

# Closer to making poverty history

The UN can help China travel the 'last mile' to achieve sustainable socioeconomic development

By NICHOLAS ROSELLINI

**B**ased on its efforts and achievements, China will have many successful stories to share as it moves one step closer to making poverty history.

Between 2013 and last year, a total of 55.64 million people were lifted out of poverty in the country — an average of 13.91 million per year, resulting in a reduction of poverty incidence from 10.2 percent in 2012 to 4.5 percent last year.

This is a big achievement in the past five years under the leadership of President Xi Jinping.

As the world has signed up for the UN-initiated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is an increasing need for other developing countries to learn from China regarding its poverty-reduction experiences.

There is a web of interrelated factors that can help explain China's achievement. Yet, it all boils down to one fundamental enabling element — effective governance for human development, along with strong leadership.

There are at least three impor-

tant lessons in this aspect.

First, China has adopted a phased approach to eradicate poverty. This means, as drivers of poverty evolve over time, due to changes in socioeconomic and environmental contexts, poverty-fighting governance mechanisms are adjusted accordingly to put the development context into perspective.

The dynamic nature has been manifested in varied aspects of governance, including, for instance, how the poor are identified, how programs and instruments are designed, as well as how financial resources are managed and monitored.

Second, China has increasingly applied a broad-based poverty-alleviation approach, indicating a modality that consolidates efforts across multiple sectors and stakeholders.

The targeted poverty-alleviation strategy — exemplified by five major categories of measures that touch upon education, social protection and industrial development among others — is a good case in point.

At its core, the strategy recognizes the fact that poverty is a multidimensional problem. If

implemented effectively, the poverty-alleviation strategies can contribute to job creation and provision of public services, all of which are essential to ensure inclusive growth and equal opportunities for all.

And third, China's institutional design has allowed increasing flexibility for innovative bottom-up processes that are instrumental in providing tailor-made solutions.

For instance, industrial development has progressed by leaps and bounds in many poor Chinese villages.

Encouragingly, a great deal of this progress is due to local entrepreneurship, which is maximized through proper policies and guidance.

This cannot be achieved without the right incentive mechanisms. In China's context, the latter is formulated to encourage the poor to think and act positively, and to help them take initiatives and self-develop.

However, challenges still remain. Beyond 2020, once the "last batch" of the poor has been lifted out of poverty, new and diverse challenges will arise and China will need to adapt.

Changing demographics, coupled

with high levels of migration and uncertainties from the next wave of industrialization, will bring new challenges that China will have to mitigate.

This is where the UN system can play a vital supporting role.

First, the UN can help with broad-based poverty alleviation through its efforts in localizing the SDGs for long-term impact.

This entails integration of sectoral approaches at the local level, ensuring integration of various aspects of poverty and broader development, and convening of necessary partners and resources, for which the UN system is well built.

It can also bring in various tools to help with needs assessment, financing and budget planning — all with an integrated view, aiming to realize impact investing that effectively links financing with positive development outcomes.

Second, to help ensure long-term impact, the UN can help monitor and assess poverty-alleviation efforts. For instance, to prevent people from falling back into poverty, real-time and real-place tracking is of significant use to improve precision in targeting the poor.

On this note, the UN can assist China to experiment with innovative instruments, such as big data, to monitor poverty dynamics, which complements the traditional household surveys that feed the national database.

And last, the UN can continue to offer international perspectives and experiences for China, both now and beyond 2020, bringing in innovation, particularly at the local level.

For example, through the Belt and Road Initiative — the China-led proposal to build a modern network that links the ancient Silk Road routes — which provides a promising channel to expedite knowledge exchange, the UN can help to share experience on best development and governance practices between China and others.

China is close to finishing the "last mile" of poverty reduction but, with further challenges ahead, the UN looks forward to supporting China to make poverty a thing of the past.

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# Time to heed China's suggestions

DPRK must suspend nuclear and missile tests, and the US and ROK stop joint military drills

By SUN XINGJIE

**T**he Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) vowed on Sept 13 to accelerate its weapons program in a tit-for-tat reaction to the "evil" sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council. On Sept 11, the Security Council had imposed fresh sanctions in response to the DPRK's sixth and strongest nuclear test on Sept 3.

The DPRK's response is a step in the wrong direction and will further isolate it from the international community.

The Security Council's sanctions against the DPRK include a ban on the country's textile exports and restrictions on imports of crude oil.

The Security Council's ninth package of measures against the DPRK since 2006 came amid escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula and high vigilance by all parties concerned.

Reports say the United States, whose Pacific territory of Guam

is under the perceived threat of Pyongyang's intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), "considerably" watered down its draft sanctions resolution — that initially demanded a complete oil embargo and a partial naval blockade — to win the support of China and Russia.

The motives of Washington, however, go beyond "avoiding a Chinese or Russian abstention" from a UN resolution.

The US oil-embargo proposal is an attempt to make the Washington-Pyongyang dispute, a focal point of the DPRK nuclear program, Beijing's exclusive problem, as China is the DPRK's biggest oil supplier.

Even if China does not veto such a full ban, Russia, another major oil supplier to the DPRK and also a permanent member of the UN Security Council, is not likely to support such a move.

The ban on the DPRK's textile exports, reportedly the second-most important source of income for the country, might make a difference.

**“On the occasions that China has agreed to sanctions against the DPRK, it has ... always taken into account the livelihoods of the ordinary people in that country.”**

The latest sanctions ban the export of oil condensates to the country and cap refined petroleum exports at 2 million barrels a year, cutting by half the existing export levels.

Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions pose a serious security threat to the international community, including China. Its insistence on continuing with the nuclear program and developing ICBMs scales down the room for strategic maneuvering and consumes China's diplomatic resources too.

China always fulfilled its responsibility by making the best efforts to ease tensions on the peninsula. On the occasions that China has agreed to sanctions against the DPRK, it has done so to help Pyongyang return to the right track and has always taken into account the livelihoods of the ordinary people in that country.

Pyongyang may not be a stranger to economic sanctions, but this time it faces a moment of truth. Not only do the fresh sanctions touch

upon its oil imports and textile exports, these could also entail increasing diplomatic pressures.

Mexico and Peru, for instance, have expelled the DPRK's ambassadors to the two countries over its nuclear test.

More importantly, neither the DPRK's bet on its nuclear prowess nor the controversial anti-missile battery of the US and the Republic of Korea (ROK) will be good options to achieve "absolute security" on the peninsula.

It is high time the related parties heed China's suggestions on "dual suspension" — Pyongyang suspends its nuclear and missile tests in exchange for the US and the ROK suspending their joint military drills — and resume talks as soon as possible.

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