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Comparative Research on the Reform and Exploration of Balancing Urban-Rural Development

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Abstract Balancing urban and rural comprehensive reform is the major reform and developmental strategy of China. On the basis of the concept and theory of balancing rural and urban reform, the two national pilot cities Chengdu, Chongqing and several provincial pilot cities including Ningbo, Yangzhou, Shaoxing and Zigong are compared. The experiences and connotation of balancing urban and rural areas are concluded from the following four aspects. Firstly, scientific plan is a prerequisite; secondly, promoting "three collections" is the core; thirdly, developing people's livelihood is the basis; fourthly, organization security is the key.

Key words Balancing urban-rural development, Reform, Comparative research, China

Balancing urban-rural comprehensive reform is of great significance to solving the current urban-rural dual structure, facilitating the transformation of economic growth mode and promoting the stable development of Chinese social economy. The comprehensive reform is of great importance to the comparative researches on the balanced urban-rural reform and exploration in demonstration cities at various levels nationwide; the conclusion and extraction of reform experiences at certain steps and the further implementation of various works. On the basis of balancing urban-rural theory, the paper conducted comparative researches on the pilot cities at national level and provincial demonstration cities including Ningbo, Yangzhou, Shaoxing, Zigong *et al.*, and concluded the experiences and connotations.

1 Theory basis for balancing urban and rural development

When conducting the related research on balancing urban-rural development, the rough knowledge on the concepts of "urban areas", "rural areas" and balancing urban-rural developing is very important. Since the implementation of urban-rural dual management model, China has formed urban and rural two basic patterns. "Urban area" is the cities and towns established after the approval of the State Council. It is characterized by dense population, developed industry and commerce and large non-agricultural populations *et al.* It is the political, economic and cultural center of the neighboring areas. "Rural area" is the rural grass-roots administrative organization and its prefectures. In towns, which are composed by villages, the basic organization form is villagers' committees. Their basic features are backward economic development, vast geographic area,

dispersed population and agricultural population.

Marx thought that urban-rural conflict was a historic scope and the fundamental reason that caused the conflict was the production and development of capitalism. With the development of productive forces, the urban and rural areas would integrate together. The theory of "economic development under the infinite supply of labors" put forward by American development economist Arthur Lewis; the development theory of binary space structuralism of G·Myrdal, the stage theory of economic growth of Rostow, the industrial structural theory of Kuznets and the human capital theory of Schultz are all of significance to directing balanced urban-rural development.

Since the scientific developmental strategy of "five balances" put forward in the third session of the 16th CPC Central Committee, balancing urban-rural development has become hot among various circles in China. Balancing urban-rural development is under the situation of adhering to the fundamental role of market mechanism in resource allocation, to fully display the government's role in macro control; break through the barriers between advanced urban areas and backward rural areas; gradually realize the reasonable flow and optimized integration of productive elements and promote the close combination and balanced development of urban-rural economic and social life^[1]. Balancing urban-rural development includes balancing urban-rural relations, balancing urban-rural elements and balancing urban-rural development^[2]. At present, the key to balancing urban-rural comprehensive reform is to break through urban-rural dual structure; take urban-rural economic social development as an integration to manage; promote the communication and reorganization of whole productive elements (that are land, capital, labor and management)^[3]; construct urban and rural areas into an integration with mutual reliance, mutual relations and mutual development and cultivate a favorable pattern, which is characterized by developing urban areas to promote rural areas, promoting urban areas by developing rural areas, mutual market, mutual service and mutual environment. In summary, balancing urban-rural development should be

based on the direction of scientific development outlook; on realizing the balanced development of urban and rural areas and mutual development and constructing the socialist harmonious society with Chinese characteristics.

2 The reform practices of balancing urban-rural development in Chengdu City and Chongqing Municipality

Various areas in the whole nation are trying to eradicate urban-rural dual structure and the exploration on it has been practiced for ten years. However, in June, 2007, the Central Government established Chengdu City and Chongqing Municipality as the comprehensive supporting reform demonstration areas. The two cities have conducted reform and practice in large scale and accumulated valuable experiences.

2.1 Experiences of reform in balancing urban-rural development of Chengdu City As one of the reform and demonstration districts on balancing urban-rural development at national level, Chengdu City started from the features of its location, resource & environment, developmental status of economic society, and then determined the new strategy of cultivating "modern idyllic city in the world" through the three stages including plan of the whole city, balance of the whole district and global location. The changes of developmental location of Chengdu City are the fruit of intensified promotion on coordinating urban-rural reform. Chengdu City starts from the livelihood development of enriching people, comforting people and creating jobs to conduct reform and exploration on balancing urban-rural development and it has reached fruitful results, which can be concluded on the following aspects. In the first place, Chengdu City should adhere to the key areas of towns and counties and central towns, and it takes scientific plan as guild and basis; the industrial developmental as support; establishing perfect and healthy mark allocation mechanism as the key; stipulating and perfecting supporting policies as guarantee and the changes of farmers' production, living and residential way as a starting point and foothold, to continuously promote the whole area developmental paths with the characteristics of "complex urbanization, element marketization, urban-rural integration". In the second place, Chengdu City vigorously promotes "three concentrations", implements the joint "industrialization, urbanization and agricultural modernization" to improve the resource allocation efficiency; promote the concentration from industry to industrial estate to foster the industrial cluster advantages and improve the industrial development level; promote the concentration of agricultural land to scale operation to improve agricultural scale operation level, the transformation from traditional agriculture to modern agriculture; the concentration of agricultural land to scale operation to improve the agricultural scale operation level and the transformation from traditional agriculture to modern agriculture; facilitates the concentration of farmers to urban areas and towns to let farmers enjoy the relatively perfect infrastructure and urban civilization to promote the transformation of farmers' thought pattern, livelihood mode and behavior mode. In the third place, Chengdu City should vigorously promote the

"three key projects": accelerating agricultural industrial operation, environment construction for agricultural development and rural poverty relief and development construction to vigorously promote rural development and accelerate the progress of urban-rural integration.

2.2 Exploration on balancing urban-rural reform in Chongqing Municipality As a municipality under the jurisdiction of the Central Government and the demonstration area of balancing urban-rural comprehensive supporting reform at national level, Chongqing Municipality has realized the urban-rural balanced development through urban-rural connection and begin interaction among them under the market environment, by taking urban areas and rural areas as main body, government as leader to further promote the reform of various aspects and the rational circulation and optimized allocation of productive elements between urban and rural areas; taking balancing urban-rural developmental plan as active directions, perfect mechanism system and legal system as guarantee system and the driving mechanism as "engine"^[4]. In view of the situation that promoting "big cities" by "small cities", Chongqing Municipality highlights the reform in registration system, land use right reform, social security system reform, administrative mechanism reform, public financial system reform and gradually establishes the mechanism system of balancing urban-rural development. The specific measures include the following two aspects: in the first place, establishing favorable operation mechanism, taking scientific development outlook as guide, government as leading party, and market as the basis for resources allocation to promote the benign urban-rural interaction. In the third place, the market allocation mechanism should be taken as a base to promote the combination of sending urban resources to rural areas (accelerating the integration of the first and the tertiary industries) and farmers' entrance to cities; narrow down urban-rural gap and reach the urban-rural balanced development. The government has displayed a major role in the great breakthroughs bought by Chongqing Municipality. In the first place, the government has conducted systematic reform, refined the number of institutions, reduced the levels of management, tried hard to improve the execution efficiency and effectively handle the relations between the government and market. In addition, the scientific plan should be paid attention to and the implementation of various plans should be intensified. For example, the integration of urban-rural construction plan, land use plan, industrial developmental plan, and environmental protection has well solved the connection of various specialized plan and tested the implementation of various plans.

3 Balanced urban-rural reform of provincial demonstration cities

On the basis of mirroring the reform of demonstration areas at national level in Chongqing municipality and Chengdu City, each province (region directed by the Central Government, Municipality directed by the Central Government) in China, establishes the demonstration area at provincial level and conducts comprehensive reform on balancing urban-rural develop-

ment according to its realities. The paper selects the reform of Yangzhou City in Jiangsu Province, Ningbo City and Shaoxing City in Zhejiang Province, and Zigong City in Sichuan Province as examples to prove.

3.1 Balancing urban-rural reform of Yangzhou City According to the overall thought pattern of "developing space to support city and industries, the added profits should be used for rural areas and farmers", Yangzhou City adheres to the development from reality and pays attention to the development of rural areas, at the same time of accelerating economic development and promoting urban construction. So far, Yangzhou has formed the urban-rural development ideas with Yangzhou distinctions and has accelerated the progress of urban-rural integration. In terms of accelerating urban-rural balanced development, Yangzhou City takes eight "integrations" as highlights and practically balances the urban-rural development. The right "eight integrations" are optimizing urban-rural function division and spatial layout; promoting the integration of urban-rural plan; maintaining farmers' land rights and promoting the integration of urban-rural land use; promoting rural economic prosperity and farmers' income increase and promoting the integration of urban-rural integration; promoting the integration of urban-rural infrastructure construction and environmental protection; promoting the integration of urban-rural financial services; promoting the integration of urban-rural social causes; facilitating the integration of urban-rural social management^[5].

3.2 Balancing urban-rural reform Of Ningbo City The balanced urban-rural development in Ningbo City starts from the developmental plan. The Ningbo City has revised the overall urban plan and urban-rural system plan; steadily promoted the adjustment of administrative districts, transforming counties into districts, changing villages into towns, transferring villages into quarters. Thus, the layout and scale of cities and towns are more reasonable and the clustering functions are further intensified. The developmental layout, which takes central cities, sub-central cities, central towns as main bodies, is formed. In the second place, Ningbo City vigorously develops its economy at county level (five counties (cities) directed by Ningbo City has been listed among the five-hundred counties nationwide); promotes the balanced development of urban-rural industries. Ningbo City has formed the developmental pattern of motivating rural areas by urban areas and the mutual interactive development of urban and rural areas. In the third place, the construction of rural infrastructure should be accelerated and rural public service level should be improved to ensure the stable development of rural economy on the basis of protecting rural ecological environment. In the fourth place, the land use right reform should be steadily promoted and the land expropriation compensation system of "comprehensive price in a certain district" is established to stimulate rural development vitality and protect farmers' interests.

3.3 Balancing urban-rural reform of Shaoxing City Through the construction of "ten networks", Shaoxing City has promoted various works for balancing urban-rural reform. The "ten networks" include urban layout network, urban-rural transportation

network, urban-rural information network, urban-rural modern supermarket network, urban-rural education network, urban-rural financial network, urban-rural healthy protection network, urban-rural social security network and urban-rural peace network. In terms of constructing the urban layout network, Shaoxing City intensified the plan on urban system and the five counties (cities) under its control have completed the village plan and adjustment. At the same time, taking the engineering construction of "a hundred villages' demonstration and a thousand villages' consolidation" as carriers, to promote the reconstruction of urban villages in suburbs area and estate villages in development estate. Through the construction of "ten networks", the further development of urban-rural integration has been greatly promoted and the overall development of rural area has been stimulated.

3.4 Balancing urban-rural reform of Zigong City Zigong City has vigorously promoted the reform of balancing urban-rural development through strategically considering a series of reform and development of resource saving, environmental protection, urban-rural balance, livelihood engineer, the invigoration of old industrial estate and construction of central cities. From the perspective of "Chengdu and Chongqing economic development zone and overall Zigong", the Zigong City has established its major directions of balancing urban-rural reform. In the first place, the mechanism for balancing urban rural reform is established. In the second place, Zigong City liberates its mind, and clarifies the developmental thought pattern and stipulates related policies on balancing urban-rural development. In the third place, Zigong City adheres to the priority of demonstration districts and finds the keys and breakthroughs them. Zigong City promotes various systems reform from the following aspects; in the first place, it compiles *The Construction Plan of Big City with Hundreds of Population, Spatial Development Plan of Balanced Urban Rural Development and Control Planning of Urban-rural Junction Area of Zigong City*, to promote the integration of urban-rural plan. In the second place, rural land property system should be promoted steadily. The property elements of stimulating land and rural houses are taken as breaches to construct the framework of rural property right reform, which has accelerated the progress of urban-rural integration. In the third place, the registration system reform and security system should be promoted. Firstly, the supporting reform of social security of populations, who have been transformed to be urban citizens from rural citizens, should be reinforced and the integrated household registration system should be established, so as to promote the order progress of changing farmers to urban citizens. At the same time, through implementing, the *Notes on Really Do Well the Works on Balancing Urban Rural Social Security and Trial Procedures on Transferring the Basic Medical Security Relations*, the basic framework of social security system should be established. Fourthly, Zigong City has intensified its financial support on rural construction and has provided great support on agricultural loans, pilots of forestry right mortgage and political policy in planting and breeding industries.

4 Comparative analysis on balancing urban-rural reform

Chengdu and Chongqing have implemented fruitful reform according to different market situations, their experiences can be mirrored by the reforms in other cities. However, different pilot cities are exploring different ways of reform according to their economy, society, natural environment *et al.* Although different cities have different highlights and breaches, the following experiences are the key rules that determine the success and fail of balancing urban-rural reform.

4.1 Scientific plan is a prerequisite Each pilot city lays stress on combining its reality and compiles the scientific development plan of "urban-rural integration". For example, Chengdu City has planed to develop from "the whole Chengdu City" to "global position"; on the basis of balanced plan of the whole city, Chongqing emphasizes the scientific plan of each district; Yangzhou City adheres to "eight networks"; and Zigong promotes the reform on balancing urban-rural development through establishing "urban-rural integration mechanism".

4.2 Promoting "three concentrations" is the core The industry should be concentrated and take the development path of cluster and intensive development. Industrialization is the driver of urban-rural balanced development to promote the development of cities and towns and the secondary and tertiary industries to create good situations for transferring rural surplus labors. Farmers concentrate to cities and towns and new quarters. Rural surplus labors should be encouraged to undertake the secondary and tertiary industries to create good situation for land scale operation. The land should be concentrated to appropriated scale operation to transfer agricultural production way; promote the development of agricultural modernization and agricultural industrialization; promote the improvement and release of agricultural productive forces, at the same time, provide resources for the development of the secondary and tertiary development. The reform of "three concentrations" involves free and improves land resources, household registration system and mutual development of industrialization, urbanization and agricultural modernization, so it is the essence of balancing each reform.

4.3 Developing livelihood is the root The fundamental aim for balancing urban-rural comprehensive reform is to establish the system and mechanism for balancing urban-rural development; create the developmental layout of motivating cities by villages, promoting villages by cities and mutual interaction of urban and rural areas; comprehensively improve rural development level; eliminate urban-rural dual structure and realize the rapid and healthy development of urban-rural integration. Therefore, each reform measure should be based on the adherence to the development of rural areas and agriculture and should take farmers' income growth as essence; emphasize mutual development of various industries and land transfer and launch various works revolving livelihood engineers. Only by adhering to the development of people' livelihood, the urban-rural integration can be reached.

4.4 Organization security is the key Balancing urban-rural reform is a complex and systematic project, which involves large area and has great influences. The effects of balancing urban-rural reform can be guaranteed, only by each party paying much attention to it; stipulating supporting policies of each item; and vigorously promoting the implementation of each policy and plan of it.

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