

## Event Highlights

### **The 13<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China Forum on Social Development and Poverty Reduction Nanning, Guangxi 26 – 28 June 2019**

The ASEAN-China Forum on Social Development and Poverty Reduction provides a platform for the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) to exchange views on common concerns, explore ways to narrow development gaps, and share best practices to achieve harmonious development based on mutual benefits and win-win spirit.

International Poverty Reduction Center in the PRC (IPRCC) has been the regular organizer of the forum. This year's forum was supported by ASEAN Secretariat, Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Development Programme, and China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges. Its objectives were to share best practices of the PRC and ASEAN on rural revitalization and poverty reduction, learn about linkages between rural and urban poverty and innovative ideas on poverty reduction, and discuss ways of enhancing poverty reduction partnerships to realize sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the region.

Over 200 participants attended the forum with the highest level being vice-ministerial. Participants from the PRC were from the State Council Leading Group of Poverty, provincial poverty alleviation offices, related ministries, research institutions, media and the private sector. External participants included officials from ASEAN countries, researchers from Japan and the Republic of Korea, and staff from international organizations, non-profit organizations, and embassies.

### **Highlights**

A distinctive feature of this year's forum was that it was organized as a series of back-to-back events that provided more in-depth sharing of poverty reduction cases not only from the PRC but also from Japan and the Republic of Korea. On 25 June, the day before the forum, the "Workshop on PRC-Japan-Korea Rural Vitalization Experiences: Implications for ASEAN" was held where participants learned about the successes and challenges of rural developments in the Plus Three countries. In addition to attending the forum itself, over 40 IPRCC capacity building trainees from Asia, Africa and Latin America also extended their stay to 29 June to learn in particular Guangxi's targeted poverty alleviation practices and experiences.

Following are several key messages from the forum:

- The PRC and ASEAN have made great achievements in poverty reduction and development, but still face challenges. Although 800 million have been lifted out of poverty since 1990, multi-dimensional poverty is still prevalent, while rising inequality, environmental degradation, and risks to disasters

remain obvious challenges.

- ASEAN countries have developed valuable experiences in poverty reduction and development, such as promoting economic growth and employment, increasing farmers' incomes, developing communities and improving social security. For instance, Cambodia has launched a four-stage strategy to reduce poverty, achieve higher growth, and create jobs through human resource development, economic diversification, private sector and market development, sustainable and inclusive growth, and governance reforms. Malaysia has made basic education and healthcare free, provided housing for the extreme poor, and job training for the young. Singapore has built a social-safety net for short, medium and long-term family care and medical funds, which inspire individual responsibility, build strong families, and create caring communities.
- Rural development and revitalization provide opportunities that help countries achieve their sustainable development goals (SDGs). Rural community represents the poverty core, which highlights the importance of the poor and low-income groups being able to share development results. For example, Indonesia is transforming its rural development strategy from a centralized model to one that is participatory and decentralized, which gives community organizations more power and targeted funding. The Philippines has put forward an ecological management framework at the village level to reduce poverty through environmental protection. And Thailand has enhanced capacity of rural communities through public-private partnership efforts, developing agricultural products and processing, and creating tourism niches.
- This forum has established itself as an important south-south knowledge sharing platform. It should capitalize on the participation of regional and international organizations to learn advanced experiences and best practices to share with all countries.
- Regional cooperation on social development and poverty reduction needs to be further explored. The PRC and ASEAN should enhance cooperation for mutual benefits. Regional and global initiatives can greatly facilitate the implementation of SDGs by investing in cross-country infrastructures, widening civic spaces for inclusive development, and adopting innovative technology-based approaches.
- Although ASEAN has much to learn from the PRC, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, there is no formalized arrangement on how the learning can be translated to actual implementation on the ground. Thus far, such arrangement has taken place on a bilateral basis between an ASEAN country with one of the Plus Three countries.
- Participants were satisfied with the forum. Although many believed more detailed presentations on country experiences would be useful, which admittedly was constrained by time. The field visits—to a cattle breeding farm, a pitaya orchard, residential flats for resettled poor, and a herbal production and processing farm—were rated most satisfactorily. They allowed participants to experience

first-hand the success of anti-poverty efforts.

### **Next Steps**

- To continue the forum next year as an annual event to promote PRC and ASEAN cooperation.
- Explore more innovative approaches to improve knowledge sharing experiences for participants.
- Excerpt of speeches and presentations will be uploaded online at <http://south.iprcc.org.cn>, and [www.rksi.org](http://www.rksi.org).

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