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Demonstration Zones of Agricultural Modernization by Mr. Qian (chief agro-economist of MOA)

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Following the decisions and instructions of the Party Central Committee and the State Council in 2010, The Ministry of Agriculture has identified 283 Demonstration zones nationwide with three groups. I will introduce the basic information about this practice which is laying specific emphasis on the development of modern agriculture and attracts concerns from all walks of life.

1. The basic information of the establishment of Demonstration zones

The level of agriculture development varies across geographic conditions, climate amenities and resource endowments. This makes it impossible to employ the same development pattern in agriculture throughout the nation. So, in order to facilitate the construction of agricultural modernization with Chinese characteristics, a great number of patterns of agricultural modernization should be explored.

The establishment of national agricultural representative zones was issued in the No.1 document in 2010 aiming to set the benchmark, present demonstration and stimulate vitality. This movement is designed to accelerate the pace of agricultural modernization from separated regions to the whole nation. Some specific demands were posed by the No.1 document from 2012 to 2015 in a row and the detailed construction of the modern agricultural Demonstration zones during ‘the twelfth plan’ were issued by the national and social development Planning Outline passed by the session of eleventh with the fourth meeting of people’s congress. This plan was in accordance with those printed and

issued by the State Council. According to the principle of strict standards, rigorous processes and high-quality revision, 153 Demonstration zones have been set up in August, 2010 and in February, 2012 respectively. After summarizing the past experience of construction, the third group of Demonstration zones was affirmed by Ministry of Agriculture making the total number of zones rising to 283. Overall, the levels of economic development in those zones lie ahead in related regions, so these zones play a demonstrative role in agricultural modernization.

As the statistics show, there are 283 Demonstration zones distributed in a variety of region categories and geographic landforms with 127 square kilometers accounting for 13% of the total national territory. For main-food industries, there are 173 zones lying in 13 provinces whose crop yields are relatively high. These zones treat crops and meet as their main production. Moreover, those zones which are characterized as vegetation, fruits and flowers account for 40% of the total number.

As for the regional distribution, there are a relatively great number of zones in Northeast Plain, North China Plain and the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River where the terrain is flat and full of cultivated land resources. In comparison, there are some distinct Demonstration zones in grasslands, hills, mountains and fishing zones. For instance, the Ecological Animal Husbandry in Xiwuzhumuqin area and the featured agriculture of meitan mountain zones in Guizhou province, as well as the modern ecological fishery industry in Suzhou city of Jiangsu province, are self-evident in promoting agricultural modernization.

In administrative level, the county is the main unit and there are 236 counties in the aggregate, involving 236 county-level cities accounting for 83.4% and districts and 42 prefecture-level cities making up 14.8%. Province-level and township level cities are relatively few, 5 altogether.

2. The implemented tasks in facilitating the construction of Demonstration zones

With the method of co-construction of provinces and ministries, and the means of regional dominance, the central departments provide instructions on formulating strategies, construction management as well as disseminating experience. Under the sufficient support of the Ministry of Finance and National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture has been following the instruction of Organizational leadership and concentrating on planning management, policy support, reform experimentation, science and technology matching, communication and training.

This practice is also a showcase for multi-level exploration from a point (at regional levels) to the surface (at the national level).

The first thing that should be given the top priority is to strengthen the organizational leadership. The leading group of agricultural modernization Demonstration zones has been founded by MOA, organizing the construction of Demonstration zones and managing important tasks. In addition, specific institutions have been established in many regions, such as Yutian in Hebei Province, nanchong in Sichuan Province, Changsha in Hunan Province and haicheng in Liaoning Province, to promote the construction of Demonstration zones.

The second thing which we have valued highly is to insist on planning guidance. The MOA requires that those identified zones should draft planning of construction, put their ideas into shape and clarify the aims and construction missions. At present, 153 zones of the first two groups have compiled their planning, and those in the third group are drawing in the process.

The third thing on which we have laid a great deal of emphasis is to reinforce the guidance of construction. There were two live conferences hold in Heilongjiang Province by MOA and leaders in State Council proposed explicit demands in how to perfect Demonstration zones and how to facilitate the agricultural modernization proceedings nationwide.

The fourth thing to which we have attached importance is to promote the science and technology matching progress. The matching-up campaigns between national agriculture Demonstration zones and R&D institute in agriculture were hold by MOA. Additionally, the autonomous matching campaigns were launched in around 70 Demonstration zones, such as Shandong Province, weihai city, tiandong city in Guangdong, ledong city in Hainan, chongming in Yunnan, jiuquan city in gansu, huzhu city in Qinghai, helan city in ningxia, shaowan district in xinjiang, building up huge platforms with agriculture research institute.

The fifth thing on which we have focused is to develop reform experimentation. Under the support of Ministry of Finance, China Banking Regulatory Commission, National Development Bank, Agriculture Development Bank of China as well as the China Grain Reserves Corporation, 25 Demonstration zones, such as lujiang in anhui, taigu in shanxi, chongchang in Chongqing, have become the pilot zones for agriculture reform and construction in efforts to reach a shift from traditional agriculture to modern agriculture.

The sixth thing to which we have paid high attention is to amplify the policy support. The projects and programs in MOA could be arranged in some Demonstration zones under proper planning and distribution. With the support of the Development and Reform Commission, the project of the construction of standardized farmlands in preserving crop

yields irrespective of droughts or floods has been initiated; With the assistance of the Ministry of Finance, the support policy in which farmers could get rewards instead of subsidies if they choose more effective and efficient way in production has been launched; supported by the National Development Bank and China Postal Savings Bank, the new medium of financial support for those zones has been explored.

The seventh thing which we have taken into consideration is to consolidate the management service. For assessment and evaluation tasks, the monitor assessment reports of national modern agriculture Demonstration zones should be printed and issued. Appointment talks should be implemented for a few zones which take modern agriculture not seriously and whose construction process are relatively lag behind. International produce selling congresses should be organized in Demonstration zones to encourage the exploration of new patterns and to play a leading role. There will be a shift from agriculture-driven development to a combining forces-driven development, a shift from policy-promoting to market-and-policy-promoting, a shift paving a solid way for the ordered development of these zones.

3. The main fruits of the construction of Demonstration zones

The outcomes from efforts of various components are manifest. **Firstly**, the level of agriculture modernization has been rising. The increasing level of agriculture modernization in 153 zones leads ahead of this country. It has been estimated that the total crop yields could reach 192 billion kg, accounting for 23% of the whole production of the country; the mechanized level of cultivating and reaping arrives at 76%, 15% higher than the average level of China; there will be an increase in the disposable income of farmers by more than 10% at 13000 yuan per year. As the assessment showed in 2014, approximate 20 zones, such as taicang in Jiangsu, pudong in Shanghai, shunyi in Beijing, had completed the agricultural modernization phrase, namely the initial phase of the agricultural modernization, becoming the ‘leader’ in the construction of the agricultural modernization. **Secondly**, a set of patterns of constructions have been explored. These patterns feature mechanized the pattern of Heilongjiang farmlands, the water-saving means of the ecological agriculture in Yanan city in Shanxi province, the characterized pattern of mountain agriculture construction in Meitan district in Guizhou province, the pattern of urban agriculture in Wuqing district in Tianjin city, the pattern of grass-livestock balance in Neimenggu area, and so forth. These patterns provide a showcase for those zones where geological conditions are roughly similar. **Third**, there has been an increasing positive effect on related zones. Some Demonstration zones not only speed up the pace of its own construction process, but promote the development of zones in the vicinity by establishing communication mechanism at regional level.

In the future, following the related instructions and guidance of the State Council, we will lay more emphasis on policy support, innovative service, summarizing patterns. It can be foreseen that by perfecting management systems, strengthening support service and launching specific training, the path of agricultural modernization with Chinese characteristics will be taken with high production-efficiency, product-safety, resource-saving and environmental- friendly development.

Appendix: The Conception of National Modern Agriculture Demonstration Zones

In general, under the principle of modern industry development and supported by the modern science and technology and advanced equipment, the national modern agriculture Demonstration zones are run by well-informed farmers and employ modern sustainable methods of production and management. They feature well-organized geographical distribution, high resource-saving rate, guaranteed food safety and prominent overall profit.

As is required by MOA, the assessment system includes three steps: objective assessment, dynamic management and in-or-out principle. To be more precise, MOA sets a string of goals and objectives for each Demonstration zone. Those zones which attain corresponding goals may gain subsidies or grants from related and those which fail in their efforts to fulfil their mission may be removed out from the list. At present, 283 Demonstration zones have been established after the third group released.

The construction of these zones plays a demonstrating role in agriculture development as a starting point. These zones are supposed to be accustomed to The New Normal, to accelerate the patterns of agriculture development, to make decisions from a historical perspective, and to lead the construction of agricultural modernization in China.