

## Coordinated regional development promotes common prosperity

By MING HAIYING

WUHAN—The 2022 Annual Conference of the Chinese Association for Regional Economics and the Symposium on Coordinated Regional Development and Common Prosperity in the New Era was held concurrently at the China University of Geosciences in Wuhan, Hubei Province, on Oct. 30. Scholars conducted in-depth discussions on coordinated regional development and common prosperity in response to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

### Key factors to common prosperity

Chinese modernization is the modernization of a huge population and common prosperity for all. To achieve common prosperity and curb excessive income gaps is not only stipulated by the basic socialist system but also an objective requirement for the steady progress of modernization. Shi Dan, director of the Institute of Industrial Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), said that at the current stage of China's economic development, common prosperity requires efforts not only to keep the income distribution gap within a reasonable range, but also to take advantage of the population size, stimulate economic growth by demand, expand employment, and raise the income level of workers in primary distribution. As external demand has declined amid the current world economic downturn, internal demand plays an important role in economic stability and growth. Due to its large population, China's market size and consumption demand are singular among nations. For instance, in 2021, China's domestic demand contributed 79.1% to its economic growth, and the contribution rate of final consumption expenditure was 65.4%.

According to Wan Guanghua, director of the Institute of World Economy at Fudan University, promoting common prosperity should not only focus on "common," namely income distribution and "sharing the pie," but more importantly "making the pie bigger" by maintaining sustained economic growth. Urbanization can not only significantly improve productivity, but also boost domestic

consumption demand, thus furthering "dual circulation" and driving economic growth. It can also narrow the income gap between urban and rural areas, contributing to economic growth and improving income distribution. Accordingly, it is of great importance to actively advance urbanization to achieve common prosperity.

Integrated urban-rural development and common prosperity interact and are closely linked with each other. Liu Guobin, a professor from the College of Biological and Agricultural Engineering at Jilin University, emphasized the importance of the interaction between integrated urban-rural development and common prosperity, the rational allocation of urban and rural economic factors, and the complementarity of urban and rural industries' strengths and coordinated development. These measures will help to better activate the vitality of urban and rural industrial development, cultivate new leading and advantageous industries, and provide a solid foundation for the full and balanced development of the urban and rural economies.

### Coordinated regional development

Common prosperity is not only reflected in the narrowing income gap between residents, but also in the narrowing development gap between regions and urban and rural areas. Hou Yongzhi, director of the research department of development strategy and regional economy at the Development Research Center of the State Council, said that narrowing regional disparities requires optimizing regional economic patterns in a systematic way. Specifically, the optimization of regional economic patterns should give full consideration to national strategic requirements, differing resource endowments, the differences in locational conditions under the open economy, the differences in the development basis of different places, and other issues. A systematic approach is necessary to balance the relationships between efficiency and equity, development and security, immediate and long-term interests, the whole and the part, and the government and the market.

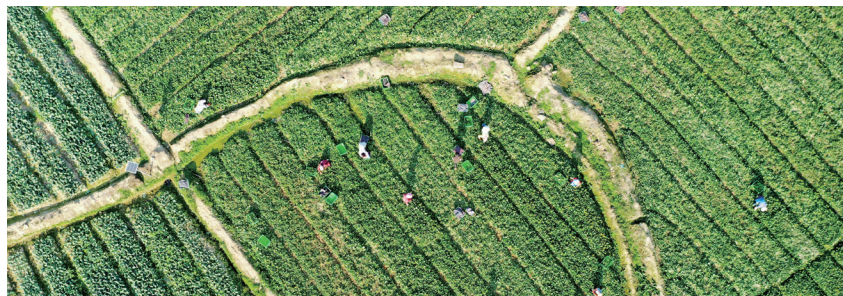
The rich connotation of "regional coordinated development" is an innovation of regional development theory and policy. Deng Hongbing, a professor from the School

of Economics and Management at the China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), believes that the rational inter-regional flow of products, factors, and resources can be facilitated through inter-regional interactions and influence, under the dual role of the market and the government, gradually promoting common prosperity.

Realizing coordinated regional development is essential for the country's economic and social development. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China has started to explore the establishment of coordinated regional development mechanisms to promote coordinated regional development. Since the late 1990s, the central government has implemented major strategies such as the large-scale development of the western region, the revitalization of old industrial bases in northeast China, and the rise of central China. These strategies are part of an overall regional development strategy of eastern, central, western, and northeastern China. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, China has implemented major regional strategies such as the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the development of the Yangtze Economic Belt, the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta, and ecological conservation and high-quality development in the Yellow River Basin, gradually establishing the "beams and pillars" necessary for coordinated regional development in the new era.

Zhang Qizai, deputy director of the Institute of Industrial Economics at CASS, said that the benefits of these strategic practices have been gradually emerging. The inter-provincial regional development gap has been reduced, the integration level of key regions has been significantly improved, and region-wide poverty has been effectively resolved. These achievements have created favorable conditions for building a new pattern of development and established a sound foundation for promoting common prosperity in future.

According to He Canfei, dean of the College of Urban and Environmental Sciences at Peking University, China's economy has entered the stage of high-quality development from high-speed growth. Developed regions or regions with more technological accumulation ought to leverage the window of opportunity brought about by the new round of scientific and technological and industrial transformation, prioritize the development of emerging industries in the international frontier, and lead a new round of industrial reform. At the same time, the central and western regions need to actively break with path dependence and promote transformation of old and new industrial drivers to catch up and narrow the gap.



Farmers collect fresh vegetables in Dongsheng Village, Xintian County, Hunan Province, to supply the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Photo: CFP

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The report further clarified the relationship between the rule of law and modernization. According to Mo Jihong, director of the Institute of Law at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, "the comprehensive advancement of law-based governance" is not only an important component of "building a modern socialist country in all respects," but also provides solid and powerful legal underpinnings for doing so. The relationship between "the modernization of the rule of law" and "Chinese modernization" is a relationship between one part and the whole, and between means and goals. After the overall

pattern of comprehensively advancing law-based governance takes shape, the crucial task of modernizing the rule of law is to further improve the quality of legislation, law enforcement, the judiciary, and the observance of the law, and to satisfy the people's pursuit of the rule of law's value on a higher level.

"Building a modern socialist country in all respects under the rule of law" is a deeper version of modernizing the system and capacities for state governance under the rule of law in Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law, and has elevated the significance of advancing the rule of law in China to a new height. Qin Qianhong,

a law professor from Wuhan University, noted that the key to implementing this deployment lies in upholding the supremacy of the Constitution. Law-based governance and law-based exercise of state power begin with compliance with the Constitution.

Qin emphasized that adhering to constitutional supremacy requires remaining firmly committed to the Party leadership, as mandated by the Constitution; upholding the people-centered philosophy; and strengthening the Constitution's implementation and supervision, and maintaining the unity and sanctity of the national legal system.



*Local Stories and National History: Social Changes in the Middle and Lower Reaches of the Han River*

By Chen Chunsheng  
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## Writing national history in local stories

By WANG WEI

*Local Stories and National History: Social Changes in the Middle and Lower Reaches of the Han River*, by Chen Chunsheng, a professor from the Department of History at Sun Yat-sen University, focuses on people's daily lives and changes in social organizations in the middle and lower reaches of the Han River in southeastern China. The book reflects on the changes in the overall national history and related mechanisms from the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties to the early Republic of China (1912–49), and attempts to explain historical processes of China within the context of regional history.

National history is written in the stories of beliefs. The existence and evolution of folk beliefs in local society is a complex issue, and thus researchers tend to focus on a special "circle of belief" to meet requirements for groups or regions with synchronicity within a specific time and space. Chen tries to break through the limitations of such traditional research on "circles of beliefs" and "circles of sacrifice" in the study of folk beliefs. To explain the internal logic of local social changes, the author examines three key aspects: complex and dynamic regional power domination, the relationship between the evolution of the temple system and the development of primary-level social organization structures, and the two-way interaction between the "locality" and "orthodoxy" of beliefs in this process.

National history is written in the stories of commerce and trade. If local beliefs are regarded as the cultural orientation of the book, commerce and trade can be considered the practical line running through social changes in the middle and lower reaches of the Han River basin. A clear and dynamic picture of social changes is portrayed, from the smuggling trade centered on Nan'ao island in Guangdong under the policy of "abandoning the Nan'ao island" [to serve the ban on maritime trade] in the Ming Dynasty, to the rise of the Zhanglin port after the "opening of marine trade" in the Qing Dynasty, to the replacement of Zhanglin by Shantou, and finally to the rise of the hometown of overseas Chinese. The author describes the historical continuity of the region. The development of commerce and trade, the changes of national policies, and the social changes in the Han River basin were the logical and inevitable result of mutual influence.

National history is written in the stories of different groups. In the middle and lower reaches of the Han River, the relationships between people and bandits, between Hoklo speakers and the Hakka, and between overseas Chinese and locals were constantly evolving, and serve to reveal the nature of relationships between local governments and the people, and between dynastic states and the local.

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