

CHINA

Guangdong to increase co-owned dwellings

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Guangdong province is planning to expand construction of co-owned dwellings and steadily introduce the system of housing with common property rights in major cities in the coming years.

The move aims to improve the province's housing conditions and attract more professionals, according to a guidance on the development of housing with common property rights.

Co-owned housing refers to homes that are developed or purchased by governments and sold to qualified residents at market prices.

Purchasers occupy the houses after they have paid part of the price, while sharing the property rights with the government.

Further, the government and the purchasers share the risks and interest.

Such homes can be purchased by qualified professionals from throughout Chinese mainland as well as the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, according to the guideline published on July 28.

Each family will only be allowed to buy one co-owned dwelling, with a maximum space of 120 square meters, it said.

Apartments of that size, usually containing three bedrooms, are suitable for a family, the guideline stipulates. The average Guangdong family has 3.25 people.

Buyers are required to pay at least 50 percent of the price in principle, and the co-owned home can be sold in five years, according to the guideline's stipulations.

Han Shitong, executive director of Guangdong Real Estate Research Association, said the co-owned housing system is a type of welfare program that would certainly benefit those who cannot afford to buy a commercial apartment by themselves.

He urged governments to introduce more specific rules and regulations to ensure and guide the healthy development of the co-owned housing system and build more small- and mid-sized co-owned apartments to benefit more residents.

"Co-owned housing will have little impact on the property market in the city, as the number of co-owned houses still represents a very small percentage in Guangzhou," he told China Daily.

According to the guideline, Guangdong selected five cities — the capital Guangzhou, as well as Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan and Maoming — to introduce the co-owned dwelling system as a pilot program in 2018.

By the end of June, the province, home to a large number of migrant workers from around the country, had constructed 61,000 co-owned houses, with more than 34,000 in use, the guideline said.

"The co-ownership housing policy has helped the province, which has a population of more than 115 million, to further improve housing conditions and attract talent," it said.

In addition, co-owned housing is playing a role in boosting the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and building a quality-of-life circle in the bay area that is suitable for living, business and tourism, it added.

The guideline was jointly issued by the Guangdong Provincial Development and Reform Commission, the Guangdong Housing and Urban-Rural Development Bureau, the Guangdong Bureau of Finance, the Guangdong Department of Natural Resources, the Guangzhou Branch of the People's Bank of China and the Guangdong Bureau of China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission.

Wang Yuezia contributed to this story.

Inner Mongolia banner to offer free HPV shots

By CHEN MEILING in Beijing
and YUAN HUI in Hohhot

Juungar Banner in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, became the first area in China to offer free vaccinations against human papilloma virus for female students ages 13 to 18, expecting to help prevent cervical cancer in about 11,000 young women.

The new policy aims to promote health in women, said Wang Genhou, director of Juungar Banner Health Commission, adding that the region has seen high infection rates of HPV since it began cervical cancer inspections about 10 years ago.

Cervical cancer, which can be caused by HPV, is one of the most common tumor diseases for women in China and is highly fatal.

More than 100,000 women in China contracted cervical cancer in 2018, with 47,739 deaths, according to the latest data from the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

Incidents and mortality related to cervical cancer have grown over the last two decades in the country as Chinese youth begin to have sexual intercourse at a younger age than in previous generations, which increases exposure to potential HPV infection, said Qiao Youlin, professor of epidemiology at the Cancer Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and Peking Union Medical College's School of Population Medicine and Public Health in Beijing.

Li Caixia, 41, mother of a 15-year-old middle school student in Juungar Banner, said she is "happy to hear the news," and that all girls in her daughter's class have applied to get vaccinations.

Yang Meiling, 39, a local teacher, said she immediately applied to get her daughter, 15, a vaccination.

She said she has two female relatives infected with HPV, and one was confirmed to have contracted cervical cancer.

"The local government has been

providing free cervical and breast cancer examinations for years, and many people have shown abnormalities. Having the HPV vaccines to protect children, we parents feel much more reassured," she said.

World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called for action in 2018 to eliminate cervical cancer and recommended children from 9 to 14 to get HPV vaccinations. Concerning historic and cultural backgrounds, most Asian countries and regions, including China, mainly target 13 to 15-year-old girls in middle school for vaccination, Qiao added.

"It's an effective way to protect the next generation from the HPV-caused diseases by getting the vaccination as early as possible," he said.

The earliest HPV vaccine was put into market in 2006. Since then, 104 countries and regions have provided the shot among certain groups of young women for free, previous reports said.

Qiao said the latest move by Juungar Banner is of great value and shows the government's determination to secure and improve people's health, adding that more cities may be inspired to follow.

In 2018, the WHO set the goal for all member states to provide HPV vaccinations to 90 percent of girls under 15 by 2030. But the data may be less than 1 percent among Chinese girls from 9 to 14, Zhao Fanghui, director of epidemiology department of Cancer Hospital of Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, told news outlet Caixin in a report in 2019.

Experts said a lack of awareness, high prices and an insufficient supply of the vaccines are some of the challenges.

Yu Luming, a national political adviser, put forward the proposal in May to offer all girls ages 9 to 14 free HPV vaccinations.

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Homage to herdsmen

Herdsmen perform at the opening ceremony of a horse racing art festival in Nagchu city, Tibet autonomous region, on Monday. The annual event is a high-profile platform to showcase herdsman culture and other folklore, promote tourism and facilitate sales of local agricultural products.

ZHANG RUFENG / XINHUA

Jobs for rural workers a top priority, official says

Announcement comes as nation enters final stretch of campaign to help poor

By LI LEI
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A top anti-poverty official said on Monday that employment of rural workers has been made a top priority as China races to meet its goal of eliminating rural poverty by the end of the year.

Ou Qingping, deputy head of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, said the number of farmers in the less affluent central and western provinces who have found urban jobs reached 28 million this year, higher than last year's total.

Of those farmers, more than 10 million have migrated to other provinces, he told a news conference held by the State Council Information Office in Beijing.

"At present, the migrant worker situation is relatively good," he said. "The Chinese market is large, and there is great room for maneuvering."

The situation also looks promising in the 52 counties that still retain the poverty label. Ou said 2.85 million farmers from these

counties have found jobs outside their hometowns, 12 percent higher than last year's total. The data is 7 percentage points higher than the national average.

The progress report came after the novel coronavirus epidemic halted operations at factories, restaurants and hotels, strongholds for such workers earlier this year. The epidemic has forced millions of migrant workers who contribute the lion's share of rural income to sit idle at home unpaid, threatening to impoverish many.

To ensure that China ends domestic poverty on schedule, Ou said his office would continue to work with employment and other relevant authorities to help enterprises hire large numbers of migrants.

Ou said the office would make sure such employers enjoy favorable policies such as tax breaks and exemptions from paying social security fees.

Efforts will also be made to promote cross-regional cooperation, Ou said, citing as an example the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous

region, which has worked with neighboring Guangdong province, a manufacturing hub, to find jobs for its rural workforce.

The moves come as China enters the last leg of its yearslong anti-poverty campaign, which aimed to eliminate rural poverty before 2021, the centenary of the Communist Party of China.

Huge progress has been made in curbing rural poverty. Between late 2012 and the end of 2019, more than 90 million rural poor escaped extreme poverty.

The progress enabled China earlier this year to focus its energy on the 52 counties still labeled as impoverished. Measures to help these counties include offering more funding and manpower to help bolster the accessibility of the most basic public services, such as compulsory education, healthcare, safe housing and clean drinking water in these places.

According to the anti-poverty office, all residents in those counties now have access to clean drinking water, and about 1.2 million farmers have been relocated to newly built homes that are safe and close to factories that offer jobs as well as hospitals, schools and other public facilities.

Ecological protection aids poverty fight

By YANG JUN in Guiyang
and YANG WANLI in Beijing

China's ecology protection efforts have injected vitality into the country's poverty alleviation work, an official with the National Forestry and Grassland Administration said.

The country now has 1,316 poverty alleviation demonstration bases via green science and technology, Peng Youdong, deputy director of the administration, said at a recent national conference on poverty alleviation through the forestry industry in Guizhou province.

By November, 7,000 training classes had been provided by local forestry departments with more than 800,000 participants nationwide, he said.

He said four pilot projects in Guizhou and the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region had received 10.2 million yuan (\$146 million) in government funding over the past two years, a boost for the 20 poverty alleviation programs in four counties.

Libo county in Guizhou — one of the pilots famous for its unique forest that grows over limestone hills, known as karst — has capitalized on the geological advantages and developed economic crops, including a type of orchid that has been widely used in traditional Chinese medicine to alleviate hepatitis, diabetes, obesity, rheumatoid arthritis and many other diseases.

Since 2017, the county has

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Peng Youdong, deputy director of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration

worked with an agricultural science technology company and built several herb production bases.

Many farmers from the county have joined in the program, planting the herbs instead of other crops in their farmlands.

"The ecological environment in Libo is perfect for the orchid to grow. The newly bred seedlings have a high survival rate, and fresh stems can be harvested within a year," said Yu Xian'gen, who is in charge of a production base in Libo.

He said the base has received an investment of 16.8 million yuan. A total of 600,000 clusters of 12 sub-species have been grown, providing 26 impoverished families with annual incomes of 10,000 yuan.

"It used to be hard to earn money

in our village when you had to farm for a living. Now, we can make money at our doorsteps," said Xu Shiquan, a farmer in Mucao village.

As an administrator at the base, Xu has earned 3,500 yuan a month since he arrived there in February 2019.

By July last year, Libo county had 340 hectares of land for orchid production, bringing an output value of 81 million yuan, according to the statistics from the county government.

A total of 1,859 families in the county have benefited from the industry. Of those families, 1,068 that had lived below the poverty line all escaped poverty.

Data from authorities showed that 14,585 families with 57,180 people had been lifted from poverty in the county by the end of last year, and the county's poverty rate declined from 37.8 percent in 2014 to 1.5 percent last year.

"Poverty alleviation through the development of green industries should be practiced based on local natural advantages and characteristics," Peng said.

"High-tech support is also necessary. We will further increase the investment in technology-oriented poverty alleviation and take a case or two of success stories as an example for the rest to follow."

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7,831 graft fugitives nabbed in 6 years; over \$2.8b returned

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China brought back 7,831 fugitives from more than 120 countries and regions from 2014 to June, with 19.65 billion yuan (\$2.82 billion) of illegal gains recovered, according to a work report of the National Supervisory Commission, the nation's top anti-graft watchdog.

Among them, 2,075 were members of the Communist Party of China and State employees, and 60 were on the Interpol red notice list of China's 100 most-wanted corruption fugitives, the report said.

While delivering the report, Yang Xiaodu, head of the commission, said, "The CPC Central Committee has elevated the work of tracking down fugitives and recovering stolen assets to the political and diplomatic level and incorporated it into the overall plan of anti-corruption work."

The report was reviewed on Monday during a session of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, China's top legislature, for the first time since the establishment of the commission in 2018.

The top legislature adopted the country's first law on national supervision in 2018 and the National Supervisory Commission was created as part of the country's reform of supervisory institutions to prevent corruption.

The law entrusts the commission with responsibilities such as international cooperation against corruption, strengthening efforts to hunt down fugitives, recovering stolen assets and preventing corruption suspects from fleeing abroad.

The commission is elected by the NPC and is subject to supervision by the top legislature. The supervision includes reporting its work to the NPC Standing Committee.

The report said that after the commission's establishment, both the number of fugitives brought back to face trials and the amount of stolen money recovered greatly increased.

Since the commission began its work in 2018, 3,848 fugitives and 9.91 billion yuan of illegal gains were recovered, both accounting for about half the number of fugitives and money recovered from 2014 to June.

"The institutional advantages of the reform have been further transformed into governance effectiveness in the field of fugitive repatriation and asset recovery," said Yang, head of the commission.

The number of Party members and State employees who fled abroad each year has dropped significantly, from 101 in 2014 to four in 2019.

Global cooperation was also strengthened. China has signed 43 treaties on extradition, judicial assistance and return of assets with 28 countries since 2014, the report said.

"An anti-corruption law enforcement cooperation network covering all continents and key countries has formed," Yang said.