000 yuan, in which the account of urban and rural is 980,800 yuan and 613,200 yuan respectively. The disabled and semi-disabled people in Xincheng are 36.0% centralized supported. There are 1 support service organization Xincheng and they have a total of 8 full-time staff members, of whom 1 have obtained professional qualifications for social work.

2.3 Temporary Assistance

The targets of temporary assistance in Xincheng can be divided into two categories, which is individual temporary assistance and family temporary assistance. As of June 2018, Xincheng temporarily rescued a total of 7 people with local registration, the financial funding is 316,600 yuan and the average standard of assistance for these two types is 3231 yuan per capita.

3. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY AND INNOVATION IN XINCHENG

3.1 The social assistance mechanism

In recent years, Xincheng has continuously enriched the content of social assistance policies. Based on sufficient effort on social assistance, Xincheng has established the social assistance system. In the optimization of social assistance resources and conference mechanism, the traditional Dibao system and relief and support for people in dire poverty, various special assistance programs have been introduced, and classified assistance scheme has been explored.

In addition, Xincheng implemented a lot of innovations. For instance, Xincheng established Special rescue funds for people with severe mental disorders. This special rescue fund is supported by District Government and used for narrowing the gap between medicine payment after medical assistance.

3.2 The Administration and Innovation of Social Assistance

In the perspective of working progress, Xincheng laid out administrative execution regularity document. During grassroots basic work, the staff frequently receive complaint about lack of correct administrative procedures and accurate documents. In order to standardize working process and inspire the office staff, Xincheng set up administrative execution regularity document, which includes three policy targets. The first is to standardize procedures and instruments, including clarifying 3 notifications and acceptances, setting up 8 verification acceptance links, determining 4 approval links, setting up 3 dynamic management links and standardizing 6 daily regulatory links, which to ensure that every key link has a standardized legal instrument and leave evidence for future administrative disputes. It also allows the people who apply for assistance to understand the steps and progress of the procedures and enhance the legal awareness of the staff and the people in need. The second is to make procedure run transparently. Specifically, the document makes the minimum livelihood from the "application-audit-approval" links have written notice and certification materials. It not only guarantees that the subsistence allowance is transparent and fair, but also protects the staff to a certain extent. Avoid litigation and accountability for staff due to incomplete procedures, incomplete documents, and lack of key materials. The third is to achieve through information technology, simplify procedures and facilitate the masses. Through the social assistance law enforcement platform, the data in the subsistence system is fully imported, and the functions of household survey, location navigation, camera recording, scanning, and data uploading are added. The platform integrates households, inquiries and management, and realizes the electronic operation of all five key links in the instrument, greatly improving the efficiency and accuracy of the subsistence work, and reducing the burden on the staff while facilitating the difficult people.

4. MAIN PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN XINCHENG

Although Xincheng has achieved a lot in social assistance and played a vital role in guaranteeing people's livelihood, overall, there are still major problems and challenges, which should be the direction of the next step of innovation and improvement.

4.1 Temporary Assistance threshold

The application threshold for the temporary assistance policy in Xincheng is relatively high, resulting in a narrow scope of assistance for the temporary assistance policy. Secondly, in the identification of temporary assistance targets, there are some difficulties in identifying information such as ambiguous information and incomplete information, and the framework for identifying temporary assistance policies is more stringent. Although Xincheng has launched an emergency rescue procedure for families in need, the grassroots workers have a lack of flexibility, which has led to a narrower range of temporary assistance. Overall, there are more applications and less assistance.

4.2 Information boundaries

Although the Xincheng has established an inter-departmental family economic information system, the information is mainly reported by the municipal reconciliation center. The specific operation departments such as towns and streets lack timely data information and coordinated working mechanisms, resulting in low efficiency at the grassroots level. Taking "one-in-one acceptance" as an example, in the daily grassroots work, since the grassroots information has not yet been opened, "one-in-one acceptance" is only used as a daily working mechanism and has not yet played its role. In addition, civil affairs departments are unlikely to play a leading role in cross-sector cooperation.

4.3 The gap between aging workforce and high requirements of informational office

From the perspective of the civil service staff structure, 60% of the grassroots staff in Xincheng have participated in the work for more than 30 years and accumulated rich experience in civil affairs. However, it is difficult to adapt to the requirements of informational no papers office, which

leads to inefficiency in grassroots work. In addition, the pressure on the grassroots staff is high, which makes the difficulty of social assistance work more difficult.

4.4 Insufficient matching of work expenses

The funds for social assistance work in Xincheng are only matched by the district-level finance. In 2017, the working expenses are 60,000 yuan, making it difficult to carry out innovative work, which restricts the reform and development of social assistance policies.

Based on this, the development direction of social assistance work in Xincheng should be to increase financial input to promote social assistance and professional level, and to open up grassroots information barriers and achieve information sharing methods and measures through top-level design, and to open up cross-sector information. Interoperability mechanism and collaborative working mechanism, play the role of civil affairs leadership, the following social assistance work approval authority, reform special assistance, through the exploration of new assistance qualification identification methods and social assistance standard determination mechanism to achieve classification and stratification assistance.

**The Evaluation of Social Assistance
in the Comprehensive Reform Experimental Area of Zhangjiagang, Jiangsu**

Baseline Report

*Lin Mingang, Jin Yuxi, Yang Shuang, Wang Kai
June 2018*

1. THE BASIC SITUATION OF ZHANGJIAGANG

The Zhangjiagang Experimental Area is located in Suzhou, under the jurisdiction of 8 towns and 2 districts. The total GDP and public budget revenue of Zhangjiagang maintains the top 3 in county-level cities of Jiangsu. In 2017, its GDP was 259 billion yuan, the public budget revenue achieved 21 billion yuan and its urbanization rate reached 68.13%. The per capita disposable income of residents in Zhangjiagang ran up to 48,800 yuan. By June 2018, the urban household registration population of the Zhangjiagang Experimental Area was 704,000, the urban permanent population was 856,900; the household registration population in rural area was 225,000, and the rural permanent population was 400,900.

2. BASIC SITUATION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN ZHANGJIAGANG

Since 1998, Zhangjiagang has gradually established a social assistance system, which sets Dibao, subsistence security system, as the core and is supplemented by various special systems. Zhangjiagang has ensured the orderly advancement of various tasks in social assistance by raising standards and expanding coverage.

2.1 The Minimum Livelihood Guarantee (Dibao)

As of June 2018, there are 4139 people and 2758 households included in minimum livelihood guarantee system in the Zhangjiagang Experimental Area. Among them, the urban population is 1,020 people, 674 households; and 3,119 rural residents, 2,084 households in rural areas, accounting for 0.12% and 0.78% of the urban and rural permanent residents respectively.

In June 2018, the urban and rural minimum living standard was both 875 yuan per month, which accounted for 17.74% of the per capita disposable income of urban residents and 31.5% of the per capita consumption expenditure. The per capita urban minimum living allowance was 780 yuan per month, and the rural 770 yuan per month. From the perspective of minimum living standards, the integration of urban and rural areas has been realized. Judging from the financial expenditure, it is mainly burdened by local finances.

2.2 The Relief and Support System for People Living in Dire Poverty

Judging from the support of special hardship people, Zhangjiagang supports 438 poverty-stricken people, of whom 420 for centralized support and 18 for scattered support. In 2017, the basic living standard for urban destitute people is 1225 yuan/month, and the basic living standard for rural poverty-stricken people is 1225 yuan/year. The disabled and semi-disabled people in Zhangjiagang are 100% centralized supported. There are 8 support service organizations in Zhangjiagang and they have a total of 187 full-time staff members, of whom 8 have obtained professional qualifications for social work.

2.3 Temporary Assistance

In August 2016, the temporary assistance policy for original household residents and new citizens was integrated. Since 2017, Zhangjiagang has issued a temporary assistance fund of 1.28 million yuan allocated to 2430 people with various difficulties, including 33 new citizens and 125,800 yuan for them. As of May 2018, Zhangjiagang temporarily rescued a total of 53 times. In 2017, the funds for temporary assistance of fiscal expenditures at various levels were 2.14 million yuan, and the average level of assistance per capita was 1575 yuan, and it also helps non-local registration householders for 37 times.

3. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY AND INNOVATION IN ZHANGJIAGANG

3.1 The social assistance mechanism

In the optimization of social assistance resources, a joint conference mechanism for social assistance has been established. The conference is held twice a year to coordinate the social

assistance resources, organize and coordinate work, and coordinate the relevant policies of social assistance and poverty alleviation.

In terms of optimizing the social assistance process, Zhangjiagang have established a mechanism of "one reception, all to coordinate" and "emergency assistance". First, the "one reception, all to coordinate" working mechanism aims to optimize the social assistance bid process. The town/district shall establish a "one-door" service window for social assistance; special persons shall be responsible for accepting and transferring work. Each village/community shall set up a "one reception" service point for social assistance, responsible for the application of families with difficulties in applying, consultation, visit and verification work of social assistance. Second, the linkage of the "emergency assistance" work mechanism has three parts. First step is the active discovery mechanisms. The assessment and support team is composed of village/community relief staff, social workers and volunteers, to conduct regular household assessment for high-risk families. Next, establish a fast response mechanism. In the village/community, the telephone number of the Civil Affairs Bureau's Rescue Division and the "12345" convenient service hotline have been released for a long time. And last, all work needs a stable workforce.

In the aspect of innovating the supervision and inspection for social assistance, Zhangjiagang established a verification mechanism for the economic status of the families that apply for assistance. In 2013, Zhangjiagang took the lead in setting up the household economic status verification center in Suzhou. At present, the verification system in Zhangjiagang has been able to compare the information on the applicants' economic status with the public security, human society, housing management, provident fund, state tax and other departments; it has also completed the docking with Suzhou verification system and realized the data and financial assets in the scope of Suzhou. By the end of 2017, the center has verified applications from 47,000 households and 85,000 people for various types of assistance and detected 2146 households that were not eligible, with a detection rate of 4.57%, ensuring financial funds really benefit poor families.

3.2 Social forces participate in social assistance

Zhangjiagang encourages social forces to participate in social assistance, which not only expands the content and the targets of service, but also forms the three-party verification mechanism of social assistance through the way of the government's purchase of services.

First, content innovation and object expansion. Zhangjiagang has enriched its service content through innovative social work projects, venture capital public welfare projects and venture capital charity projects, such as the trusteeship for children, special needed family empowerment, new citizen growth plan, and so on. The service targets gradually extend from the families under the minimum living standard to the dying, single mothers and the minority ethnic groups.

Second, establish a three-party verification mechanism for social assistance. Since 2016, Zhangjiagang has carried out the three-party verification mechanism for social assistance. It entrusts professional institutions of social work to carry out annual verification work and mean tests for new applicants from a third party, which ensure the authenticity and effectiveness of the verification results and avoid the illegal issues. First of all, commissioned to implement social assistance year review and check work. Third-party organizations annually conduct a comprehensive verification on family conditions from 30% families who are assisted and supported by the government, including the demographic structure, causes of poverty, ability and intention of employment, housing, medical care, and children' education, and a overall check on the management of social assistance funds in the aspect of distribution, account information, village-level publicity and archives. And next, Zhangjiagang has commissioned to carry out inspections of new aid targets. Since October 1, 2016, the monthly household surveys of newly added into Dibao and critically-impaired targets were also submitted to third-party agencies for implementation. Finally, it commissioned the operation of social assistance and care platform. Zhangjiagang has established a

platform for social assistance and care, using the Internet to integrate government and social resources, which guides the extensive participation of social forces to achieve diversification of the assistance entity, the enrichment of assistance, and the efficiency of the assistance process.

To sum up, the social assistance in Zhangjiagang has formed a relatively complete system of social assistance policy, which has the characteristics of a sound information base, a complete policy system, and a unified and resource-efficient approach.

4. MAIN PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN ZHANGJIAGANG

4.1 Verification lack of timeliness

In 2012, Zhangjiagang City took the lead in completing the verification work within the scope of Suzhou. However, there is still a gap between the effectiveness of the verification system and the accuracy of social assistance requirements at present.

4.2 Insufficient work force at the grass-roots level

Due to the wide range and large workload of civil affairs, it is difficult to work at the grassroots level; and because of the high work pressure and poor treatment, the number of staff working at the grassroots level is insufficient and their mobility is strong. For example, Zhangjiagang only has full-time civil affairs staff in Waicun (a community) of Jinfeng Town, while the other townships have no civil affairs commissioners and full-time social assistance staff.

CHAPTER 2.

C3 SPRP PILOT SITES PROGRAMES

Rural Comprehensive Reforms - “Assistance On-Demand”

—Pilot Venue Work Program of Da’an City, Jilin Province

Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Program of Da’an

Lin Mingang, Jia Yujiao, Huo Xuan, Zhang Juan

August 2018

In order to further improve the social assistance system, give full play to the role of social assistance in helping the most in need, explore and advance the systems, policy measures and methods for the innovative development of social assistance, Da'an City has formulated its social assistance comprehensive reform program based on its actual situations, which are stated as follows:

1. GUIDING IDEOLOGY

Thoroughly apply the spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress, take the Chinese characteristic thoughts in the new era of Xi Jinping, adhere to people-centered development thoughts and the basic strategy of improving people's livelihood during development, pursue the goal of building a moderately prosperous society, winning the tough fight of poverty alleviation and improving people's livelihood, act on the specific policy requirements of helping the most in need, building a tightly woven safety net and building the necessary institutions, further deepen system reforms, enhance service modes, make bold explorations and accumulate successful experience in building a social assistance system with scientific and reasonable assistance standards, accurately identified targets, reasonably allocated assistance resources, and standardized and efficient assistance management, and give play to the role of social assistance in helping the most in need and guaranteeing basic livelihood.

2. BASIC PRINCIPLES

2.1 Stick to the principle of combining thought liberation and law-based reforms

Act on the requirements of "making bold explorations and innovations, promoting scientific reform decisions, carrying out more systematic, integrated and coordinated reforms, and making innovation in practice for the reform and opening up" proposed in the report of the 19th CPC National Congress, persist in the integration of theory with practice, draw on as much as possible advanced experience, stick to the combination of administration by law and thought liberation, living up to responsibilities and being first movers, and actively promote social assistance comprehensive reforms to achieve significant results.

2.2 Adhere to the coordination of social assistance and positive incentives

Abide by the thoughts of "adhering to principle that everyone should assume the responsibilities and every poverty-stricken person is entitled to social assistance, hold on to the bottom line, highlight key points, improve the system and guide people's expectations" proposed in the report of the 19th CPC National Congress. On the one hand, pay more attention to people with various difficulties, and make the best effort to address their practical difficulties; on the other hand, act within its capability, do not make unrealistic commitments beyond financial capacity. Encourage the poor people to use labor to improve their financial conditions, strengthen mutual help between families, advocate honesty and trustworthiness of social assistance targets, and promote social equity and justice.

2.3 Stick to the coordination of priorities highlighting and overall arrangement

Act on the general requirement of “comprehensively building a sustainable multi-level social security system featuring universal coverage, overall urban-rural development, clearly defined powers and responsibilities, and moderate security” proposed in the report of the 19th CPC National Congress, highlight the improvement of basic livelihood security system, strengthen the role of social assistance in guaranteeing basic livelihood and helping the most in need, enhance the connection between the basic livelihood security system with special assistance system, social insurance, and poverty alleviation and development policies, and promote the improvement of social security system.

2.4 Stick to the combination of lowering management and quality improvement

Act on the requirements of “strengthening social governance system construction, improving the social governance system that is characterized by party committee leadership, government accountability, social coordination, public participation and law guarantee, and enhancing the socialization, legalization, intellectualization and specialization levels of social governance” and “strengthening community governance system construction, promoting the lowering of social government priority to grassroots levels, giving play to social organizations, and achieving benign interactions among government governance, social adjustment and residents’ self-governance” proposed in the report of the 19th CPC National Congress, focus on promoting the lowering of social assistance management service priorities to villages and towns, enhance township governments’ capacity of providing social assistance management services, straighten out city-level, town-level and village-level management mechanisms, make the people satisfied by bringing convenience for them while ensuring fairness and justice.

3. OVERALL GOALS

Implement the basic livelihood security standards determined based on consumption spending, and improve the mechanism of determining basic livelihood security standards through comprehensive pilot reform programs; set up an index system for comprehensive evaluation of social assistance targets, realize the transformation of social assistance target identification and assistance criteria from “income” to “poverty degree + individual demands”; build a comprehensive social assistance network service platform, progressively realize rational allocation of government resources and directional allocation of social resources; explore to establish the management system of lowering examination and approval authority, and gradually form an efficient and convenient social assistance management pattern equipped with clearly defined powers and responsibilities, professional services, and powerful supervision.

4. KEY TASKS

The subject of social assistance comprehensive reform in Da’an City is “Assistance On-Demand” in rural areas. It mainly includes three key tasks to make this theme on the ground: First, improve the mechanism for determining basic livelihood security standards. The establishment of the basic living security standard mechanism aims to improve the accurate identification of social assistance beneficiaries, which is the basic premise to achieve “Assistance On-Demand”. Second, establish the gradient assistance mode. That is to achieve accurate assistance on the basis of determining the assistance beneficiaries, which is the core essence of realizing “Assistance On-Demand”. Third,

explore the mechanism featuring city-level supervision, town-level approval and village-level examination. By optimizing the social assistance approval process, it provides organizational and platform support for “Assistance “On-Demand””.

4.1 Improve the mechanism for determining basic livelihood security standards

Explore to establish the mechanism of determining basic livelihood security standards on the basis of per capita consumption expenditure that is consistent with per capita disposable income, minimum wage level, and the economic and social development levels and financial guarantee of Da’an City, achieve scientific and reasonable determination of social assistance standards, and promote overall development.

4.1.1 Basic Ideas

Act on the fundamental principle of “Basic Subsistence Expenditure Method”, aim to ensure “basic livelihood protection” and achieve the minimum goal of “Two No Worries and Three Guarantees”, classify the items of “Household Consumption Expenditure” in the category of “People’s Living Standard” listed in *Da’an City Statistical Yearbook* into three groups of “Two No Worries”, “Three Guarantees”, and “Others”, and calculate respective basic livelihood security standards according to relevant data.

4.1.2 Calculation Methods

(a) Among the eight categories of items listed in *Da’an City Statistical Yearbook*, “food” and “clothing” are divided into “Two No Worries” group, “living”, “education, culture and entertainment” and “medical care” into “Three Guarantees” group, and “household items and services”, “transportation and communication” and “other items and services” into “Others” group.

(b) The basic livelihood security standard for “Two No Worries” programs will be calculated by 100% of related data, “Three Guarantees” programs by 20% of related data, and “Others” programs by 10% of related data (subject to that China’s minimal assurance standard accounts for 35% of the mean value of per capita consumption expenditure)

(c) During the poverty alleviation period, the basic livelihood security standards will be no less than China’s existing poverty alleviation standards (data from Jinlin Province). Upon completion of the poverty alleviation period, the basic livelihood security standards shall be as follows: if the basic livelihood security standard is lower than the minimal livelihood guarantee standard of 2020, it shall be subject to the latter; if the basic livelihood security standard is higher than the minimal livelihood guarantee standard of 2020, it shall be subject to the new standard.

4.2 Establish the gradient assistance mode

Define assistance needs based on factors such as poverty degree, health conditions and urgency level according to the pattern of “household-based evaluation and identification and person-based program and standard determination”, and establish a gradient assistance mode by which the system application order will be determined according to the social assistance target identification index

system and institution implementation mechanism based on “poverty degree + individual demands”, and the “poverty urgency level”.

4.2.1 Establish an index system for comprehensive appraisal and quantitative identification of social assistance targets

Build an index system for the comprehensive appraisal of social assistance targets’ family difficulties with property as exclusion criteria and the “Net Income” in the “Income - Expenditure (only illness-related expenditure for the time being)” as the determination condition of income levels while taking into account of “individual demands (family members’ health conditions)” in order to basically satisfy the poor people’ “demands”. People whose income level is below the basic livelihood security standard will be included in the coverage of basic livelihood security system; while those who are not eligible for basic livelihood security will obtain special assistance according to their “individual demands”.

(a) Improve property conditions. Retain the sub-item regulations on property conditions of financial items, land and buildings, vehicle machines and tools and valuable items in existing social assistance policies; reasonably determine financial property conditions, i.e., per capita financial property should be lower than one-year basic livelihood security standard, and ensure aided families have certain ability to defend against risks or get rid of poverty; set property conditions for land and buildings and vehicle machines and tools respectively according to the nature of property uses, restrict consumptive property conditions and relax productive property conditions, ensure rescued families have certain production and operating capacities.

(b) Standardize income conditions. Unify family income accounting items, and calculate family income according to the per capita disposable income items determined by statistics departments; quantify the family income items that cannot be expressed intuitively, establish accounting and evaluation standards for income from the planting industry, cultivation industry, wage income, costs of support or upbringing, etc.; add family members’ health conditions as an additional evaluation item, make the “coefficient of family members’ health conditions”, further calculate quantifiable incomes of the senior, young, sick and disabled (“individual demands”). Ensure fair and equitable accounting of all residents’ family income through accounting items unification, family income quantification and health conditions conversion.

(c) Add expenditure conditions. Directly introduce and set the “out-of-pocket medical expenses within the policy context” as a necessary expenditure item; establish evaluation standards for special needs expenditure of the elderly, young, sick and disabled, and set it as a necessary expenditure item; explore to establish evaluation standards for expenses related to illness, education and housing, and add necessary expenditure items according to social and economic development level. Realize the upgrade of social assistance functions from alleviating absolute poverty to alleviating relative poverty by adding expenditure conditions.

(d) Comprehensively evaluate family properties, income and expenditure to identify target families of social assistance. Any family whose income falls short of expenses (necessary expenses) and that cannot get through difficulties by selling properties is entitled to social assistance, and the government is obliged to provide assistance for them.

4.2.2 Establish a classified and stratified assistance pattern

(a) Clarify assistance responsibilities of families, government and the society. The government is the second assistance provider following families, which is obliged to aid families suffering from financial difficulties. Other social forces, who may, at their own discretion, offer assistance resources, and the government will provide assistance demand information and link services for social resources suppliers.

(b) Clarify the relationship between basic livelihood assistance and special assistance, and their application order. Straighten up the relationship between civil affairs departments and other people's livelihood departments, namely, each department should perform their own responsibilities but their resources are complementary, establish the application order of basic livelihood assistance to special assistance, and build a stratified assistance pattern of "basic livelihood assistance" - "basic livelihood assistance + temporary assistance" - "basic livelihood assistance + temporary assistance + special assistance".

(c) Reasonably calculate the amount of basic livelihood assistance. Provide "Making Up" assistance, i.e., make up the short part between calculated net family income and the basic livelihood security standard, set the minimum assistance amount; provide additional temporary and special assistance for families that cannot get rid of difficulties with full-amount livelihood assistance. For people in great need of assistance such as the elderly, young, sick and disabled, evaluate their family economic conditions, add expenditure items, reduce family's net income, and increase the assistance difference, ensuring that they obtain key protection.

4.3 Explore the mechanism featuring city-level supervision, town-level approval and village-level examination

Da'an Municipal Government will delegate the authority of examining and approving social assistance target families to township people's governments through authorization, and explore and implement the examination and approval management mechanism featuring city-level supervision, town-level approval and village-level examination, thus achieving the goal of delegating approval authority.

4.3.1 Clarify city-level, town-level and village-level management responsibilities

The municipal civil affairs department is responsible for policy and planning formulation, determination and adjustment of basic livelihood security standards, capital management, supervision and inspection, business training, implementation of major assistance projects, letters and visits handling, performance evaluation, information disclosure, electronic archives storage, and information verification.

Town-level civil affairs departments are responsible for policy guidance, business training, information disclosure, letters and visits handling, supervision and inspection, examining and approving social assistance targets (data entry, sending verification requests, households verification, democratic appraisal, joint examination and approval, examination and approval results announcement, certificates granting, release funding), archives management, and dynamic management; village-level sectors are responsible for policy advocacy, information disclosure,

application acceptance, information collection, submitting for verification, households verification, pre-examination appraisal, examination results announcement, real-time monitoring, proactive identification, etc.

4.3.2 Restructure examination and approval processes. Redefine examination and approval processes of social assistance according to the management mechanism featuring township government's approval and village committee's examination, clarify matters, criteria, time limit and other content of each link.

4.3.3 Establish and improve the town-level "One-sector Acceptance" mechanism. Set up comprehensive service windows for social assistance application acceptance at township government's service centers, uniformly handle village-level examination and approval application and poor groups' assistance application matters, and thus achieve the goal of service handling transformation to "Small Windows' Handling and Big Back Offices' Coordination".

4.3.4 Establish and improve the city-level supervision system. In terms of internal supervision, conduct data monitoring (adopt the information system to monitor the number of households and people covered by social assistance, coverage rate, subsidy level, funding release, etc.), business inspection (conduct regular inspection on matters such as archives management, dynamic management, information disclosure, social assistance targets announcement), sampling survey (evaluate accuracy rate of social assistance targets identification), performance appraisal (comprehensively evaluate work stages of each town), and entrust third parties for evaluation. In terms of supervision of departments, timely transfer relevant clues and accept supervision and audit of departments such as discipline inspection and audit departments. In terms of social supervision, ensure government affairs openness and smooth channels of letters and visits, carry out public hearings, and widely solicit opinions and suggestions from all walks of life.

4.3.5 Strengthen civil administration capacity construction at the grass-roots level. Implement the spirit of the *Opinions on Strengthening Civil Administration Capacity Construction at the Grass-roots Level* by Jilin Provincial Committee of the CPC and Jilin People's Government, intensify construction of institutions, personnel and sites, enhance expenditure guarantee and improve information application capacity, and thus form a crowd-pleasing assistance work pattern equipped with sound institutions, sufficient staff, scientific functions, orderly operation, powerful guarantee, and efficient services. (1) Perfect the working mechanism. Set up town-level civil affairs offices and village-level civil affairs workstations. (2) Assign enough staff. Reasonably determine the number of service staff in town-level sectors according to the population size, service radius and other factors; assign staff for administration posts, permanent posts and public service positions by means of internal transfer. Assign one staff for each village-level civil affairs workstation, which should be served by a member of villagers' committee in principle. Where conditions permit, villages may select and recruit from qualified villagers. (3) Strengthen office space construction. At the town level, ensure all service items are accessible at the Convenience Service Hall, optimize service process, improve service quality, and achieve the goal of "one-time solution". At the village level, set special service windows at the Convenience Service Hall, install necessary office facilities such as computers, printers, and file cabinets. Where conditions permit, equip electronic touch screens

and other modern device. (4) Implement working funds. Funds for town-level and village-level civil affairs work will be subject to the municipal finance bureau's overall arrangement based on the area of township jurisdictions, population size, workload, number of villages, transportation costs and other factors. (5) Improve information application capacity. Handle all the procedures at "One-sector Acceptance and Coordinated Handling" service windows, rely on the social assistance comprehensive information platform, and follow the service procedures of "comprehensive acceptance at village-level sectors, classification at city-level and town-level back offices, and unified certificate release at town-level service windows", and thus realize the goal of one-window handling, one-stop service, one-platform sharing and whole-process supervision of efficiency for town-level service matters, and promote cross-sector collaboration in handling assistance matters.

5. IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

5.1 Preparatory phase (July to August 2018)

Investigate and evaluate the construction and implementation of Da'an City's social assistance system, find existing problems, clarify work direction and pilot targets, and generate the evaluation report. On this basis, formulate Da'an City's social assistance comprehensive reform pilot program, and submit the program to the Provincial Civil Affairs Bureau and then to the Ministry of Civil Affairs for approval. Upon approval of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, formulate special pilot programs according to the guiding ideology, basic principles, overall objectives, key tasks, implementation steps and working measures specified in the comprehensive reform pilot program and based on the survey and evaluation outcomes, and submit to the Provincial Civil Affairs Bureau for approval.

5.2 Implementation phase (September 2018 to March 2019)

Carry out delegation authorization, education-based mobilization, policy advocacy, public opinion guidance, and other related work according to the schedule specified by special pilot programs. During the implementation process, evaluate matters such as the pilot work progress, beneficiaries, capital investment, and efficiency and effectiveness of social assistance, and submit the progress and evaluation report to the Provincial Civil Affairs Bureau on a monthly manner.

5.3 Summing-up phase (April to June 2019)

Conduct the comprehensive assessment on the pilot work, generate the final assessment report and submit it to the Provincial Civil Affairs Bureau.

6. WORK PRACTICES

6.1 Strengthen organizational leadership

Set up a leading group for Da'an City's comprehensive pilot reform on rural social assistance, with Mayor Zhao Yanfeng as the leader, the deputy mayor in charge of related work as the deputy head, and leaders of involved departments and township party secretary (chief executive of town government) as members organizing and leading comprehensive reforms. Strengthen departmental interaction and cooperation, offer real time guidance on comprehensive reform practices, and thus

achieve the goal that relevant departments perform respective responsibilities and all the forces in the city cooperate to promote comprehensive reforms.

Under the leading group, Da'an City will also set up: (1) the pilot reform promoting team for “determining social assistance standards”, which will be responsible for promoting the determination of basic livelihood security standards; (2) the pilot reform promoting team for “building a stratified assistance pattern”, which will be responsible for promoting comprehensive evaluation and quantitative identification of social assistance targets, and classified and stratified assistance; (3) the pilot reform promoting team for “delegating the examination and approval authority”, which will be responsible for exploring and implementing the examination and approval management mechanism featuring city-level supervision, town-level approval and village-level examination; (4) the evaluation team, with Feng Guochun, Director of the Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau, as the leader, which will be responsible for evaluating the implementation progress of comprehensive reforms, beneficiaries, capital investment, and efficiency and effectiveness of social assistance, and producing the assessment report; (5) the implementation team, with the deputy mayor Yu Xiaoyang as the leader, which will be responsible for advancing various reforms in a coordinated and timely manner, breaking down departmental barriers, and strengthening comprehensive reform implementation.

6.2 Strengthen overall implementation

Further improve the joint conference system of basic livelihood security for the poor people, and give full play to its coordinating functions of researching, formulating and improving important systems, policies, institutions and mechanisms in connection with poor masses' basic livelihood security work under the leadership of the Municipal Committee and Municipal Government.

6.3 Strict planning and implementation

Act on the principle of “overall planning and separate implementation”, implement the reform tasks such as determining assistance standards, identifying assistance targets, allocating assistance resources, and carrying out management system and mechanism reform step by step, follow up and provide guidance, and strengthen research, to make sure the reform effects are implementable, replicable and propagable, and to obtain mass approval and social satisfaction.

6.4 Strengthen publicity and guidance

Extensively solicit opinions of relevant departments, grass-roots units and the people, actively carry out the publicity and mobilization work, try to obtain social support and crowd's satisfaction, and thus create a favorable atmosphere for comprehensive reforms.

Comprehensive Reforms — “Targeted Social Assistance – Integrated approach”

— Work Program for Dachuan Pilot Area, Dachuan District, Sichuan Province

Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Program of Dachuan

Lin Mingang, Huo Xuan, Zhang Juan, Wang Jieling

August 2018

In order to thoroughly apply the spirits of the 19th CPC National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping's important instructions on Sichuan Province's work and the second Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee of Sichuan Provincial Committee of the CPC, conscientiously implement the *Temporary Schemes of Social Assistance* (State Council Order No. 649), further deepen the comprehensive reform on social assistance system, Dachuan pilot area has worked out the following pilot program focusing on system and mechanism reforms with the protection and improvement of people's livelihood as the main line.

1. GUIDING IDEOLOGY

Implement the important statements in relation to "strengthening the construction of social security system" and "firmly winning the tough fight of poverty alleviation" in the report of the 19th CPC National Congress, adhere to the people-centered development concept, strengthen policies related to targeted identification, on-demand assistance, and targeted poverty alleviation of social assistance targets, stick to the principle of basic supply guarantee, sustainability, emphasis on fairness, and stability enhancement, change work methods, clarify tasks and objectives, build a social assistance mechanism with scientific standards, accurate targets, fair treatment, orderly process. and overall coordination, further consolidate the foundation of social assistance work, firmly win the tough fight of poverty alleviation, and make new contributions to Dachuan District's social harmony and stability.

2. MAIN OBJECTIVES AND WORK MEASURES

2.1 Innovate the methods of social assistance targets identification and examination and approval to achieve targeted poverty alleviation

Firstly, integrate bank sectors' information verification function into the big assistance platform for unified verification in addition to the previous 27 economic information verification departments, to achieve accurate verification of information about the family income, business registration, social insurance, motor vehicles, housing, and bank deposits of social assistance target families. Secondly, develop a new software system for information verification that supports information data sharing between various departments, whose automatic verification function will help resolve the issue of heavy workload of each department's back office manual verification. Thirdly, incorporate the application, information verification, and examination and approval of various assistance matters on the big assistance platform for unified processing. Townships (subdistrict offices) will no longer need to submit paper documents to relevant district-level departments in order to fully realize paperless office. Fourthly, strengthen social assistance publicity, adopt innovative policy advocacy means such as through Weibo and Wechat public accounts in addition to traditional publicity methods, expand publicity forms, enrich publicity contents, and extend the scope of publicity in order to strengthen the openness and publicity to social assistance targets, make assistance-related information available to the public, and accept supervision by the people. Fifthly, standardize examination and approval procedures, achieve unified examination and approval of various

assistance matters on the big assistance platform system, and carry out application-approval separation and traces management.

2.2 Improve the “On-demand Assistance” system to realize universal coverage for the poor people

Further standardize social assistance management, integrate social assistance resources, improve actual effects of social assistance, provide “On-demand Assistance” for the poor people within the jurisdiction in full accordance with the “Ten Livelihood Assistance Systems”, i.e., any resident within the jurisdiction that encounters difficulties and is eligible for any assistance requirements specified in the “Ten Livelihood Assistance Systems” will be granted assistance. This measure will help prevent “bundling assistance” — only low income people are entitled to other assistance. For example, according to the “Fire Victims Assistance System” in the “Ten Livelihood Assistance Systems”, the assistance targets should be families whose houses were burnt due to fire disaster and that have local registered residence (except those owning two or more houses). Their assistance standards are as follows. Firstly, grant temporary living allowances. Each resident staying at home at the time of fire will be granted a one-time living allowance of RMB 500. Secondly, grant housing reconstruction funds. Among those whose houses were completely burnt, key entitled groups, households enjoying the five guarantees, households enjoying the minimum living guarantee and people with medium or above disability will be granted RMB 5,000 per household, and the remaining households will be given RMB 3,000 for each. Families whose houses were not completely burnt will be granted RMB 1,500 for each. In terms of the “Special Diseases Assistance System” in the “Ten Livelihood Assistance Systems”, the assistance targets should be residents with local hukou who have been diagnosed with cancer by medical institutions which are at least Rank Two, Grade A (excluding employees and retired workers of state agencies, enterprises and institutions, or recovered or dead patients), and native patients who have been diagnosed with leukemia and uremia by medical institutions which are at least Grade Three (excluding employees and retired workers of state agencies, enterprises and institutions, or recovered or dead patients). The assistance standards are as follows: Patients with leukemia and uremia will receive one-time annual grant of RMB 10,000 per person, and those with cancer will receive one-time annual grant of RMB 2,000 per person.

2.3 Coordinate assistance resources and carry out integrated assistance

Take full advantage of the big social assistance platform, and incorporate the forty assistance items of twelve assistance departments, namely, Civil Affairs Bureau, Benefit and Assistance Center, Disabled Persons’ Federation, Federation of Trade Unions, Red Cross Society, Health and Family Planning Commission, Science and Education Department, Department of Housing and Construction, Human Resources and Social Security Bureau, Women’s Federation, Youth League Committee, and Ministry of Justice on the big platform for unified implementation. These assistance items are as follows: District Civil Affairs Bureau: urban and rural minimal livelihood guarantee system, severely disabled people’s nursing allowance, urban and rural extremely poor people assistance and support, vagrants and beggars assistance; Benefit and Assistance Center: temporary livelihood assistance due to fire disasters, housing reconstruction assistance due to fire

disasters, housing reconstruction assistance due to natural disasters, temporary livelihood assistance due to natural disasters, consolation money for family members of people died in disasters, special diseases assistance, housing difficulties assistance for key entitled groups, medical assistance for key entitled groups, temporary livelihood assistance for key entitled groups, subsidies for senior citizens, general temporary livelihood assistance, medical assistance for poor mental illness patients; District Disabled Persons' Federation: disabled people's home fostering and nursing subsidies, intensive rehabilitation and fostering assistance, sight rehabilitating assistance for poor cataract patients, livelihood assistance for the disabled, medicine assistance for poor mental patients, hospitalization assistance for poor mental patients, colleges and secondary schools enrollment assistance for poor disabled people (or poor disabled people's children); District Education and Science Department: livelihood assistance for poor resident students at compulsory education stage, national tuition assistance for students from poor families at regular senior secondary schools, tuition waiver for students from poor families at regular senior secondary schools, national tuition assistance for students from poor families at secondary vocational schools, special grants for registered undergraduate students (including higher vocational students), and educational poverty alleviation funds; District Human Resources and Social Security Bureau: public welfare positions recommendation, and social security subsidiaries; District Department of Housing and Construction: lease subsidiaries, and physical distribution; District Federation of Trade Unions: needy workers livelihood assistance, and needy workers medical assistance; District Health and Family Planning Commission: health poverty alleviation fund assistance; District Ministry of Justice: legal assistance; District Red Cross Society: medical (humanitarian) assistance for poor people; District Women's Federation: marriage and family consultation service; District Youth League Committee: adolescents assistance.

Integrate data information of twenty-seven verification departments including the Department of Motor Vehicle, Housing Management Bureau, Commerce Department, Ministry of Public Security, and Social Security Administration on the big platform for accurate verification. The verification responsibilities of the above departments are as follows. District Ministry of Public Security: household registration information verification; Second Brigade directly under the Municipal Traffic Police: vehicle information verification; District Ministry of Transport: vehicles and ships operation information verification; District Finance Office: coordinated verification of information related to deposit, securities and insurance provided by banks, securities institutions, insurance agencies and other financial institutions; District Housing Management Bureau: verification of information related to housing, housing reform and equity transaction; Municipal Housing Provident Fund Management Office: verification of information in relation to public funds payment and loans; District Employment Agency: verification of information about employment, unemployment and unemployment assistance; District Social Insurance Bureau: verification of information about social insurance payment and collection; District Medical Insurance Bureau: verification of medical insurance indemnity information; District Local Taxation Bureau: Verification of local tax registration information; District Bureau of Commerce: verification of individual operation information; District Financial Bureau: verification of information about financial support population; District Forestry Bureau: verification of information in relation to forest right exchange and forest project grants; District Agricultural Bureau: verification of

information in relation to land contract, planting and breeding project grants, and farm machinery subsidies; District Education and Science Department: verification of school attendance information and study assistance information; District Civil Affairs Bureau: verification of information about low-income and extremely poor people assistance and marriage registration; Benefit and Assistance Center: verification of information in relation to the “Ten Livelihood Assistance”; District Disabled Persons' Federation: verification of information about the disabled and assistance of the disabled; District Federation of Trade Unions: verification of information about needy workers' assistance; District Health and Family Planning Commission: verification of information about health poverty alleviation funds assistance; District Women's Federation: verification of information about poor families assistance; District Ministry of Justice: verification of legal assistance information; District Youth League Committee: verification of adolescents assistance information; District Red Cross Society: verification of information about poor people medical (humanitarian) assistance; District Work Committee for Offices Directly under the CCCPC: verification of information about the assistance of needy members of the Communist Party. Besides, endeavor to arrange banks in each district to conduct family deposits verification. When necessary, add relevant departments at all levels outside the district to the list of verification departments with the help of higher authority.

2.4 Introduce social resources to help the needy people

2.4.1 Further expand the sources of assistance funds. In addition to financial capital, further attract social funds such as non-government capitals and social organizations' funds to participate in social assistance work under the leadership of party committee and government domination, to make up the shortage of social assistance funds which used to consist only of financial capital, and to build a social assistance system with internal and external resources complementing with each other.

2.4.2 Link legal cooperated public platforms. Link and take full advantage of legal cooperated platforms with broad public participation (e.g., Qingsongchou, Shuidichou, etc.) on the basis of government assistance, raise social funds to supplement social assistance, and achieve seamless connection between government-led assistance and social supplemental assistance. Implement social forces' assistance for special groups, especially families reversing to poverty because of illness, under the framework of government assistance, to make social assistance an effective supplement to government assistance, and promote the big social assistance platform to create more social effects.

2.4.3 Further enhance joint assistance efforts. The Verification Office will initiate joint assistance program for assistance applicants on the basis of accurate verification to realize maximum assistance benefits, and completely address difficulties faced by the poor people.

2.4.4 Further connect the databases of all verification sectors, achieve sharing and real-time verification of data from the Verification Office and each verification sector, shorten the duration of application and verification for the applicants and service staff, and realize more accurate and efficient services.

3. IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

3.1 Preparatory phase (prior to the end of July 2018)

Carry out basic investigation on assistance work, formulate separate reform implementation schemes, and define reform routes, timetables and task statements.

3.2 Reform promotion phase (July 2018 - March 2019)

Actively and steadily promote the comprehensive pilot reform on social assistance throughout the district, collect and monitor data on a regular basis, strengthen supervision, inspection and evaluation, and strive to make breakthroughs in crucial aspects.

3.3 Summary and evaluation phase (April 2019 - May 2019)

Conduct summative evaluation on the effects of pilot work.

4. ORGANIZATION GUARANTEE

4.1 Strengthen organizational leadership

Establish a leading group and a coordinated promotion mechanism for the comprehensive pilot reform on social assistance of Dachuan District in Dazhou City. The District Financial Bureau will provide expenditure guarantee for the assistance comprehensive reform; the District Civil Affairs Bureau will carefully plan and arrange the assistance work to assure the accomplishment of target reform tasks on time.

4.2 Strengthen examination and evaluation

Urge relevant town (subdistrict office)-level and district-level departments to fulfill respective job responsibilities, thus forming a clear working orientation. Establish a scientific and standardized evaluation system for the comprehensive reform on social assistance, and carry out dynamic evaluation on the pilot work.

4.3 Strengthen publicity and guidance

Give full play to the role of broadcast, television and network media, strengthen publicity of the comprehensive pilot reform on social assistance, and create a thick social atmosphere for the comprehensive pilot reform on national and social assistance.

**Comprehensive Reforms on Social Assistance - “Streamlining Administration, Delegating
More Power, Improving Regulation and Optimizing Services”**

—Pilot Venue Work Program of Xincheng District, Hohhot, Inner Mongolia

Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Program of Xincheng

Lin Mingang, Bai Weijun, Wang Xiaodong, Jin Yuxi, Yang Shuang, Wang Kai

August 2018

1. GUIDING IDEOLOGY

Take the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and the spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress as the guideline, fully implement major decisions and arrangements of the Party Central Committee, the State Council, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Venue and Government on winning the tough fight of poverty alleviation and implementing social assistance, act on the specific policy requirements of helping the most in need, building a tightly woven safety net, and building the necessary institutions, and truly realize the objective of “helping the weak” proposed in the 19th CPC National Congress.

2. REFORM BACKGROUND

Xincheng District is located in the northeast of Hohhot and covers an area of 700 square kilometers. It contains 1 township, 8 subdistrict offices, 24 administrative villages, 53 community committees, and has a total population of 620,000, of whom there are approximately 370,000 registered residents and about 50,000 rural people. Population in this municipal district is composed of 33 nationalities including Manchu, Mongolian, Han and Hui Nationalities, among which Manchu people make the largest portion. It is also where Hohhot’s CPC, government, military are located. As of June 2018, Xincheng District’s urban and rural low-income households and persons that have received social assistance reached 1,888 and 2,987 respectively (down by 922 persons from the same period of 2017). Among them, the number of urban low-income households and persons was 1,489 and 2,293 respectively, and the total released urban assistance funds reached RMB 7,100,000. And the number of rural low-income households and persons was 399 and 694 respectively, and the released funds reached RMB 1,520,000.

Xincheng District boasts unique advantages and characteristics: (1) Since the establishment and implementation of urban subsistence allowance system, it has strictly followed relevant policies, laws and regulations of the state, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Venue and Hohhot on subsistence allowances based on the reality of Xincheng District, and thus worked out a series of standardized and detailed management measures and working process since 2013. Meanwhile, every possible means has been taken to strengthen the weakness, make bold innovations and conduct unprecedented experiments. Consequently, it has achieved remarkable results in key and innovative work, which filled the vacancy of social assistance work in Hohhot and even in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Venue. (2) Low-income persons, especially from rural areas, are quite few in Xincheng District. This is mainly attributable to the fact that 28,000 residents aged above 18 within the district have paid the endowment insurance for land-expropriated persons, among whom most of the seniors aged above 60 that have received endowment insurance benefits are no longer eligible for subsistence allowances, and all the registered poor households have thrown off poverty since 2016. In these cases, the social assistance work is not so stressful in Xincheng. As a result, it can spare time for some fine and exemplary work. (3) With an innovative and formidable civil administration cadres group that is willing and ready to fulfill its responsibilities and has strong executive force, Xincheng District’s grass-roots work is carried out solidly and diligently.

3. REFORM OBJECTIVES

Xincheng District has defined the working thought of “overall implementation after trial work” according to the spirit of comprehensive pilot reforms by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. It will conduct the Five in One comprehensive reform program in the venue, i.e., with standardized construction as the support, information construction as the strength, overcoming the weakness as the breakthrough, establishing diversified assistance methods as the objective, and deep integration of decentralization and supervision as the innovation point.

Specific measure are as follows: (1) make sure that departments at all levels enforce the same and standardized regulations on the basis of standardized, normalized and fine management; (2) take advantage of informatization advantages to fully improve service quality and civil affairs management level based on the improvement on-line paperless examination and approval regulations; (3) gather social forces to participate in social assistance via government’s purchase of services to create diversified assistance methods to meet people’s different assistance demands; (4) raise the proportion of assistance-covered groups and the standard of assistance for low-income people and urgent and difficult matters by adjusting and improving the existing temporary assistance policies to truly realize the goal of classified assistance and “helping the weak”; (5) transform the past two-level examination and approval of basic living allowance and temporary assistance, i.e., at county level and town (subdistrict) level, to one-level examination and approval (at the town (subdistrict) level) based on the policy of “simplifying administration and delegating powers, exercising fair supervision, and improving service efficiency”, and build a reproducible, propagable and summarizable demonstration mode of Xincheng District’s comprehensive reform on social assistance in one year.

4. REFORM IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

The current social assistance has basically fixed and well-established system and quite complete projects. In the face of the new era’s reform demands, it is necessary to build a more tightly woven safety net, make it more convenient for the poor people to apply for social assistance, relieve the pressure on grass-roots staff, and address insufficient service abilities of grass-roots sectors for the social assistance work. After preliminary investigation and evaluation, Xincheng District has worked out the Five in One comprehensive reform direction. Specific implementation steps are as follows:

4.1 Realize the standardized, normalized and fine management of social assistance

On the one hand, Xincheng District lacks a clear identification standard for low-income people, leading to occasional infringement of regulations, thus severely damaging the image of the party and government and harming the interests of poor people. On the other hand, it is not common that assistance departments and their staff are involved in lawsuits and even have to assume liabilities due to incomplete procedures and documents, which hurt the enthusiasm of service staff. Fine management and accurate identification are urgently needed for urban and rural assistance work. After iteratively soliciting opinions from upper and lower levels, it has introduced the *Document on Administrative Enforcement Standardization of Xincheng District's Subsistence Allowances*, which truly realizes law-based administration and standardized, normalized and fine management of social

assistance work. On the basis of above regulations, accurate quantitative identification of low-income people is also imperative.

In 2018, Xincheng District rolled out the *Implementation Plan for Identification of Xincheng District's Lowest Social Security Targets* according to the spirit of municipal departments' documents and based on local reality. Qualification of subsistence allowance receivers will be recognized scientifically by means of person labor force coefficient calculation, on-line comparison of personal property information, village (neighborhood) -level democratic appraisal of low-income families, assistance announcement and other methods. Departments at all levels will consequently enforce the same and standardized regulations for accurate quantitative identification of low-income people according to standardization and normalization documents based on effective integration of standardized construction and accurate identification of low-income groups.

4.2 Improve service quality and civil affairs management level through information construction

Firstly, develop on-line paperless examination and approval software for subsistence allowances, and conduct paperless examination and approval for subsistence allowances and temporary assistance matters on-line according to the *Document on Administrative Enforcement Standardization of Xincheng District's Subsistence Allowances*, which will make sure each examination and approval procedure is carried out justifiably and orderly, greatly improve the efficiency and accuracy of social assistance, bring convenience to the poor people, relieve the pressure on service staff, and fill in the vacancy of informatization service of Xincheng District's social assistance work. Secondly, vigorously carry out social assistance informatization construction on the basis of paperless examination and approval. On the one hand, upgrade daily dynamic management. Service targets will no longer need to go to respective towns (or villages) to register their information within the stipulated time. Instead, the registration can be conducted on mobile APPs remotely. This will bring convenience to people whose registered residence (hukou) is not the same with the actual permanent residence, disabled and half-disabled people, people suffering from mental diseases and other people who are unable to move freely, improve the working efficiency of grass-roots departments, and ensure the safety of funds release. On the other hand, make full use of informatization advantages, change traditional work patterns, and provide unified hand-held working equipment for grass-roots staff to improve the efficiency of daily work such as job scheduling, files sending and dynamic management by means of on-line informatization work and service. In addition, actively explore service modes that suit the people's convenience, and use computer or mobile APP client to realize on-line application and processing of matters related to subsistence allowances and temporary assistance, and on-line consultation of assistance policies, thus truly realizing the goal of "unobstructed information replacing people's busy running errands".

4.3 Introduce social forces to participate in social assistance

To effectively spend the government's rescue funds for poor families "in real need" and to make social assistance available to more people are key issues of current social assistance work as well as difficulties of grass-roots civil affairs work. Xincheng District will gather social forces to participate in social assistance via government's purchase of thirty party services to create diversified

assistance methods to meet people's different assistance demands. Specific measures are as follows. Firstly, conduct concept innovation, and entrust third party service organizations to carry out survey on social assistance target families' income and expenditure. Appoint the Guangyi'an Public Management Service Center that has committed to civil affairs informatization for many years and has a deep understanding of various civil affairs businesses to conduct the survey via the government's open tendering. They have already signed a one-year service contract, the price of which will be subject to actual number of households surveyed and actual expenses. Secondly, adopt technology innovation. Take advantage of the information-based means of Xiaoyu Yilian's new generation of cloud communication platform with world leading 8-meter sound pick-up technology to implement functions such as HD video, evidence exchange and whole process tracing, and establish the remote real-time monitoring system to allow civil affairs staff to supervise the whole process of family survey on mobile clients. Thirdly, carry out service innovation and realize diversified and classified assistance. Classify social assistance target families, and provide daily nursing services and other social supportive service like life care, education, employment, and medical rehabilitation for poor families with the senior, young and disabled, unemployed persons, severely ill and disabled persons and other people with special difficulties according to their differentiated demands and difficulties. Entrusting social organization for family conditions survey will not only remedy the weakness of insufficient grass-roots civil affairs forces, but also meet personalized and diversified demands of social assistance and help build a positive, diversified and accurate assistance service system.

4.4 Adjust and improve the temporary assistance to increase efforts to aid low-income persons and urgent and difficult matter

Raise the proportion of assistance-covered groups and the standard of assistance by appropriately adjusting and relaxing temporary assistance policies according to Xincheng District's social assistance characteristics and current temporary assistance policies, to address the practical problem that some families fall into temporary poverty because of huge fixed family expenditure such as medical care and children's education (i.e., expenditure poverty), and temporary, sudden or catastrophic events despite that their family revenue is above the minimum subsistence level. Gradually set up the urban and rural assistance system framework with subsistence allowances as the center, extremely poor people assistance system and medical assistance as main content, housing assistance, education assistance and heating assistance as supportive measures, and temporary assistance as the main supplement, to truly achieve the goal of classified assistance and "supporting the weak".

4.5 Implement the reform of "streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services"

In order to meet the demands of economic and social development and poor people assistance, solidly forge ahead the innovative and pragmatic construction of modern civil affairs work, further standardize the social assistance operation mechanism, optimize the process of social affairs work, and improve accurate identification of social assistance targets, Xincheng District applies to the District People's Government for setting Baoheshao Town and Xijie Subdistrict Office, Yingxinlu

Subdistrict Office as pilot areas of delegating the examination and approval authority on urban and rural subsistence allowances and temporary assistance, and authorizing town (subdistrict office) - level sectors to exercise the examination and approval authority on urban and rural subsistence allowances and temporary assistance. The delegation of the examination and approval authority on urban and rural subsistence allowances and temporary assistance aims to simplify examination and approval procedures and improve working efficiency. The pilot work will adhere to the principle of “simplifying administration and delegating powers, improving efficiency, following rules and regulations, giving subsidies for the difference, dynamic management, covering every person in need, open operation, and justice and equity”. Meanwhile, it will uphold the concept of “Three Changes and Three No Changes”. “Three Changes” refers to: (i) changing district-level examination and approval to town (subdistrict office)-level examination and approval to achieve efficient separation of subsistence allowance examination and approval authority and supervision functions; (ii) changing town (subdistrict office)-level sole examination and approval to joint examination and approval at town (subdistrict office) level and village (neighborhood) level to achieve open operation of subsistence allowance examination and approval; and (iii) changing district-level funds release to town (subdistrict office)-level funds release. “Three No Changes” refers to (i) maintaining the same service objects and service targets; (ii) adhering to the original policy requirements of providing social assistance according to relevant standards and giving subsidies for the difference; and (ii) sticking to the original principle of regular registration, review and dynamic management.

Comprehensive Reforms on Massive Assistance - “Helping the Weak”

-- Pilot Venue Work Program of Zhangjiagang City, Jiangsu Province

Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Program of Zhangjiagang

Lin Mingang, Jin Yuxi, Yang Shuang, Wang Kai

August 2018

In order to advance the all-round development of the city's social assistance and to implement the pilot program of social assistance comprehensive reforms, according to the *Notice on Pilot Programs of Social Assistance Comprehensive Reforms* by the Department of Social Assistance of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Zhangjiagang City has worked out the following work program based on its actual situations:

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

It is required to act on the general requirement of "Helping the Weak" and specific policy requirements of helping the most in need, building a tightly woven safety net, and building the necessary institutions while following the spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress, and adhere to the principle of combining basic livelihood protection with capability development support, government leadership with social participation, all-inclusive assistance with personalized services, and funding aid with services aid based on Zhangjiagang's economic and social development reality, the design of Social Assistance Scheme, and the practical survival and development demands of the subjects of social assistance. Its aim is to explore the establishment of a new social assistance scheme for Zhangjiagang, to protect the basic rights and interests of assistance recipients, and to improve the whole city's social assistance management level.

2. OBJECTIVES

The goal of implementing social assistance comprehensive pilot reform programs is to enhance the capacity of helping the most in need, further improve the social assistance scheme, perfect work mechanism, and strengthen standardized administration; rely on the cross-sector platform for integrated management of social assistance information to realize coordination of social assistance resources; actively promote social participation in social assistance, and raise assistance recipients' sense of gain; promote new developments in the city's civil administration work in the new era, and achieve new breakthroughs in the massive assistance comprehensive reforms.

3. TASKS

3.1 Improve social assistance scheme construction and intensify special assistance efforts

3.1.1 Implement the basic livelihood security system

Establish the "9+1" modern social assistance framework, and improve the basic livelihood security system covering all the poor families that provides urban and rural subsistence allowances plus additional temporary assistance for extremely poor people, seriously ill groups with meager or no medical provident funds, orphans, severely disabled people and people with special disabilities. Make sure no less than 8% annual growth of urban and rural subsistence allowances, implement the linkage mechanism between subsidy standards for extremely poor people, seriously ill groups with meager or no medical provident funds, severely disabled people and people with special disabilities, and the minimal assurance standard, and implement the mechanism of accruing orphans' basic livelihood standards.

3.1.2 Set up the new residents' assistance system

Firstly, set up new residents' comprehensive information platform, enhance new residents' information collection system, and thus fully grasp new residents' important information such as social relations, rental households, migrant population, etc.; assign full-time coordinators and information officers to perform thorough investigation, registration and dynamic updating on information in relation to new residents, ensuring a rapid response to new residents' "urgent, difficult and dangerous" incidents. Secondly, set up policy mechanisms of new residents' extreme poverty assistance, accident insurance and disaster compensation. Include non-native permanent residents who have stayed in the city for over six months in the coverage of temporary assistance; purchase accident insurance for new residents aged 16-60 who work in the city and hold residency cards for over one year. Provide a fixed amount of capital allowances for new residents whose native places suffer from major natural disasters; implement the "Welfare Lottery Staying with You" assistance program, and provide financial aids for new residents who fall into poverty because of illnesses or are in urgent need of assistance due to accidents. Thirdly, launch new residents' award point system. Children of eligible new residents with sufficient award points will be entitled to the same and equal treatment and services with native residents in participation of residents' basic medical insurance system, enrollment in public schools and transfer of household registration to the city.

3.1.3 Actively expand the scope of special assistance

Set up low-income group's information database, and include relatively poor low-income people in the coverage of policies relating to livelihood, health care, education, housing, etc. Formulate implementation opinions on the livelihood of families suffering from poverty due to illness, and provide a subsidy of the full amount of or the difference with subsistence allowance standard based on each family's total medical expenses and disposable income. Provide special medical assistance for low-income people, and any shortage in the difference between rescued people's obtained compensation for critical illness and 75% of their out-of-pocket expenses will be additionally granted. The duration of social and medical assistance for some people falling into poverty due to illness or disabilities will be extended appropriately. The duration of assistance for people with special financial difficulties such as low-income population, people with meager or no medical provident funds and extremely poor people who are accepting chemoradiotherapy of malignant tumors (leukemia), anti-rejection treatment after organ transplantation, severe uremia dialysis, etc., but are no longer eligible for previous medical assistance due to added income. Students from low-income families will be granted 50% of the financial aid standards applicable to students from families receiving subsistence allowance. Low-income families eligible for financial aid requirements of the "Housing Project for Low-income Families" will be entitled to the same subsidiary policies applicable to minimal assurance families.

3.2 Optimize social assistance process and strengthen the construction of social assistance capacity

3.2.1 Rely on social assistance service centers to improve the social assistance working mechanism of "One-sector Acceptance". Play the active role of party construction leadership, connect the CPC

and the public with service windows, create the party construction brand of “Sunshine E-assistance”, and deeply integrate the establishment of party construction brands and business optimization. Meanwhile, set up sector-wide on-line service windows covering all communities, break up horizontal and vertical barriers with departments and towns respectively, achieve on-line and off-line integration for assistance application acceptance, separate handling and transferring handling, make sure that people asking for help receive timely assistance, and further improve service efficiency.

3.2.2 Build the social assistance management platform to improve the efficiency of social assistance. Build Zhangjiagang Social Assistance Management Platform which is connected to systems of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and National Health and Family Planning Commission and other departments and covers all of its towns and villages (communities), thus forming a unified massive assistance information system throughout the whole city. Establish a cross-sector information sharing mechanism to resolutely put an end to repeated rescue and missing rescue, and to maximize the social benefits of social assistance work.

3.3 Arrange a list of people in need of social assistance and intensify efforts to develop the “Four Mechanisms”

3.3.1 Establish the working mechanism for social forces’ participation in social assistance

Firstly, improve the mechanisms and channels for social forces’ participation in social assistance, and take the initiative to provide information relating to social assistance programs and demands, thus creating conditions and convenience for social forces’ participation in social assistance. Enhance communication with trade unions, Communist Youth League, Women’s Federation, Disabled Persons’ Federation, Red Cross, Charity Federation and other related organizations, and coordinate the work of proving aid and assistance to the city’s poverty-stricken families. Request city-level, town-level and village-level charitable organizations to customize charitable assistance programs and other assistance programs for specific groups, and mobilize and guide influential social organizations and settled large and medium-sized enterprises to launch assistance projects.

Secondly, set up a long-term working mechanism for social workers to participate in social assistance. Carry out social assistance caring and rescue programs in the aspect of spiritual assistance, cultural needs, technical capacity, etc. of the poor people through the pattern of government support plus social operation. The Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau will set up special funds to entrust professional social organizations to implement the city’s social assistance programs in the form of purchasing services. Special funds for city-level and town-level rescue programs will be invested at a proportion of 3:7 for the implementation of the target tasks and programs planned at the beginning of year. Set up the city-level poor people’ basic information database, evaluate the subjects of social assistance from perspectives of their personal development, children’s demands and social support, and collate and enter the assessment information in the database. Then determine appropriate assistance programs for the poor people after the backend system sorts through incoming persons’ information. All towns (districts) will design their own special caring and rescue programs based on local conditions. Entrusted social organizations will be responsible for the declaration, review, guidance and supervision of the city’s assistance programs, and will

designate assessment agencies to conduct process and effectiveness evaluation on the implementation of assistance programs.

Thirdly, guide village-level forces to participate in social assistance. Encourage villages (communities) to provide medical assistance to seriously ill patients under their respective jurisdiction by introducing commercial insurance, carrying out village-level mutual medical assistance, and providing multiple supports. Standardize the management of village-level charitable organizations to attract more philanthropic people and enterprises under villages' jurisdiction to join assistance teams; guide village-level forces to implement critical illness insurance by various means, which will be operated professionally in the form of commercial insurance, and focus on enhancing the sense of gain of families of seriously ill patients; guide eligible villages to set up village-level mutual medical funds with contributions from village collectives, villagers and philanthropic enterprises, and entrust third party platforms to manage these funds, and thus establish a new assistance model featuring "One Policy for One Village", diseases-specific assistance and mutual sharing and assistance.

3.3.2 Establish the tracking management mechanism for various poverty-stricken groups

Establish and improve the "One Household - One File - One Policy" mechanism, expand its service scope to cover all poverty-stricken families, work out and implement assistance programs for every poor person and family based on respective situations. Firstly, update poor population's basic data in real time on a monthly basis on the dynamic management principle of "adding those who are in real need of help" and "deleting those who no longer need social assistance" to improve data's use efficiency. Secondly, make sure all relevant sectors effectively cooperate with vertically-managed units. Define the responsibilities of social assistance administrative departments, towns and villages, ensure the subjects of social assistance receive accurate and efficient social assistance and service, and provide the most timely and efficient assistance and service for rescue applicants. Thirdly, make sure that the assistance system's extension websites, APPs and public accounts are effectively connected to the public to realize the integration of on-line and off-line application, acceptance and approval. Thirdly, set up the poor people's serious illness warning mechanism, conduct targeted tracking of specific diseases and medical expenses through linkage of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, Health and Family Planning Commission and Ministry of Civil Affairs, and take the initiative to provide assistance.

3.3.3 Establish the mechanism for comprehensive utilization and integration of various resources

Rely on social assistance service centers to achieve deep integration of the "One-sector Acceptance" mechanism and assistance resources coordination. Firstly, integrate resources within the social assistance system. To be specific, exchange the assistance data of assistance administrative departments such as civil affairs department, education department, ministry of human resources and social security, health and family planning commission and housing management department, achieve longitudinal (city, town and village levels) communication on the social assistance management platform, form the "query—import—registration—sending orders—feedback" social assistance working chain, work hard to provide assistance for individuals in urgent needs, and provide combined assistance. Secondly, integrate social resources. Entrust professional

agencies to assist target groups to address or alleviate their life and development difficulties such as “living environment problems, family relationship problems, personal psychological problems, employment issues and personal development issues” according to the caring and rescue programs, emphasize combination of financial aid and “ambition and education improvement”, encourage rescued crowd to reduce dependence on welfare and raise their positive energy, guide poverty-stricken people to establish subject consciousness, and inspire them to participate in, integrate into and pay back to the society.

3.3.4 Establish the supervision and management mechanism of social assistance

(a) Improve the joint supervision and inspection mechanism. Further establish and improve the joint conference working mechanism of social assistance, incorporate social assistance supervision and inspection in the scope of important tasks, further clarify each department’s responsibilities and duties, improve service regulations, strengthen coordination and cooperation, and join forces to implement the responsibilities for social assistance supervision and inspection. Departments such as the discipline inspection and supervision department, audit department, civil affairs department and financial department will strengthen day-to-day supervision of social assistance, and conduct collaborative special inspection on issues such as social assistance targets identification, assistance fund release, assistance announcement, and archives management. Any breach of laws and regulations in relation to social assistance will, upon discovery, be transferred to discipline inspection department, public security department, judicial department and relevant departments in a timely manner for investigation and treatment.

(b) Strengthen the day-to-day supervision mechanism. Further enhance the long-term day-to-day social assistance supervision mechanism, strengthen the supervision of social assistance prior to, during and following the assistance work, and promote the normalization of social assistance supervision and management. Set up the social assistance performance evaluation system, introduce relevant performance evaluation methods, scientifically set performance objectives, quantify the evaluation index system, specify evaluating cycle and methods, conduct comprehensive assessment on the implementation process and effects of social assistance system via organizing specialized forces or purchasing services, further promote the standardized operation of social assistance work, and improve the overall effectiveness of social assistance system.

(c) Broaden the channels of social assistance supervision. Establish and improve social assistance complaints and report verification system. Firstly, publicize permanent social assistance report and complaints telephone, and make complaints and report channels more smooth through carrying out activities such as “Civil Affairs Department Open Day” and “Livelihood Issues Face to Face”. Secondly, improve the social assistance publicity system. The Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau will compile the publicity requirements for social assistance targets to set unified standards of publicity subjects and contents for all towns (districts) and villages (communities); perfect village (community)-level social assistance bulletin board construction, and strengthen supervision; innovate social assistance target publicity channels, and implement the measures of network publicity of social assistance targets. Thirdly, fully implement special personnel accountability and first inquiry accountability systems. Any major letters and visits event in relation to social

assistance or any material breach of laws and regulations that has worse effects on the society will be handled under the supervision of specific leaders of the Municipal Government. Fourthly, strengthen public sentiment monitoring and early warning, pay close attention to all kinds of tendentious, emerging and aggregated public opinion information related to social assistance, make careful analysis and judgment, and respond to and handle these issues in a timely manner.

4. GUARANTEE MEASURES

4.1 Strengthen organization guarantee

Further strengthen the joint conference system of social assistance, and undertake the city's social assistance comprehensive pilot reform work in a coordinated manner. Further refine department functions, establish regular consultation mechanisms, and work out reform plans. Further strengthen the responsibilities of village (community)-level grass-roots party organizations, incorporate the performance of grass-roots party organizations' implementation of massive assistance into the annual performance appraisal, take the appraisal results as an important factor of the comprehensive appraisal on the Two Communities (village Party Branch and village committee) at the village level, and carry out "One-vote Veto" for organizations and persons that have made little contribution or no contribution to the social assistance work. Further mobilize social forces to participate in social assistance work, integrate various governmental and social resources, and smooth the channels of social assistance services. Further improve the efficiency of family economic conditions verification, and achieve the goal of "verifying every subject of social assistance and accurately identifying needed groups". Meanwhile, actively disclose social assistance policies and funds employment, accept extensive social supervision, and perform social assistance on the principles of openness, fairness and impartiality.

4.2 Expand system guarantee

Further improve system guarantee, and build an all-round massive social assistance system that integrates basic medical insurance, critical illness insurance, medical assistance, illness-caused poverty assistance, new residents' assistance and social charity.

4.3 Guarantee the workforce for social assistance

Further improve social assistance team construction, and build team guarantee networks at the three levels of city, town and village (community). At the city level: the Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau and Municipal Social Assistance Service Center will assign full-time personnel to coordinate the management, guidance and service of the city's social assistance. At the town level: each town's civil affairs department will assign one full-time social assistance officer to coordinate the massive social assistance work in every jurisdiction. At the village level: each village (community) will assign one civil affair officer to take charge of local social assistance services.

4.4 Clarify capital guarantee

Further clarify fund guarantee for the pilot work. The payment channels of social assistance funds for comprehensive pilot programs will comply with the existing policies and regulations, which will be provided by the Municipal Financial Bureau; staff of the Municipal Social Assistance Service Center and their work funds will be provided by the Municipal Financial Bureau; the special work

funds of social assistance comprehensive pilot reform program will be paid with welfare lottery funds, which will be primarily used to purchase social caring and rescue programs and social assistance performance management and other services.

CHAPTER 3.

Report on the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot of EU-China

Lin Mingang, Huo Xuan, Jin Yuxi
Center for Social Security Research of Nanjing University

May-July 2019

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1 Excutive summary

1.1 Excutive Background

The overall goal of the EU-China Social Protection Reform Project is to deeply promote social equity and share the fruits of economic development in Chinese society. The specific goals of the project are to contribute to the improvement and full coverage of China's social security system by enhancing the ability to formulate policies, strengthening the ability to implement the legal and regulatory framework, and increasing the supervision system of social insurance, social assistance and social security financial management.

The comprehensive reform pilot program of social assistance is the Component 3 of the EU-China Social Protection Reform Project, which aims to improve the legal framework and policies for social assistance through cooperation with the Ministry of Civil Affairs. In order to accelerate the urban and rural overall development of social assistance, improve the minimum living guarantee and other assistance systems, solve the bottleneck problems restricting the development of social assistance in China and make effective use of social assistance as a guarantee for winning the fight against poverty and building a moderately well-off society in an all-round way, EU-China Social Protection Reform Project decides to carry out the comprehensive reform pilot work of social assistance.

1.2 Excutive Task

(1) Improve the social assistance system. Focusing on the Minimum Living Guarantee System, explore ways to improve the mechanism for quantifying and determining standards for social assistance, the method for identifying the recipients of social assistance, the method for verifying the economic status of families applying for assistance, the accounting method for social assistance funds, and the method for providing assistance for low-income families, promote urban and rural overall development of social assistance and provide non-material social assistance services. Pilot areas can study and formulate corresponding measures according to the types of social assistance.

(2) Strengthen the social assistance resource planning. Explore specific methods and measures for the Ministry of Civil Affairs to better play a leading role in developing the social assistance system; further improve the coordination mechanism for basic living guarantee for poverty-stricken population at the county level, and focus on solving “in urgent needs” cases by coordinating resources of the ministry; perfect the system of proactive discovery and improve the “acceptance in one department for coordinated handling” to form a synergy of assistance.

(3) Optimize the social assistance process. Aiming at efficiency and convenience, further explore the methods and measures to simplify the review and approval process of social assistance; explore and establish the system of “acceptance in one department for comprehensive assessment”, and implement comprehensive assistance with relevant departments on the basis of scientifically assessing the needs of individual case for poverty-stricken population; make innovations in publication and notification, and promote the open, fair and impartial implementation of the social assistance system.

(4) Strengthen the social assistance capacity building. Establish a database of basic information of poverty-stricken population, develop and use a comprehensive management platform for social assistance information, and gather information on social assistance from various departments; explore methods and measures to share information across departments; promote “Internet+assistance”; implement the government’s purchase of social assistance services and explore specific methods and measures for social forces to participate in social assistance. Make social assistance services at basic level more professional.

(5) Innovate the supervision and inspection mechanism for social assistance. Further clarify the responsibility positioning of county, township and village levels in the social assistance work; explore effective methods and measures to solve the problems of “targeing acquaintance” (Renqing

Bao) and “targeting relations” (Guanxi Bao) at basic level; explore the establishment of social assistance fault tolerance and error correction mechanism; and explore effective methods to solve the problem of welfare fraud.

1.3 Determination of Pilot Sites

The comprehensive reform pilot of social assistance has been carried out in counties (cities and districts) for one year. According to the application of various regions, Da'an City, Jilin Province, Zhangjiagang City, Jiangsu Province, Xincheng District of Hohhot City, Inner Mongolia and Dachuan District, Dazhou City, Sichuan Province are the EU-China comprehensive reform pilot sites of social assistance after the review and nomination by the Social Assistance Department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Da'an City, located in the northwest of Jilin Province, is subordinate to Baicheng city of Jilin Province. It has 5 neighborhoods, 10 towns and 8 villages under its jurisdiction. It covers an area of 4,879 square kilometers and has a total registered population of 430,000, including about 160,000 in cities and 270,000 in rural areas, which belongs to the nationally designated poor counties. In 2017, the total GDP of Da'an was RMB 15.6 billion and the public finance budget revenue was RMB 800 million.

Zhangjiagang City is located in Suzhou city, Jiangsu Province. The total GDP and public finance budget revenue of Zhangjiagang City remain the top three county-level cities in the province. In 2017, the GDP was RMB 259 billion and the public finance budget revenue was RMB 21 billion. The urbanization rate reached 68.13%, with the per capita disposable income of RMB 48,800 in 2017.

The Xincheng District is located in the northeast of Hohhot, capital of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. The total area of the district is 700 square kilometers, among which 55 square kilometers are in the urban area and 645 square kilometers are in the rural area and mountainous area. With a total population of more than 640,000, the district has 36 minorities including Han, Mongolian, Manchu and Hui, which is inhabited by the Manchu people. In 2017, the total GDP and per capita GDP of Xincheng were RMB 84.2 billion and RMB143, 900 per capita. The public finance budget revenue was RMB 15.76 billion.

Located in the south of the main urban area of Dazhou City, Dachuan District is a municipal district in Sichuan province, Dazhou City, which covers an area of 2,245 square kilometers and has jurisdiction over 52 towns and two sub-district offices. In 2017, it had a registered population of about 1.12 million, including 307,000 urban registered residents and 811,000 rural registered residents. The number of its permanent residents is 1,020,400. The total GDP was RMB 21.4 billion and the per capita GDP of the permanent residents RMB 21,000 and the public finance budget revenue RMB 1.31 billion.

The four comprehensive reform pilots of social assistance have covered the three major regions of east, central and west China, representing regions with different levels of economic development with consideration to rural areas and nationally designated poor county.

1.4 Executive Process

In April 2018, Professor Lin Mingang of the Center for Social Security Research of Nanjing University held three team meetings of research team. Aiming at the background and task of the pilot program, the meeting analyzed and discussed the situation of each pilot, especially in particular, especially on the four pilot themes.

On June 23, 2018, researchers from Center for Social Security Research of Nanjing University, went to Beijing to participate in the fifth group meeting of the Component 3 of the EU-China Social Protection Reform Project. In the meeting, director of the Social Assistance Department Liu Xitang put forward suggestions on the next step of the Component 3 of the EU-China Social Protection

Reform Project and Dr. Marzena Breza summarized the meeting. After the meeting, all parties further discussed the details of the social assistance comprehensive pilot reform.

From June to July 2018, Professor Lin Mingang and his team members went to the every pilot region for baseline survey. In each pilot region, they interviewed relevant local officers and collect data on the development status of social assistance system. On the basis of that, the pilot theme and implementation plan according to the characteristics of each pilot region were formulated.

On August 23, 2018, a kick-off meeting of the comprehensive reform pilot program of social assistance was held in Beijing. Liu Xitang, director of the Social Assistance Department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, Lin Mingang, Professor and Director of Center for Social Security Research, Ms. Marzena Breza, an EU resident expert of the Component 3 of the EU-China Social Protection Reform Project, and more than 20 representatives from the four pilot regions attended the kick-off meeting. At the kick-off meeting, the baseline survey results and theme establishment of the four pilot regions, and the main goals of each pilot program were introduced, exchanged, and discussed.

From September 22 to September 29, 2018, four pilot regions conducted expert training programs in succession. On September 22, 2018, EU Chinese experts Professor Jia Yujiao and Professor Zhu Jianhua went to Da'an City, Jilin Province for a special training course. More than 80 people including Li Mingyu and Wang Zhongqiu from the Social Assistance Department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Jilin Province, Song Youzhi, deputy director of Da'an Civil Affairs Bureau, and leaders of pilot towns and villages, staff of Da'an social assistance center and civil affairs assistants of towns and villages (streets) of the city attended the training. Against the backdrop of the new era, Professor Jia Yujiao from Jilin University gave an in-depth explanation of the status and role of professional social workers and social organizations in social assistance, the respective positioning of the government, social organizations and social workers in social assistance in the new national governance thinking, and the beneficial experience and successful practices of developed countries with *The Role of Professional Social Workers and Social Organizations in Assistance* as the topic. Professor Zhu Jianhua from Zhejiang University of Technology gave an in-depth explanation from seven aspects, including the social assistance system, targeting method, current targeting mechanism and deviation, two special situations, and feasible options, focusing on *Targeting Mechanism of Social Assistance*. On September 27, 2018, EU Chinese experts Professor Zuo Ting and Professor Zhu Jianhua went to Dachuan District, Dazhou City, Sichuan province for a special training course. More than 40 people including Fang Rong, director of Dachuan Civil Affairs Bureau, staff of social assistance center and civil affairs assistants of towns and villages (streets) attended the special training. Professor Zuo Ting gave an in-depth explanation of the connotation and extension of "helping the weak", the concept and innovation practice of development-oriented social assistance with *Helping the Weak in the New Era and Development-oriented Social Assistance Innovation* as the topic, focusing on the new era background.. Professor Zhu Jianhua from Zhejiang University of Technology gave an in-depth explanation from seven aspects, including the social assistance system, target positioning, current targeting mechanism and deviation, two special situations, and feasible options, focusing on *Targeting Mechanism of Social Assistance*. On September 28, 2018, EU Chinese experts Professor Wen Jun and Professor Lin Mingang went to Zhangjiagang City for a special training course. More than 60 people including director Fan Yiming and deputy director Hui Hong of Zhangjiagang Civil Affairs Bureau, and civil affairs assistants of towns and villages (streets) of the whole city attended the special training. Professor Wen Jun gave an in-depth explanation in combination with social governance with *Application of Professional Social Work in Social Assistance and Community Service* as the topic, focusing on professional social work. Professor Lin Mingang gave an in-depth explanation with *The Key and Difficult Points of Social Assistance in Developed Regions* as the

topic. On September 29, 2018, EU Chinese experts Professor Yao Jianping and Associate professor Tian Rong went to the Xincheng District of Hohhot, Inner Mongolia for special training. More than 50 people including director Wu Honglian of the Xincheng District Civil Affairs Bureau and civil affairs assistants of towns and villages (streets) of the whole district attended the special training. Professor Yao Jianping gave an in-depth explanation of social assistance qualification and verification, object aiming and related issues with *China's Social Assistance Qualifications, Object Aiming and Program Optimization* as the topic. Associate professor Tian Rong gave an in-depth explanation on resource allocation and service optimization of cooperation between the government and the society with *Cooperation between the Government and the Society in Social Assistance* as the topic.

On October 15, 2018, a seminar on “Comprehensive Reform Pilot of Social Assistance” hosted by the Center for Social Security Research of Nanjing University was held at the international conference center of Nanjing University Xianlin Campus. Deputy director from the Social Assistance Department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs Jiang Wei, EU resident expert Ms. Marzena Breza, director of the Center for Social Security Research of Nanjing University Professor Lin Mingang contributed to the seminar and more than forty leaders from Jilin Province, Jiangsu Province, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Sichuan province, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Hunan province, Shandong province, Shanghai and other comprehensive reform pilot regions of social assistance participated in the seminar. This seminar held a special discussion on the implementation plan and program of the comprehensive reform pilot of social assistance, and representatives of the pilot regions have exchanged the key points and contents of the implementation plan. The seminar was hosted by Jiang Wei, deputy director of the Social Assistance Department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs. EU resident expert Ms. Marzena Breza and Professor Lin Mingang, director of the Center for Social Security Research of Nanjing University made comments and conclusions respectively. This seminar has built a good foundation for the next nationwide comprehensive reform pilot of social assistance.

From January to April 2019, the Center for Social Security Research of Nanjing University carried out follow-up research and policy effect evaluation based on the progress, and execution effectiveness of the four pilots. The division of follow-up research and investigation actions in the four pilot regions is as follows: Professor Bai Weijun and Associate professor Wang Xiaodong from Inner Mongolia are responsible for the Xincheng District of Hohhot in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region; Professor Jia Yujiao from Jilin University is responsible for Da’an city, Jilin Province; Professor Lin Mingang and Huo Xuan are responsible for Dachuan District, Dazhou City, Sichuan province. Professor Lin Mingang and Jin Yuxi are responsible for Zhangjiagang City, Jiangsu Province.

On May 1, 2019, four pilot regions completed the comprehensive reform pilot work of social assistance in succession and respectively submitted their pilot summary reports. Professor Lin Mingang, Huo Xuan and Jin Yuxi from the Center for Social Security Research of Nanjing University completed the pilot summary report on this basis.

2. Background and Significance of the Comprehensive Reform Pilot of Social Assistance

2.1 Background of the Comprehensive Reform Pilot of Social Assistance

In 1993, Shanghai first explored the establishment of a Minimum Living Guarantee System for urban residents. After more than 20 years of development, China has gradually formed a comprehensive social assistance system, with the urban and rural Minimum Living Guarantee System and the support for the extremely poor people at the core, supplemented by special assistance such as medical assistance, housing assistance and education assistance, and supplemented by temporary assistance and social assistance; and China has opened up a path of developing a social assistance system with Chinese characteristics.

In order to comprehensively push forward the reform of China's social assistance system, better absorb international experience and carry out international exchanges, China and EU have carried out cooperation on the EU-China Social Protection Reform Project. And the comprehensive reform pilot of social assistance is clearly listed as the Component 3 of the EU-China social protection reform project, which is the key point of the whole reform program.

Under this background, in order to accelerate the urban and rural overall development of social assistance, improve the minimum living guarantee and other assistance systems, solve the bottleneck problems restricting the development of social assistance in China and make effective use of social assistance as a guarantee for winning the fight against poverty and building a moderately well-off society in an all-round way, the Ministry of Civil Affairs first carried out the comprehensive reform pilot work of social assistance under the EU-China Social Protection Reform Project. According to the application situation of various regions for assessment, taking into account the differences in geographical distribution, level of economic and social development, urban-rural structure and social assistance work basis, Dachuan District, Dazhou City, Sichuan province, Da'an city, Jilin Province, the Xincheng District of Hohhot, Inner Mongolia and Zhangjiagang City, Jiangsu Province are selected as the first batch of comprehensive reform pilot regions.

The Social Assistance Department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs proposed that the pilot regions should carry out the work in accordance with the basic principles of "Problem-oriented, adjusting measures to local conditions, key breakthroughs and overall consideration", and clarified five key tasks of the pilot reform: First, improve the social assistance system. Focusing on the Minimum Living Guarantee System, explore ways to improve the mechanism for quantifying and determining standards for social assistance, the method for identifying the recipients of social assistance, the method for verifying the economic status of families applying for assistance, the accounting method for social assistance funds, and the method for providing assistance for low-income families, promote urban and rural overall development of social assistance and provide non-material social assistance services. Second, strengthen the social assistance resource planning. Explore specific methods and measures for the Ministry of Civil Affairs to better play a leading role in developing the social assistance system; further improve the coordination mechanism for basic living guarantee for poverty-stricken population at the county level, and focus on solving "in urgent need" cases by coordinating resources of the ministry; perfect the system of active discovery and improve the "acceptance in one department for coordinated handling" to form a synergy of assistance. Third, optimize the social assistance process. Aiming at efficiency and convenience, further explore the methods and measures to simplify the review and approval process of social assistance; explore and establish the system of "acceptance in one department for comprehensive assessment", and implement comprehensive assistance with relevant departments on the basis of scientifically assessing the needs of individual case for poverty-stricken population; make innovations in publication and notification, and promote the open, fair and impartial implementation of the social assistance system. Fourth, strengthen the social assistance capacity building. Establish

a database of basic information of poverty-stricken population, develop and use a comprehensive management platform for social assistance information, and gather information on social assistance from various departments; explore methods and measures to share information across departments; promote “Internet+assistance”. Implement the government’s purchase of social assistance services and explore specific methods and measures for social forces to participate in social assistance. Make social assistance services at basic level more professional. Fifth, innovate the supervision and inspection mechanism for social assistance. Further clarify the responsibility positioning of county, township and village levels in the social assistance work; explore effective methods and measures to solve the problems of “targeting acquaintance” (Renqing Bao) and “targeting relations” (Guanxi Bao) at basic level; explore the establishment of social assistance fault tolerance and error correction mechanism; and explore effective methods to solve the problem of welfare fraud.

For this purpose, the comprehensive reform pilot regions of social assistance formulates targeted reform programs focusing on the five specific tasks of the comprehensive reform pilot in combination with the respective situation. Actively explore the system direction, policy measures and approaches for the innovative development of social assistance in China, and form a number of replicated and propagable policy measures and innovative achievements through pilot programs, so as to provide experience for the comprehensive reform of social assistance nationwide in the future.

2.2 Theme and Significance of the Comprehensive Reform Pilot of Social Assistance

Under the organization and leadership of the Social Assistance Department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, an expert team from the Center for Social Security Research of Nanjing University carried out a baseline assessment and judgment of the situation in the four pilot regions. Combined with the opinions of the leaders and management staff of the local Ministry of Civil Affairs and the suggestions of the experts from the EU, the themes and programs of the four pilots with different key points were formulated: Namely the comprehensive reform of “targeted assistance integration” in Dachuan District, the comprehensive reform of “on-demand assistance” in Da’an rural areas, the comprehensive reform of “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services” in the Xincheng District social assistance, and the comprehensive reform of “help the weak” big assistance in Zhangjiagang. Each program corresponds to the main task of the comprehensive reform pilots.

The comprehensive reform of “targeted assistance integration” in Dachuan District starts from improving social assistance system, coordinating social assistance resources and strengthening social assistance capacity building. In the implementation of demand-oriented low-income families precision assistance, the integration of assistance resources within and outside the system to form a synergy of assistance, and through the development and use of social assistance information management platform, important pilot experience has been formed in the aspect of realizing cross-departmental information sharing and improvement.

As a nationally designated poor county, Da’an has carried out comprehensive reform of social assistance, which can fully test the feasibility and applicability of comprehensive reform of social assistance in less developed areas. The comprehensive reform of “on-demand assistance” in Da’an rural areas focuses on improving the social assistance system, aiming at exploring and improving the quantification mechanism of social assistance standards and reforming the identification methods of social assistance objects. At the same time, explore methods to strengthen rights at basic level and further simplify the review and approval process of social assistance under the leadership of the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Different from the previous two pilot regions where the rural population accounts for the majority of the population distribution structure, the Xincheng District is dominated by urban population. The pilot theme is the comprehensive reform of “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services” in the social assistance

focusing on the optimization of social assistance process, and a five-in-one systematic reform program is implemented from the perspective of “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services”. Centering on the contradiction between the increasing requirement for work ability at basic level and the weak work force at basic level in the “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services” reform, explore innovative ways for the government to purchase social assistance services, adjust and refine the approval process to prevent problems that may occur in delegation, and formulate strict supervision and assessment measures at district level to separate the approval rights from the supervision function.

As the region with the highest level of economic and social development and the best foundation of social assistance among the four pilots, Zhangjiagang takes the lead in proposing the comprehensive reform goal of “helping the weak”. Through the establishment of the “four mechanisms”, Zhangjiagang has made breakthroughs in improving the social assistance system, expanding the connotation of social assistance and coordinating social assistance resources, providing a model for the eastern less developed areas to lead the comprehensive reform of social assistance nationwide.

All in all, the determination of reform themes in the four pilot regions is planned on the basis of the pilot goals and key tasks planned by the Social Assistance Department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs. By selecting the structural and mechanistic problems that need to be solved most in social assistance work and the most concerned issues, the pilot regions carry out systematic reform starting from one point and then to the whole scheme, taking into account other aspects. According to the differences of economic and social development in different pilot regions, the reform should be carried out in different levels and stages in order to make social assistance meet the level of economic and social development. The areas with better social assistance foundation set high standard first, take the lead to realize the comprehensive reform, and fully play their leading role. The areas with weak foundation steadily boost the reform in a progressive manner by improving weak links. The ultimate objective is to build a new social assistance system with wide coverage, multiple layers and full depth at the national level based on the goal that “the weak can always get the help”.

3 Achievements and Problems of the Comprehensive Reform Pilot of Social Assistance

3.1 Major Advances and Breakthroughs of the Comprehensive Reform Pilot of Social Assistance

Since the initiation of the comprehensive pilot reform project of social assistance, the pilot areas have made significant progress and breakthroughs. From the perspective of pilot program and area classification, and based on the actual situation of the pilot areas of comprehensive social assistance reform, they can be roughly divided into three types: the first is Dachuan District and Da'an City which are ordinary or relatively backward in economic development level and where the rural residents are in the majority; the second is the Xincheng District--the core area of the provincial capital where the townsfolk dominate in population; the third is Zhangjiagang City in the eastern coastal developed region which has higher level of economic development and stronger social assistance ability.

3.1.1 Major progress and breakthroughs in pilot reform of Dachuan District of Dazhou City

Dachuan District and Da'an City share certain common features in this reform in that they have a dominant number of rural population and many recipients of social assistance which is mainly carried out in rural area. The social assistance is faced with high pressure and many problems, and is also restricted by the economic development level and financial capacity, the contradiction between which results in a low level of social assistance in these two areas, and there exist outstanding problems in the assistance of low income groups and planning of integration of urban and rural assistance, so the pilot reform has mainly taken this as the starting point and has made significant progress.

In terms of Dachuan District, so far, it has 9,939 urban households receiving subsistence allowances, namely 15,332 persons in total, and 36,414 rural households receiving subsistence allowances, namely 63,377 persons, and the financial input in subsistence allowances accounts for more than 80% of the central finance. In the process of pilot reform, Dachuan District has focused on the reform of "targeted assistance integration", mainly made progress in the full coverage of assistance of the poverty-stricken population and the multi-channel integration of social assistance resources, and provided support to the reform by further improving the existing social assistance management platform, concentrating the confirmation and approval of assistance demand and information verification in the big platform to realize the integration.

Firstly, in terms of the full coverage of assistance of poverty-stricken population, pay attention to be "demand-oriented". Before the comprehensive pilot reform of social assistance was initiated, Dachuan District only had the medical assistance system which was appropriately separated from the subsistence allowance system in a way, while in the aspect of other special assistance, the low income families or families on the edge of subsistence allowances were rarely included in the range of social assistance, resulting in a huge gap in the social assistance treatment of households enjoying subsistence allowances and the low income households with the income slightly higher than subsistence allowance standard, and that part of the poverty-stricken population were excluded from the assistance system. Through the experimental reform, Dachuan District has taken full advantage of the existing "ten major livelihood assistance systems" to provide the on-demand assistance for the poverty-stricken population throughout the District, stipulated that the assistance would be given as long as the people in the District were in straitened circumstances and met any assistance condition in "ten major livelihood assistance systems", which avoided the "bundling assistance" that only the targets of subsistence allowance could enjoy other assistance.

Secondly, in terms of social assistance resource integration, Dachuan District is restricted by the financial capability, so in order to give full play to the effect of assistance reform to the maximum extent, it is necessary to mobilize the social forces and bring in external resources. Before the comprehensive pilot reform, the social forces, such as the social organizations in Dachuan District hardly contributed to the social assistance. After the pilot implementation, in order

to make up for the deficiency of solely depending on financial funds under the goal of “targeted assistance” and meet the diversified demands of the poverty-stricken population under “on-demand assistance”, the first is to expand the assistance fund sources, and attract the private capital, social organization funds and charitable organization and other social funds to join the social assistance efforts, building a social assistance system with the internal and external resources of the system complementing each other. The second is to link to the charitable donation platform to specially contribute to the assistance of those falling into poverty because of illness and patients with serious illness. The third is to carry out joint assistance for poverty-stricken population, and according to their poverty situation and verification result, and combining with the assistance policy, to initiate other assistance proposals for particularly impoverished applicants and their family members with relevant departments, and to initiate joint assistance for the impoverished applicants to maximize the benefits of assistance, and solve the poverty problem through multiple channels.

Thirdly, the targeted assistance and on-demand assistance cannot be done without the accurate identification of poverty-stricken targets. The advantage of Dachuan District lies in that it has built a big social assistance platform which is relatively perfect and integrates multiple functions before the reform. Because the assistance matters of various departments are brought together on the big platform, the poverty-stricken population only need to submit the application and related materials to the township (subdistrict) social assistance window of census register location “for one time”, and the information verification and assistance examination and approval are all fulfilled by various departments on the platform network. Meanwhile, the assistance formalities are simplified by including several information verification departments into the platform system, so the applicants only need to provide personal application, ID card and information verification authorization with other background verification fully completed by networking which realizes “acceptance by one department with comprehensive evaluation”. However, before the pilot reform, the information interconnection was not realized between each responsible department and the verification department, so when accepting a related assistance application, each department needed to depend on the background personnel to operate, and the heavy workload caused a long verification time. In addition, in the integration of economic information verification departments, due to the department barrier, the banks and other financial sectors were not included, resulting in the dead zone in the verification of economic position. After the initiation of pilot reform, on the one hand, on the basis of the original social assistance platform verification system, the information and data are shared among various departments by developing new information verification software system, and the system verifies the information automatically, turning the “request for review” before the reform into the “real-time review” and improving the efficiency to handle the social assistance matters. On the other hand, significant progress has been made in breaking the department separation, the information verification by agriculture and commerce banks is added which cooperates with the original information verification departments to realize the precise verification and examination of the social assistance families in the aspects of family income, industrial and commercial registration, social security information, motor vehicles, house information and deposit in bank etc. The building and improvement of the big social assistance platform have provided support for the realization of “targeted assistance integration”, which is also a great advantage for Dachuan District to make significant progress in comprehensive reform of social assistance.

3.1.2 Major progress and breakthroughs in pilot reform of Da’an City, Jilin Province

As a nationally designated poor county, Da’an City has 8,557 urban households receiving subsistence allowances, namely 12,732 persons in total, and 19,900 rural households receiving subsistence allowances, namely 33,032 persons, and the financial input in subsistence allowances accounts for more than 95% of the central finance, which means the subsistence allowances almost completely rely on the central finance.

Da'an City focuses its comprehensive reform on “on-demand assistance” in rural area, and has established four tasks of comprehensive reform of social assistance, namely “to perfect the mechanism to determine the basic livelihood security standard, introduce the working capacity index into the comprehensive assessment and quantitative recognition of assistance targets, set up the gradient assistance mode and transfer the rural subsistence allowance examination and approval authority to the township governments”, and according to its own actual situation, it has mainly made reform progress in improving the quantitative determination mechanism of social assistance standard, reforming the recognition method of social assistance targets and intensifying the primary level management and capacity building.

Firstly, in the aspect of setting of social assistance standard, change the minimum living standard into “basic livelihood security standard”, and effectively expand the social assistance target base by raising the standard. Before the comprehensive pilot reform, Da'an City had a relatively low level of social assistance, and mainly followed the superior policies in the security standard of the major systems including subsistence allowance, so it could only guarantee the basic survival needs of the assisted targets and lacked the scientific and reasonable standard setting and dynamic adjustment mechanism. After the pilot reform started, Da'an City set the objective of guaranteeing “basic livelihood security” and the baseline of realizing “two no worry, and three guarantees”, namely “no worry about food and clothing, and guarantee for compulsory education, basic medical care and housing safety”, explored the implementation of determining the basic livelihood security standard according to consumer spending, which indicated it gradually surpassed the absolute poverty connotation and strode toward multidimensional poverty. The specific practices are to classify the “food” and “clothing” in the eight major categories listed in *Da'an Statistical Year Book* into the items of “two no worry”, classify the “housing”, “education, culture and entertainment” and “medical care” into “three guarantees”, and classify “living articles and services”, “transportation and communication” and “other articles and services” into “other” items. The figures under “two no worry” items are calculated at 100%, figures under “three guarantees” items are calculated at 20%, and the figures under “other” items are calculated at 10%. At the same time, ensure the coordination between the assistance standard and the per capita disposable income, minimum wage standard as well as the economic development level of the whole city and the financial guarantee level, and that the basic livelihood security standard is not lower than national poverty alleviation standard in force. Furthermore, study, judge and verify the scientific rationality of the new standard through actual survey.

Secondly, in the aspect of social assistance target recognition, on the basis of social assistance standard adjustment and by establishing the comprehensive evaluation indicator system for assistance targets, realize the gradient assistance mode of “poverty degree + individual demand” and “urgent degree of straitened circumstances”. Before the pilot reform, due to the binding between various assistance systems and subsistence allowance qualification, the low income households and the households at the edge of subsistence allowance in Da'an City were excluded from the temporary and special assistance systems and became the “blind area” of assistance, resulting in the obvious problem of “cliff effect” in social assistance. After the pilot reform, on the basis of social assistance standard adjustment, Da'an City explored to change the recognition of the assistance targets and their assistance from according to “income” to according to “poverty degree + individual demand”, established the comprehensive assessment and quantitative recognition indicator system for assistance targets to exclude the illness spending from the income level criterion, and taking into account the individual demand, brought in the “working capacity index” to partially solve the difficulty in calculation and quantifying of income of rural residents. The assistance targets recognized according to the new indicator system, if below the basic livelihood security standard, are included into the basic livelihood security coverage; and if not eligible for

basic livelihood security, are decided on the special assistance they can obtain according to their “individual demand”, which realized the breakage of binding between the subsistence allowance system and the special systems and the assistance according to classification, and preliminarily established the assistance mode of “basic living assistance + temporary assistance + special assistance”.

Thirdly, in the aspect of social assistance management and service delivery, attempt to establish the examination and approval management system with the approval authority transferred to lower level, namely “supervision at city level, examination and approval at township level and review at village level”. Transfer the authority of review and approval of assistance families to the people’s government of township by means of Da’an Municipal People’s Government providing authorization to the people’s government of township, explore the implementation of the examination and approval management system of supervision at city level, examination and approval at township level and review at village level, and realize the objective of “passing down the examination and approval authority”, which is still in progress and is expected to be launched officially in July, 2019.

3.1.3 Major progress and breakthroughs in pilot reform of Xincheng District of Hohhot City

The Xincheng District of Hohhot City is a typical example of central urban area where the urban residents constitute the majority of population. Because most of the elderly in rural area are excluded from the subsistence allowance coverage by enjoying the endowment insurance for deprived land regulated by human resources and social security bureau, the number of people enjoying subsistence allowance throughout the area, especially the rural population, is relatively low and the social assistance faces less pressure. As of June, 2018, the total number of subsistence allowance targets in the Xincheng District was only 1,868 households, that is 3,164 persons with 2,336 persons, i.e. 1,449 households in city and 828 persons, i.e. 419 households in village, and the financial funds of social assistance depended less on superior finance, and there were no the same problems existing in the above-mentioned two areas i.e. Dachuan and Da’an, in resource constraints.

Before the comprehensive reform of social assistance, the overall social assistance system of Xincheng District had been basically fixed and the system and items were relatively complete, and since 2013, Xincheng District has developed a series of standardized and elaborate management methods and standard processes. At present, the major problems of Xincheng District are the relatively cumbersome processes of examination and approval of the poverty-stricken population’s applications for social assistance, and the working ability and working pressure of the primary-level personnel remain to be improved, so the reform is carried out by the breakthrough point of “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services”, and a “five in one” systematic reform scheme has been built, namely standardized construction as support, information construction as advantage, solving of weak links as breakthrough point, building of multiplex assistance ways as objective, and in-depth combination of power delegation and regulation strengthening as innovation point.

Firstly, in terms of social assistance management, take the “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services” reform as the breakthrough point, and realize the optimization of the assistance processes by strengthening at primary level. Before the comprehensive reform, when accepting and handling the applications for subsistence allowance and temporary assistance, because the primary-level managers in townships and subdistricts lacked the examination and approval authority which caused the inflexible execution, Xincheng District was found the problems of the long examination and approval period, more applications vs less assistance, and low working efficiency, etc. After the comprehensive reform started, in accordance with the content of comprehensive reform project, Xincheng District

delegated the examination and approval of urban and rural subsistence allowance and temporary assistance from the district level to the township subdistrict level, and re-checked and evaluated on the basis of trial at first and thus spread to the whole district with the Xincheng District's *"Streamlining Administration, Delegating More Power, Improving Regulation and Optimizing Services" Comprehensive Reform Implementation plan in Social Assistance* and the *Xincheng District's Implementation Plan to Delegate the Examination and Approval Authority for Subsistence Allowance and Temporary Assistance to Lower Level (Trial)* issued successively, and proposed to delegate downward the granting of subsistence allowance and temporary assistance funds after the delegation of approval authority, which not only improved the efficiency of examination and approval of social assistance, and also eased the poverty-stricken population's application. At the same time, in order to avoid the possible problems of power delegation, it adjusted and refined the examination and approval processes, and developed strict supervision and evaluation measures at district level to realize the separation of examination and approval authority and supervision function. In addition, on the basis of *Standard Document for Administrative Enforcement of Law of Subsistence Allowance*, it further promoted the standardization, normalization, refinement and informatization of social assistance management based on the original standard document of law enforcement, ensured the consistency of superior and subordinate enforcement provisions and no deviation of standards to lay the foundation for the success of "streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services" effort and ensure "being able to delegate", "able to take over" and "sound management".

Secondly, the proposed "streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services" reform imposes higher requirements on the working ability of primary-level personnel, so in order to resolve the contradiction between the increased requirements for working ability of primary-level personnel imposed by "streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services" reform and the weak working ability of primary-level personnel, Xincheng District carried out the innovative exploration in purchasing the social assistance handling service by the government. Before the comprehensive pilot reform, the primary-level personnel in Xincheng District bore high pressure due to limited number of staff and were unable to adapt to the requirements of information work. After the pilot work started, Xincheng District employed the third party service agent to conduct the family livelihood survey of social assistance by means of open tendering and purchase of services by government, and combined high-definition video, evidence exchange and entire-course tracking through technical innovation, and established long-distance real-time online monitoring, effectively easing the burden of primary-level personnel, making up for the deficiency of primary-level civil administration force.

Thirdly, Xincheng District has also made new breakthroughs in improving social assistance system by taking advantage of the opportunity of comprehensive reform of social assistance. Firstly, in terms of social assistance targets, take the adjustment and perfection of currently temporary assistance as a breakthrough point to enhance the assistance efforts for people at the edge of subsistence allowance. In the past, the major special assistance items were limited to the people eligible for subsistence allowance and extremely impoverished targets, which excluded the "expenditure-dominant" poor families whose incomes were slightly higher than the subsistence allowance line and the families at the edge of subsistence allowance from the assistance. After the pilot reform started, according to the social assistance characteristics and the currently temporary assistance policy of Xincheng District, it appropriately adjusted and loosened the policies, and increased the temporary assistance standard and proportion to solve the actual problems facing some families which had income higher than subsistence allowance level, but got into trouble due to the higher rigid expenditure in medical care and children's education, as well as the occurrence of

temporary, sudden and disastrous circumstances, and could not get timely assistance or the assistance was insufficient to solve the problems. Secondly, in terms of social assistance content and standard, realize the integrated granting of urban and rural subsistence allowances, and plan the common development of urban and rural social assistance undertakings as a whole. Before the pilot reform, the ratio of urban and rural subsistence allowance standard in Xincheng District was 1.43:1, and there existed great differences between the social assistance treatment enjoyed by the poverty-stricken population in the urban and rural areas. After the initiation of pilot reform, Xincheng District raised the subsistence allowance standard in rural area to realize the consistency of the rural and urban standards, and made the calculation method and granting time of the rural subsistence allowances the same as that in the urban area to realize the urban-rural integration comprehensively, and thus to break the traditional concept of “preference of cities to villages” to place the urban residents and rural residents at the same position and offer equally the most basic livelihood security.

3.1.4 Major progress and breakthroughs in pilot reform of Zhangjiagang City, Jiangsu Province

Among the pilot areas of this comprehensive reform of social assistance, Zhangjiagang City, as the area with highest economic development level, was the first to put forward the reform objective of “helping the weak”, and has made the new breakthroughs of comprehensive reform in enlarging of social assistance coverage, expansion of social assistance connotation and coordination of social assistance resources, and has become the demonstration area to guide the comprehensive reform of social assistance nationwide.

Firstly, in terms of perfection of social assistance system, enlarge the coverage of assistance to new residents, low income people, etc., and create new resident assistance system for innovation. Zhangjiagang almost fully relies on the local finance and resources in social assistance work, and it has already started to provide the medical assistance, education assistance and housing assistance and other special assistance to the families beyond the coverage of but at the edge of subsistence allowances before 2010. However, before the comprehensive reform was initiated, except for the temporary assistance system, each social assistance system mainly targeted the population with household registration in Zhangjiagang, and the “new residents” formed by a large number of floating population were excluded from most of the assistance systems. After the pilot reform was initiated, Zhangjiagang City improved the information collection mechanism by building a comprehensive new resident information platform, produced the register and made dynamic update for the related information of new residents, and on this basis, established the policy mechanisms, including the assistance for extremely poor “new residents”, accident insurance, disaster compensation, etc., and offered economic assistance to the new residents falling into poverty due to illness or in urgent need of assistance due to accidents. At the same time, actively expand the coverage of special assistance, and extend the policies in life, medical care, education, housing, etc. to cover the relatively impoverished people with low income.

Secondly, in terms of social assistance content, switch from mainly providing traditional material assistance to “material assistance + services” to further expand the connotation of social assistance. Due to its high level of economic development and sound foundation of social assistance, before the comprehensive pilot reform was initiated, Zhangjiagang City had achieved better results in the material assistance for poverty-stricken population, and had realized the integration of urban and rural subsistence allowance standards and the natural growth mechanism of linkage between special assistance and subsistence allowance treatment. However, although it has carried out the social assistance services, there still exist the problems of insufficient development. Since the pilot reform was launched, Zhangjiagang City has further expanded the connotation of social assistance, and guided the effective connection between social assistance and social insurance

and commercial insurance, and established a multi-layer assistance and support system for poverty-stricken population.

The main measures in this aspect are: firstly, social assistance and caring aid projects for the people confronted with difficulties in the mode of platform establishment by the government and social operation, such as spiritual assistance, cultural demand and technical abilities, etc.; secondly, with the basic information database of those confronted with difficulties on social assistance management platform, it assesses the individual development, children's demand and social support of them, sorts out social assistance and caring aid projects, and procures from pivotal social organization to carry out the declaration, evaluation, guidance and regulation of the municipal aid projects; thirdly, it guides the charity forces to join social assistance. The charitable organizations in various levels consider the assistance policies and actual situation of the families in difficulty, set up charitable projects, encourage the social circles to join charity through establishing named fund and special funds, and help more families in disease and difficulty to get rid of the difficulty. In the aspect of medical assistance, it introduces village-level medical mutual aid projects, thus establishes "five defense fronts", and forms "3+2" material and mental assistance policy system composed of three measures, namely basic type (urban insurance, and rural insurance), universal benefit type (serious disease medical insurance, and long-term care insurance) and special type (social medical assistance), and two incentive guidance measures of village medical mutual assistance and charitable aid project.

Thirdly, in the aspect of social resource integration, it strengthens the social assistance resource integration, and achieves "integration in two aspects" of governmental resources and social resources of social assistance on the social assistance management platform. Zhangjiagang City has made achievements in introducing social forces to join social assistance, but various resources including governmental assistance resources and social resources tend to operate separately and do not form resource concerted force. Since the pilot reform, Zhangjiagang City has formed municipal "social assistance service center" and thus achieved the in-depth integration of internal and external assistance resources. On the one hand, it integrates the systematic resources, achieves the data sharing of competent assistance departments of civil affairs, education, human resources and social security, housing and urban-rural development, health and family planning, and housing management, achieves the vertical connection in the levels of city, town and village, forms the closed loop chain, and accumulates the concerted force of the departments. On the other hand, it integrates the social resources, gathers the basic information of the groups in difficulty regularly, undertakes big data analysis, carries out assistance project design, and guides the social forces to join. Meanwhile, to let the poverty-stricken population to get convenient, rapid and efficient integrated assistance, and improve civil services ability, it also establishes "integrated window for civil services".

3.2 Achievements and Promotion Experience of the Comprehensive Reform Pilot of Social Assistance

The four pilot areas selected for comprehensive reform pilot project of social assistance represent different economic development levels, different population structure features and different social assistance basis, and provide diversified experience for the areas under different situations in China to learn from the reform.

3.2.1 For the less developed economic areas, especially rural areas, the social assistance should focus on the improvement of social assistance system.

Firstly, it should adjust the assistance structure, achieve targeted assistance, and thus help to achieve maximized social assistance performance. The experience of Dachuan District and Da'an City is to make scientific social assistance standard and identification mechanics, offer the most needed assistance to the groups in difficulty with different demands according to "poverty level",

“individual’s demand” and “difficulty and urgency level”, work according to the sequence, and assist “accurately”. It should offer different assistance opportunities to different groups and indirectly achieve the differentiated hierarchical assistance to different groups; implement the classified assistance, accurately break down the addition and supplement standard for different groups, and achieve the classification and echelon; achieve accurate aiming and echelon arrangement for the follow-up of special assistance system and the entire assistance system arrangement. It can thus avoid the excessive resource concentration in certain group, and avoid the assistance resource waste and low assistance efficiency caused by systematic exclusion of other groups.

Secondly, it should explore quantifiable social assistance standard and target identification mechanism as important means. Whether it is “targeted social assistance” or “on-demand assistance”, the premise for realization is a set of scientific and reasonable social assistance standard and target identification mechanism. It is vital to the social assistance pilot reform areas with the rural population as the majority and the informal income of the farmers being almost immeasurable. In this regard, the experience of Dachuan District is to integrate the information from the economic information verification department of resident family on unified social assistance big platform, achieve real-time verification and inquiry through network connection, and achieve cross-department information sharing; Da’an establishes “basic life guarantee standard model” and introduces “working capacity index” to make adjustment in the aspect of quantitative certification of integrated assessment of social assistance applicants, comprehensively assesses the factors of the family members of the households applying for assistance, such as sex, age, and health status, etc., estimates the rural household income with the coefficient, analyzes and adjusts through the survey of the scientificity of the coefficient.

Thirdly, an effective means to expand social assistance resources in less developed economic areas is to let the social forces join social assistance. The experience of Dachuan District shows that in case of insufficient governmental resources, sufficient utilization of the resources of social organization, social work institutions and charity organizations, and even direct leading them to coordinate the demands of the poverty-stricken population, can effectively make up the blank of insufficient governmental resources.

3.2.2. The key is to take grassroots capacity building as the breakthrough point in urban areas and strengthen social assistance capacity building.

Firstly, it should issue administrative standardized enforcement instruments of social assistance, fulfill the management objectives of social assistance, namely legal administration, standardization, normalization, refinement and informatization, in five steps of “standardized building, informatization building, shortcoming solution, diversified assistance mode building, in-depth combination of decentralization and control” in order to lay the foundation for the “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services” reform.

Secondly, the development trend of social assistance management is to strengthen the grassroots through the “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services” reform, simplify the approval process of social assistance, and increase approval efficiency. Except for Xincheng District, the pilot areas including Da’an City will take it for the key task of the social assistance reform in the next step. However, the “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services” reform is not “sole decentralization”. To ensure the successful progress of the reform, the Xincheng District summarizes the experience in the advanced operation in pilot areas, undertakes strict evaluation, and undertakes a series of preliminary preparation work. Firstly, it strengthens the “readiness in three aspects”, namely the readiness of organization leader, police measures and the duties of three-

level civil affairs departments and ensures “letting go”; secondly, it strengthens the guarantee work, and the villages work according to the standardization and normalization documented work procedure, achieves paperless online approval, and launches information management in order to “well receive”; thirdly, it strengthens the monitoring, monitors with lowest living security system, allows the district civil affairs bureau to view the steps from acceptance to assessment in each town and sub-district offices on lowest living security system, and makes timely correction for the problems, carries out site random inspection, enhances publicity system, and improves complaint and tips-off mechanism in order to ensure “well manage”.

Thirdly, the “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services” reform inevitably raises higher requirement for the work abilities of the grassroots social assistance workers. When the professionalism level and ability level of the system workers are strengthened and the team building is improved, the third party institutions can be thus introduced to join the social assistance undertaking. The new area investigates the lowest living security households and the citizens in great difficulty through offering social assistance purchase service, and solves the problem of imprecise assistance due to incomplete dynamic management caused by insufficient grassroots workers. Since the beginning of 2019, the continued governmental purchase of social assistance service items has not only added new service contents, but also changed the service mode. The service personnel are directly dispatched to the town and sub-district offices to implement the project, which substantially solves the problem of social assistance service level degradation due to serious shortage of grassroots workers and poor work capabilities of them.

Fourthly, comprehensive reform of social assistance is a systematic project. When focusing the capacity building, we should also emphasize the improvement of social assistance system. Especially for the rural areas, efforts should be made to take the opportunity to promote urban-rural assistance integration. The adjustment and improvement of the existing temporary assistance policy can be taken for the breakthrough point to increase the ratio and strength for marginal person and urgent & difficult events. This is also the reform experience from the new area.

3.2.3 For the relatively developed economic areas, systematic reform goals should be made and efforts should be made to achieve the new goal of “helping the weak”.

Firstly, for the areas highly urbanized with large migratory population, “temporary assistance” can be taken as the breakthrough point and efforts should be made to include the permanent and non-household registered population in social assistance system as soon as possible. The experience of Zhangjiagang City is that the premise of the fulfillment of non-household registered population assistance is to build a set of complete floating population gathering mechanism and comprehensively master the information of social groups, tenants, and floating population, etc.; register relevant situation in register book and update according to the development in order to ensure rapid response and launch of “urgent, difficult and dangerous” event of non-household registered population in this way. Meanwhile, the commercial insurance and charity forces should be guided to assist, coordinate the demands of non-household registered population, and the point-based household registration system shall be explored.

Secondly, assistance resources from different channels and various sources can only bring better concerted assistance force and effect through integration and optimization. In the pilot reform of Zhangjiagang City, it establishes municipal social assistance service center, and achieves the in-depth integration of internal and external assistance resources. Integrate the systematic resources, achieve the data sharing of competent assistance departments of civil affairs, education, human resources and social security, housing and urban-rural development, health and family planning, and housing management, achieve the vertical connection in the levels of city, town and village, form the closed loop chain, and accumulate the concerted force of the departments. Integrate the social resources, gather the basic information of the groups in difficulty regularly, undertake big

data analysis, carry out assistance project design, and guide the social forces to join. Moreover, to let the poverty-stricken population to get convenient, rapid and efficient integrated assistance and improve civil services ability, it makes efforts to establish an integrated window for civil services.

Thirdly, in the aspect of social assistance system improvement, on one hand, it expands from traditional assistance to humanistic care. It does not only offer traditional material assistance to social assistance beneficiaries, but also offers corresponding non-material service assistance, psychological counseling, social participation and cultural demands to the them, and especially education assistance to the families with children, “poverty alleviation and intellectual assistance” and the improvement of development ability for the beneficiaries with labor capacity. It breaks the intergenerational transmission of poverty of the poor households. On the other hand, the social assistance scale in many eastern developed areas is small currently. Take Zhangjiagang City as an example, the lowest living security beneficiaries in the city were only 4,139 residents for 2,758 households as of June 2018. Among these, there were 1,020 urban residents for 674 urban households, and 3,119 rural residents for 2,084 households. The gradual decrease of social assistance scale does not only indicate the relatively good social assistance achievement, but also shows that the social assistance level cannot keep pace with the average social economic level. Under this background, it is urgent to achieve the upgrade of social assistance, cover poverty-stricken population and let the poverty-stricken population enjoy the achievements of economic development.

In summary, as a systematic reform project, comprehensive reform of social assistance does not only require an overall plan and proper arrangement, but also requires innovations in key area in order to gain the expected effect.

3.3 Problem Analysis of the Comprehensive Reform Pilot of Social Assistance

Due to the economic development level, urban-rural distribution and specific systematic background, the four integrated reform pilot areas of social assistance make reform programs with different focuses to solve the shortcomings for the respective problems according to the actual situation, and has made important progress and gained great reform achievements, thus offering important experience of popularization for the reform in national level. However, the analysis above also indicates that the factors that restrict the successful progress of comprehensive reform of social assistance share common characteristics in the areas, which should be comprehensively considered and mainly handled in the future comprehensive reform of social assistance.

3.3.1 In social assistance targeted identification, the information of the departments cannot be shared due to the lack of top-level design, especially the the departments outside the traditional government system, for example, financial institutions. This seriously hinders the comprehensive execution of the economic status verification.

Though the basic information database of the poverty-stricken population has been established in the pilot areas to different extents to achieve the information sharing on comprehensive management platform of social assistance information, the information of the financial departments like banks and vehicle management department cannot be shared. Though Dachuan District performs well, it only makes the information of one financial institution, namely, rural commercial bank, available with the efforts of multiple parties. In the baseline survey of the pilot areas and subsequent follow-up investigation, it is also found from the feedback of the staff of the civil affairs departments that the only way to achieve information sharing is top-level design. Otherwise, the unilateral efforts from civil affairs department can hardly help to fulfill this goal.

Meanwhile, because it is difficult to verify the economic status of the applying households, especially rural households, many areas would rather exclude some unconfirmed applicants from the social assistance system to avoid work mistakes under the background of strengthening social assistance monitoring. Though it takes effect to prevent “security due to personal favor, and security

due to relationship”, it also leads to “security omission”. For the “working capacity index” introduced by some areas in the informal income calculation, the scientificity remains to be further discussed.

3.3.2 The social assistance contents have always present the phenomenon of emphasizing “cash assistance” and slighting “service assistance”, emphasizing “survival assistance” and slighting “development assistance”.

In the four pilot areas, only Zhangjiagang City with relatively high economic development level takes some measures in the aspects of social assistance service and the development of social assistance beneficiaries, while other areas at intermediate economic development level and relatively behind level still focus on material assistance to ensure basic livelihood and uniformly give material support regardless of the features of assistance beneficiaries. On the one hand, this will hide the diversified demands of the poverty-stricken population and the social assistance cannot perform on the right “points”. On the other hand, it also cannot activate these assistance beneficiaries with development potential to get rid of the difficulty and achieve self reliance.

3.3.3 The overall social assistance level is relatively low; the fiscal input is insufficient, and the poverty-stricken population finds it hard to share the achievements of social and economic development.

Currently, the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee beneficiaries in the two pilot areas of Xincheng District and Zhangjiagang are only thousands of persons. It is related to rapid economic and social development in recent years, especially the execution effect of the anti-poverty measures, but so few social assistance recipients also indicate the backwardness of social assistance standard and ideas. In the reform of social assistance standard, for example, Da’an City increases the basic living standard after the reform, and meets the demand of the poverty-stricken population in sharing the achievements of social and economic development to certain extent, but the general standard is still relatively low. From the perspective of calculation mode of specific standard, the guarantee items that present the surpassing of the connotation of absolute poverty among “three guarantees” are calculated at 20% of the data of statistical yearbook items. According to the reform goal, the basic living standard after reform should be determined as the lowest living security standard takes 35% of the average of per capita consumption expenditure. As for urban-rural integration, those achieving the integration are the areas without high rural assistance pressure, such as Zhangjiagang and Xincheng District. In the areas with the main problem of rural households in difficulty, local civil affairs departments indicate that to increase the rural lowest living security to the same level of urban standard will immediately bring heavy fiscal expenditure burden.

3.3.4 The grassroots work pressure of social assistance is high, and the handling management ability and professionalism level is insufficient

Currently, the mechanism of “acceptance in one department for coordinated handling” and the exploration in the delegation of management and approval authority of social assistance make the assistance application and approval procedure for the poverty-stricken population convenient in the pilot areas. With the improvement of “active identification mechanism”, they serve the beneficiaries in difficulty better, but this puts forward higher requirements for the grassroots social assistance workers. As of the situation in pilot area, the outstanding problems for the grassroots reception window service staff are the lack of professional social assistance workers with high mobility. The Xincheng District and others introduce third party institutions including social organizations to relieve the difficulty. However, with the execution and expansion of comprehensive reform of social assistance, the problem of insufficient handling management ability and lack of specialization will be more obvious.

4. Policy Suggestions on Promoting the Comprehensive Reform and Development of Social Assistance in China

4.1 Suggestions on Improving the Social Assistance Regulation

4.1.1 Transform single-dimensional income standard into multi-dimensional standard in terms of the determination of social assistance quantitative standards

The future development trend is to explore, introduce and apply international multi-dimensional poverty theory and method, and establish the multi-dimensional poverty measurement index system suitable for China's national condition and local characteristics in order to improve the current quantitative standard and confirmation mechanism of social assistance with unitary standard of income. On one hand, in this pilot reform, besides minimum livelihood need, Da'an City has also taken the healthcare, education and housing demand of the disadvantaged into account by formulating the "basic livelihood security standard", aiming to enrich the anti-poverty connotation

through application of multi-dimensional poverty measurement index system. In addition to that, the relevant index system can also help to assess the differentiated and diversified demand of the groups in difficulty, and lays the foundation to link corresponding assistance resources for the achievement of "targeted assistance" and "on-demand assistance"; on the other hand, for those areas with the majority of population being rural people like Dachuan and Da'an, despite the continuous improvement of the social assistance information system, the difficulty of checking the economic status of social assistance applicants can always exist. In this respect, the multi-dimensional poverty index can effectively help solve the problem in these areas. Because it is easier to calculate and visualize multi-dimensional poverty index compared with income, it can become an effective supporting tool to identify potential social assistance beneficiaries, comprehensively increase the targeting rate of social assistance recipients, and increase the use efficiency of social assistance resources.

4.1.2 Achieve the transformation from absolute poverty to "relative poverty" for social assistance recipients and assistance goals

Though after the pilot reform, the social assistance standard of each pilot site has been improved, except that Zhangjiagang has begun to explore expanding the coverage of special assistance to the relatively poor with low income, social assistance programs in most areas still target the absolutely poor, reflecting the lack of substantial increase of social assistance standard.

Currently, the assistance beneficiaries in absolute poverty greatly decrease, and the social assistance should be urgently upgraded. The new goal of "helping the weak" covers various poverty-stricken groups in development difficulty, and thus the assistance standard should be raised to achieve the support for the groups in "relative poverty". The low income standard line should be made on the basis of lowest livelihood security standard through combining "income" and "consumption". Currently the trial areas still apply a relatively low basic livelihood standard line compared with the ideal low income standard line. In reference to international experience, certain ratio of social income median or average income can be applied as the low income standard line in order to include more poor people in social assistance. The making of relative poverty line will meet the demand of the poverty-stricken population in sharing the achievements of economic development. Lay the foundation for the establishment of integrated social assistance system of "basic livelihood security + classified assistance" through combining the low income standard line and multi-dimensional poverty.

4.1.3 Achieve the transformation from "material assistance" to "material + service" assistance, from survival assistance to development assistance in the aspect of social assistance contents

The actual situation of the four pilot areas indicates that social assistance is still limited to material assistance except for Zhangjiagang. The current unitary material-oriented assistance mode

makes it increasingly difficult to meet the differentiated and diversified assistance demands of the assistance beneficiaries, and thus the expansion of social service connotation should be set as an important direction of social assistance system development reform. Referring to Zhangjiagang's experience in expanding the meaning of social assistance and introducing social forces to participate, the mode of the government purchasing social assistance service can be explored to entrust the social assistance service to social organizations, professional social work institutions and competitive market entities, encourage the social worker institutions, professional social workers and volunteers to positively intervene. The expansion of social assistance connotation will help to promote the transformation from the traditional and unitary material and cash assistance to the compound assistance integrating material security, life care, spiritual consolation, psychological counseling, ability improvement and social inclusion. For the difficulty of insufficient social forces and a lack of institutions offering social assistance services in some areas like Da'an, the social organizations should be forcefully nurtured or the external resources should be linked to join social assistance management and services. The social assistance beneficiaries can be classified by with or without labor ability. The long-term material and service support should be given to those without labor ability and should be taken into consideration, and the individual "urgent and difficult" case should be prioritized. For the beneficiaries with labor ability, positive assistance mainly composed of development assistance should be given. Firstly, temporary assistance should be given to guarantee that they get temporary transitional guarantee for basic livelihood. Secondly, various means including vocational training, income exclusion, and employment subsidy, etc. should be adopted to stimulate the internal power. With the combination of "poverty alleviation" and "intellectual support", the ultimate goal should be set as help people to help themselves and achieve development. Meanwhile, special attention should be paid to the children from poor families to strengthen the input in basic public services for children, emphasize the nutrition input and preschool education of early children in poor families, strengthen the education assistance for school-age children, and break chronic poverty trap and intergenerational transmission of poverty with the orientation of "children".

4.2 Suggestions on Strengthening the Social Assistance Resource Planning

4.2.1 Establish diversified fund-raising mechanism on the basis of clarifying the fiscal responsibilities of the governments in various levels regarding resource supply for social assistance

An important measure to enhance social assistance effect is to reasonably allocate the fund and stably increase the level of the assistance systems. Whereas, the less developed economic areas undergo the phenomenon of "willing but lacking the power" because of the resource restriction in the execution of social assistance, which impedes the improvement of social assistance standard and efficiency, firstly, improve multi-level fiscal sharing mechanism, specify the fiscal responsibilities of each level in the mode of regulations, and strengthen the support of central and provincial financial departments; secondly, referring to Dachuan in terms of its experience in integrating internal and external resources, mobilize more social forces and market resources to join the building of social assistance system to fill in the gap in social assistance resources, including the private capital, social organization funds and charitable funds, and continuously strengthen the material guarantee of social assistance regulations; thirdly, enhance the reasonableness of assistance fund allocation, organize preferential funds for the assistance projects with great influence and urgent demands, increase the input in medical assistance, education assistance and temporary assistance, and increase the use ratio and marginal effect of the funds.

4.2.2 Civil affairs department should coordinate to integrate and unite the internal and external forces of the system as for the formation of concerted force of social assistance

Social assistance resources do not only include the "hard resources" of materials such as fund, but also include the "soft resources" in non-material nature such as service provision and talent

building & supply. Meanwhile, the social assistance resources are also included in the more macroscopic social security system. As for the formation of concerted force of social assistance, the social assistance resources of various department should be integrated to form united assistance. On one hand, the resources out of the system can be included through the government's purchase of service. The talent team can be supplemented through service assistance and professional social worker import on the basis of material assistance, to achieve the three-level integration of funds, social workers skills and service and the greatest assistance performance. On the other hand, efforts should be made to achieve social assistance and other social security projects, especially the effective link between social insurance and social benefits. The relatively high work pressure of grassroots social assistance is also related to excessive systematic functions of social assistance and long-term absence of social welfare. The system concerted force should be formed through linking social assistance with social insurance & social welfare policy, especially the proper universal benefit policy including the subsidy system for the elderly and the children, etc., in order to give full play to the overall anti-poverty effect of social security system and reduce the burden of minimum guarantee of social assistance.

4.3 Suggestions on Optimizing the Social Assistance Process

4.3.1 Combine the “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services” reform and further delegate approval authority to the lower level as for the simplification of assessment and approval process of social assistance

Explore the method to simplify the assessment and approval process of social assistance for the objective of high efficiency and convenience. Combine the “streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services” reform, and delegate the assessment and approval authority of main social assistance projects from district/county level to sub-district/rural town level. In the authority delegation process, like Xincheng, a series of supporting measures should be established, such as district-level supervision and document standardization to ensure authority delegation without messy management. Meanwhile, the social assistance reform focusing on grassroots strengthening puts forward higher requirements of grassroots work ability, and thus much attention should be paid to the problems of the shortage of grassroots workers, the lack of fund, unitary method and low efficiency, and various measures should be taken to make grassroots social assistance handling service more professional.

4.3.2 Establish the mechanism of “acceptance in one department for comprehensive assessment” for the application processing of social assistance, and assessment of the demand of social assistance applicants

Currently, all of the four pilot sites have established inter-department joint conference system for social assistance, established the mechanism of “acceptance in one department for coordinated handling” for close cooperation with relevant departments of social assistance, and increased the resource integration level and work efficiency of social assistance. Places where conditions permit have also tried to introduce the system of proactive discovery based on demand assessment. In the next step, the quality should be further improved based on the existing system foundation in the efficiency increase process. For the individual cases of the poverty-stricken population, based on the application in one department, all departments involved should scientifically assess the difficulty confronted and the specific demands of the applicants, give integrated assistance, form the “one policy for one person” system, and achieve targeted assistance and refined assistance.

4.4 Suggestions on Strengthening the Social Assistance Capacity Building

4.4.1 Comprehensively eliminate department segmentation and achieve information sharing through top-level design for the establishment of social assistance information database

In recent years, with the information verification system of resident family economic status built by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the target identification accuracy of social assistance in the

four pilot sites is increased in grassroots social assistance management to certain extent. The key to the development in the next step is to start from top-level design, and further break the department boundaries, above all, strengthening the inclusion of information from financial institutions such as banks. Meanwhile, in consideration of the current relatively low level of information sharing and verification, the information sharing restricted to district and county levels is insufficient to meet the factual demands in the current population mobility process. The levels of information coordination should be raised gradually from district and municipal level to provincial and even the national level. Thus further relieve the work pressure of social assistance handler, and achieve “assist those who should be assisted”.

4.4.2 Improve the professional skills from in and out of the government system as for social assistance handling service

According to the existing major problems in current grassroots social assistance handling service, on one hand, the approach of the existing social assistance departments should be taken to increase the number of the grassroots social assistance workers. The professional level should be increased through encouraging them to obtain social work certificates and in other ways. And various incentive measures should be taken to stimulate the work enthusiasm. On the other hand, governmental purchase services should be positively promoted to introduce third part to participate in social assistance administration like Xincheng. Through introducing professional social worker organizations, the grassroots social assistance handling service ability can be enhanced in order to reach the “last mile” of social assistance.

Glossary

Targeted social assistance: Through the social assistance economic information checking system, the economic status of the applicants for social assistance is checked to accurately identify the assistance targets. On the basis of accurately targeting, differentiated assistance are provided to different beneficiaries according to their various needs.

On-demand assistance: The needs of the assistance recipients are determined by factors such as the difficulty and urgency they encounter, and their health status. On this basis, based on the degree of poverty and individual needs, different people are provided with differentiated assistance, and fine targeting and classification guarantees are implemented.

Targeting acquaintance (Renqing Bao): For the convenience of doing things, take the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee as a favor to include those who are not qualified but with certain powers.

Targeting relations (Guanxi Bao): In the examination and approval of the qualification of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee, the officials give preferential treatment to their family members and relatives, so that these family members and relatives can receive the subsidies and related assistance even if they do not meet the eligibility.



Appendix 1

Timeline of the project Activities	Dates	Relevant researchers
Three team meetings to discuss the implementation of the project	04/2018	Lin Mingang, Huo Xuan, Yang Shuang, Kang Zhen, Zhang Juan, Jin Yuxi, Wang Kai, Wang Jieling
Baseline survey in Dachuan	18/06/2018-20/06/2018	Huo Xuan, Zhang Juan, Kang Zhen
Baseline survey in Zhangjiagang	19/06/2018-20/06/2018	Jin Yuxi, Yang Shuang, Wang Kai
EU-China C3 5 th group meeting in Beijing	23/06/2018	Huo Xuan, Jin Yuxi
Baseline survey in Da'an	03/07/2018-05/07/2018	Lin Mingang, Jia Yujiao, Huo Xuan, Kang Zhen, Zhang Juann
Baseline survey in Xincheng	04/07/2018-06/07/2018	Lin Mingang, Bai Weijun, Wang Xiaodong, Huo Xuan, Jin Yuxi, Yang Shuang, Wang Kai
Second survey in Dachuan	13/07/2018-15/07/2018	Lin Mingang, Wang Jieling
Second survey in Zhangjiagang	18/07/2018	Lin Mingang, Huo Xuan, Wang Jieling
Kick-off meeting in Beijing	23/08/2018	Lin Mingang
Training session in Da'an	22/09/2018	Jia Yujiao, Zhu Jianhua
Training session in Dachuan	27/09/2018	Zuo Ting, Zhu Jianhua
Training session in Zhangjiagang	28/09/2018	Lin Mingang, Wen Jun
Training session in Xincheng	29/09/2018	Yao Jianping, Tian Rong
A seminar on "Comprehensive Reform Pilot of Social Ssistance" in Nanjing	15/10/2018	Hosted by the Center for Social Security Research of Nanjing University
Tracing and evaluation of the pilot reform in four sites	01/2019-04/2019	Lin Mingang, Bai Weijun, Wang Xiaodong, Jia Yujiao, Huo Xuan, Jin Yuxi
Submission of the four separate reports for each pilot site respectively	29/50/2019	Civil affairs department of four pilot sites
Submission of the final evaluation report	31/05/2019	Lin Mingang, Huo Xuan, Jin Yuxi
Revise and resubmit the reports	03/06/2019-14/06/2019	Lin Mingang, Huo Xuan, Jin Yuxi
Component 3 pilot conclusion and Summing up workshop	3 rd July, 2019 Beijing	Lin Mingang, Guan Xinping, Hu Hongwei, Guo Yu, Gang Shuge, Yao Jianping, Wang Kai, Sheng Yannan, Cheng Zhongpei

Appendix 2

**Summary Report on the Social Assistance Comprehensive
Reform Pilot in Dachuan District, Dazhou City**

Dachuan Civil Affairs Bureau

1. General Situation of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Dachuan District, Dazhou City

1.1 Overview of Economic and Social Development in Dachuan District, Dazhou City

In 2018, Dachuan District fully implemented the major decisions and deployments issued by the Central Government and the provincial and municipal governments. Specific measures include initiativly adapting to the new normal of economic development, actively promoting supply-side structural reform, overcoming the adverse impact of macro economy, strictly complying with the overall deployment of “12235”, and adhering to the working principle of “striving for the first”. Through agglomerating efforts to address multiple tasks and overcoming various difficulties, Dachuan District has achieved sustainable economic and social development.

In 2018, the district’s GDP reached up to RMB 22,155 million, an increase of 8.4% from 2017 (the same below). Among them, the GDP of the primary industry rose by RMB 5,026 million, an increase of 3.6%; that of the secondary industry rose by RMB 6,209 million, an increase of 8.6%; and that of the tertiary industry rose by RMB 10,919 million, an increase of 10.6%. The structural ratio among the first, secondary and tertiary industries is 22.7 : 28.0 : 49.3. The district’s per capita GDP for 2018 reached RMB 21,443, an increase of 8.0%, and its total fiscal revenue were RMB 2,241 million, an increase of 10.3%.

1.2 General Situation of Social Assistance Progress in Dachuan District, Dazhou City

In recent years, Dachuan District has been carrying out the social assistance work as a basic undertaking of the social security system, and has formulated a series of innovative policies and measures to benefit people’s livelihood, relieve people’s worries and warm people’s hearts. As a result, the district’s social assistance work has achieved remarkable results, and the goal of building an all-inclusive assistance network, conducting scientific and standardized operation procedures, and providing assistance for more needy people has been preliminarily realized. It has contributed greatly to ensuring the wellbeing of the people and improving their lives, promoting social fairness and justice, and maintaining social harmony and stability.

1.2.1 Establish and improve the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System, and ensure that more needy people are covered by the system

In 2015, Dachuan District promulgated *Measures for Examination and Approval of the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System in Dachuan District of Dazhou City and Measures for Supervision and Administration of Examination and Approval of the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee in Dachuan District, Dazhou City*. In 2018, Dachuan District’s urban Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard was raised to RMB 520 per month for each person, and its rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard was raised to RMB 330 per month for each person. Up to now, 9,939 low-income families and 15,332 people in urban areas and 36,414 low-income families and 63,377 people in rural areas have been granted Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance. The urban and rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances granted in 2018 reached RMB 165 million. In order to further standardize management, Dachuan District and relevant departments jointly rolled out a series of policies and measures to improve the qualification requirements of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances, standardize examination and approval procedures, strengthen the dynamic management of assistance targets, establish and further improve the dynamic adjustment mechanism of the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard, explore to establish a financial condition verification mechanism for the families applying for assistance, and strengthen supervision over policy implementation. These polices and measures have effectively guaranteed the basic livelihood of the needy people in urban and rural areas.

1.2.2 Further improve the support system for the people living in dire poverty to ensure their affordability for life’s necessities

In 2017, Dachuan District determined that the 191 urban “Sanwu” people who had been entitled to Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances were integrated into the scope of the extreme poverty relief system. Since July 2017, the monthly basic living standards of decentralized and centralized support for extremely poor people in urban areas were raised to RMB 500 and RMB 600, while those for extremely poor people in rural areas were raised to RMB 400 and RMB 500. From January 1, 2018, the nursing care funds for extremely poor people have been granted at three levels: those without self-care abilities are granted RMB 400 per month for each person; those with partial self-care abilities are granted RMB 200 per month for each person; and those with self-care abilities are granted RMB 50 per month for each person. Those without self-care ability are first to receive centralized support in support institutions, and those scattered are cared for by their village (neighborhood) committees. At present, 138 people without self-care abilities are receiving help in support institutions, accounting for 24% of all the people receiving centralized support. Dachuan District currently supports 5895 extremely poor people, and the support funds granted to them in 2018 reached over RMB 36 million.

1.2.3 Further strengthen the medical assistance system, which has greatly relieved the burden over the needy people

First of all, increase fiscal input. Dachuan District further increases investing supporting funds in medical assistance. The District Finance Bureau releases sufficient financial and medical aid funds at its level based on estimated capital demands and financial subsidies from the higher authority. Secondly, expand the scope of medical assistance. Assistance targets are extended from key objects such as those entitled to Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances, people living in dire poverty, severely disabled people, and key entitled groups, to include registered poor people, the elderly and juveniles in low-income families, people suffering from major and serious diseases, and families that have fallen into poverty because of illnesses. Thirdly, grant key assistance targets for medical insurance. Since the establishment of the medical insurance system, Dachuan District has fully granted assistance targets for medical assistance.

1.2.4 Further standardize the temporary assistance system, and the undertaking of “helping those in urgent needs” has achieved remarkable results

Improve the temporary living assistance system and work hard to solve the emergency and temporary living difficulties encountered by the low-income people. Further increase fiscal input, allocate sufficient budget for temporary assistance funds, and coordinate the spending of funds at provincial, municipal and district levels. Adhere to the principle of providing assistance for more needy people, and incorporate those suffering from sudden, urgent and temporary living difficulties into the assistance scope. Enhance the assistance level and improve the standard of assistance for families falling into poverty due to major and serious diseases, children living in difficult circumstances, the severely disabled people and other needy people.

2. Progress of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Dachuan District, Dazhou City

2.1 Subject and Focus of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Dachuan District, Dazhou City

Dachuan District’s comprehensive reform of social assistance is themed on “Targeted and Combined Social Assistance”. The key contents of the reform are as follows: innovating the methods for identification and examination and approval of assistance targets to achieve targeted assistance; improving the “On-demand Assistance” system to realize universal coverage of assistance for the poor people; coordinating assistance resources and providing combined assistance; introducing social resources to help the needy people.

2.2 Roadmap and Measures of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Dachuan District, Dazhou City

2.2.1 Innovate the methods for identification and examination and approval of assistance targets to achieve targeted assistance

Firstly, further integrate the information to be verified by the banking sector on the major assistance platform for unified verification in addition to those to be verified by the twenty-seven financial information verification departments. Secondly, develop a new software system of information verification. Thirdly, integrate the application, information verification, and examination and approval procedures of various assistance matters on the major assistance platform for unified processing. Fourthly, strengthen social assistance publicity, and adopt innovative policy advocacy means through Weibo and Wechat Official Account in addition to traditional publicity methods.

2.2.2 Improve the “On-demand Assistance” system to realize universal coverage of assistance for the poor people

Provide “On-demand Assistance” for the poor people within the jurisdiction in full accordance with the system of “Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs”, i.e., any resident within the jurisdiction that encounters difficulties and meets any of the assistance requirements in the “Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs” would be granted assistance funds. This measure has helped prevent “bundled assistance”, i.e., only low income people are entitled to other assistance.

2.2.3 Coordinate assistance resources and carry out integrated assistance

Take full advantage of the major social assistance platform, and integrate the forty assistance matters undertaken by the twelve assistance departments, namely, the Civil Affairs Bureau, Mass-benefiting Assistance Center, Disabled Persons' Federation, Federation of Trade Unions, Red Cross Society, Health and Family Planning Commission, Science and Education Department, Department of Housing and Construction, Human Resources and Social Security Bureau, Women's Federation, Youth League Committee, and Ministry of Justice on the platform for unified processing. Integrate the information of twenty-seven verification departments including the Vehicle Administration Office, Housing Management Office, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Public Security, and Social Security Bureau on the major platform for precise verification.

2.2.4 Introduce social resources to help the needy people

Firstly, further expand the sources of assistance funds. In addition to financial capital, further attract social funds such as non-government capital and social organizations' funds as supplement to social assistance funds under the leadership of party committee and dominance of the government. Secondly, link to legal reciprocal public platforms. Link to and take full advantage of legal reciprocal platforms with wide public participation (e.g., Qingsongchou, Shuidichou, etc.) on the basis of government assistance, and raise social funds for social assistance. Thirdly, further enhance joint assistance efforts. The Verification Office advocates providing joint assistance for assistance applicants on the basis of accurate verification.

2.2.5 Further connect the databases of all verification sectors to achieve data sharing between the Verification Office and other verification sectors

Shorten the application and verification process of the applicants and service staff, and provide more accurate and efficient services.

3. Effects of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Dachuan District, Dazhou City

Under the careful guidance of leaders from the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Provincial Department of Civil Affairs and the Social Security Expert Team of Nanjing University, Dachuan District acts on the important statements regarding “strengthening the construction of the social security system” and “firmly winning the tough fight of poverty alleviation” in the report of the 19th CPC National Congress, adheres to the people-centered development concept, establishes and implements the innovative system of “Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs”, builds a major online

platform of social assistance based on the “Internet +” concept, and actively introduces and integrates assistance resources. Consequently, Dachuan District has achieved the goal of targeted identification, on-demand assistance, and targeted poverty alleviation of social assistance targets, and has successfully built a social assistance mechanism featuring scientific standards, precise identification of targets, fair treatment, orderly process and overall coordination. So far, Dachuan District has basically completed its pilot work for comprehensive reform on social assistance and has achieved remarkable results.

3.1 Build a Major Platform of Social Assistance Based on the “Internet +” Concept

The “Internet+” social assistance platform aims to establish a social assistance platform connecting the online and offline business. On the one hand, “Internet+” social assistance platform has the function to integrate the social assistance information, and could consolidate the information foundation for social assistance through information integration and analysis; and on the other hand, social assistance service platform is also a service providing platform, and it realizes the optimization of social assistance service supply through the intelligentization of integrated declaration, check, examination and approval. The establishment of the social assistance platform makes the social assistance check more accurate and efficient, and embodies the trend of that the social assistance comprehensive reform develops towards informatization, refinement and intelligentization.

Firstly, integrate the information to be verified by the banking sector on the major assistance platform. Dachuan District has creatively built a major on-line platform of social assistance. The information of flow-income families’ financial conditions to be verified by twenty-seven verification departments in the district has been integrated on the platform for unified verification. On this basis, Dachuan District further integrated the information to be verified by the Rural Commercial Bank on the platform in October 2018. In this way, relevant department can accurately review the information of the families that are granted assistance funds such as family income, business registration history, social insurance, motor vehicles, housing information, and bank deposits.

Secondly, develop a new software system of information verification. In December 2018, Dachuan District developed a new software system of information verification based on the verification system of the social assistance platform. The new software system supports information data sharing between various departments as well as automatic verification, which has effectively solved the issue of heavy workload of background manual verification in each department and improved the efficiency of verification.

Thirdly, perform on-line examination and approval for all the matters of social assistance. The application, information verification, and examination and approval of the forty assistance matters undertaken by the twelve assistance departments in the district are integrated on the major platform of social assistance for unified processing. Meanwhile, the platform implements application-approval separation and traces management. Town (subdistrict)-level sectors need no longer to submit paper documents to relevant district-level departments, making paperless office operations possible for all relevant procedures.

Fourthly, publicize the social assistance work in an innovative manner. In addition to measures such as posting relevant documents on social assistance bulletin boards in towns (subdistricts) and villages (communities) and giving out brochures on the social assistance work, Dachuan District launched its Wechat Official Account for social assistance work in August 2018. It utilizes the platform to publicize social assistance policies, forward information about the higher authority’s social assistance work, release dynamic information of its own social assistance work, disclose information of the social assistance targets in the district, and accept oversight by the public.

3.2 Creatively Establish the System of “Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs”, Realizing Universal Coverage of Assistance for the Poor people

The system of “Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs” which are innovatively established by Dachuan District mainly include: the assistance to the households suffering from fire disaster, the assistance to the households suffering from natural disasters, the solatium to the family members of the personnel having died of disasters, the assistance for special types of diseases, the assistance to vagrants and beggars, the assistance aiming at the “three difficulties” of key entitled groups, the allowances for the elderly of advanced age, special assistance to the disabled people, the assistance to poverty-stricken people with mental diseases, and temporary assistance for living. Every system has made clear the assistance objects, assistance standards and assistance procedures, basically realizing the overall coverage of assistance for difficulties in the whole district, and implementing assistance on demand and targeted assistance to the people in difficulties in the whole district. All people encountering difficulties in jurisdiction and meeting any assistance conditions of the “Top Ten People’s Livelihood Assistance Systems” will be provided with assistance, avoiding the “bundle assistance” that only minimum livelihood guarantee objects could enjoy the other assistance. Here, the “system of assistance to the households suffering from fire disaster” among the “Top Ten People’s Livelihood Assistance Systems” is taken as an example. The assistance objects are the families whose houses are burnt for fire disasters, but which have a registered permanent residence in this district (except for the families which have two and more houses). Assistance standard: The first is to grant temporary life salvage money. As per the number of persons living at home when a fire disaster occurs, the temporary life salvage money of RMB500 will be granted in lump sum for each person. The second is to grant the salvage money for house rebuilding, which shall be RMB5,000/ household to the key entitled groups, five guarantees families, minimum livelihood guarantee households, and disabled people of grade two and above, and RMB3,000/ household to the other objects among the totally burnt-down households; and RMB1,500/ household to commonly burnt-down households. As for the “system of assistance for special types of diseases” among the “Top Ten People’s Livelihood Assistance Systems”, the assistance objects are the patients of local registered permanent residence (excluding the on-job and retired employees of the national organs, enterprises and public institutions; and excluding the personnel who have been healed or died after medical treatment) and diagnosed to suffer from cancers by medical institutions of grade two and class A and higher level (limited to the hospitals in the present district), and the patients of local registered permanent residence (excluding the on-job and retired employees of the national organs, enterprises and public institutions; and excluding the personnel who have been healed or died after medical treatment) and diagnosed to suffer from leukemia or uremia by medical institutions of grade three and higher grade. The assistance standard is RMB10,000 in lump sum to every patient with leukemia or uremia every year, and RMB2,000 in lump sum to every patient with cancer every year. Since the starting of the pilot work of assistance since July 2018, more than 80,000 people in Dachuan District have been benefited by the “Top Ten People’s Livelihood Assistance Systems”, and more than RMB56,000,000 has been granted for assistance.

3.3 Integrate Assistance Resources to Realize “Addressing All Difficulties Confronted by Low-income Families”

Dachuan District integrates the information of low-income families’ financial conditions to be verified by twenty-seven verification departments such as the Vehicle Administration Office, Housing Management Office, Social Security Bureau, and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce on the social assistance platform for unified verification. Besides, it integrates forty assistance matters, such as Minimum Livelihood Guarantee, assistance for people in urgent needs, student subsidies, and housing allowances to be undertaken by the twelve assistance departments including

the Civil Affairs Bureau, Health and Family Planning Commission, Science and Education Department, and Department of Housing and Construction on the platform for unified processing. It sets up social assistance windows at town (subdistrict)-level sectors, through which all matters concerning social assistance are handled. The needy people are required to submit their applications and relevant materials through the social assistance windows of the towns (subdistricts) where their residence is registered for only once. Information verification and examination and approval of social assistance are accomplished on the platform by relevant departments. The needy people need no longer to visit various departments in their counties over and over again. Instead, those who are eligible for social assistance receive their grant directly by bank transfer, and those who are not eligible will be notified by telephone, on the on-line platform or the WeChat Official Account. Since the launch of the pilot project of social assistance in July 2018, Dachuan District has processed and concluded over 75,000 assistance matters and granted over RMB 72 million in assistance funds through the major platform of social assistance.

3.4 Actively Introduce Social Resources to Help the Needy People

Firstly, further expand the sources of assistance funds. In addition to financial capital, Dachuan District further attracts social funds such as non-government capitals and social organizations' funds for social assistance. In September 2018, Dachuan District introduced one enterprise to engage in providing pension service for the needy; Since July 2018, Dachuan District has raised RMB 1.6 million in charity funds for social assistance. Secondly, link to the donation platform "Shuidichou". In August 2018, Dachuan District's social assistance platform was successfully linked to the donation platform "Shuidichou". So far, 56 patients with major diseases in the district have received more than RMB 3.5 million in assistance funds through "Shuidichou". Thirdly, provide joint assistance for the needy people. After verifying the information of the needy people who apply for particular assistance and their family members, the social assistance platform would then seek advice and help from other departments for the applicants and their family members and provide joint assistance for them according to their poverty status, verification results, and assistance policies. Joint assistance helps realize the maximum benefit of assistance and solve difficulties through multiple channels. Since August 2018, a total of 25 needy people in the whole district have accidentally received many other assistance when applying for particular assistance.

4. Experience of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Dachuan District, Dazhou City

4.1. Typical Measures of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Dachuan District, Dazhou City

4.1.1 Creatively build a major platform of social assistance to provide "fast, efficient, targeted, comprehensive, fair, and transparent" assistance

The platform integrates forty assistance matters undertaken by twelve assistance departments and the information verification work undertaken by twenty-seven relevant departments into the system for unified processing. It sets up windows for social assistance at town (subdistrict)-level sectors, through which all matters concerning social assistance are handled. The needy people are required to submit their applications and relevant materials through the social assistance windows of the towns (subdistricts) where their residence is registered for only once. Those who are eligible for social assistance receive their grant directly by bank transfer, and those who are not eligible will be notified by telephone, on the on-line platform or the WeChat Official Account. Meanwhile, the assistance procedures are simplified. In the past, assistance applicants were required to submit twelve materials including certificates for vehicles, houses and social insurance when applying for Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances. They now need only to provide three materials, namely, personal application form, identity card and authorization letter for information verification. In doing so, the goal of "the platform system helping reduce the frequency of running

errands by the assistance targets” is truly realized, and the issues confronted by low-income families can be effectively addressed. Besides, Dachuan District is also able to provide “fast, efficient, targeted, comprehensive, fair, and transparent” assistance. This practice was recorded in *Information Report of the Secretary Bureau of the General Office of the State Council*, and was published by *People’s Daily*, *China Society News*, *China News*, and *Special Issue on the Two Sessions*. It was appraised by the Ministry of Civil Affairs as “An Outstanding Innovative Practice of Social Assistance in China”. It was also exhibited in the First Digital China Summit as an achievement of innovative practices. The Site Meeting on Social Assistance Work of Sichuan Province was held in Dachuan District, during which attending leaders from the Provincial Civil Affairs Bureau and the civil affairs bureaus of other cities (prefectures) visited the Dachuan District Social Assistance Service Center (an institution directly affiliated to Dachuan District Civil Affairs Bureau), and the social assistance windows of “addressing all difficulties confronted by low-income families” of Sanliping Subdistrict and Heshi Town. They also conducted an on-the-spot investigation on the management and operation of the major social assistance platform built in Dachuan District.

4.1.2 Creatively establish the system “Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs” to provide on-demand assistance for the poor people

Dachuan District’s social assistance work has been implemented unevenly for a long time. Whether to grant assistance relies solely on grass-roots cadres’ individual judgment. Due to factors such as varied abilities of grass-roots cadres and their consideration of interpersonal relations, inequalities of social assistance occur sometimes. As a result, some needy people who are eligible for assistance receive no or insufficient assistance, while others who do not live a hard life but have a close relationship with cadres or are good at making troubles actually receive assistance. The mass are very dissatisfied with the phenomenon. Some poor people who cannot receive timely assistance often visit the District Committee and District Government to reflect the problems. With the introduction of the system of “Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs”, the appeals of the poor people are addressed at the rural grass-roots sectors. As a result, the appeals of the mass have been reduced by more than 80%. At present, few people directly go to the District Committee for reflecting their problems. Meanwhile, the “Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs” are also a “regulator” in resolving social contradictions. After the “Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs” are released, those who have been eligible for Minimum Livelihood Guarantee and new rural cooperative medical care can not only continue to receive these assistance, but also be granted additional subsidy under these systems. When encountering difficulties, the needy people can easily identify suitable assistance types and standards for them among these assistance systems. In this way, both the mass and the grass-roots cadres are more clear about and know how to deal with the social assistance system. The mass need only to notify the village cadres of their difficulties, and the rest errands are all accomplished by the latter. Next, the cadres submit relevant materials to the town (subdistrict)-level cadres who are responsible for matters related to the “Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs”, who then directly perform examination and approval or timely submit the matters to the District People-benefited Assistance Center for examination and approval. In this way, the needy people are granted assistance funds very soon.

4.2 Promotable Experience of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Dachuan District, Dazhou City

By adhering to the principle of “benefiting, serving and caring the people”, Dachuan District in Dazhou City has creatively established the system of “Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs” and provided on-demand assistance to realize universal coverage of assistance for the needy people. On this basis, Dachuan District builds a major platform of social assistance according to the “Internet +” concept, and integrates forty assistance matters undertaken by twelve assistance departments

including the Civil Affairs Bureau, Health and Family Planning Commission, Science and Education Department, and Department of Housing and Construction on the platform, and the information of low-income families' financial conditions to be verified by twenty-seven verification departments on the platform for unified processing. The platform makes business cooperation among different assistance departments possible, integrates relevant social assistance resources, and effectively constructs a mode featuring remote processing, system exchange, online supervision and WeChat interaction. Consequently, a convenient, efficient, targeted, comprehensive, fair, and transparent social assistance platform is truly built up. The above measures have produced a result of "1+1>2", effectively addressed the issues of coordinated and reached the "last mile" of social assistance, and improved the accessibility, transparency, and public satisfaction of social assistance work.

Practice has proved that Dachuan District's success in comprehensive reform on social assistance is a correct answer to the epochal topic of building a service-oriented government to the people's satisfaction proposed in the 19th National Congress of the CPC, corresponded with the real requirements of deepening the reform of "streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services" and transforming government functions, and responded to the realistic needs of the people in the new era for a better life. Its success provides a replicable and propagable experience for the establishment of a satisfactory social assistance system for the people in need.

Glossary

Overall deployment of "12235": Build an overall well-off society, keeping the pace with the city, the province and the country, and achieve "one vision" of establishing a happy and beautiful Dachuan; take the strict governance of the CPC and the eradication of poverty as the "two guides" of building an overall well-off society; take urban development and industrial development as the "two major breakthroughs"; take the joint support of "one nuclear urban area, two deputy-centers, three economic areas, and diverse township economies", urbanization and industrialization interaction and urban-rural integration, reform and opening and innovation promotion" as the "three major strategies"; take strengthening the industrial development, promoting urbanization, laying a solid foundation, facilitating the development of culture and tourism, and improving the rule of law and public security as the "five targets".

The system of "Ten Livelihood Assistance Programs": In order to effectively address the difficulties of the poor people, improve and perfect the social assistance system, standardize social assistance administration and integrate social assistance resources, Dachuan has introduced a social assistance system including ten assistance programs. The system includes the assistance to the households suffering from fire disaster, the assistance to the households suffering from natural disasters, the solatium to the family members of the personnel having died of disasters, the assistance for special types of diseases, the assistance to vagrants and beggars, the assistance aiming at the "three difficulties" of key entitled groups, the allowances for the elderly of advanced age, special assistance to the disabled people, the assistance to poverty-stricken people with mental diseases, and temporary assistance for living.

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Appendix 3

**Summary Report on the Social Assistance Comprehensive
Reform Pilot in Da'an City**

Da'an Civil Affairs Bureau

1. General Situation of Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Da'an City

1.1 Overview of Economic and Social Development in Da'an City

Da'an City, located in the northwest of Jilin Province, is a county-level city affiliated to Baicheng City of Jinlin Province. It has 5 subdistricts, 10 towns and 8 villages under its jurisdiction. The city covers an area of 4,879 square kilometers, and has a population of 430,000. Its regional GDP for 2017 reached up to RMB 14,127 million. In 2016, the per capita disposable income and per capita consumption expenditure of urban residents in Da'an City were RMB 20,008 and RMB 11,196 respectively, while those of rural residents in Da'an City were RMB 8,130 and RMB 7,344 respectively.

(1) Per capita GDP. In 2016, China's per capita GDP was RMB 53,817, whereas Da'an's per capita GDP was RMB 36,069, or 67% of the national average.

(2) Per capita disposable income of rural residents. In 2016, China's per capita disposable income of rural residents was RMB 12,363, and that of rural residents in Da'an City was RMB 8,130, or 66% of the national average.

(3) Per capita consumption expenditure of rural residents. In 2016, China's per capita consumption expenditure of rural residents was RMB 10,130, and that of rural residents in Da'an City was RMB 7,344, or 72% of the national average.

(4) Per capita disposable income of urban residents. In 2016, China's per capita disposable income of urban residents in China was RMB 33,616, and that of urban residents in Da'an City was RMB 20,008, or 60% of the national average.

(5) Per capita consumption expenditure of urban residents. In 2016, China's per capita consumption expenditure of urban residents was RMB 23,097, and that of urban residents in Da'an City was RMB 11,196, or 48% of the national average.

In short, Da'an City's level of social economy and people's livelihood is significantly below the national level in respect of many indicators. Therefore, the comprehensive reform of social assistance in Da'an City can fully test the applicability of social assistance policies to poverty-stricken areas.

1.2 General Situation of Social Assistance Progress in Da'an City

1.2.1 Construction of social assistance system

In July 2014, the Da'an Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Da'an Municipal People's Government issued *Opinions on Implementation of Extreme Poverty Relief Project and Deepening of Social Assistance Work* (DF [2014] No. 10). In the same month, the Da'an Municipal People's Government issued *Opinions on Helping Those in Urgent Need* (DZF [2014] No. 15), *Implementation Scheme of "Acceptance in One Department for Coordinated Handling" Work of Social Assistance in Da'an City* (DZBF [2014] No. 40). In November 2014, the Da'an Municipal People's Government issued *Implementation of "Detailed Rules of Interim Measures of Social Assistance" in Da'an City* (DZF [2014] No. 89). In April 2015, the Da'an Municipal People's Government issued *Implementation Measures of Temporary Assistance Work in Da'an City* (DZBF [2015] No. 13). In July 2014 and February 2017, the Commission Office of Public Sectors Reform of Da'an City and the Da'an Municipal People's Government issued *Notice on Establishment of the Joint Conference System of Social Assistance in Da'an City* (DB Zi [2014] No. 16) and *Notice on Establishment of the Joint Conference System of Subsistence Allowances for the Poverty-stricken Population in Da'an City* (DZBH [2017] No. 12) respectively. The construction of Da'an City's social assistance system has been basically completed, which offered system guarantee for coordinating social assistance resources, giving full play to the effects of social assistance work and properly solving various difficulties encountered by the poor people.

In July 2014, the Da'an Municipal People's Government Office issued *Implementation Measures of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System in Da'an City* (DZF [2014] No. 44), which

expressly specifies the standards, qualifications, approval conditions, classified implementation, and supervision and management of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System in the administrative region of Da'an City, and thus guarantees the scientificity, normalization, as well as openness, fairness and justice of the minimum living guarantee work at the system level.

In November 2017, the Da'an Municipal People's Government Office issued *Implementation Scheme for Identification, Relief and Support of People in Urgent Needs* (DZBF [2017] No. 23). The document clearly specifies the requirements and procedures for identification of people in urgent needs, assistance content, standard and form, contract management, and supporting measures in the administrative region of Da'an City. In doing so, an assistance and support system for people in urgent needs with clear boundary and detailed specifications is hence established.

1.2.2 Construction of social assistance mechanism

Since the enforcement of *Interim Measures of Social Assistance*, Da'an City in May 2014 has successively issued *Notice on Establishment of the Joint Conference System of Social Assistance in Da'an City* and *Notice on Establishment of the Joint Conference System of Basic Living Security for the Poverty-stricken Population*. Following that, it established the joint conference system and identified the functions, responsibilities of member units, member lists and working rules of the conference. These measures have strengthened the leadership over basic livelihood guarantee work and interdepartmental cooperation, and provided system guarantee for resolving various issues in relation to basic livelihood security confronted by the poor people in a coordinated manner. Da'an City has, based on the joint conference systems of social assistance and of basic living security for the poverty-stricken population, convened 17 joint sessions which were frequently attended by main leaders of the municipal committee and the municipal government, and 102 liaison meetings which involved a total of 37 towns (subdistricts or stations) and departments on an annual basis, during which 62 policies were used. Besides, an average of 310 issues relating to social assistance were handled annually, 87 of which involved helping people in urgent needs. As a result, an average of 1,021 people in urban and rural areas received social assistance annually. Results show that Da'an City has effectively acted on the policy requirements of "helping the most in need, building a tightly woven safety net, and building the necessary institutions" of social assistance.

In July 2014, the Da'an Municipal People's Government Office issued *Implementation Scheme of the Social Assistance Work of "Acceptance in One Department for Coordinated Handling" in Da'an City* (DZBF [2014] No. 40). The document clearly stipulates functions of relevant departments and the time limits of procedures such as "documents transfer", "procedures transfer" and "referral". It brings convenience for properly settling social assistance issues for the poor population and helping those in urgent needs. Da'an City has also built the "acceptance in one department" platform of social assistance in the Comprehensive Service Hall of Social Assistance Center and the convenience service halls at the village and town (subdistrict or station) levels, to uniformly handle matters such as supporting people in urgent needs, and the basic living security, medical assistance, temporary assistance, educational subsidies, housing assistance and employment services, as well as assistance matters for which applicants are uncertain which management departments to apply to. In recent years, Da'an City has dealt with an average of 1,077 social assistance cases annually on the "acceptance in one department for coordinated handling" platform, among which 404 were transferred or referred to other departments. It has demonstrated that the role of "acceptance in one department for coordinated handling" mechanism has been well exerted, which enables the needy people to identify relevant departments to apply for assistance and receive assistance subsidies in a timely manner.

1.2.3 Implementation of social assistance

In 2018, Da'an City adjusted its urban Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard to RMB 480 per month, and its corresponding rural standard to RMB 3600 per year, realizing

unification of rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard and national poverty alleviation standard. Da'an City has granted urban Minimum Livelihood Guarantee to 8,557 households and 12,732 people, whose per capita subsidy reached RMB 326.2 per month. Moreover, 19,900 households and 33,032 people were granted rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances in Da'an City, whose per capita subsidy reached RMB 2,420 for each year. A total of 1,806 people in urgent needs have received assistance and support in Da'an City. The basic living standard for people in urgent needs in rural areas was RMB 347 each month, and that in urban areas was RMB 572 each month. The three standards of care and nursing were set as RMB 148, RMB 296 and RMB 444 each month. Da'an City has provided temporary assistance to an annual average of 3,019 needy households in urban and rural areas, and allocated RMB 6.7 million of relief funds for them.

2. Progress of Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Da'an City

2.1 Subject and Focus of Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Da'an City

In 2018, Da'an City was designated by the Ministry of Civil Affairs as one of the four pilot counties (cities) for the comprehensive reform of social assistance in the "EU-China Social Protection Reform Project". Under the guidance of the Social Assistance Expert Group of the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Provincial Civil Affairs Bureau, Da'an City has finished its investigation on social assistance baseline data, based on which it has determined the subject of the pilot project for the comprehensive reform of social assistance in Da'an City, namely, "Comprehensive Reform for On-demand Assistance in Rural Areas". The Municipal Government Office has formulated *Pilot Work Program for Comprehensive Reform of Social Assistance in the Experimental Area of Da'an City* (DZBF [2018] No. 68). Four pilot subjects of the comprehensive reform of social assistance have been identified, which are respectively "perfecting the mechanism of establishing subsistence allowance standards, introducing working capacity index into comprehensive evaluation and quantitative identification of assistance targets, establishing a gradient assistance mode, and delegating the examination and approval authority on urban and rural subsistence allowances to township governments". Furthermore, Da'an City has built its pilot work leadership group for the comprehensive reform of social assistance. The group is headed by the vice-mayor-in-charge, and consists of 48 government departments. The city has also built 4 teams working on the pilot subjects to vigorously promote the pilot work.

2.2 Roadmap and Measures of Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Da'an City

Firstly, build the model of "subsistence allowance standard" and establish the mechanism of determining the "subsistence allowance standard". According to *Notice on Strengthening the Links Between Rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System and the Poverty Relief and Development Policies Issued by the Jilin Provincial People's Government and Other Departments* (JZBF [2016] No. 81) forwarded by the Jilin Provincial People's Government, the rural low-income people and registered poor households should be guaranteed to receive assistance in terms of "Two No Worries" and "Three Guarantees", and the role of the rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee system to guarantee the basic livelihood and help the most in need should be well exerted. On this basis, Da'an City defines a major focus of its pilot reform project, namely, striving to add "Three Guarantees" to the rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard in addition to the original "Two No Worries", while adding "Others" as mediation coefficients. In this way, Da'an City has preliminarily determined its rural subsistence allowance standard in the post-poverty era which consists of "Two No Worries", "Three Guarantees" and "Others".

Specific methods are as follows. Among the eight items of "Household Consumption Expenditure" under the category of "People's Living Standard" listed in *Da'an City Statistical Yearbook*, "Food" and "Clothing" are classified as "Two No Worries" items; "Living", "Education, Culture and Entertainment" and "Medical Care" are classified as "Three Guarantees" items; and

“Household Items and Services”, “Transportation and Communication” and “Other Items and Services” are classified as “Others” items. The subsistence allowance standard shall be 100% of “Two No Worries” items, plus 20% of “Three Guarantees” items, and 10% of “Others” items (China’s current Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard is determined as 35% of the mean value of per capita consumption expenditure).

In order to further study and verify the rationality of the model, Da’an City gave out another 5,000 questionnaires this year to 11 groups of people, including “registered rural poor households, households enjoying the minimum living guarantee, low-income people, farmers, migrant workers, employees of enterprises and institutions”, in addition to the 2,000 questionnaires given out last year.

Secondly, set and introduce “working capacity index” for the comprehensive evaluation and quantitative identification of assistance targets. In order to set “working capacity index”, it is necessary to take into account the gender, age, health conditions and other related factors of members of the families applying for assistance and to define different coefficients for each of them. According to *Labor Capacity Appraisal Standard* (published by China Labor and Social Security Publishing House in 2007 and jointly established by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and the Ministry of Health of the People’s Republic of China), the health condition is divided into 11 grades, and the corresponding health coefficients are set as 1, 0.9, 0.8, 0.7, 0.6, 0.5, 0.4, 0.3, 0.2, 0.1 and 0 respectively. According to the statutory age of retirement (60 years of age in China), international practice (65 years of age) and the actual situation in Da’an City (before 70 years of age and with partial work capacity), the age coefficients are set as 1 (18-60 years of age), 0.6 (60-65 years of age), 0.2 (65-70 years of age), 0 (1-18 years of age and over 70 years of age) for different age groups. Besides, the age coefficients for men and women are 1 and 0.8 respectively.

(Individual Working Capacity Index = Health Coefficient * Age Coefficient * Gender Coefficient. Household Working Capacity Index = the Sum of all Family Members’ Working Capacity Index / Number of Family Members.)

Setting “working capacity index” and applying them to calculating the income of the families applying for assistance and their assistance subsidies help quantify non-intuitive revenues such as farming income and migrant workers’ income, make income calculation and quantitative identification more scientific and reasonable, and promote targeted identification of the needy people. It provides technical support and makes it possible for eliminating the issue of “supporting lazy people” of the rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee system, improving the level of assistance for the elderly, young, sick and disabled poor people, and promoting positive motivation and identifying specific needs. A sample calculation was carried out for 246 low-income families in Changfa Village of Lianhe Township, Mayingzi Village of Honggangzi Township, and Xiping Village of Shaoguo Town which were selected randomly from the pilot townships (towns).

Thirdly, establish the gradient assistance mode of social assistance based on the “poverty level + individual demands” and “poverty urgency level”. Define assistance needs based on factors such as poverty degree, health conditions and urgency level according to the pattern of “household-based evaluation and identification and person-based program and standard determination”, and establish a gradient assistance mode by which the system application order will be determined according to the social assistance target identification index system and institution implementation mechanism based on “poverty level + individual demands”, and the “poverty urgency level”. Establish the order of applying basic livelihood assistance prior to special assistance, and build a gradient assistance mode of “basic livelihood assistance” - “basic livelihood assistance + temporary assistance” - “basic livelihood assistance + temporary assistance + special assistance”. The model offers different assistance opportunities and different levels of assistance subsidies indirectly to different groups in respect of basic living guarantee; precisely refines the increased allowance standard for different

groups, and thus realizes classification and gradation in terms of classified implementation of basic living security; and realizes precise targeting and gradient arrangement in the follow-up of special assistance system and the arrangement of the entire assistance system.

Fourthly, explore to establish the mechanism of “supervision at city level, examination and approval at township level and review at village level” through the municipal government delegating power to township (town) people’s government. According to Da’an City’s pilot work schedule and the work schedule of rural minimum living security for the third quarter of 2019, it is expected that by July 2019 Da’an Municipal Government will delegate the authority on examination and approval of low-income families to township people’s governments, and explore to establish the mechanism of supervision at city level, examination and approval at township level and review at village level, thus achieving the goal of delegating examination and approval authority.

At present, Da’an City has clarified the management responsibilities at the city, township and village levels respectively. The municipal civil affairs department is assigned 11 responsibilities, namely, policy and planning formulation, determination and adjustment of subsistence allowance standards, capital management, supervision and inspection, business training, implementation of major assistance projects, letters and visits handling, performance evaluation, information disclosure, electronic archives storage, and information verification. Town-level civil affairs departments are assigned 8 responsibilities, namely, policy guidance, business training, information disclosure, letters and visits handling, supervision and inspection, examining and approving social assistance targets, archives management, and dynamic management. Village-level sectors are assigned 10 responsibilities, namely, policy publicity, information disclosure, application acceptance, information collection, documents submittal for verification, households verification, pre-examination and appraisal, examination results announcement, real-time monitoring, proactive identification, which provides system guarantee for delegating the examination and approval authority of rural Livelihood Guarantee allowances for the next step.

3. Effects of Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Da’an City

3.1 Mechanism of Determining the Subsistence Allowance Standard

Build the model of “subsistence allowance standard” and establish the mechanism of determining the “subsistence allowance standard”. It was estimated by using the simulation method that the subsistence allowance standards for the low-income people in rural areas of Da’an City for 2016, 2107 and 2018 were RMB 2,962, RMB 3,494 and RMB 3,587 respectively, or 110%, 109% and 99.6% of the national poverty alleviation standard respectively for the same period. The facts proved that the rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standards in Da’an City from 2016 to 2018 covered all the items in “Two No Worries” and “Three Guarantees”, and thus realized unification of rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard and national poverty alleviation standard. During the poverty alleviation period, the subsistence allowance standard should be no lower than China’s existing poverty alleviation standards (data from Jilin Province). Upon completion of the poverty alleviation, the subsistence allowance standard shall be as follows: if the new subsistence allowance standard is lower than the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard of 2020, the latter shall apply; if the new subsistence allowance standard is higher than the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard of 2020, the new standard shall apply.

Calculation Table of “Subsistence Allowance Standard” of Da’an City, Jilin Province in 2016-2018

Calculated by: Da’an Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau Calculated date: October 2018 Unit: RMB

Year of data	Expenditure components	Proportion of each component in the model							Year of subsistence allowance standard	Calculated standard of subsistence allowance	Actual standard of subsistence allowance	Remarks
		1	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.1				
2014	Two No Worries Food, clothing	2185.28				655.6	437.06	218.53	109.27			
	Three Guarantees Living, education, culture and entertainment, medical care	3434.01				1030	686.8	343.4	171.7			
	Others Household items and services, transportation and communication and other items and services	899.8				269.9	179.96	89.98	44.99	2016	2962	2700
2015	Two No Worries Food, clothing	2700.13				810	540.03	270.01	135.01			
	Three Guarantees Living, education, culture and entertainment, medical care	3301.64				990.5	660.33	330.16	165.08			
	Others Household items and services, transportation and communication and other items and services	1342.02				402.6	268.4	134.2	67.1	2017	3494	3200
2016	Two No Worries Food, clothing	2760.95				828.3	552.19	276.09	138.05			
	Three Guarantees Living, education, culture and entertainment, medical care	3323.55				997.1	664.71	332.36	166.18			
	Others Household items and services, transportation and communication and other items and services	1620.31				486.1	324.06	162.03	81.02	2018	3587	3600

Note: The above data is sourced from Da’an City Statistical Yearbook, Subsistence Allowance Standard = “Two No Worries” * 100% + “Three Guarantees” * 20% + “Others” * 10%

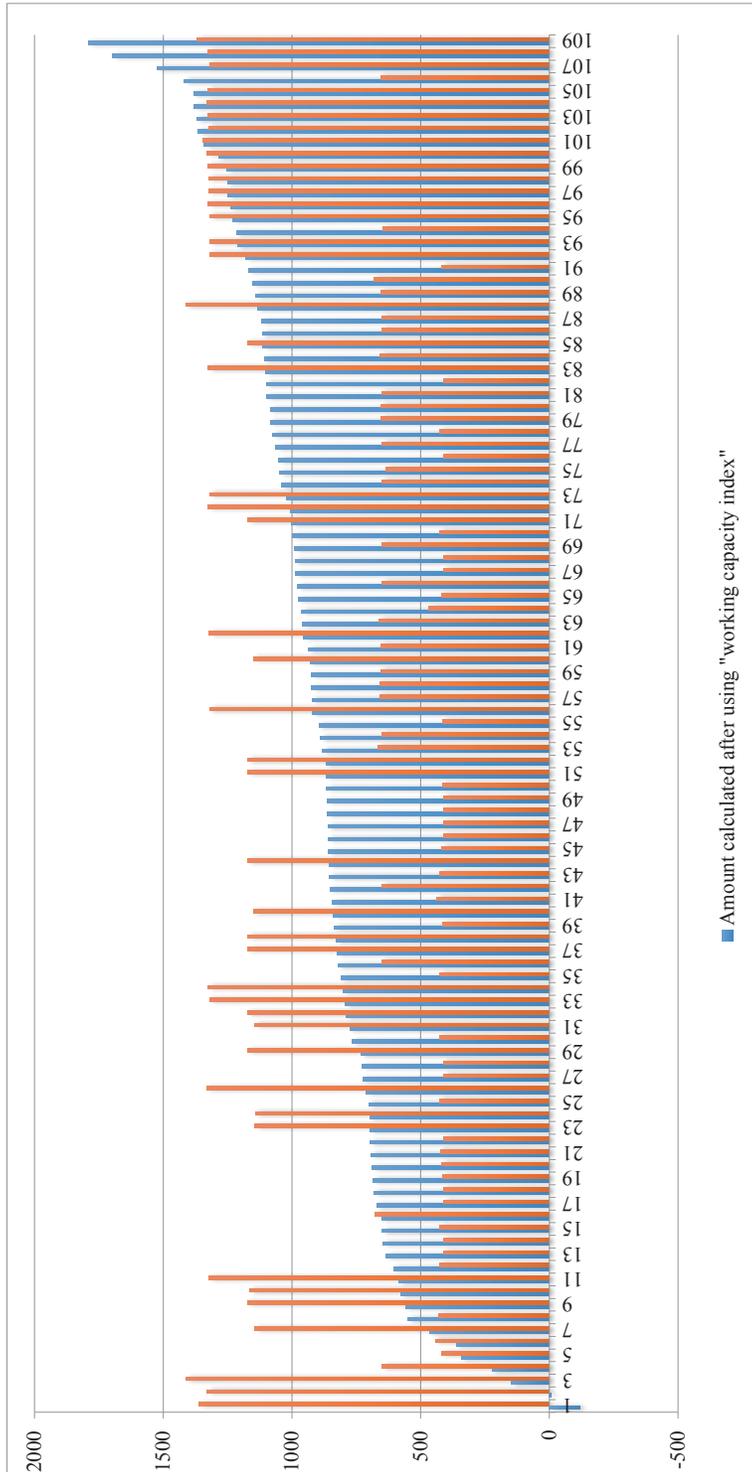
The questionnaires for sampling survey have also been recovered (among which 4,505 were valid, and 495 were invalid). According to the sampling analysis of the existing questionnaires, 89.2% of the respondents’ per capita consumption expenditure was slightly different from the model for each item; 2.6% of them had the former significantly lower than the latter; and 8.2% of them had the former significantly higher than the latter. Whether the current proportion of “Two No Worries”, “Three Guarantees” and “Others” is reasonable or not is undergone comprehensive analysis and study, the outcome of which will provide realistic reference basis for scientifically determining the “subsistence allowance standard” of Da’an City in the future.

3.2 Comprehensive Evaluation and Identification of Assistance Targets Based on “Working Capacity Index”

Set and introduce “working capacity index” for the comprehensive evaluation and quantitative identification of assistance targets. Da’an City carried out a sample calculation of 246 low-income families in Changfa Village of Lianhe Township, Mayingzi Village of Honggangzi Township, and Xiping Village of Shaoguo Town which were selected randomly from the pilot townships (towns). It has produced household-based tables of working capacity index for the calculation of family income and assistance subsidies of the families applying for assistance (including the table of “working capacity index” of applying families, the table of “estimated family income” of applying families, and the table of subsistence allowance and classified assistance of applying families calculated by using “working capacity index”). At present, the application and calculation of “working capacity index” for the pilot project in Changfa Village of Lianhe Township has been completed. The results of calculating the family income and assistance subsidies of the 109 low-income families in the village by using “working capacity index” are shown as follows: the assistance subsidies granted to 30 low-income families decreased (data analysis revealed that these families had higher income and a greater relative working capacity index); the subsidies granted to 62 low-income families then increased (data analysis revealed that these families had lower income and a smaller working capacity index); the assistance subsidies granted to 15 low-income families varied little (data analysis revealed that these families had higher income and a smaller working capacity index); and 2 low-income households were no longer eligible for subsistence allowances (data analysis revealed that these families had higher income and a greater working capacity index, and their per capita income was above the existing rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee standard in Da’an City). In the second quarter of 2019, the rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance granted by Changfa Village of Lianhe Township in Da’an City was RMB 90,939.25. If applying “working capacity index” to the calculation of low-income families’ income and assistance

subsidies, the amount should be RMB 99,492.85, a 9.4% increase from (or RMB 8,553.6 higher than) the former. The Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances granted to low-income families in the 223 villages of Da'an City for the second quarter of 2019, when calculated using the above method, would increase by RMB 1.907 million, and the amount for the whole year of 2019 would increase by RMB 7.63 million. The method further reflects the differentiation in assistance subsidies and thus raises the level of assistance for the elderly, young, sick and disabled poor people in the city.

Table 1. The comparison of the amount of subsistence allowances calculated before and after using "working capacity index"



calculation and determination of applying families' income and assistance subsidies. However, the establishment and application of "working capacity index" help remove the drawbacks of the inaccurate calculation of applying families' income and assistance subsidies. In this way, the latter's fairness and impartiality are improved significantly.

4. Experience of Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Da'an City

4.1. Typical Examples of Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Da'an City

4.1.1 Case study before using working capacity index

Case 1: Mr. Zhang, a 35-year-old man in Lianhe Township, suffers from second-degree speech disability. His wife Ms. Wang is 33 years old and in good health. Their daughter is 10 years old and currently attends primary school. Wang's family have 7 mu of arable land, and their income for contracting out the land in 2018 was RMB 3,200. Wang's wife Ms. Wang takes odd jobs for three months every year (She engages in household services during her daughter's winter and summer vacation).

The estimated revenue standard of a healthy workforce in domestic service industry is RMB 2,000 per month.

Zhang's wife Ms. Wang's annual wage = RMB 2,000 per month * 3 months = RMB 6,000.

Zhang's family's annual real income = land income of RMB 3,200 + wage income of RMB 6,000 = RMB 9,200.

Zhang's family's per capita income = RMB 9200 / 3 persons = RMB 3,067 per person.

Since Da'an City's rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard is RMB 3,600 per year for each person, Zhang's family is eligible for rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance and is thus granted household-based assistance subsidies.

Zhang's family's annual rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance subsidies = (3,600 per year for each person - RMB 3,067 per year for each person) * 3 persons = RMB 1,599.

Zhang's family's annual classified assistance subsidies = RMB 3,600 per year for each person * 50% (Mr. Zhang) + RMB 3,600 per year for each person * 50% (Mr. Zhang's daughter) = RMB 3,600.

Zhang's family's total annual Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance = RMB 1,599 + RMB 3,600 = RMB 5,199.

4.1.2 Case study after using working capacity index

Case 2: Mr. Zhang, a 35-year-old man in Lianhe Township, suffers from second-degree speech disability. His wife Ms. Wang is 33 years old and in good health. Their daughter is 10 years old and currently attends primary school. Wang's family have 9 mu of arable land, and their income for contracting out the land for the year 2018 was RMB 3,200. Wang's wife Ms. Wang takes odd jobs for three months every year (She engages in household services during her daughter's winter and summer vacation). Mr. Zhang's working capacity index is 0.4, his wife Ms. Wang's working capacity index is 0.8, and their daughter's working capacity index is 0 (refer to the table of labor capacity coefficients).

The estimated revenue standard of a healthy workforce in domestic service industry is RMB 2,000 per month.

Zhang's family's working capacity index = $(0.4+0.8+0) \div 3 = 0.4$.

Wang's wife Ms. Wang's annual wage = RMB 2,000 per month * 0.4 * 3 months = RMB 2400.

Zhang's family's annual real income = land income of RMB 3,200 + wage income of RMB 2400 = RMB 5,600.

Zhang's family's per capita income = RMB 5,600 per year \div 3 persons = RMB 1,866.7 per year for each person.

Since Da'an City's rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard is RMB 3,600 per year for each person, Zhang's family is eligible for Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance and is thus granted household-based assistance subsidies.

Zhang’s family’s annual rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee subsidies = (RMB 3,600 per year for each person - RMB 1,866.7 per year for each person) * 3 persons = RMB 5,199.9.

Classified assistance subsidies = Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard of RMB 3,600 per year for each person * (1 - family’s working capacity index) * the number of family members which is represented by N * increase ratio of 25% (adjustment index) = RMB 3600 per year for each person * (1-0.4) *3 persons * 25% = RMB 2,592 per year.

Zhang’s family’s annual rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance = RMB 5,199.9 + RMB 2,592 = RMB 7,791.9.

4.2. Promotable Experience of Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Da’an City

4.2.1 Mechanism of determining the subsistence allowance standard

Build the model of “subsistence allowance standard” and establish the mechanism of determining the “subsistence allowance standard”. Among the eight items of “Household Consumption Expenditure” under the category of “People’s Living Standard” listed in *Da’an City Statistical Yearbook*, “Food” and “Clothing” are classified as “Two No Worries” items; “Living”, “Education, Culture and Entertainment” and “Medical Care” are classified as “Three Guarantees” items; and “Household Items and Services”, “Transportation and Communication” and “Other Items and Services” are classified as “Others” items. The subsistence allowance standard shall be 100% of “Two No Worries” items, plus 20% of “Three Guarantees” items, and 10% of “Others” items. The subsistence allowance standard shall be reasonably determined according to the local reality.

4.2.2 Comprehensive appraisal and quantitative identification of social assistance targets

Set and introduce “working capacity index” for the comprehensive evaluation and quantitative identification of assistance targets. Take into account the gender, age, health conditions and other relevant factors of members of the families applying for assistance and define different coefficients for each of them. Specific measures are as follows. Heath coefficients are defined according to the *Labor Capacity Appraisal Standard* (published by China Labor and Social Security Publishing House in 2007 and jointly established by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and the Ministry of Health of the People’s Republic of China). Age coefficients are defined for different age groups according to the statutory age of retirement (60 years of age in China), international practice (65 years of age) and the actual situation in Da’an City (before 70 years of age and with partial work capacity). In addition, different gender coefficients are defined for women and men respectively.

The model of applying “working capacity index” to social assistance identification system is shown as follows:

$$L=(a1\times b1\times c1+++++an\times bn\times cn)N$$

$$S= ((P-d/N) \times N)+(P\times (1-L) \times M\times N)$$

Notes:

a: age coefficient b: gender coefficient c: health coefficient L1: individual labor capacity coefficient

L: family labor capacity coefficient n: number of family members S: Minumun Livelihood Guarantee subsidies P: allowance standard

d: family net income M: adjustment index

References

1. Relevant Policy Documents

Notice on Issuing the *Pilot Work Program for Comprehensive Reform of Social Assistance in the Experimental Area of Da’an City*, December 8, 2018

Questionnaire on “Subsistence Allowance Standard”

In order to further improve the social assistance system, give full play to the minimum guarantee effect of social assistance, explore the system direction for promoting the innovation development, policy measures, paths and methods of social assistance undertaking, in May 2018, Da’an City was determined by the Ministry of Civil Affairs to be “Pilot County (City) for the Comprehensive Reform of National Social Assistance”. With the instructions of the Expert Appraisal Panel for Comprehensive Reform of Social Assistance of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Social Assistance Division of the Department of Civil Affairs of Jilin Province, Da’an City has determined four pilot contents of comprehensive reform, such as “exploring the mechanism for the determination of the subsistence allowance standard”, etc.

Now, we are soliciting your opinions on the pilot contents of comprehensive reform, namely “exploring the mechanism for the determination of the minimum livelihood guarantee standard”, and realizing the transformation of from “the minimum livelihood guarantee system” to “subsistence allowance system”. Please fill in the content of this questionnaire according to facts.

Thank you for your support and assistance!

Type of respondents: Household enjoying minimum livelihood guarantee Poverty-stricken household Low-income family Peasant Urban resident Migrant worker Enterprise worker Official population Private enterprise owner State-owned enterprise employee Others

Place of investigation:

Name of household owner: ; sex: ; age:

1. Do you or other people you are familiar with know about the minimum livelihood guarantee policy?
 No Yes
2. Can the subsidy of minimum livelihood guarantee meet the basic livelihood of the receiving families you’re familiar with (foods and clothing)?
 Can not meet the basic life This is a relatively big gap Can basically meet the basic life
3. Can the minimum livelihood guarantee families you’re familiar with often afford the foods like meat, egg, and fish, etc.?
 No Seldom Yes
4. Do the minimum livelihood guarantee families you’re familiar with have more than 2 sets of clothes in average?
 Less than 2 sets 2 to 3 sets 3 to 5 sets More than 5 sets
5. Do the minimum livelihood guarantee families you’re familiar with have their own houses?
 No Yes
6. Do the houses of the minimum livelihood guarantee families you’re familiar with meet the residential demand?
 Cannot meet residential demand Can basically meet residential demand
 Can meet residential demand
7. The reason for the difficulty in the living of the minimum livelihood guarantee families you’re familiar with have is:
 Excessive expenditure on medical treatment Long-term disease or disability of the families’ major labor force
 Excessive expenditure on children’s education Others
8. How much does your family spend on basic medical treatment at your own expenditure every year?
 RMB0-RMB500 RMB5,00-RMB1,000 RMB1,000-RMB2,000
 More than RMB2,000
9. Does your family have any children who have gone to school or are about to go to school?
 Yes No
10. Which schooling stage are your children at?
 Pre-school education Primary school education Junior high school
 Senior high school

- Secondary school education and vocational higher school education
 - Junior college and higher education

11. How much do you basically spend on children's education every year?

- RMB0-RMB500 RMB5,00-RMB1,000 RMB1,000-RMB2,000
- More than RMB2,000

12. Do you have any other expenditures every year?

- Yes No

13. How much do you spend on others every year?

- RMB500 RMB1,000 RMB1,500 More than RMB1,500

14. What are your expenditure items? (You don't need to fill in items 13, 14 and 15 if you fill in "No" in item 12)

15. How much is your other expenditures every year?

Appendix 4

**Summary Report on the Social Assistance Comprehensive
Reform Pilot in Xincheng District, Hohhot City**

Xincheng District Civil Affairs Bureau

1. General Situation of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Xincheng District, Hohhot City

1.1 Overview of Economic and Social Development in Xincheng District, Hohhot City

Xincheng District, located in the northeast of Hohhot, is the capital of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. It was built in the fourth year of Qianlong's reign in the Qing Dynasty (1739 AD) and was named for the "Suiyuan City" (commonly known as "Xincheng") built in the Qing Dynasty. Xincheng District is bounded by Ulanhap in the east, Huimin District in the West and Saihan District in the south. It covers an area of 700 square kilometers with the planning area of 100 square kilometers, of which the built-up area is 70 square kilometers, the Donghe New District is 30 square kilometers, the fore slope of Daqingshan Mountain is 127 square kilometers, and the mountain and forest areas are 473 square kilometers. The district has a population of 640,000, of whom there are 398,000 registered residents. The population consists of 36 ethnic groups including Han, Mongolian, Manchu and Hui Nationalities. It has 1 town, 8 subdistrict offices, 24 village committees and 53 community neighborhood committees under its jurisdiction. Xincheng District is a Manchu community and the core area in the capital. It is not only the cultural, educational, scientific and technological, financial and information center of Inner Mongolia and Hohhot, but also a window of Inner Mongolia and Hohhot opening to the world. In 2017, the total GDP and per capita GDP of Xincheng were RMB 84.2 billion and RMB143, 900 respectively. The public finance budget revenue was RMB 15.76 billion.

1.2 General Situation of Social Assistance Progress in Xincheng District of Hohhot City

With the purpose of seeking happiness for the people, Xincheng District Committee and Government strictly implemented various people-benefiting policies. As of June 2018, there are 1,868 households and 3,164 people included in minimum livelihood guarantee system in the Xincheng Experimental Area. Among them, the urban population is 2,336 people (1,499 households) and the fund is 15,410,000 yuan; the rural recipients is 828 (419 households) and the fund is 4,240,000 yuan, respectively. The urban minimum living standard was 670 yuan per month per capita, with the average amount actually received 518 yuan per month per capita, which accounted for 16.47% of the per capita disposable income of urban residents and 22.09% of the per capita consumption expenditure. The rural minimum living standard was 468 yuan per month per capita, with the average amount actually received 365 yuan per month per capita, which accounted for 29.63% of the per capita disposable income of urban residents and 32.16% of the per capita consumption expenditure.

While strictly implementing various people-benefiting policies, Xincheng also issued specific policies for the benefit of its own people based on its reality. Especially since the 18th National Congress and with the continuous introduction of various national policies that promote people's well-being, the social security standards have been raised year by year. Xincheng District will shift its focus to finding ways to strengthen its weakness and making up for its shortcomings. After several years of development, Xincheng District has achieved remarkable results in its social assistance work, whether in terms of its basic work, key work or innovative work, and has thus played an exemplary role on different levels. Xincheng District boasts unique advantages and characteristics: (1) Since the establishment and implementation of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System, it has strictly followed relevant policies, laws and regulations of the state, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Hohhot on Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances based on the reality of Xincheng District, and thus has worked out a series of standardized and detailed management measures and working process since 2013. Meanwhile, every possible means has been taken to strengthen the weakness, make bold innovations and conduct unprecedented experiments. Consequently, it has achieved remarkable results in key and innovative work, which filled the vacancy of social assistance work in Hohhot and even in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. (2) Low-income persons, especially in rural areas, are quite few in Xincheng District. This is mainly

attributable to the fact that 28,000 residents aged above 18 within the district have paid the endowment insurance for land-expropriated persons, among whom most of the seniors aged above 60 that have received endowment insurance benefits are no longer eligible for Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances, and all the registered poor households have thrown off poverty since 2016. (3) With an innovative and formidable civil administration cadres group that is willing and ready to fulfill its responsibilities and has strong executive force, Xincheng District's grass-roots work is carried out solidly and diligently.

In 2017, the *Normative Document on Administrative Enforcement of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System in Xincheng District* regarding social assistance was awarded National Top Ten Typical Cases of Innovative Achievements by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Xincheng District has ranked first in the Hohhot's annual performance evaluation of social assistance for many times. Besides, the Xincheng District Nursing Home was advanced to the "Three Star" level in the autonomous region, and was designated as an experimental unit of comprehensive standardization of elderly care management and public services in the district by the Quality and Technology Supervision Bureau of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

2. Progress of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Xincheng District

2.1 Subject and Focus of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Xincheng District

In recent years, Xincheng District has achieved distinctive results in social assistance, and played a demonstrative and guiding role at different layers. However, there are still many short slabs and deficiencies. For example, the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee management is not standard, and there is a lack of uniform standard; there are not sufficient grass-roots employees, and the work pressure is high, and the dynamic management is inappropriate; the process of examination & approval and fund granting is complicated; the assistance to the people in difficulties is simplex, and fails to realize multiple perspectives and overall coverage of assistance; the temporary assistance is not effective enough, etc. Aiming at the existing problems, Xincheng District has established the working ideas of "first carrying out trials in pilot areas, drawing upon the experience on key points, and steadily pushing forward social assistance reform". To implement the "five-in-one" systematic reform, specific measures are as follows: (1) make sure that departments at all levels enforce the same and standardized regulations on the basis of standardized, normalized and fine management; (2) take advantage of informatization advantages to fully improve service quality and civil affairs management level based on the improvement on-line paperless examination and approval regulations; (3) gather social forces to participate in social assistance via government's purchase of services to create diversified assistance methods to meet people's different assistance demands; (4) raise the proportion of assistance-covered groups and the standard of assistance for low-income people and "in urgent needs" cases by adjusting and improving the existing temporary assistance policies to truly realize the goal of classified assistance and "helping the weak"; (5) transform the past two-level examination and approval of basic living allowance and temporary assistance, i.e., at banner county level and town (subdistrict) level, to one-level examination and approval (at the town (subdistrict) level) based on the policy of "streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services".

2.2 Roadmap and Measures of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Xincheng District

2.2.1 Make sure that departments at all levels enforce the same and standardized regulations on the basis of standardized, normalized and fine management

On the one hand, Xincheng District lacks a clear identification standard for low-income people, leading to occasional infringement of regulations, thus severely damaging the image of the party and government and harming the interests of the poor people. On the other hand, it is not common that assistance departments and their staff are involved in lawsuits and even have to assume liabilities due to incomplete procedures and documents, which has reduced the enthusiasm

of service staff. Fine management and accurate identification are urgently needed for urban and rural assistance work. Xincheng District has introduced a normative document on administrative enforcement of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System, on which basis the accurate quantitative identification of low-income people is also urgently needed. Based on the document, the Ministry of Civil Affairs has standardized and optimized all the procedures related to civil affairs examination and approval, and introduced *Guidelines for Examination and Approval Procedures of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Xincheng District*, in order to ensure uniform examination and approval procedures and standards.

2.2.2 Take advantage of informatization advantages to fully improve service quality and civil affairs management level based on the improvement of approval for online paperless regulations

Firstly, develop a software for on-line paperless examination and approval of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances and perform paperless examination and approval of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances and temporary assistance matters on-line according to the above-mentioned document to ensure each examination and approval procedure is carried out justifiably and orderly; Secondly, vigorously carry out social assistance informatization construction activities on the basis of paperless examination and approval. On the one hand, comprehensively implement the face recognition system through mobile applications and thus improve daily dynamic management. The service targets need no longer to personally visit district-level offices to register their information within the stipulated time, but simply need to finish registration on mobile applications remotely. On the other hand, construct a mobile platform of social assistance. The platform makes full use of informatization advantages, transforms traditional work patterns, and provides unified hand-held working equipment for grass-roots staff to improve the efficiency of daily work such as job scheduling, files sending and dynamic management. Workers need no longer to deliver notices and documents personally, but can enjoy the convenience of online conferences, file transfer, and online supervision.

2.2.3 Gather social forces to participate in social assistance via government's purchase of services to create diversified assistance methods to meet people's different assistance demands

The dynamic management on Minimum Livelihood Guarantee in urban and rural areas has always been a difficult point in the grass-roots civil administration, and especially, the recheck work is even more difficult. The main reason is that, there are many Minimum Livelihood Guarantee objects to be rechecked, and such objects live relatively dispersedly, while there are few grass-roots working personnel, and precisely, the civil affairs office of each town and division has only 1 to 2 persons dealing with the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee work. The recheck work is time-consuming each time, and cannot guarantee the acquisition of accurate data. So, the working personnel cannot adjust the assistance amount in time, resulting in "wrong guarantee". How to effectively spend the government's rescue funds on poor families "in real need" and how to achieve targeted assistance while enhancing the government's credibility are sensitive issues of the current social assistance work as well as a difficulty and stress in the grass-roots civil affairs work. In order to effectively solve these issues, Xincheng District has learned from advanced areas through multiple channels and worked out a solution to solve the issue of inaccurate assistance due to serious shortage of grass-roots staff that leads to poor dynamic management, that is, the government purchasing services. The services are mainly purchased from third-party service agencies for conducting household investigation of people who are granted Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances and those in urgent needs. The major measures are as follows.

Firstly, select well-qualified social enterprises focusing on civil affairs informatization and with strong service capacity and advanced and sophisticated device required for the investigation, as well as with a deep understanding of civil affairs policies, through open tendering by the government.

Secondly, convene district civil affairs scheduling meetings to repeatedly discuss specific standards and details of the investigation work with the grass-roots personnel, so as to ensure the clarity and thoroughness of each household's investigation and reliability of the final outcomes, and that the funds for purchasing services are well spent.

Thirdly, convene special mobilization and deployment meetings in nine regions, which are participated by three-level civil affairs leaders and all staff members. Principal heads of each region are invited to do the mobilization work while the third-party institutions propose specific requirements and precautions. These meetings aim to ensure superior and subordinate departments work closely throughout the investigation to produce effective results.

Fourthly, convene appraisal and acceptance meetings on research results in time in each region, during which reports are given on the investigation of each household in each village and are approved by three-level civil affairs personnel. Meanwhile, third-party institutions report all the issues discovered in investigation to the District Civil Affairs Bureau, which are then transferred to respective regions for review and rectification within a time limit.

2.2.4 Raise the proportion of assistance-covered groups and the standard of assistance for low-income persons and "in urgent needs" cases by adjusting and improving the existing temporary assistance policies

At present, the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee can guarantee the life of some people in difficulties, but cannot solve such people's practical problems that, because of relatively big-amount rigid expenditures for medical treatment and children's schooling, etc. (namely expenditure-type poverty), and the occurrence of temporary, sudden and disastrous situations, they fall into temporary difficult situations, but cannot obtain timely assistance or cannot obtain sufficient assistance. According to its social assistance characteristics and existing temporary assistance policies, Xincheng District intends to issue the Implementation Plan for Further Strengthening and Improving the Temporary Assistance Work, properly adjust and loosen the temporary assistance policy, raise the standard and proportion of temporary assistance, and thus solve the problem that some families have an income higher than that of the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee line, but still face many difficulties. The main reform contents: First, expand the scope of assistance: Add the assistance to the people who suffer from poverty and are in difficulties for diseases, and the poverty-stricken population having got rid of poverty, but still enjoying the policy with established card for archives, which is a special card documenting the information and demands of poor people. Make clear the standards of temporary assistance aiming at the temporary difficulties of families, like that the necessary life expenditures of the severely disabled people's families exceed the families' bearing capacity, the families suffer from difficulties due to children's education, and the emancipists have no labor skills and income in the very year when they return to the society. Second, raise the amount of assistance: Reform the original "maximum amount of RMB6,000 for assistance of "in urgent needs" cases or the monthly guarantee standard of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee * the family population * 6 months" into that "the maximum amount of assistance of "in urgent needs" cases reaches the monthly guarantee standard of the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee * the family population * 12 months". For the people in special difficulties and orphans, the assistance has also been raised. After medical insurance reimbursement and medical assistance, full-amount special assistance will be provided aiming at the self-assumed expenses for hospitalization and outpatient service. Third, make clear the system of reserve fund for temporary assistance and the system of special salvage money.

2.2.5 Transform the previous two-level examination and approval of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance and temporary assistance to one-level examination and approval (at the town (subdistrict) level) based on the policy of "streamlining administration, delegating more power, improving regulation and optimizing services". The two-level examination and approval method before the reform has many disadvantages. First, the regional scope is big, and the District Civil

Affairs Bureau cannot realize home investigation on all households. In the District, most objects of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee are in the state of people and household separation. Especially, rural objects of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee are in lonely villages, and the District Civil Affairs Bureau has only one working personnel to deal with the examination and approval of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee aiming at urban and rural areas respectively. This work involves too many issues, the working personnel do not have enough strength to deal with the investigation for the registration of new applicants, and much time is delayed during the town and the division's waiting for the registration of the district-level department. Second, the town and division have inconsistent rights and responsibilities. The town and division know the best about the basic situations of the people in difficulties, but they do not have the right of examination and approval, while the District Civil Affairs Bureau cannot comprehensively grasp the overall situations, it has the right of examination and approval. The inconsistency of rights and responsibilities induces that, the town and division do not examine the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee and temporary assistance in earnest, the office responsible for examination do not implement their responsibilities properly, but only carry out the responsibilities in form, and even submit some conflicts for examination and approval to the District Civil Affairs Bureau in an irresponsible way. The audit and examination & approval sections are disconnected, and when being investigated into liability, both parties consider that the responsibility should be undertaken by the other party. Third, the time for examination and approval is relatively long. The District has realized paperless examination and approval, and grass-roots working personnel do not have to run around here and there, but at present, the system is not perfect yet, and section of district-level signature, seal affixation and announcement is required, so it is generally unable to complete the examination and approval within the regulated time limit. Moreover, the data of each region shall be summarized before the salvage money is granted uniformly. The people in difficulties have to wait for a long term, and sometimes, they cannot enjoy the guarantee treatment in two to three months, so the objective of improving the services for the people is not achieved. In order to meet the demands of economic and social development and assistance for the needy people, further standardize the social assistance operation mechanism, and optimize social assistance procedures, Xincheng District authorizes town (subdistrict) -level sectors to exercise the examination and approval authority on urban and rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances and temporary assistance. In August 2018, Xincheng District applied to the District People's Government for establishing one town and two subdistricts as pilot areas to delegate the examination and approval authority, and authorizing town (subdistrict) -level sectors to exercise the examination and approval authority on urban and rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances and temporary assistance. Xincheng District has adjusted and refined the examination and approval process, and the District Civil Affairs Bureau has formulated *Implementation Scheme of Delegating the Examination and Approval Authority on Minimum Livelihood Guarantee Allowances and Temporary Assistance in Xincheng District (Trial Implementation)* after repeatedly soliciting opinions from grass-roots personnel and relevant departments, in order to ensure successful delegation of examination and approval authority and effectively perform its supervisory obligations. Through specifying the responsibilities and powers of departments at all levels and the regulatory measures for the management and use of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances, the document provides a strong policy basis for power delegation.

3. Effects of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Xincheng District

3.1. Effects of the Pilot Project for Comprehensive Reform

Firstly, Xincheng District has introduced *Normative Document on Administrative Enforcement of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System in Xincheng District*, in which the law-based administration and standardized, normalized and fine management of social assistance work are truly realized in five aspects. All regions and villages in the district have guided and carried out

their work according to the standardized and normalized work flow, in order to ensure consistent enforcement of regulations by departments at all levels.

Secondly, all regions in the district have been able to conduct on-line paperless examination and approval of urban and rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances, and make use of informatization advantages to fully improve their service quality and civil affairs management level. (1) On-line paperless examination and approval of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances has been fully implemented. The examination and approval system transforms the five links described in *Normative Document on Administrative Enforcement of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System in Xincheng District* to five electronic operation steps according to the document. The paperless examination and approval of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances is implemented on line, so that the traceability and accountability of each step of the examination and approval work are guaranteed. This can ensure comprehensive supervision and traceability of the social assistance work. (2) The face recognition system on mobile applications has been rolled out in an all-round way. It not only brings convenience to people with separated registered and actual residences, disabled and part-disabled people, people suffering from mental diseases and other people who are unable to move freely, but also improves the working efficiency of grass-roots departments, and ensures the safety of funds release. (3) The mobile platform of social assistance has been built. The platform helps to improve the work efficiency, the level of informatization management of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System, and the capacity of serving the people through providing informatization service on line.

Thirdly, the district is now handling the examination and approval procedures of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances and temporary assistance. The goal that “departments at the banner county level and those at the township level are both capable enough to delegate and accept the authority respectively” is basically achieved. The three experimental areas in Xincheng District have carried out examination and approval of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances and temporary assistance since August, 2018. All assistance matters have passed district-level re-examination, and the goal of autonomous and error-free examination and approval has been basically achieved. The mode has also produced positive results. On the one hand, the examination and approval efficiency is greatly improved. For the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee, before delegating the examination and approval authority, it took at least 44 working days throughout the process from application processing to examination and approval by the District Bureau of Public Assistance. After the examination and approval authority is delegated, the procedures are simplified and the management and services are flattened. Meanwhile, the examination and approval by the district-level civil affairs bureau and repetitive publicity procedure are canceled, and the examination and approval procedure is optimized, which requires only 30 working days. Besides, the time for examination and approval of temporary assistance has also been shortened from original 22 working days to 15 working days; On the other hand, after the examination and approval authority is delegated, the primary responsibility of township (subdistrict)-level sectors and supervisory responsibility of the District Civil Affairs Bureau are both established. The functions of the District Civil Affairs Bureau are transformed from examination and approval to filing, and those of township (subdistrict) -level departments are transformed from application processing to examination and approval. Despite of greater responsibility and pressure assumed by township (subdistrict) -level departments, the superior and subordinate work is connected more efficiently. Besides, the “investigation, examination and approval” accountability system is truly implemented. Up to April 2019, the township-level examination and approval procedure has been implemented across the whole district. At the same time, the assistance funds are distributed at the township and subdistrict level.

Case 1: Application Processing for Minimum Livelihood Guarantee Allowances

In February 2019, Li Lingyan, a resident of Xincheng District, applied for Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances. Due to Li's difficulty in moving because of bone cancer, Yingxin Road Subdistrict Civil Affairs Bureau came his residence to collect information and grant Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances to him according to the one-level examination and approval procedure of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances. According to the one-level examination and approval procedure of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances, relevant information was publicized only once (instead of two times in the past), which has shortened certain procedures, reduced the frequency of materials submission by residents, and improved the work efficiency. The Yingxin Road Subdistrict Civil Affairs Bureau will continue to serve the needy people within its jurisdiction, and assist Xincheng District Civil Affairs Bureau in improving and innovating social assistance policies in strict accordance with the one-level examination and approval policy of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances and temporary assistance.

Case 2: Examination and Approval of Temporary Assistance

The one-level examination and approval policy and procedure of temporary assistance in Yingxin Road Subdistrict have always been clear and standardized since its implementation. In the event of any special circumstances within the jurisdiction, relevant departments can directly convene the Party Working Committee Conference to address issues based on the "case-by-case" policy.

In December 2018, Xue Fei, a low-income resident, collapsed on the roadside due to epilepsy. The Yingxin Road Subdistrict Civil Affairs Bureau hospitalized Xue Fei after seeking help from three hospitals. After Xue's discharge from hospital, the Yingxin Road Subdistrict Civil Affairs Bureau notified subdistrict leaders to immediately convene the Party Working Committee Conference to address issues based on the "case-by-case" policy according to the one-level examination and approval procedure. Issues on Xue Fei's temporary assistance were discussed on the conference. As the one-level examination and approval policy has shortened certain procedures and improved the work efficiency, Xue's temporary assistance funds were granted very soon.

Fourthly, allow the government to purchase services in order to thoroughly solve the issues of insufficient grass-roots staff and lagging dynamic management. In 2018, Xincheng District took the lead in purchasing services of social assistance. At present, third-party service providers from whom services were purchased have completed household investigation on low-income households and people in urgent needs. A total of 1,749 low-income families and 98 impoverished families which were entitled to Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances were surveyed. According to the investigation results, there is some doubt about the 178 families, and 81 Minimum Livelihood Guarantee households are suggested to be included in the special difficulty scope. The District, Town (Subdistrict) and Community have rechecked the doubtful data jointly according to the clues provided, and discovered that there are no wrong guarantee, group guarantee, and "targeting relations" (Guanxi Bao), etc. among the 178 households, 12 persons among the 81 persons meet the standard of special difficulty and have been included in the scope of special difficulty, and the standards of assistance to 20 households have been raised at different degrees. The household investigation developed this time has not only made clear the base number and concrete situations, but also realized the objective of accurate recognition and assistance, and more importantly, improved the public trust of the government. In 2019, based on the work done last year, Xincheng District will transform from "purchasing of service projects" to "purchasing of talents" to strengthen the grass-roots work force, solve the problem of drop in the level of social assistance services due to the severe insufficiency and poor working ability of grass-roots working personnel fundamentally. At present, this project has completed the competitive tendering, and the personnel of third party service company have started to work.

Fifthly, after the expansion of temporary assistance scope and proportion, the assistance personnel have been increased over the same period of last year. What's more, the special salvage

money system has been started for the first time. The special salvage money of RMB100,000 has been provided for the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee family with a leucocythemia patient, extremely relieving the family's difficulty in receiving medical treatment.

3.2 Follow-up Measures

3.2.1 Use the thinking of "Internet + Social Assistance" to further expand the depth integration between the Internet and social assistance

In 2019, Xincheng District plans to start using the thinking of "Internet + Social Assistance" to push ahead the scheme of "unobstructed information reducing the frequency or replacing busy running errands (front office tasks) by the needy people and grass-roots personnel" and reach the "last mile" of social assistance. In this way, it aims to achieve the goal of granting accurate, standardized, fair and equal Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances. One major approach is to install "Smart Machines of Application and Declaration". This approach will help realize the goals such as "self-application by the needy people, self-declaration by the people entitled to Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances, application progress inquiry, publicity of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System, information, policy advocacy, and surveillance by the people". Another approach is to build a self-service platform on WeChat. Applicants are allowed to apply for Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances at home conveniently. The needy people can also check the progress of social assistance at any time through the WeChat system. For the use of self-service application system, Xincheng District has first trained the working personnel of the Civil Affairs Department in each region, required each region to organize the training for social assistance beneficiaries independently and carry out field operation demonstration, and meanwhile, it intends to print and issue the leaflet about the use of self-service equipment and WeChat platform, to explain the concrete steps and methods of self-service application with easy-to-understand wording, so as to make a large number of people understand the process of self-service application and skillfully operate the self-service application equipment, make the whole process of the examination and approval of Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances open and transparent, and enable networked and refined supervision, on-line reporting, on-line processing, rapid verification and timely feedback.

3.2.2 At the next step, Xincheng District will gradually establish a complete framework of urban and rural social assistance system with the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee as the center, with special difficulty system and medical assistance as main content, with housing assistance, education assistance and heating subsidy as supporting facilities, with temporary assistance system as main supplementation, and linked with charity undertaking, truly realizing the objectives of classified assistance and "helping the weak".

4. Promotable Experience of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Xincheng District

One of the content of Xincheng District's reform is delegating the examination and approval authority on urban and rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances to town (subdistrict) - level sectors. The District Civil Affairs Bureau is responsible for granting and supervising Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances and temporary assistance funds. This measure simplifies the examination and approval process and improves the efficiency of assistance. The success of this work is attributed to the following aspects:

4.1 Adhere to the Government's Leadership, Strengthen "Implementation of Three Key Measures", and Ensure "Effective Delegation of Power"

On the one hand, Xincheng District is under excellent leadership in every aspect. Since it was designated as a pilot area, the district government has attached great importance to the pilot work, and convened special executive meetings to study and deploy the pilot reform, which has provided a strong organizational guarantee for the delegation of the examination and approval authority. Xincheng District identified three experimental areas as first movers to ensure that departments at

the banner county level and those at the township level are both capable enough to delegate and accept the authority respectively. On the other hand, policies and measures are well prepared and implemented. The District Civil Affairs Bureau promulgated *Implementation Scheme of Delegating the Examination and Approval Authority on Minimum Livelihood Guarantee Allowances and Temporary Assistance in Xincheng District*, according to which Xincheng District delegates the examination and approval authority on urban and rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances to town (subdistrict) -level sectors in the form of authorization. The document has provided a strong policy basis for power delegation. Meanwhile, the district also clarifies the responsibilities of the three-level civil affairs departments.

4.2 Strengthen Social Assistance and Ensure Relevant Departments are Capable Enough to Accept the Delegated Power

Firstly, all regions and villages in the district have guided and carried out their work according to the standardized and normalized work flow, in order to ensure consistent enforcement of regulations by departments at all levels. Secondly, all regions in the district have been able to conduct on-line paperless examination and approval of urban and rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances, and make use of informatization advantages to fully improve their service quality and civil affairs management level. Thirdly, the district has initiated information management to improve its capacity of dynamic management. Based on paperless examination and approval, Xincheng District has invested RMB 500,000 with incentive funds from superiors in purchasing 45 mobile devices for the grass-roots sectors. Superior and subordinate sectors across Xincheng District can thus execute their work both on line and off line. One major highlight is that the daily dynamic management is upgraded. The service targets no longer need to personally visit district-level offices to register their information within the stipulated time, but simply need to finish registration on mobile applications remotely. Another is that household investigation results are directly uploaded to the system through tablet computers. The system can also identify and supervise low-income families, which can effectively prevent falsification.

Firstly, conduct supervision through the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System. The examination and approval authority is not delegated once for all. In fact, the District Civil Affairs Bureau can oversee the acceptance and examination and approval of documents at each link by town (subdistrict)-level sectors. It also has the right to check all the electronic files of new applicants for social assistance, so that it can correct any issues it discovers. Secondly, conduct random spot check. The District Civil Affairs Bureau conducts random checks on new applicants for social assistance every month, and participates in household survey and democratic evaluation in pilot areas in the early stage, in order to ensure complying with relevant procedures and passing the examination and approval process. Thirdly, strengthen the publicity system and perfect the complaint reporting mechanism. Due to the delegation of examination and approval authority, and cancellation of district-level publicity of examined and approved programs (namely, the information of those granted assistance subsidies is publicized only once), Xincheng District puts forward more stringent requirements for the publicity system of all regions. Applicants' information is not only posted in the public boards nearby applicants' residences, in the villages, neighborhood committees and offices in the area where applicants are resided, but also published on the government's information network. Meanwhile, the hotline for public report and supervision at all levels is publicized, which will urge relevant sectors to accept the supervision by the general public. It also requires relevant departments to look into and review all reports.

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Appendix 5

**Summary Report on the Social Assistance Comprehensive
Reform Pilot in Zhangjiagang City**

Zhangjiagang Civil Affairs Bureau

1. General Situation of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Zhangjiagang City

1.1 Overview of Economic and Social Development in Zhangjiagang City

Zhangjiagang City is a strong industrial port city which is named for and thrives on Zhangjiagang Port. It is now accelerating transformation into a city of high quality featuring comprehensive development of the port, industry and city. The city covers a total area of 999 square kilometers, with the land area of 777 square kilometers. It has eight towns, one modern agricultural demonstration park, one tourist resort on Shuangshan Island and 153 administrative villages under its jurisdiction.

In 2018, the city's GDP reached RMB 272 billion, with the per capita GDP of RMB 216,000; its estimated public revenue was RMB 23.34 billion, fixed assets investment was RMB 40 billion, and the total import and export volume was RMB 36.1 billion. In terms of taxes payment, 4 enterprises paid over RMB 1 billion, 39 paid over RMB 100 million, and 94 paid over RMB 50 million. The city currently has a population of 1.63 million, with the registered population of 930,000 and floating population of 700,000. The per capita disposable income of urban and rural residents in the city is RMB 59,200 and RMB 30,200 respectively. The income ratio between urban and rural residents is 1.96:1, which is the lowest in China. The Engel's coefficient, food expenditure as a percentage of total household expenditure of its residents is 28.4% (below 30%), which is comparable to the level of developed countries in the world.

Zhangjiagang City has been dedicated to the construction of both spiritual civilization and material civilization. It is the only county-level city that has been awarded the title of "National Civilized City" for five consecutive years. It has also won 16 national first awards in the field of Eco-environment protection, including the First Model City for Environmental Protection in China, National First Eco-cities, First County-level City winning the UN Habitat Award, and the First Eco-civilization Award in China. The city has 83,000 registered volunteers, with one volunteer in every 10 permanent residents. A total of 2,547 Zhangjiagang citizens have passed the National Social Worker Vocational Examination (among which there are 688 social workers and 1,859 junior social workers), which ranks first among all the counties and cities throughout China. In Zhangjiagang, 20.2 out of 10,000 residents hold social work certificates, which is close to the level of western developed countries. The licensed social workers have been playing active roles in various civil affairs fields in Zhangjiagang City. In terms of social assistance, the pilot work for expanding social assistance connotation has begun since 2012, and currently 26 social assistance programs are being implemented. In terms of welfare charity, an increasing number of social workers and social organizations participated in social fund-raising activities since the introduction of "Walking for Love" project in 2015. So far, 17 social organizations have participated in the design of 46 charity programs. Last year, 5 social organizations carried out 6 welfare charity programs in order to raise funds from the society on the "Aiyue Marathon" platform. In 2017, 37 social work studios and 15 social organizations participated in the pilot work for needy children assistance. Statistics show that 169 social works provided assistance services for 2,320 people, which has promoted the healthy growth of the needy children. Since 2017, two professional social service organizations have participated in the "Hand-in-hand Program" launched by the Civil Affairs Bureau jointly with privately-run social service organizations in Anhui and Henan Provinces. During the program, 11 social workers have spent 37 working days in providing support services. In 2018, 7 social organizations provided assistance for children living in welfare institutions, left-over children and other needy children by responding to the call of targeted poverty alleviation in Yanhe County, Guizhou Province. In terms of old-age service, various social organizations have started to undertake services for old-age home nursing service centers (stations) since 2017. In 2018, 11 social organizations undertook services for 84 stations, with approximately RMB 8.36 million supporting funds from the city and town levels. In October, 2018, the Civil Affairs Bureau entrusted a third

party to carry out the “Special Training Camp for Old-age Services” program which lasted for three days, with an aim to enhance the business-handling ability of old-age service practitioners. In terms of community governance, a total of 16 social organizations undertook 37 social service projects to address minor people’s livelihood issues in 25 communities, with a total fund of RMB 1.38 million.

1.2 General Situation of Social Assistance Work in Zhangjiagang City

1.2.1 Improve the subsistence allowance system and exert the capacity of helping the most in need

Zhangjiagang City has established a subsistence allowance system that covers all the poor families in urban and rural areas. The system is based on urban and rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System, supported by assistance for extremely poor people, seriously ill groups with meager or no medical provident funds, orphans, severely disabled people and people with special disabilities, and supplemented by temporary assistance. Currently, Zhangjiagang City’s urban and rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard is RMB 945 per month; the support subsidy standard for those in dire poverty is RMB 1,334 per month; the support subsidy standard for orphans who are taken care of by welfare agencies, is RMB 2,360 per month; and the support subsidy standard for orphans who remain unsettled is RMB 1,880 per month. The city has 2,502 registered low-income families and 3,642 people; 846 low-income families and 896 people with meager or no medical provident funds; 428 people living in dire poverty; 4,026 severely disabled people; 111 families and 197 people with special disabilities; 477 jobless people with Grade III or Grade IV mental (intellectual) disabilities. In 2018, Zhangjiagang City granted RMB 92.94 million in subsistence allowances (subsidies) to 10,739 people.

1.2.2 Implement various special assistance programs and build a tightly woven net of people’s livelihood guarantee

Firstly, give full play to the role of temporary assistance to “help those in urgent needs”, and strengthen assistance for families falling into poverty due to illness. Secondly, jointly implement the “Housing Project for Low-income Families” with departments like the Ministry of Finance for the key entitled groups, the disabled and and poor families suffering from major and severe diseases in Zhangjiagang City who are covered by Minimum Livelihood Guarantee, with meager or no medical provident funds, and whose family income is below the twice of the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance standard, to ensure the safety of housing for low-income families. Thirdly, do the utmost to fulfill various tasks of people’s livelihood insurance. In 2019, Zhangjiagang City allocated RMB 5.8 million in funds for people’s livelihood insurance against natural disasters, which were released as special compensations for personal injury and death and house damages due to natural disasters such as lightning strikes and tornadoes, and drowning and fires. Fourthly, strengthen the classified assistance policy for children living in difficult circumstances, and the care and protection mechanism. Fifthly, work on implementing charity programs, grant nutritional subsidies to patients with Crohn’s disease and traffic subsidies to patients with uremic hemodialysis. Sixthly, grant festival subsidies to the needy people during the May Day and National Day festivals to enhance their sense of happiness and acquisition.

1.2.3 Improve the verification mechanism and enhance the level of targeted assistance

Firstly, continue to improve the verification mechanism of low-income families’ financial conditions. Zhangjiagang City builds on its own a verification platform of low-income families’ financial conditions, and exchanges data with eleven departments, including the Household Registration Sector of the Public Security Bureau, Human Resources and Social Security Bureau, and Vehicle Management Station. The platform is connected to Suzhou’s verification system, so that Suzhou City is able to verify the data and financial assets across the city. Besides, relevant sectors can legally obtain accurate information on the revenue and property of low-income families that apply for assistance, which provides a basis for providing targeted assistance. Since this year, a total of 209 families and 414 people that apply for living assistance and assistance of “Housing

Project for Low-income Families” have been examined by the Verification Center. Among them, 52 families were at the early warning line, and 23 household were determined no longer eligible for assistance, with the knockout rare being 11%. Secondly, introduce third-party organizations to conduct annual verification of families and people that apply for urban and rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowances (including those with meager or no medical provident funds) and entrust appraisal agencies to supervise the entire process of verification by such third-party organizations. Third-party verification further improves the transparency and fairness of the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee allowance work, which allows relevant sectors to understand the most urgent needs of the needy people through professional social workers. It further expands the content of social assistance and effectively solves the issue of insufficient grass-root civil affairs personnel.

2. Pilot Work for Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform in Zhangjiagang City

2.1 Subject and Focus of Comprehensive Reform Pilot

Zhangjiagang City aims to push through three reforms through the pilot work for social assistance comprehensive reform by focusing on the goal of “Helping the Weak”. The first is the reform on social assistance system, i.e., expanding the scope of assistance targets to include new residents, low-income people, etc., shifting from the traditional material assistance to “material assistance + service”, further expanding the content of social assistance. Till now, 445 new residents are included and have received social assistance. The second is the reform on social assistance resources coordination, i.e., utilizing the social assistance management platform to coordinate government resources and social resources for social assistance. The third is the reform on social assistance process, i.e., simplifying the examination and approval process of social assistance through “Internet + government services”.

2.2 Roadmap and Measures of the Comprehensive Reform Pilot

2.2.1 Strengthen organization guarantee

Further strengthen the joint conference system of social assistance, and comprehensively conduct the social assistance comprehensive reform pilot project across the city. Further refine department functions, establish regular consultation mechanisms, and work out reform plans. Further reinforce the sense of responsibility of village (community)-level grass-roots staff, and incorporate the performance of massive assistance into annual performance appraisal. Further mobilize social forces to participate in social relief work, integrate various governmental and social resources, and smooth the channels of social assistance services. Further improve the efficiency of verification of families’ financial conditions, to achieve the goal of “verifying every potential applicant of of social assistance and accurately identifying the needed groups”. Meanwhile, actively disclose social assistance policies and the use of funds, accept extensive social supervision, and provide social assistance on the principles of openness, fairness and impartiality.

2.2.2 Perfect system guarantee

Build an all-round massive social assistance system that integrates basic medical insurance, critical illness insurance, medical assistance, illness-caused poverty relief, new residents’ assistance and social charity.

2.2.3 Improve team guarantee

Build team guarantee networks at the city, town and village (community) levels. At the city level: the Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau and Municipal Social Assistance Service Center assign full-time personnel to coordinate the management, guidance and service of the city’s social assistance. At the town level: each town’s civil affairs department assigns one full-time social assistance officer to coordinate the massive social assistance work in every jurisdiction. At the village level: each village (community) assigns one civil affair officer to take the charge of local social assistance services.

2.2.4 Clarify capital guarantee

Further clarify fund guarantee for the pilot work. The payment channels of social assistance funds for comprehensive pilot projects comply with the existing policies and regulations, and those funds are provided by the Municipal Financial Bureau. Wages of the staff of the Municipal Social Assistance Service Center, their work funds, and the special work funds of social assistance comprehensive pilot reform project are provided by the Municipal Financial Bureau. The funds of reform are primarily used to purchase social caring and rescue programs and social assistance performance management and other services.

2.3 Reform Achievements

2.3.1 Establish a system of social assistance consisting of “Five Lines of Defense”

Focus on building an illness-caused poverty relief policy mechanism consisting of critical illness insurance, social medical assistance and long-term care insurance according to *Implementation Opinions on Ill-caused Poverty Relief Work*, and thus produce the “3+2” policy system featuring material and spiritual assistance. The three major policy initiatives involve basic assistance (urban insurance, rural insurance), all-inclusive assistance (critical illness insurance, long-term care insurance), and special assistance (social medical assistance). The two incentive and guide measures are village-level mutual medical assistance and charity assistance measures. The five lines of defense together help effectively alleviate the problem encountered by families falling to or reversing to poverty due to illness.

2.3.2 Set up a center to coordinate “internal and external resources”

Establish the Social Assistance Service Center of Zhangjiagang City to achieve full coverage of the “Acceptance in One Department” mechanism online and offline across the city. The needy people can apply for assistance offline through service windows at city, town and village levels, or online through self-service machines, assistance-related websites, and the Wechat Public Account. The center deeply integrates the “Acceptance in One Department” mechanism and assistance resources to provide diversified assistance. Integrate resources within the social assistance system to achieve data exchange between different assistance administrative departments (such as the Civil Affairs Bureau, Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, Health and Family Planning Commission, and Housing Management Department) and longitudinal communication through the city, town and village levels, and form a closed loop working chain and provide combined assistance. Integrate social resources, collect the basic information of the needy people on a regular basis, apply big data analysis, design assistance programs, and guide social forces to participate in social relief work. This year, departments at the city and town levels granted RMB 3.5 million in assistance funds for the implementation of social assistance and care programs. At present, 25 social organizations are implementing twenty-one projects under four categories that involve providing assistance for the needy children, the elderly, and those with health disorders. These projects have achieved good social effects. Besides, a lot of efforts are put in setting up the “Comprehensive Windows for the People” in order to help the needy to receive prompt and efficient comprehensive assistance conveniently and improve the government’s capacity of serving the people.

2.3.3 Build a platform to improve “Comprehensive Effectiveness”

Integrate and connect the systems of income verification, assistance and care, and the needy children assistance to the business systems of departments such as the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and Health and Family Planning Commission. Develop a city-wide unified information platform of massive social assistance and update its information to improve the efficiency of use. Sort through the policies and information in the database and produce a list of assistance polices and a list of the families that have received assistance in order to prevent any repetitive and missed assistance. Break through the information barriers with departments such as the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and Health and Family Planning Commission, establish a risk-warning mechanism of serious diseases, supervise the spending of

medical expenses, control excessive medical treatment, and improve the level of assistance, and thus achieve the goal of “Five Preciseness”, i.e., precise identification of assistance targets, precise use of funds, precise selection of projects, precise integration of forces, and precise assistance.

3. Experience of the Social Assistance Comprehensive Reform Pilot in Zhangjiagang City

3.1 Typical Examples of the Social Assistance Reform

3.1.1 Establish a special assistance system for the low-income population

Set up an information database of the low-income people, submit declarations on monthly basis, conduct dynamic management, and implement the policies of livelihood, health care, education, housing, etc. for the low-income people who live in relative poverty and Zhangjiagang City currently has 815 registered low-income families. Firstly, entrust third parties to provide special assistance for people with serious diseases in low-income families. Secondly, provide special medical assistance for the low-income people, and any shortage in the difference between rescued people’s obtained compensation for critical illness and 75% of their out-of-pocket expenses are additionally granted. Thirdly, students from low-income families are granted 50% of the financial aid standard for students of the families covered by subsistence allowances. In 2018, the subsidy granted to 479 students from low-income families reached RMB 1,073,000. Fourthly, low-income families eligible for financial aid requirements of the “Housing Project for Low-income Families” are entitled to the same subsidiary policies applicable to minimal assurance families. In 2018, 5 low-income families received assistance from the “Housing Project for Low-income Families” project with a total subsidy of RMB 168,400. In 2019, 3 low-income families were initially approved as assistance targets and the subsidy which would be granted was RMB 96,000.

3.1.2 Set up an assistance system of new residents

Firstly, set up a comprehensive information platform of new residents, enhance the information collection mechanism of new residents, and have a overall grasp of the information about the people with social relations, rental households, the migrant population, etc.; register and dynamically update information about new residents to ensure rapid response of relevant departments to new residents’ “urgent, difficult and dangerous” incidents. Secondly, set up the policy mechanisms of extreme poverty relief, accident insurance and disaster compensation for new residents. Include non-native permanent residents who have stayed in the city for over six months in the scope of temporary assistance. Statistics show that 445 new residents who live in dire poverty have received assistance funds of RMB 1.552 million. The Municipal Government purchases accident insurance every year for new residents aged 16-60 who have worked in the city and held residency cards for over one year. So far, it has settled 209 insurance claims and paid a total of RMB 5.636 million in compensation. This measure effectively satisfies the urgent needs of new residents and improves the medical assistance level for and risk resistance capacity of new residents. New residents are also given financial support when any major natural disaster happens to their native places. A total of RMB 2.3 million in grants and RMB 6.8 million in donations have been released after the “5.12” Wenchuan Earthquake, “4.20” Ya’an Earthquake, “8.3” Ludian Earthquake, and “6.23” Tornado Strike in Yancheng. Furthermore, assistance is also given to new residents through the assistance program of “Welfare Lottery Staying with You”. Thirdly, launch new residents’ award point system. Children of eligible new residents are entitled to the same and equal treatment and services with native residents for basic medical insurance, enrollment in public schools and movement of their household registration to the city. Up till now, nearly 150,000 new residents have been covered in the award point system; 49,100 children of new residents have purchased basic medical insurance for urban residents in Zhangjiagang City; and 41,616 children of new residents have attended public schools in Zhangjiagang City.

Case 1: Temporary assistance for new residents

Ma Yulian is a new resident who was born in 1978 in Wangjiang County, Anqing City, Anhui Province. Her husband Ren Manhua was born in 1972 in Wangjiang County, Anqing City, Anhui

Province. Their residence address is No. 1, Group 12, Yanjiadai Village, Sigang Subdistrict, Yangshe Town, Zhangjiagang City. The couple share custody of their two daughters, Chen Miaoyan (born by Ma Yulian and her ex-husband) and Ren Huiyan. Chen Miaoyan, born in March 2004, was diagnosed with ocular myasthenia gravis in 2007. She has suffered from persistent paroxysmal right eye droop for eleven years. In November 2017, Chen Miaoyan relapsed from ocular myasthenia to systemic myasthenia, and thus needed long-term medication. Her treatment expenses were fully paid by her family. Her mother Ma Yulian has quit working to look after her at home, and the whole family were entirely supported by Ren Manhua with his working income. In December 2018, the Municipal New resident Affairs Center carried out routine investigation on the poor new residents in each town (district). During the period, Yang Yudan, Assistant Administrator in Yangshe Town New resident Center who is responsible for assistance matters in the west of the city, after visiting Ma's residence and learning about the family's actual situation, told the Ma's family that they could try to apply for temporary assistance for the needy new residents. The family's application was approved at the town and city levels, and was thus eligible for assistance. The New resident Affairs Center approved the assistance proposal granted RMB 3,000 in assistance funds in early 2019. It happened just before the Spring Festival when leaders of the New resident Affairs Center visited Ma's residence to offer condolences and blessings for the Spring Festival to them and encourage them to bravely confront risks in their life.

Case 2: Accident insurance for new residents

Qi Chunhua is a new resident who was born in 1990 in Caoxian County, Shandong Province. He works in a mechanical and electrical company in Zhangjiagang City. In May 2018, he was crushed by a machine at work, resulting in malformation, swelling and pain, and one-hour limited motion of his right forearm. He was then diagnosed by the First People's Hospital of Zhangjiagang City with right distal radius fracture, fracture of the lower part of right cubita, and fracture of right cubita styloid. He was treated with open reduction and internal fixation after being hospitalized. After the surgery, his clinical signs were basically stable. However, he still suffers from limited motion of the right wrist joint and partial loss of joint functions.; According to *Criteria for Disability Assessment of Life Insurance*, Qi's disability level was identified as Grade 10. The district assistance administrator contacted the Pacific Insurance Company and applied for new resident accident insurance for him. In March 2019, Qimou received RMB 4,200 in compensation for accidental disability.

3.1.3 Optimize the channel for assistance application

Suzhou City was the first to achieve full coverage of the "Acceptance in One Department" mechanism of social assistance online and offline. In addition to the "Acceptance in One Department" windows at town (district) level, city-level sectors add windows at the Social Assistance Service Center to accept and handle assistance issues offline. Meanwhile, self-service machines are installed at each sites, making online application and policy inquiry possible. The needy people are free to apply for assistance and make policy inquiries through assistance-related websites and the Wechat Public Account. Application information from all channels directly flows to the database of the Management Platform of the Social Assistance Service Center, which is then processed by the Center in a uniform manner. Depending on specific conditions, some cases may be processed by several departments or transferred to other departments. The Center tracks the processing process, supervises the services of social organizations, sends the processing and service results to the management platform, and allows applicants to inquire about the processing progress on the platform. A complete social assistance flow consisting of acceptance, pre-review, transferral, feedback, conclusion, inquiry and tracking is hence formed. The platform allows online transmission of application information between different departments. The needy people need no longer to visit different assistance departments many times, which, instead, can settle assistance matters through mutual cooperation. In addition, the platform's serious illness early warning

mechanism ends the traditional after-incident assistance model, which requires relevant departments to provide active assistance through information means and has further improved the efficiency of assistance.

Case 1: Active assistance of the serious illness early warning mechanism

On the morning of May 29, 2019, the Assistance Management Platform of the Municipal Social Assistance Service Center issued an early warning of “illness-caused poverty”. Mr. Zhang, who is a registered minimum livelihood guarantee beneficiary, was recently diagnosed with colonic malignant tumor and was hospitalized in Zhangjiagang Aoyang Hospital. The Municipal Social Assistance Service Center immediately sent the early warning to Yangshe Town, and directed Yangshe Town Civil Affairs Bureau to contact Mr. Zhang to learn about the actual situation as soon as possible. On the afternoon of May 29, Yangshe Town Civil Affairs Bureau confirmed the early warning. Mr. Zhang lived with his son, who suffers from second-degree mental disability. Mr. Zhang’s serious illness added to his difficult family financial situation. In order to save the family, Yangshe Town Civil Affairs Bureau helped him apply for city-level temporary assistance on May 29, which was approved by the Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau on May 30. The Bureau granted RMB 2,835 in temporary assistance fund for his basic living during the treatment.

Case 2: Link social resources for social assistance

On March 27, 2019, the Social Assistance Management Platform of the Municipal Social Assistance Service Center received a message asking for help from the family of Mr. Chu, a psychiatric patient in Daxin Town, Zhangjiagang City. According to the message, Mr. Chu had second-degree psychic disability but refused to go to the hospital to receive treatment, and his family could not compulsorily get him to the hospital. The family was greatly troubled due to his emotional abnormality and hoped to get help from relevant departments. The Center immediately sent the early warning to Daxin Town for verification by Daxin Town Civil Affairs Bureau. Upon confirmation by Daxin Town Civil Affairs Bureau, the Center transferred the message to the Municipal Social Assistance Care Center on the management platform, so that the Care Center would provide professional social work services for the family. Upon receiving the order, the Care Center immediately convened a seminar and worked out the plan of providing services based on the case-by-case approach and preparing an interview outline through preliminary research. On April 1, relevant social workers communicated with and gradually comforted Mr. Chu’s mother in a telephone interview. On April 4, the Care Center held an evaluation meeting to discuss and determine on the expert intervention mechanism. On April 8, the Care Center evaluated and selected appropriate experts. On April 10, the Care Center linked psychological expert resources and discussed with them on the case-by-case basis. On April 12, relevant experts provided services for the family for the first time. Later, psychological experts joined the assistance work and strengthened the awareness of illness of Mr. Chu and his family. Finally, Mr. Chu voluntarily decided to return to the medical system to receive treatment. As professional social work organizations provided professional services for the family, Mr. Chu has made great progress in his mood and now has taken the initiative to go to the Fourth People’s Hospital for inspection. Chu’s mother said, “My son’s mood has improved significantly. We are very grateful to all sectors in society for their help. Now we are doing our best to help my son to recover so that he can return to the society as early as possible and live a normal life.”

3.2. Promotable Experience of the Pilot Reform

The measures of actively guiding social forces to participate in social assistance work and expanding the content of social assistance are listed as follows.

Firstly, expand the content of traditional assistance to include humanistic care. Carry out social assistance programs of spiritual assistance, cultural needs, technical capacity, etc. for the poor people through the pattern of government support plus social operation. Carry out appraisal on social assistance targets for their personal development, their children’s needs, and social support

based on the basic information database of the needy people on the social assistance platform, and identify appropriate social assistance projects to mainly help address personal psychological problems, promote employment, and enhance the ability of the needy people. Entrust pivotal social organizations to conduct procedures such as declaration, examination and approval, guidance, and supervision of the assistance projects across the city.

Case 1: Crohn Patient Group - Crohn Patients' Caring and Mutual Assistance Project

Crohn is a rare disease, with note diet. During the investigation, Zhangjiagang found that there were a number of Crohn's patients in the city. At that time, there was a health expert setting up a relevant social organization, which provides a good match between service supply and demand of these patients. Zhangjiagang first carried out the pilot of Crohn group in a township. After the pilot achieved good results, it began to implement this project in the whole city in 2019. Compared to the diversity of cancer types and the society's awareness of cancer, Crohn can get more concerns as a rare disease in this way. The project helps Crohn patients, their family members and main caregivers to exchange treatment and rehabilitation experience, release psychological pressure, share rehabilitation resources, and positively face various difficulties the disease brings through establishing the Crohn Disease Support Group. During the implementation cycle, the Support Group participated in 30 activities, during which 5 members received 62 case-based services. Besides, relevant departments held 2 major health lectures, bringing immediate benefit to 213 people and immediate benefit to 639 people. The project involved 20 social workers, 32 doctors and experts and 20 volunteers, and funds spent reached RMB 29,429.68. The project leaders knew exactly about each service object and kept a detailed record of the services provided to them. Meanwhile, they helped service objects to restore and maintain health by themselves, which effectively decreased their frequency of diseases and hospitalization and treatment expenses. At the same time, rich experts resources were linked to provide case-by-case services for the needy people.

Case 2: Love Breaks Obstacles - Barrier-free Space Project for the Elderly Who Live Alone With Special Difficulties

The project catered to the needs of the elderly who live alone with special difficulties by providing them with necessary infrastructure such as barrier-free handrails, and creating convenient, safe and humane barrier-free living space for them in order to ensure their home safety, strengthen their ability of taking care of themselves, and help them to lead peaceful life in their late years. Relevant departments have carried out 77 activities in aspects of volunteer training, home safety assessment, barrier-free facilities installation and training during the implementation cycle of the project. A total of 548 people received help. 57 social workers, 90 volunteers and one installation technician have participated in the project. The project funds were RMB 29,496.70. During the implementation process, relevant home safety information was compiled into a brochure named "Guidelines for the Elder's Home Safety", which was released to the public, and a senior volunteer team of "Love Breaks Barrier" was established. Besides, the social workers provided training on the use of barrier-free facilities for the service objects, and regularly visited them at their home to learn about their use of those facilities and feelings, in order to effectively improve their sense of satisfaction.

Secondly, guide charitable organizations to participate in social assistance. Charitable organizations at all levels set up charity projects according to relevant assistance policies and the reality of the poor families; encourage all sectors of society to participate in charity activities through setting up named funds and special funds to relieve more needy families with the diseased out of poverty. As a useful supplement to government assistance, charitable organizations' efforts have achieved good social effects

Thirdly, explore to develop village-level mutual medical assistance projects. The village-level mutual medical assistance projects are implemented for on the village basis, through which funds

are raised from “joint contribution by civilians, villages and the society”. The funds are granted to the diseased villagers on a third-party platform, which adds another line of defense.

Glossary

“3+2” policy system: This is a policy system that targets poor families with illnesses. It is composed of three measures, namely basic type (urban medical insurance, and rural medical insurance), universal benefit type (serious disease medical insurance, and long-term care insurance) and special type (social medical assistance), and two incentive guidance measures of village medical mutual assistance and charitable aid project.

Five Preciseness: Achieve all-round precision in the implementation of the social assistance system, including precise identification of assistance targets, precise use of funds, precise selection of projects, precise integration of forces, and precise assistance.

Social workers and junior social workers: The evaluation of the professional level of social workers is divided into three levels: junior social workers, social workers and senior social workers. Qualifications of junior social workers and social workers can be obtained directly through the exam, and senior qualifications will be obtained through the examination + comprehensive review according to the individual’s working experience.

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Appendix 1.

Pilots program within social assistance in China based on the EU best practices and policy reform proposals

**Xinping Guan
Nankai University**

Nov 2017

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After the development for years, a comprehensive social assistance system has been created in China, which is playing significant role in the anti-poverty actions and social security system. However, there are still some problems and shortcomings in China's social assistance system, and it is thus needed to be improved by further reforms. The Report on the 19th national congress of Chinese Communist Party has put forward higher requirements for the development of anti-poverty programmes and the social welfare system, and it requires to accelerate social assistance reform to accomplish the target of *Xiaokang* society and poverty-elimination in 2020, and set up a solid foundation for the further development of the social assistance in the process towards a modern country of China afterwards.

To help the reform and improvement of China's social assistance, the 3rd component of EU-China social protection project has developed an internationally comparative and collaborating research on China's social assistance. By the cooperative work of the researchers from China and EU countries, the problems in China's social assistance system has been analyzed, some comparative research has been done, and, based on these research, some policy recommendations have been proposed. The next step is to transit these research findings and policy recommendations into actual social assistance reform practices. Therefore, it is the main goal of this report to propose a pilot of China's social assistance reform based on the findings and policy recommendations of China-EU project.

I. The main achievement and current problems of China's social assistance and the reform recommendations proposed by the EU-China social protection project

1.1 The development and achievement of China's social assistance

The current social assistance system was initiated after the economic reform. In 1990s, the state enterprise reform in Chinese cities caused more and more serious urban unemployment and poverty, but the former social relief system could not deal with the new social problems, and thus a new kind of social assistance project, called the Minimal Living Guarantee (MLG) system was initiated in Shanghai and some other cities. Several years later this new social assistance system has been set up in all Chinese cities by the State Council's document "The Notice to set up Minimal Living Guarantee System Nationwide". In 1999, another important document "The Regulation of Urban Minimal Living Guarantee System" was issued by the State Council, by which a primary regulation system of this new social assistance has been set up. After 2000, the government kept on improving the MLG system on one hand, and set up several new projects in social assistance on the other, including medical assistance, education assistance, social assistance for the beggars and homeless, and temporary assistance, etc, as well as reform the traditional "Five Guarantee System" (*Wubao*). In the same time, a housing assistance system and an employment assistance system have been set up along with the housing reform and employment reform. Furthermore, in the early years of 21 century, the development of rural social assistance was accelerated in the background of the "New Rural Construction", and medical assistance, education assistance, MLG, natural disaster assistance have been set up in rural areas, plus the reform and improvement of rural Five Guarantee (*Wubao*) system, a comprehensive social assistance has been established in rural areas.

Based on the establishment and improvement of the social assistance projects, State Council issued a regulation document "The Provisional Measures for Social Assistance" (PMSA) in 2014, and thus the social assistance system was regulated as an integrated system by the state administrative regulation, and the main regulations were set up. The PMSA includes the main eight social assistance projects in China, i.e. the minimal living guarantee system (Dibao), the extreme difficulty people's support (EDPS) project, medical assistance, education assistance, housing assistance,

disaster assistance, employment assistance and temporary assistance, including beggary and homeless assistance. Besides, there are also a lawyer assistance and judicial assistance.

In the two-decade history since the establishment of urban Dibao, China's social assistance has played a very significant role in securing poor people's well-being, maintaining social stability and supporting economic reform. Especially, it has provided basic security for the poor people and in basic living, health, education, housing, etc, helped them deal with the survival difficulties and avoid the extreme poverty, and the social assistance itself has become a comprehensive, stable and effective safety-net in the social protection system in China.

1.2 The challenges of China's social assistance

According to the researchers from both China and EU, there are following challenges in China's social assistance system.

1. The institutional goal is too low

So far, the basic goal of China's social assistance is just to maintain the basic subsistence of the poorest families and help them meet the very basic needs, rather to narrow the gap of the poor families' living standards and increase their actual living quality. Therefore, China's social assistance can hardly contribute actively to the socioeconomic goal of "overall well-being society" and "shared development" of this country.

2. The benefit level is too low

Measured by either the indicators of the average percentage of the urban or rural minimal living standards to the average incomes, or average consumptions, of the urban or rural residents, by the beneficiaries of social assistance to the total population in urban or rural areas, by the average benefit level in cash value or services for the beneficiaries, or by the public expenditure of the governments in social assistance as a percentage to the GDP, China's social assistance level is very low, not only lower than the average level of developed countries, but also lower than the average level of developing countries.

3. The beneficiaries are too few

Currently, the total beneficiaries of China's social assistance are just less than 5% of the total population, and thus the coverage is very small. Especially in the cities, the urban beneficiaries are just about 2.5% of the household registered urban residents, or less than 2% of all the urban residents, i.e. the coverage is even smaller if the non-local-household-registered people are included. Meanwhile, the entitlements of most other social assistance project are, to a large extent, based on the eligibility of Dibao project, and thus only Dibao beneficiaries are entitled to apply for the benefits in medical assistance, education assistance, housing assistance, and employment assistance etc. Therefore, the small coverage of Dibao has excluded many poor people not only from the cash benefits of Dibao, but also from benefits of other social assistance projects. In recent years, there are some losing controls in this regulation, and some social assistance benefits are extended to some non-Dibao low income families and some other families in hardship of some kinds. But so far the changes are limited and there has been no national regulation to secure the wider beneficiaries.

4. The beneficiary identification is too rigid

So far the beneficiary identification is based on the two principles: one is family unit principle, by which only a family or household's economic situation is considered in the identification process, any individual person's difficulties are not into consideration. Another one is the economic principle, by which only a family's economic indicators (income and property) are determinants in

the identification of an applicant's entitlement, and the actual needs in expenditure are not considered. As a result of these two principles, Dibao project and other related social assistance projects cannot benefit some families whose incomes are higher than the Dibao standards but still have very serious difficulties by their special needs.

5. The social assistance system is not well-integrated

The various projects within the social assistance system are developed separately in the last two decades as responses to the special social needs in different stages, with a strong gradual development feature and a weak "top-designing" feature. Moreover, the developments of different social assistance projects are administrated by different governmental offices, many of the projects are actually a natural development from the traditional public affairs of these governmental offices, and there are few integrated institutional arrangements in their developments, and there is thus a low inter-project integration as a result.

6. More benefits in cash but less in services

Most of the projects in the current social assistance system provide benefits in cash, either provide cash directly to the poor people in need to cover their daily expenses, or reimburse the poor's costs in medical care and education, etc. The social assistance system has less social provisions in services to the poor families, especially less professional social work services, thus has less function in capacity building and mobility rising, and less contributions to reduce the inter-generation transmission of poverty. Especially, the less service feature may cause more "welfare dependency" among the poor families, especially when the benefit level increases in the future. Moreover, even in some social assistance projects that have service components, such as the *Wubao* and the social assistance for beggars and homeless, there are problems of insufficient service capacity and lower service quality.

7. Dibao's weak function in encouraging poor people's employment

In its designing and implementing, *Dibao* has not a paid enough attention to the empowerment of the poor and the motivation rising of the poor's employment, and thus has a weak function in encouraging poor's employment. The employment assistance project has play some active roles in providing jobs and other employment services for the poor, but it is still weak in motivating poor's employment willingness.

8. The incomplete feature of social assistance's legislation and administration system

As many researchers indicate, there are obvious shortcomings in social assistance's legislation and administration system. At first, there is so far no a social assistance law. Secondly, the coordination among different social assistance projects is not very well, which is mainly caused by the administrative feature that the different projects are under the different government ministries. Thirdly, at the root-level, the administrative and service workers are not sufficient, and their professional capacities are lower generally.

9. The service quality should be improved for the extreme difficulty people's support (EDPS) project

There have so far been some problems in the extreme difficulty people's support (EDPS) project. For example, some local EDPS services have difficulty in targeting the beneficiaries properly, in some services the benefit is too low to cover the beneficiaries' special needs in medical care and nursing, some of the care services' professional capacities are lower and the services are incomplete, and the average size is too small, etc.

1.3 The policy recommendations proposed by the EU-China social protection project

Based on the analysis of the above-mentioned challenges and problems, the researchers in the EU-China social protection project proposed some policy recommendations. The following are among the most significant.

1. To raise the general goal and standards of social assistance

It is important for China's social assistance to raise the general goal from the current goal of securing poor people's basic subsistence to a higher level of helping poor people enjoy *Xiaokang* (fairly well-off) society, and thus fulfilling a shared development. For the new goal, it is necessary for the further development of social assistance to increase its overall standards, including to have higher Dibao standards, to enlarge the coverage and have more beneficiaries, to raise the actual benefit level and to have more public expenditure on social assistance.

2. To reform the Dibao standard

It is needed to change the Dibao standard from the current "absolute standard" to a "relative standard", by which the Dibao standard should be made and revised in terms of some percentage of regional medium income.

3. To provide more social services for the poor in the social assistance system

It is suggested to change the current dominant cash benefit model to some kind of mixture model of both cash benefits and in-service assistances, i.e. with more social services provided to the poor in the social assistance system, especially the services to the elderly, children, the people with disability, etc. At the same time, in the current in-service projects, such as the social assistance projects for the extreme difficulty persons and beggars and homeless, the main task is to increase the service quality.

4. To further improve the administration system of the social assistance

It is suggested that, at first, the current inter-ministry coordination mechanism be reinforced; secondly, the organizational capacity of the administration and service at root level be further strengthened, and the professional ability be improved.

5. To accelerate legislative process of social assistance

It is suggested that the legislative process of social assistance be accelerated and further complete the regulation system and standards system. For this purpose, the researchers suggest that the legislative process for the "Social Assistance Law" be accelerated based on the current administrative regulation of "The Provisional Methods of Social Assistance".

II. The basic goals and main tasks of social assistance reform

According to the basic requirement by the Report of the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party "to secure people's basic living, meet people's increasing needs in better-off, promote social equity and justice", and to have the poor people reaching the living standards of the fairly well-off society, this report is to have a pilot of comprehensive reform to the social assistance system, based on the improvement of Dibao system.

The main tasks of this report are, based on the researches and policy recommendations proposed by the EU-China social protection project and the current China's economic and social requirements and conditions, to design a pilot action plan to further reform the social assistance system.

This report indicates that the basic target of the social assistance system reform is, based on the actual economic and social development situation and conditions and following the central

government's guideline of "securing and improving people's well-being" and "shared development", to raise the basic goal and the benefit level, improve the institutional arrangements, increase the efficiency and social achievements, In more detail, the reform should follow the following general directions: The first is to update the general goals and raise the benefit levels of social assistance, and further reinforce the significance of social assistance in the public endeavors of securing and improving people's well-being, increasing social equity and fulfilling shared development. The second is to further complete institutional system in order to have higher coordination and efficacy of the social assistance, further improve the institutional efficiency of social assistance and then have more social achievements as a result. The third is to further improve the administrative system and thus further raise the efficacy in the services and administration at the root level. The fourth is to accelerate the process of social assistance legislation.

Under the above-mentioned goals, this report proposes the following main tasks of current social assistance reform.

2.1 To further raise and improve social assistance standards

1. To have a unified social assistance standard

The reform tasks

- 1) To create a nationally unified method of making the urban and rural Dibao standard, and thus set up a foundation for the national Dibao standard in the future.
- 2) To change the Dibao standard from the current absolute standard to a relative standard, i.e. to determine the Dibao standard in terms of some percentage of last year's local medium income.

2. To set a "national minimal" of urban and rural Dibao standard

To set a national minimal of Dibao standard and require all local Dibao standards to be no lower than it. The national minimal will be set up based on the current local Dibao standards and to increase it step by step. Currently, the national urban and rural minimal standard should be set up according in the follow ways.

- (1) The urban Dibao standard is no lower than 20% of last year's provincial medium of urban people's disposable income;
- (2) The rural Dibao standard is no lower than 30% of last year's provincial medium of rural people's disposable income.
- (3) In the areas where urban and rural Dibao is merged, the Dibao standard is no lower than 25% of last year's provincial medium of people's disposable income.

3. To set a dual standards

It is necessary to set a "low income standard" beside the current Dibao standard, which can be 150%-200% of the local Dibao standard. In addition, it is necessary to set and publish a list of social benefits for the low income family. By this dual standard system, the poor families on different difficult level can get benefits of different kinds and different amounts.

2.2 To change the targeting mechanism

1. To introduce an indicator of "family necessary extra spending"

An indicator of Family Necessary Extra Spending" (FNES) is to be set and joint with the family income and property indicators as the determinants in the measurement of the eligibility of the Dibao beneficiaries. The details are as the follows.

- (1) The FNES including all extra consumptive items that a family has to spend beyond the basic maintenance of food, cloth and housing etc, including the necessary spending on children's education, medical costs, and the cares for the elderly and the family members with disability. The

family necessary extra spending is calculated as the total necessary expenditure minus the amount that have been paid for by governments, employers, NGOs or other people or organizations who have obligation to pay.

(2) In calculating a Dibao applicant's eligibility, the amount of the FNES should be subtracted from the actual family income before calculating the family per capita income.

2. To have personal Dibao beneficiaries

It is suggested to include some individual persons into the Dibao beneficiaries according to their actual difficulties, and thus to provide related Dibao benefits. A personal Dibao beneficiary should have the following conditions.

- (1) He/she is in a low income family, and doesn't have stable work or the family income p.c. is lower than the local Dibao standard;
- (2) He/she needs a regular big expenditure for disability or serious illness, etc, which cannot be paid for by other social assistance benefits.

For the personal Dibao beneficiaries, the cash benefits can be calculated in terms of the gap between his/her personal income and Dibao standard, and no higher than his/her necessary extra expenditure.

2.3 To further improve the social assistance services

It is necessary to reinforce the in-service social assistance to narrow the current gaps in the aspect. One of the main tasks is to set up long-term care assistance for the poor elderly and the poor people with disability; the second is to raise the service quality of the current social assistance services for the beggars and homeless by having more social work's involvement.

1. To set up long-term care assistance for the poor elderly and the poor people with disability

(1) The background and needs

In the massive ageing process, there will be more and more poor elderly and the poor people with disability in China who need long-term care. Many poor families will find it very difficult to pay for the expensive costs of the long-term care, and many of them cannot get payment from other sources such as long-term care insurance, and thus it is necessary to set up a long-term care assistance for the poor elderly and the poor people with disability.

(2) Basic principles

It is to expand the free long-term care services, or the institutional care, which is currently just covering the beneficiaries of EDPS, or *the Wubao*, to all the poor people who have special needs in long-term care. The long-term care services can be divided into two separate systems: the service provision system and the payment system. The services can be provided by public and private long-term care institutes, including the privately-run public and the government-supported private. The service providers' tasks are just to provide long-term services to the poor elderly. The costs should be paid for by the services users, and then the latter can get long-term care assistance benefits from the social assistance offices.

(3) The eligibility

The long-term care assistance project should determine its beneficiaries in terms of applicant's personal and family economic capacity. The current beneficiaries of EDPS, Dibao and low income families can be included, and a diversifying assistance system should be set up, by which the

benefits can be provided differently in term of the families' actual needs and their economic capacity. A full benefit can be provided to the poorest who don't have any economic capacity to pay by themselves, and some varying benefits can be provided to other families in terms of their different economic capacities

(4) Benefit level and payment ways

The costs can be calculated in terms of two different care models of home-based care and institutional care, and the benefits can be provided in terms of the families' actual needs and their income p.c. The assistance benefits can be provided in some way of "long-term care coupon", which is provided by local government, and can be used by the beneficiaries to pay the long-term care casts to the service providers, and then the services providers (institutes or persons) can reimburse it for money from the governments.

2. To raise the service quality and standard of the current long-term care services and the temporary assistance for the beggaries and homeless

Since there are some problems of low quality and low service standard in these two kind social assistance services, it is necessary to raise the service quality and standards by some reform measures. The quality-raising actions should be conducted in both hardware and software, as well as in service standardization, etc. and the key task is to force the low quality services pay more attention to raise their service quality, and reach the required standard. For more details, the follow actions should be included.

- (1) To further improve the technique standards of services in the long-term care and temporary assistance for the beggary and homeless, including the standards in hardware, software and service of various aspects, and require all the services to meet the standards.
- (2) To emphasize mainly the safety quality of the services, further increase the safety reliability of the hardware and service regulations, reinforce the staff's safety awareness, and guarantee the fire protection, food safety, medicine safety and personal safety.
- (3) To develop a more active care and assistance model: not only to keep and recover the beneficiaries physical functions, slow the physical ageing and fulfill a healthy ageing process, but also to pay more attention to their mental health and reinforce the psychological services, and help them have better social relations, and thus let them have better mental and social well-being in welfare long-term care institutes. Especially, it is important for the beggary and homeless services to pay more attention to the beneficiaries' problems and difficulties in mental health and social environment, help them have a more active outlook on life, and reinforce their capacity and willingness to go back to a normal life.

3. To have social work involved comprehensively in social assistance

It is necessary to involve professional social work in social assistance at two dimensions: providing services for the poor and undertaking administrative work, which will be significant for the improvement of service quality and administrative level of social assistance. The government has already had some guidelines as in the official document "The Guidelines to Accelerate Social Work Development in the Areas of Social Assistance" which was issued by both the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of Finance in 2015, and researchers have also proposed some action proposals. It is still needed to develop social work services in the practices in more details. Currently, it is important to encourage actual actions in this action area, and mainly to set up proper institutions and mechanisms.

(1) To improve the institutions of social work's involvement in social assistance

The main tasks in the institution building of social work's involvement in social assistance are the social work institutes and job creating. There should be four kinds of social work institutes and jobs in their involvement in social assistance.

One is to set up social work jobs in local community organizations, i.e. neighborhood committee, who will work for the services and administrations of social assistance. The jobs should be taken by qualified professional social workers with necessary training and related knowledge/skills. Moreover, the community-based social workers should act as "general practitioners" and provide a broad-spectrum social work to the poor families and other people in need in the communities.

The second is to develop social assistance social work institutes in county-wide areas, whose main goals are specifically to provide necessary services to the poor families and other people in need. Apart from having social work theories, methods and skills, they should also be familiar with social assistance policies, poverty problems and anti-poverty actions in contemporary societies, know the poor people's actual situation in their regions, and thus be able to undertake the local social assistance administrative work, provide consultation to the community social assistance social workers, and provide social work services to the complicated cases referred from community social workers.

The third is to set up social work jobs in the long term care services for the EDPS persons and social assistance services for the beggars and homeless, and even set up a department in some large services, and employ qualified social workers who are not only skillful in working with the beneficiaries of EDPS and beggars and homeless in a professional way, but also familiar with the laws and governmental policies in social assistance. Meanwhile, it is also possible for the local governments or the social assistance institutes to contract out the social work services, and have the professional social work institutes providing special social work services for the long term care institutes or the EDSP institutes.

The fourth is to provide pro-poor social work services in various social work services, such as school social work, medical social work, industry social work, and social welfare institute social work, etc, help these social work services develop awareness and capacity to serve the poor clients, and provide more special social work services to the poor in various areas of social work.

(2) To design the tasks of social work's involvement in social assistance

Based on the improvement of basic institutions of social work's involvement in social assistance, the next step of the pilot is to design the detailed tasks of social work's services to the poor families. For different kinds of social work jobs there should be different tasks, and more attention should be paid to the social work services for the poor families, for the poor elderly in long-term care services, for the beggars and homeless, for the poor students in schools, for the poor illness in hospitals and for the poor employees in enterprises, etc.

2.4 To further improve project system of social assistance and combine Dibao and EDSP

It is a basic feature of China's social assistance to provide social benefits to the eligible persons and families under the different projects. In this kind of institutional arrangement a proper project system is the precondition to keep the social assistance functioning well with high efficiency. The properness of the social assistance's project system rely on at first the inclusive coverage, i.e. it

could provide social benefits to the all in need; secondly the comprehensiveness, i.e. it could meet the poor's basic needs in all necessary aspects; thirdly the institutional coordination, i.e. there are high inter-project coordination that can prevent welfare missing and welfare overlap; and fourthly a high comprehensive efficiency, i.e. all the social assistance resources could be used with a high efficiency.

Currently there are two kinds of projects in social assistance system: one is the projects towards some certain kinds of poor people, such as EDSP, natural disaster assistance, and social assistance for beggars and homeless, etc, and another is the projects towards the poor peoples' different needs, such as Dibao, medical assistance, education assistance, housing assistance, employment assistance, lawyer assistance and judicial assistance. Put them together, these social assistance projects have basically covered all kinds of poor and most of their needs, except the long-term care assistance, as mentioned above. However, the inter-project coordination should be further improved, and the overall efficiency should be further raised. In more detailed, the different projects that deal with different difficulties of different poor people developed individually in a long period, and so far they are still administrated by different governmental offices. The fragmental feature of the projects causes, to some degree at least, some problems in the equity and efficiency. Therefore, this report recommends to reform the social assistance's project arrangement and the ways of their running and administration. Some projects can be combined. Currently, the following reforms in this aspect are possible: to combine EDSP into Dibao, to combine medical assistance into medical services, and to combine housing assistance into Dibao. Since the latter two combination involve other governmental offices beyond MOCA, however, it is not suggested to include these two kinds actions in the proposed pilots. Therefore, this kind of reform should start from the combination of EDSP into Dibao in the proposed social assistance reform pilots.

The EDSP project came from the previous "Wubao" system in rural areas. It has expanded its coverage after 2014. In the before, it covered only rural "Three Nos", but since the State Council issued "The Provisional Methods of Social Assistance" in 2014, it has been covering urban "Three Nos", too. Currently, this project has several characteristics. The first is its strict entitlement: it exclusively targets the "Three Nos" in rural and urban areas, with a strict requirement of entitlement. The second is the comprehensive feature in it's the benefit provisions: coming from the former rural Wubao system, which provided benefits of five kinds, the current EDSP project still provide benefits not only for the beneficiaries' basic living, but also for their health care, housing, long-term care, and funeral services, etc. The third is its high level benefits. Different from many other social assistance project, the EDSP project provide high level benefits. The former Wubao system even provide benefits that could maintain the beneficiaries' living condition no lower than the average of the local residents. According the latest governmental document, it is no longer required to provide such a high level benefit, but the actual benefit level is still higher that for Dibao beneficiaries.

The current EDSP project and its features are come from the historic legacy. The main reason to have rural Wubao and set comprehensive and high-level benefit was not only to deal with the rural "Three Nos" special difficulties, but also based on an exchange of the beneficiaries' personal ownership of farmland and their personal rights of some other property. However, these conditions have changed a lot at present. On one hand, the marginal differences between EDSP and Dibao beneficiaries are not very big, because many Dibao beneficiaries are still very weak in working ability, no enough family support, e.g. other family members also don't have working ability and income, and no other income source. Especially, along with the decrease of Dibao beneficiaries in recent years, the left Dibao beneficiaries' differences with EDSP beneficiaries are even smaller. On

the other hand, according to the current regulation, the EDSP beneficiaries can keep their right of farmland and other personal property, and keep the membership of collective economic organization, thus have right to share the profits of their collective economic organizations. Moreover, currently the EDSP has two more benefits than Dibao, i.e. long term care and funeral services. According to the recommendation of this report, the Dibao beneficiaries in need should be provided long term care, and for the Dibao beneficiaries in need, funeral services can be provided under the “temporary assistance”. Therefore, the differences in personal characteristics and social economic status between EDSP and Dibao beneficiaries are disappearing, and their actual benefits are becoming more and more similar. In this circumstance, it is no longer necessary to keep two different projects, and should explore the possibility to have a combined implementation of these two projects.

The main points of the combination implementation include: At first, to include the EDSP beneficiaries into Dibao, provide them with a full benefit, support their participation in medical insurance, provide full reimbursement of their medical costs, and pay for their funeral costs. Secondly, to include Dibao beneficiaries in need into long term care, pay a full long term care benefits for the “Three Nos”, and discount benefits for Dibao beneficiaries and other poor people depending on their actual family economic conditions.

2.5 The reform and capacity building actions for the local social assistance administration

A sound legislation system and a good administration system are the stern foundation for the stable, sustainable and efficient implementation and development of social assistance system. In the two decades since the first foundation of current social assistance system, there have been some developments in the legislation and administration building, but, taking it as a whole, it is still very weak in these two aspects. In the EU-China social protection project, some researchers have focused on these topics, and some policy suggestions to improve social assistance legislation and administration systems have been proposed by researchers. Since the legislation issue should be dealt with at national or provincial levels, it is not the topic of this pilot. Therefore, the suggestions of local administration reform will be proposed in this report.

1. To further reinforce the inter-department coordination mechanism

The inter-department coordination mechanism is an important mechanism to improve inter-project coordination in the condition that the separate social assistance administrations cannot be transferred to a single governmental department at the current stage. It is suggested that this mechanism should be reinforced at every level of government, with the following measures.

- (1) To complete inter-department mechanism, and require all governmental level to set up this mechanism.
- (2) To strengthen the functions of the inter-department coordination mechanism. One recommendation is to increase times of the regular joint meeting, and at every level, there should be at least twice plenary meeting per year, and several working meeting according to the needs in the administrative work. Another recommendation is to set up standing body (offices) at every level, and let them play actual roles not only policy making, but also in daily administration, especially in such affairs as information sharing, working coordination, etc.

2. To reform and improve local administrative and service organizations

A rational, completed and high efficient local administrative and service organization system is an important guarantee for social assistance system to have a high efficiency and good social efficacy.

So far, however, the local administrative and service system is not so completed, and thus has negative impacts on social assistance's social efficacy. Many shortcomings and serious problems in social assistance in the last two decades are related, to some extent at least, to the incomplete and low professional feature of the local administrative and service organizations. Therefore, this report would suggest to put the reform and improvement of local administrative and service organizations on the core of the reform pilots this time.

(1) The main goal and directions

The main goal of reforming and improving local administrative and service organization system is to create a local administrative and service system in social assistance system in both urban and rural areas that are suitable to the long term running and development of social assistance system, can improve the social efficacy and efficiency, and thus have better effectiveness in meeting the poor people's needs.

The basic directions of reforming and improving social assistance include: at first the foundation and improvement of local administrative and service organization system, secondly the exploration of a local administrative model that combine professional and societal features, thirdly the exploration of the proper institutions of local administrative and service by which NGOs can involve.

(2) The main tasks of the reform

There are several tasks in reforming and improving local administrations and services. The first is to complete organization system of local social assistance administrations and services. They could be state-run services or NGOs (non-governmental social work services) that funded by governments under the policy of governmental service outsourcing. The second task is to develop professional services in local social assistance administration and services by employing workers with professional qualifications. The third is to develop two kinds of capacities at the same time: the capacity of administration and capacity of social services, including professional social work services, for the poor people.

3. The pilot of capacity building of the local administration and services

The capacity building of local social assistance administration and services is a key link for increasing social assistance projects' social efficacy and efficiency. In view of the general problem of incapacities in local social assistance administration and services, this report would suggest a pilot of capacity building for the local social assistance administration and services, which will include the following tasks.

(1) To set up the working standards and regulations

It is important to set up working standard and regulation system for the local administration and services of social assistance because they are a key precondition to achieve a high level services and administrations of social assistance. The standards and regulations will be used as minimal requirements for the local administration and service of social assistance and their staff's performance, other than a limit for the workers' active roles in the local administration and services.

(2) To apply for new technique means to raise the qualities of services and administration

For a better quality in service and administration, it is necessary to apply new technique means, especially to apply the digital communication and information processing technology for a better communication with the poor families in communities, and to have a better information and understanding of the poor families actual needs and their responses to the social assistance benefits and services, which are significant for a better services and administration of social assistance.

(2) To reinforce the requirement of professional qualification of social workers

It is an important condition for the improvement professional capacity of social workers in social assistance that the workers have a professional qualification. Therefore, there should be a requirement and policy to have them achieving related professional qualification. At first, there should be requirements of professional social worker qualification, either that from a formal higher education in social work or that from official evaluation examinations of social workers' professional ability, in the recruitment of new social workers; secondly there should be more trainings for the social workers, and encourage them to attend national or local evaluation examinations of social workers' professional ability.

(3) To strengthen social workers' professional ability

It is another key issue for social workers' involvement in social assistance to strengthen social workers' professional ability. It is necessary to have ability strengthening actions for the social workers. Among the actions, the professional social work ability training for the local social assistance workers is of the most important, which include the following aspects. The first is to have social assistance staff with better professional knowledge of social work, including general social work knowledge, the theories and knowledge of poverty, the professional knowledge of social assistance rationale, including the knowledge in contemporary social policy in general, and social assistance in specific. The second is to strengthen local social assistance workers' professional skills, including the general social work methods, the special methods and skills of working with the poor and vulnerable, and the related laws, administrative regulations and policies in this area. The third is to raise the local social assistance workers' general knowledge of laws and policy and their capacity in implementing of these laws and policies. The fourth is to reinforce the local social assistance workers' social values and professional ethics, including the general values and ethics of social work and special values and ethics in working with the poor.

4. To further improve social assistance's fiscal budget system and the statistical system of public budget in social assistance

(1) To further improve social assistance's fiscal budget system

A good fiscal budget system is a key foundation for a stable public financing for the social assistance system. Currently, the financing system of social assistance is a kind of multi-tier fiscal system, with the financial resources coming from both central government and local governments of municipal and county levels. Currently, it is necessary to further institutionalize the central-local co-responsibility system, but it is beyond this pilot and no need to be discussed here. The reform of prefecture-county co-responsibility system of financing will be included in this pilot.

Currently, the multi-tier financing system require the county-level governments to take a part of financing responsibility, it is good for control the public budget of local governments, prevent from irrational expansion of social assistance provisions and public expenditure, but it may also cause

some local government, especially the local governments with weak financial capacity, to over control the social benefits and budgets, and thus have some eligible families not being covered. Therefore, this report suggests that the prefecture-level or higher governments take all the financing responsibility, or they coordinate the financing responsibilities within the administrative areas by providing financing transfers to the lower government that have lower financial capacity and thus solve the less benefit problems caused by the local governments' less financial capacity.

(2) To create social assistance financing statistical system

Currently the public budgets in social assistance were made by different governmental departments, and there is no a unified budget making process under the head of "social assistance". This problem is caused by the separate feature of the social assistance system, and may not be solved completely at current stage. The fragmental feature of social assistance budget causes directly some problem of social assistance statistics. Currently the statistical data in social assistance as a whole are fragmented and incomplete, because so far the social assistance statistical data are collected and published by different department of the governments who are in charge of individual social assistance projects, and there is no an authorized total statistics of social assistance. As a result, it is difficult to have accurate analysis and evaluation of social assistance development and the actual level of public expenditure on it. In current circumstance, it is necessary to have a unified statistical indicator of social assistance beyond the current fiscal budget system. One way is to set up a statistic indicator in the official statistical system. It is suggested that the governmental statistical offices at different level collect and calculate social assistance expenditure data from related governmental departments, and then publish the statistics of public expenditure on social assistance as a whole. Another possible way is that, through the social assistance coordination mechanism, the civil affair department at every level collects relevant data from different departments who are in charge of different social assistance projects, and then put it into a whole data before publishing it.

III. The arrangement and steps of the social assistance reform pilot

The social assistance reform is a complicated affair, and should be arranged and implemented step by step. The pilot is not a thoroughgoing change of social assistance, but some exploring reform of some institutional aspects of social assistance within some certain time and under some certain condition. The main actions will be done in the social assistance projects charged by the MOCA system, and mainly at the local county level, and no action will be taken in other projects beyond MOCA system or at national level. This report will propose the arrangement and steps of the pilot based on these conditions.

3.1 The basic arrangements of the pilot

This pilot will be implemented in some provinces, in which some cities and counties/districts will be selected as pilot cities and pilot counties/districts, including comprehensive pilot cities and specific pilot cities.

1. The comprehensive pilot cities

The comprehensive pilot cities are the cities selected to implement comprehensive social assistance reform pilots. The pilots will include all or several actions determined by the Social Assistance Section of MOCA. Also, the comprehensive pilot cities may add some extra actions of their own or make some adjustments of MOCA's reform scheme after being approved by the Social Assistance Section of MOCA.

2. The specific pilot cities

Some cities that don't meet the condition to implement a comprehensive pilot may be selected as a specific pilot city, in which some specific pilot could be done. A specific pilot is to explore some specific reform in some certain aspects of social assistance. The specific pilot cities can select one or more reform actions from the action basket recommended by MOCA's social assistance pilot leading group, or have their own reform action or make some adjustment to MOCA's scheme, after being approved by MOCA.

3.2 The steps of the pilot

There are following steps in the social assistance pilots

The first step: To set up a leading group of social assistance reform under the MOCA, and consultant teams to provide intellectual supports. The leading group will be headed by the deputy Minister of MOCA who is in charge of social assistance affairs, and the members will be the Director of Social Assistance Section of MOCA and the deputy chief of the provincial Bureaus of Civil Affairs in charge of social assistance. The members of the consultant team will be the domestic scholars in the research areas of social assistance.

The second step: To have necessary theoretic researches and design pilot schemes. It is mainly the task of the consultant team to have theoretical researches and practical arrangements, and propose practical schemes of the pilot.

The third step: To discuss and approve the practical schemes of the pilot. The social assistance section of MOCA will organize a discussion of the proposed schemes by inviting local Civil Affairs offices' participation, or the members of consultant team do some field work in some pilot places to collect opinions from the local Civil Affairs offices and social assistance staff, etc. After collecting the responses to the schemes, the consultant team will make necessary revisions on the schemes. The revised schemes will be submitted to the leading group for approval, and the approved schemes will be implemented.

The fourth step: To select the pilot cities. Based on the voluntary registration of the local Civil Affairs Offices, the leading group of social assistance pilot will select some prefecture level cities/districts as the pilot cities/districts. It is suggested that about 3-5 comprehensive pilot cities/districts and 8-10 specific pilot cities/districts be selected.

The fifth step: To conduct baseline studies. Before starting the formal reform work, it is necessary to have some baseline studies in the pilot cities/districts. The main goal of the baseline studies is to have basic information of the current social assistance system of the pilot cities/districts, in order to provide reliable data for the designing of the details implementing schemes, and have a comparative dataset for the evaluation of the pilot after the implementation. The baseline studies include the main institutions of social assistance and their operation situation, and the main data of the social assistance's outcomes. The methods and approaches of baseline studies can be designed by the consultant team of the pilot's leading group, and implemented by the local Civil Affairs Bureaus in the pilot places. The consultant team will provide technical supports to the local implementation of the baseline studies, and pool the data for further analysis.

The sixth step: To implement pilot schemes. After completing the previous steps, the pilot cities/districts can begin the pilots, i.e. to implement the pilot schemes. The local pilot work will be under the direct of the local leading groups. During the pilot period, the national leading group will organize consultants to go to pilot places doing field work for analyzing the pilot process, making

summary, and providing technical supports, etc, and will organize information and experience exchanges among pilot cities/districts by workshops or visit studies.

The seventh step: To do the evaluation and conclusion of the pilots. An interim evaluation and a final evaluation will be conducted in the mid-time and at the end of the pilots. The interim evaluation will, under the guidance of the national consultant team, be conducted by the local Civil Affair Bureaus of the pilot cities/districts. The self-evaluation reports will be submitted to the national leading group of social assistance pilot. The leading group will analyze the reports, spread the useful local experiences, and help solve the problems and improve the local work. After the main pilot work is completed, the national leading group will organize consultant team to do final evaluations of all the local pilots. The final evaluation will be done by the consultant team based on the analysis of the materials of the pilot work and the social efficacies provided by local Civil Affair Bureaus of the pilot cities/districts. After the final evaluation, MOCA will sponsor a conference for conclusion and experience sharing of the pilots. The conference is mainly for the concluding and experience exchanging on one hand, and to prepare some reform schemes for all the country, and provide evidence for the national level policy documents to start new reform nationwide.

3.3 The organization system

For the successful implementation of this pilot, it is necessary to create an organization system, which should including the following provisional social assistance reform organizations.

1. The National Leading group of Social Assistance Reform at MOCA.

The leading group is headed by the vice ministry of MOCA who is in charge of social assistance, and the members include the Director of Social Assistance Section of MOCA, and the vice chief of Provincial Civil Affair Bureau of pilot provinces. The main duty of the leading group is to take the overall leading responsibility for this pilot.

2. The local leading groups of the pilots.

The local social assistance reform leading groups should be set up at pilot cities or districts, which will be headed by the Civil Affair Bureau' deputy chief in charge of social assistance, and the member will include the director of the sections of social assistance and the deputy chief of the lower level Civil Affair Bureaus. The main duty of the local leading group is to take the leading responsibility for the pilot in the local areas.

3. The consultant teams at national and local levels

For having a good expert support to the pilot, it is necessary to have consultant teams of social assistance reform at national and local level. The national consultant team will be invited by the National Leading group of Social Assistance Reform from the domestic scholars in social assistance and other related areas. The local consultants will be invited by the local leading groups of social assistance reform. The consultant groups' main duty is to provide professional consultations to the National Leading group and local leading groups of social assistance reform, and take the responsibilities of scheme designing, technical supports, evaluation and final report writing, etc.