

# Govt launches poverty alleviation survey

Country's top leadership has adopted a slew of measures to ensure targets will not be compromised

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The central government has launched a national survey on the progress of poverty alleviation as the country drives to meet its goal of lifting its entire rural population out of poverty this year, with analysts saying the survey could help usher in more targeted aid measures for impoverished individuals.

The General Office of the State Council mapped out the survey, the first of its kind, in a notice published on June 29.

The survey is a key part of the groundwork for the country's targeted poverty reduction campaign as well as a comprehensive test of its outcomes, the office said.

China has lifted over 93 million people out of absolute poverty over the past seven years but still had 5.51 million rural residents living below the official poverty line by the end of last year.

However, the poverty alleviation campaign has been complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the country's economy contracted for the first time in decades, many impoverished rural households faced difficulties finding jobs in urban areas, while sales of agricultural products also slumped.

The country's top leadership has adopted a slew of measures to ensure its targets will not be compromised, with the government already committed to spending 146.1 billion yuan (\$20.7 billion) on poverty alleviation this year.

A number of programs have been rolled out to facilitate the sale of agricultural products and bolster workshops that help poor households.

The survey will enable authorities to learn about the poverty alleviation situation as it relates to poor people and provide accurate information for judging and summarizing the outcomes of the campaign, the government notice said.

It will cover 832 counties that were focal points for the campaign, in addition to some other counties in the country's central and western regions.

Workers conducting the survey will prioritize efforts to find out basic information about poor households, such as their main source of income and whether their demands for food, clothing, compulsory education, basic healthcare and housing security have been met.

They are also expected to record how poor households are obtaining aid from authorities, taking part in poverty alleviation programs and the basic public services being offered at village and county levels.

Vice-Premier Hu Chunhua, who is also head of the State Council



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Leading Group on Poverty Alleviation and Development, told a meeting on June 30 that the quality of survey must be the top priority, and authorities must resolutely guard against human intervention and fraud.

The key is to ensure that the survey meets the same standards

across the board and its data are truthful and accurate, he said.

The State Council started preparatory work for the survey in October, when it formed a leading group for the survey that is also headed by Hu. The group's office was set up in the National Bureau of Statistics.

Tang Lixia, a professor who studies poverty and rural development at China Agricultural University, said the COVID-19 pandemic and the floods in South China have posed severe challenges to the country's economic growth, with impoverished

groups the most vulnerable.

"A survey of this kind will enable authorities to find out cases of people falling below the poverty line once again and problems such as a possible lack of momentum in poverty reduction campaigns," she said.

Tang added that the survey could help authorities better understand challenges and problems, and thus come up with more targeted measures to help the poor.

It could also help summarize practices that have proved effective, so they can be transformed into long-term measures, she said.

With the COVID-19 pandemic also posing threats to poverty reduction efforts worldwide, especially in some developing countries, Tang said the survey will offer confidence and impetus to the international community by summing up China's achievements and experience.

She said the survey should not be seen as a work assessment for authorities or the basis for official inquiries as the government had already established several work mechanisms for performance assessment and evaluation in the poverty alleviation area.

## POLICY RESPONSE

# Flood relief efforts and community jobs on agenda

By WANG QINGYUN  
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A number of ministry-level departments, including those responsible for finance, emergency management and poverty alleviation have recently responded to issues of public concern.

### 150m yuan of emergency funding for flood response

The ministries of finance and emergency management granted 150 million yuan (\$21.2 million) of emergency funds to Sichuan, Guizhou and Hunan on June 29 to help the three provinces deal with flood disasters.

The Ministry of Emergency Management, which issued a statement about the funding, said it and the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters had been discussing the weather and flood outlook with water resources and meteorology departments.

On June 28, the National Disaster Reduction Committee and the Ministry of Emergency Management



activated a level-four national disaster relief and emergency response to the rain and floods in Sichuan, Guizhou and Hunan, and dispatched working groups to areas seriously hit by flooding to help them cope with the disaster.

### Deluge prompts focus on plight of impoverished

Poverty alleviation authorities in provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities should monitor the situation of people who risk slipping into poverty due to the floods that are hitting southern parts of China and provide timely assistance to them, the State Council Leading

Group Office on Poverty Alleviation and Development said in a statement issued on June 30.

Authorities should investigate and address hidden dangers in infrastructure, speed up renovation of damaged houses, roads and water projects, and ensure poor people have safe housing and drinking water, it said.

They should also help farmers recover from the loss of crops and agricultural produce caused by floods and ensure impoverished migrant workers can find jobs, the office said.

Authorities should help impoverished migrant workers who have returned home due to floods or the COVID-19 pandemic solve the difficulties they face and encourage them to return to cities to find work.

They should also help those who cannot work away from home to find jobs nearby or engage in farm work to prevent significant loss of income, the office said.

It also called on authorities to facilitate the sale of agricultural

produce by impoverished people, among other measures.

### Graduates urged to seek community service jobs

College graduates will be encouraged to seek jobs and start businesses in the field of community services, the Organization Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and a number of government departments, including the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, said in a statement issued on Friday.

That would offer graduates more employment alternatives and help communities in urban and rural areas improve their governance by hiring graduates, the statement said.

The statement also supported the employment of graduates by companies and civil organizations that offer community services. College graduates should be given priority in filling community work vacancies designed to strengthen disease prevention efforts at the

community level in light of weaknesses exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, it said.

Policies dealing with government purchases of community services should be improved, and governments should nurture all kinds of community organizations and social service institutions in urban and rural areas to create jobs for college graduates.

More assistance should be provided for graduates seeking community-level jobs, and they should receive better training in community service skills, the statement said.



## Policy digest

### Regulations ensure timely payment of SMEs

Draft regulations passed at the State Council executive meeting on Wednesday will guarantee small and medium-sized companies receive payments in time, according to a statement issued by the State Council.

The regulations prescribe how government departments, public institutions and big companies should sign contracts with and make payments to SMEs, as well as time limits within which the payments should be made.

They also include clauses concerning the handling of complaints about payment arrears and related punishment, and said government departments, public institutions and big companies should make public the amount of money they have failed to pay to SMEs in time.

The meeting was told that the government should tide SMEs over economic difficulties and stabilize the country's economic fundamentals, thus it is urgent to make regulations to guarantee the companies receive payments in time.

The State Council General Office and government departments should strengthen inspections to make sure the regulations are fully implemented, the executive meeting was told.

### Governments enhance information disclosure

Governments of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, as well as departments and institutions under the State Council should strengthen information disclosure according to the spirit of the fourth plenary session of the 19th Communist Party of China Central Committee, the State Council General Office said in a statement released on Friday.

It said authorities should comprehensively review their administrative powers and public duties, and update and make public their lists of powers and duties.

The statement, which laid out major tasks for government information disclosure this year, also called for authorities to strengthen the interpretation of policies designed to stabilize employment, the financial sector, foreign trade, foreign and domestic investment, and expectations.

They should also ensure the timely release of information about policies aimed at safeguarding the "six priorities": employment, people's livelihoods, the development of market entities, food and energy security, the stable operation of industrial and supply chains, and the smooth functioning of society, the statement said.

They should pay particular attention to informing more people about policies issued to relieve difficulties and invigorate market entities, while ensuring funds are used transparently and benefit companies and people at the grassroots level, it said.

More government information should be released to improve the business climate, it added.

Authorities should make all market regulation rules and standards known to market entities and train those enforcing policies at the grassroots level to make sure various policies, including tax reductions, are implemented without distortion.

They also need to make sure disease control information is disclosed in a timely, accurate, open and transparent manner to enhance the public's ability to tackle contagious diseases, the statement said.

Authorities should strengthen implementation of the Regulations on Open Government Information, which was revised last year, and governments at various levels should complete the construction of their government information disclosure platforms by the end of this year.

Governments should also appoint one person to be in charge of information disclosure, the statement said.