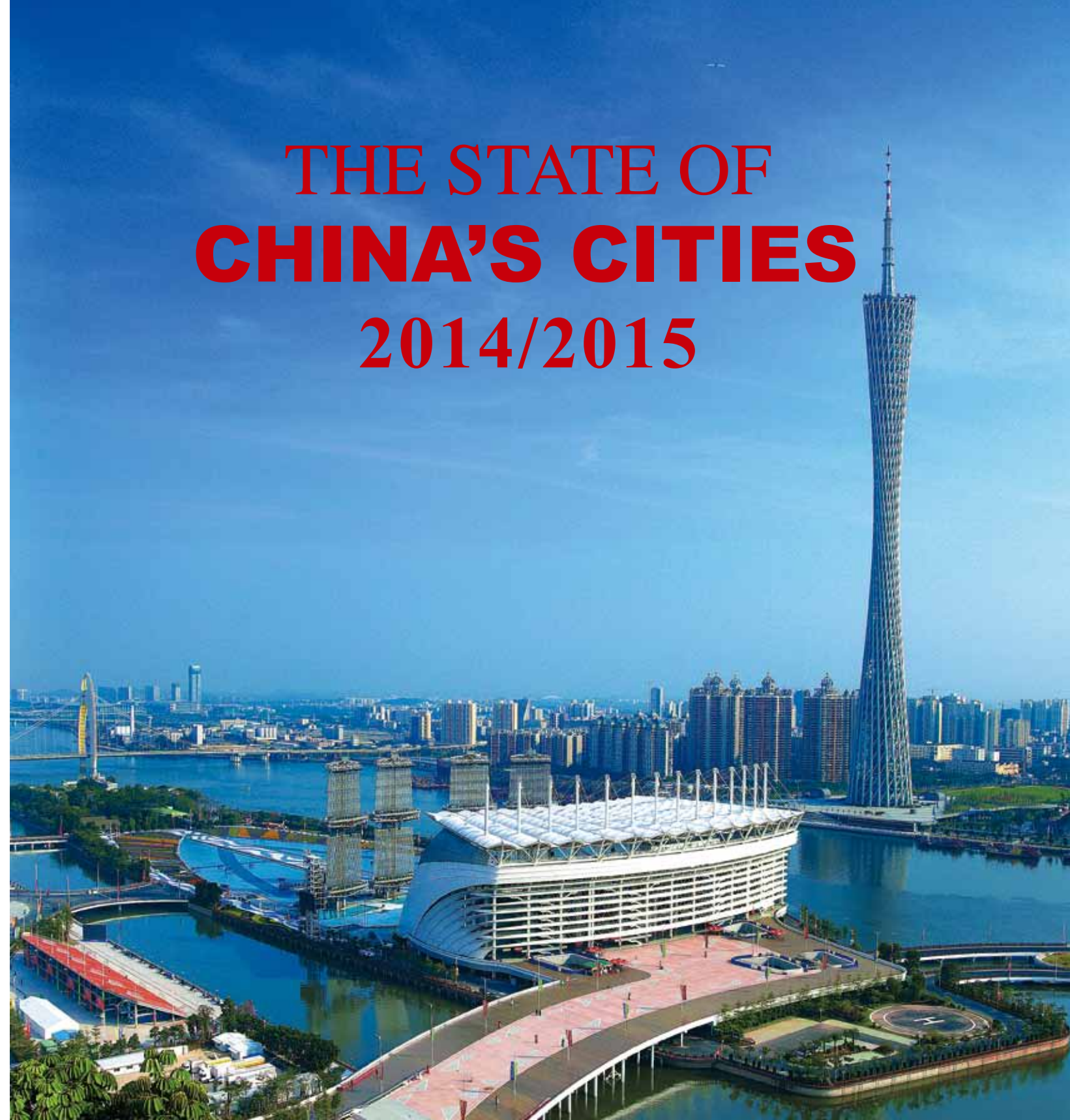


THE STATE OF **CHINA'S CITIES** 2014/2015



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AUTHORS

Mao Qizhi, Academician, IEAS, Professor, School of Architecture, Tsinghua University

Shao Yisheng, Academician, IEAS, Researcher, Vice President, China Academy of Urban Planning and Design

Shi Nan, Professor, Secretary-General, Urban Planning Society of China

Shen Jianguo, PhD., Inter-Regional Adviser, United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Yu Taofang, PhD., Associate Professor, School of Architecture, Tsinghua University

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Qu Changhong, Senior Engineer, Deputy Secretary-General, Urban Planning Society of China

Liu Jian, Urban Planner, Jiangsu Institute of Urban Planning and Design

Zhang Guobiao, Assistant Urban Planner, Urban Planning Society of China

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Wang Guangtao

Secretary-General, International Eurasian Academy of Sciences (IEAS)
Executive Vice President, China Science Center of International
Eurasian Academy of Sciences (CSC-IEAS)

Member of the Standing Committee and Chairman of the Environment Protection and Resources Conservation Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress, China

Former Minister of the Ministry of Construction, China

China's urban population exceeded that of rural areas in 2011, the first time in its several-thousand-year-long history and a symbol that China's urbanization has entered a totally new stage of development. On the Central Urbanization Work Conference held not long ago, the Chinese government has made it clear that "the interest of the people and human-centric urbanization should be promoted. The general quality of urban population and life quality of urban residents should be improved. The primary task should be the registration of the population capable of owning stable employment and living in cities as permanent urban residents in an orderly manner". The decision-makers, administrators, builders, researchers and citizens in China are joining hands in exploring a new path of people-oriented urbanization with Chinese characteristics. This book is a genuine record of this exploration presented to friends from all around the world.

CSC-IEAS has collaborated with China Association of Mayors and UN-Habitat in producing two issues of The State of China's Cities (hereinafter referred to as the Reports) since 2010, released the reports on the World Urban Forum and circulated them extensively within the UN system. The reports have generated great influences both at home and abroad and have drawn close attention from the academicians of IEAS and the Secretariat of IEAS headquarters. Starting from the report of this year, in an effort to further expand their international impact and improve the quality of the new report, IEAS assumes the sponsorship and the CSC-IEAS acts as the project undertaking organization. Following China Association of Mayors and UN-Habitat, Urban Planning Society of China has also been newly invited as a co-organizer. The theme of this issue of State of China's Cities, the New Path of People-oriented Urbanization, echoes with the theme of this years' World Urban Forum 7: Urban Equity in Development – Cities for Life, and demonstrates the common concern of the international community on humanistic concerns and quality of life. It is hoped that the release of The State of China's Cities 2014/2015 will help the international community to understand the urbanization process in China more fully and deeply.

February 2014



Jiang Weixin

Minister of Housing and Urban-rural Development of The People's
Republic of China
Executive President of China Association of Mayors

Urbanization is a major content of the modernization drive. China has been making continuous progress in urbanization since the reform and opening up. The current urbanization rate of China has exceeded the record high of 50%, and China is stepping into the critical period of transformation and development. The first Central Urbanization Work Conference of the CPC Central Committee held in December 2013 defined the guiding principles, major goals, basic principles and key tasks in advancing urbanization in China. The Conference emphasized that the promotion of urbanization must take into consideration the fundamental situations of China, abide by the laws, make the best use of the opportunities, and solve the profound problems of imbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable development. Efforts shall be made to facilitate the transition of urbanization from focusing on scale and speed to quality and performance, and pursue the path of a new-type urbanization with Chinese characteristics, which puts people first, promotes the synchronous development of industrialization, informatization, urbanization and agricultural modernization, optimizes urbanization patterns and facilitates the ecological progress and the cultural conservation.

Firstly, the interest of the people should be promoted and the quality of urbanization development should be improved. Efforts should be made to strengthen the development of the urban infrastructure and public services facilities and improve the overall carrying capacity of cities and towns. Conditions shall be created to provide multiple paths of urbanization for the migrant population from rural areas, register the population capable of owning stable employment and living in cities as permanent urban residents in an orderly manner and achieve the goal of people-oriented urbanization.

Secondly, efforts should be made to ensure the synchronous development of industrialization, informatization, urbanization and agricultural modernization and maintain the matching of the speed of urbanization with the level of economic and social development. With the overall goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and realizing the modernization, the industry support system shall be enhanced to ensure the synchronization between the growth of urban population and the development of industrial agglomeration and prevent the formation of slums due to high unemployment rate and ghost towns from unchecked construction.

Thirdly, efforts should be made to optimize the urbanization layout and pattern and promote the integrated development of urban and rural areas. Different rules and reasonable differences in the development of urban and rural areas shall be respected while promoting equitable

access to basic public services and building an elastic and interactive urban-rural relationship. The vitality for county development shall be stimulated and the capacities of the county administration to provide public services shall be enhanced. The practice of planning as the guidance shall be strengthened and urban development boundaries should be demarcated in a scientific way. Overall plans for various uses of available urban and rural lands should be made to keep a proper structure of production, living and ecological spaces in reasonable proportions.

Fourthly, efforts should be made to promote ecological progress and minimize the interference with and damage to the nature. The red line for ecological protection shall be delimited on the basis of constraints of the resources and environment to promote the economical and intensive utilization of various resources. The control of spatial development should be intensified and the mode of low-impact development shall be adopted. Further efforts shall be made to build low-carbon eco-cities and promote the intensive, compact and green development of the cities and towns.

Fifthly, efforts should be made to protect and promote the excellent traditional culture. The historical and cultural heritage of the cities and original style of the villages with local culture and features should be preserved.

As a report with joint efforts by China Science Center of International Eurasian Academy of Sciences, China Association of Mayors, Urban Planning Society of China and UN-Habitat, The State of China's Cities 2014/2015 is about to be released to the public. It integrates both the guidelines of the Third Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee and the Central Urbanization Work Conference and includes new concepts, ideas, measures and innovative cases gathered from various places in China. This report will surely become a treasured reference for all who have interest in and conduct research on China's urban development.

March 2014



Joan Clos

United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Executive Director of United Nations Human Settlements Programme

History has shown that urban development presents real opportunities for unleashing enormous economic potential, reducing inequity, and creating sustainable livelihoods for all.

Urban equality in the development agenda is based on key elements such as participation, transparency, accountability, nondiscrimination, empowerment, rule of law, and social inclusion in all matters of urban life.

Bringing urban equality into the center of development means that everyone has the right to cities and the equal access to opportunities for employment, education, and other social and public services provided by cities. It also means that more compact, better connected and integrated urban centers should be planned, built and managed to renew existing neighborhoods and improve social cohesion. It further implies that human beings should live in harmony with nature and the integrity of the earth's ecosystems should be restored, so as to ensure a quality of living that strikes the right balance between economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations.

In an urban era of this century, Cities for Life is a vision to facilitate a better understanding of the fundamental objective of urban development. It is also a concept to confront the most important challenges and respond to them in a collective manner. The "life" itself embraces the prosperity of all cities and people. Cities for Life bring a new dimension to urban equity by focusing mainly on those more in need – the poor and marginalized, who are excluded from all opportunities needed to transform their lives in the search of individual and collective wellbeing.

Cities for Life are, from the spatial point of view, urban fabrics that build, enrich and make life and living enjoyable for every inhabitant in the city. From a more practical stand, Cities for Life connect every individual with their surroundings, creating multiple local and external interactions, and facilitating possible responses to their needs, hopes and aspirations.

UN-Habitat is working closely with its partners to tap the opportunities of urban development, address the challenges associated with the development, and build economically, socially and environmentally sustainable cities so that everyone can live in a safe city with the promise of a decent life of dignity and happiness.

The urban development in China has been rapidly increasing, making more than 450 million

people urbanized in the past three decades. In a recent initiative, the central government of China has strategized urbanization as one of the four pillars for China's new modernization drive: industrialization, information technology, urbanization and agricultural modernization. It has adopted a series of policies to address urban inequality by extending more social and public services to rural migrants; optimize urban spatial distribution by building new growth poles in central, western and northeastern China; sustain urbanization by improving the efficient use of land and other natural resources; upgrade public services and infrastructure by empowering local governments with further financial and taxing decentralization; and improve the living standards by protecting and conserving environment and ecosystems.

These strategies and policies shall facilitate China's urbanization in a more healthy way, reduce the inequality within and between cities, and improve the life of 1.3 billion people living in urban and rural areas in China. I am sure that a more healthy and sustainable urbanization process in China and in other countries will help build better cities we want, and create better life in our cities we want.

February 2014

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