

# 19<sup>th</sup> CPC NATIONAL CONGRESS

## Fulfilling the promise to end poverty

Embroidery and equine skills put to work in Inner Mongolia show targeted measures taking effect toward a 'moderately prosperous' society

By CUI JIA and YUAN HUI

**M**u Dan is proud that she can now produce all kinds of traditional Mongolian embroidery, much as her mother did. Even better, the 40-year-old farmer in Horqin Right Wing Middle Banner, in North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, is excited that her newly developed skills can lift her family out of poverty.

The banner, a county-level settlement, lies at the north of the grassland in Horqin, and 86 percent of its population hail from the Mongolian ethnic group. Horqin means "archer" in Mongolian.

The area is affected by severe desertification and a fragile environment, which means that farmers like Mu are constantly concerned that their land will be hit by natural disasters that could leave them destitute.

After years of problems, the banner was placed on a list of the most poverty-stricken places in the country.

However, as a result of initiatives promoted by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and president of China, the list will not be necessary after 2020 because the residents will be lifted out of poverty by then.

"Ensuring that poor people and impoverished areas will enter the 'moderately prosperous' society along with the rest of the country is a solemn promise made by our Party," Xi said as he delivered a report to the 19th CPC National Congress on Oct 18.

The task is a formidable one. Winning the battle in areas of extreme poverty will be difficult, but with enough determination and the right measures, China can secure that victory, he said.

Mu explained how local conditions pushed her family into poverty. "In a good year, my husband and I

can earn about 20,000 yuan (\$3,000) a year by selling our crops. However, Inner Mongolia experienced a severe drought last year, so we almost had no income."

In December, she began taking embroidery classes arranged by the local government where she learned how to decorate clothes, slippers and pillowcases. When complete, the items are sold online.

The classes are part of the government's plan to make decisive progress in poverty alleviation. Every person living in poverty is now offered a tailor-made plan designed to suit their family circumstances, personal skills and even their interests.

Because Mongolians are passionate about horses and many learn to ride as children, the banner's authorities decided to create jobs by developing the equine industry. In addition to breeding horses, young Mongolians are encouraged to become skilled riders and take part in races nationwide.

Xi first raised the idea of targeted poverty relief in November 2013, when he visited a village in Huayuan, a county in the central province of Hunan.

In June 2015, he explained the philosophy behind the strategy and its basic requirements while presiding at a CPC symposium on poverty relief and economic and social development in Guizhou province in Southwest China.

Starting in 2014, before the tailor-made plans were drafted, the authorities conducted detailed surveys and registration work. The surveys identified 29.48 million poverty-stricken families, 89.62 million poor people and 128,000 impoverished villages, while examining the sources of their poverty and determining the measures required to raise living standards.

The measures used in Horqin are perfect for Mu. "Embroidery is part of our ethnic group's heritage, I really enjoy doing it," she said. "I used to watch my mother doing it when



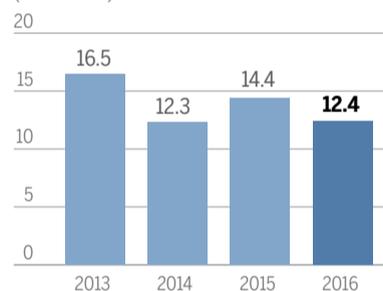
Women take part in an embroidery class in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region's Horqin Right Wing Middle Banner to learn how to decorate clothes, slippers and pillowcases with traditional designs. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

### The fight to raise living standards

From 2013 to 2016, the number of people in poverty fell from 99 million to 43.36 million. A further 10 million people are expected to be lifted out of poverty this year.

#### Number of people lifted out of poverty each year

(Unit: million)



13 million

Average number of people lifted out of poverty in each of the past five years

6.7 million

people were lifted out of poverty from 2001 to 2010

6.4 million

people were lifted out of poverty from 1986 to 2000

182.5 billion yuan

Amount contributed by provincial-level governments from 2013 to 2017, rising by almost 27 percent a year on average

Nearly 2.8 million

officials were dispatched to work in poverty-stricken villages to help eradicate poverty

278.7 billion yuan

Central government investment in poverty alleviation programs from 2013 to 2017

22.7%

Average growth in poverty alleviation investment each year

Source: State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development

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I was a child. I've made more than 5,000 yuan in the last six months."

The 2,600 women who were registered as poor and encouraged to join embroidery workshops earned an average of 2,000 yuan each between April and August, providing extra income for their families.

Now, 50 university graduates from the banner have established an association to help the women sell their embroidered products online.

Fu Lin, head of the association, said that they can sell as many as 200 pairs of slippers per day. "We expect online sales to rise in the future and the annual incomes of these hardworking women could reach between 5,000 and 8,000 yuan next year," Fu said. "Every yuan counts in poverty alleviation."

The determination and scale of the poverty-alleviation projects launched after the 18th CPC National Congress at the end of 2012 is

unprecedented, according to Liu Yongfu, director of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development.

From 2013 to 2016, the number of people living in poverty fell from 99 million to 43.36 million, and more than 10 million people will be lifted out of poverty this year, Liu said. In addition, the poverty ratio has fallen from 10.2 percent to less than 4 percent since 2012.

When he outlined the relief measures in 2014, Xi cited the key approaches as industrial development, relocation, environmental protection, education, social welfare and financial and medical support from the government.

He also encouraged financial input from industries and social forces, saying the social welfare system should provide basic living standards for the impoverished and unemployed.

China's western areas have achieved the best results in poverty alleviation; the number of impoverished people has been halved in five years. However, these regions and a number of areas with large ethnic populations remain the biggest obstacles to achieving the goal of lifting the remaining 43.36 million people out of poverty on schedule.

At present, about 39 percent of the 281,800 people in Pishan county, Hotan prefecture, in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, live below the poverty line.

The county, designated a place of "extreme poverty", lies next to the Taklimakan Desert, the largest arid area in the country, and about 99 percent of its population hail from ethnic groups, including Uygurs, Tajiks and Kyrgyzs.

Ahmet Memet, Party chief of Pishan, attended the National

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