Research on the Integrated Development of Central Henan Urban Agglomeration

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Abstract: The integrated development of central Henan urban agglomeration is a significant strategy of economic and social development for Henan Province. This paper summarized the thoughts and exerting point of integrated development of central Henan urban agglomeration, and analyzed the existing issues during the integrated development of central Henan urban agglomeration. For example, the integrated development has not been formed a consensus, there are lack of close horizontal linkages between the towns, the function allocation between cities is not clear, the development of export-oriented economy lags behind, and the central cities should be bigger and stronger, and so on. The countermeasures and suggestions, establish and improve the coordination mechanism and benefits compensation mechanism, attach great importance to the function construction of central cities, play the dual role of the market mechanism and government guidance, form the urban system for functional complementation, and fully improve the quality and level of opening-up, are proposed in this paper.

Keywords: the central Henan urban agglomeration, integrated development, issues, countermeasures

1. Introduction

The French geographer Gorter thought that the urban agglomeration was the highest spatial organizing form of which the city developed into the mature stage, and it was the combo of metropolitan areas and a large, multi-core, multi-level urban group formed by the geographically concentrated distribution of several cities and megalopolis. Chinese scholar XUE Dong, et al.(2000) hold that the urban agglomeration is defined that within a specific geographical area, a considerable number of different nature, type and rank-size cities develop the links between cities and constitute together a relatively complete city "aggregation" which relies on a certain natural conditions, takes one or two large cities or megalopolis as the core of the regional economy, and use modern transportations, integrated transport networks and highly developed information network. The Henan province proposed "Strategic Conception of Central Henan Urban Agglomeration" in 2003, and compiled "The Overall Development Plan Outline of Central Henan Urban Agglomeration" in 2005 which was approved and implemented by the provincial government in March 2006. In recent years, the central Henan urban agglomeration develops powerfully and has achieved notable results. At present, the central Henan urban agglomeration takes Zhengzhou as the center, Luoyang as the vice center, including nine cities in Henan such as Kaifeng, Pingdingshan, Xinxiang, Jiaozuo, Xuchang, Luohe, Jiyuan, et al., 14 county-level cities and 34 county-level units. The land area is 58.7 thousand square kilometers, and the population is 39.5 million. In 2007, the GDP of nine cities within the central Henan urban agglomeration is 861.1 billion Yuan, accounting for 57.4% of the provincial GDP, and the driving effect on the economic and social development of Henan is growing. But the single city in the central Henan urban agglomeration has weak competitiveness, so whether they can realize the integrated development, play the overall advantages, optimize the allocation of resources and improve the overall competitiveness in the main trend of an increasingly regional competition is related to the good and fast development of the economy and society of Henan and the overall situation of the rise of the central plains.

2. The thoughts and exerting point of integrated development of central Henan urban agglomeration

2.1 Integrated development and planning ahead
In the process of promoting the integrated development of central Henan urban agglomeration, a number
of scientific and rational planning are compiled to guide the integrated development of urban agglomeration. According to the actual situation of central Henan urban agglomeration, Henan provincial government and the party committee compiles and formulates a series of planning, such as the "Overall development plan outline of central Henan urban agglomeration", "Tourism development plan of central Henan urban agglomeration", "Rail transit planning of central Henan urban agglomeration", "Master plan of industrial zone of Zhengzhou and Kaifeng". Each city of central Henan urban agglomeration should actively communicate with provincial departments to organize various planning concerning education, science and technology, information, land, tourism and environmental protection etc., research to develop and improve supporting measures relating to zoning, employment, land, environmental protection, human resources, social security, household registration management, tax sharing and statistical systems.

2.2 Increasing the construction of transport facilities
Accelerating the integrated development of central Henan urban agglomeration should give priority to the implementation of traffic integration. To this end, central Henan urban agglomeration should gradually improve internal transport network and strengthen the construction of external transport links. At present, taking Zhengzhou as the center, to improve internal network, the expressway network connecting central Henan urban agglomeration with other eight cities has been built. Starting from Zhengzhou, in 90 minutes you can reach the other eight cities by car; To increase the construction of first class highway, 19 highways, including Zhengzhou to Xuchang, Weihui to Luohe, Jiaozuo to Wugang, Weihui to Jiyuan, Luoyang to Luoning, etc., is about to be built; To increase the construction of urban and inter-city rapid track. Zheng - Kai city expressway which has been built and put into use gets remarkable results; Focus on the implementation of rail transit construction of central Henan urban agglomeration. Zhengzhou subway is under construction, and the light rail between Zhengzhou and Kaifeng has been in the stage of demonstration and implementation and so on. In the construction of the external channel, to combine with the country to build Zhengzhou to Xi'an, Zhengzhou to Beijing, Zhengzhou-Wuhan railway passenger line, and strive for the state to start the construction of Zhengzhou to Xuzhou railway passenger line; To promote the extension of Xinzheng International Airport actively, and organize the "Zhengzhou international aviation hub-cum-port construction planning outline", and strive to construct Xinzheng International Airport to the "large hub airports and international cargo hub"; Some major projects, such as National Trunk Highway Logistics Terminal in Zhengzhou, Zhengzhou Railway Container Center Station, are stepping up their construction and so on.

2.3 Strengthening the function allocation and speed up industrial integration
"Overall development plan outline of central Henan urban agglomeration" identified the functional position of cities of urban agglomerations, for example, Zhengzhou, the provincial capital of Henan Province, China's historical and cultural city, international culture and tourism city, regional central city, the country's major modern logistics center, a regional financial center, advanced manufacturing base and technological innovation base; Luoyang, China's historical and cultural city, international culture and tourism city, the vice center of central Henan urban agglomeration, the nation's important new industrial city, advanced manufacturing base, research and development center and vocational training bases, the Midwest regional logistics hub; Kaifeng, China's historical and cultural city, international culture and tourism city, the textile, food, chemical and pharmaceutical industrial base of central Henan urban agglomeration, the important functional region of Zhengzhou metropolitan and so on. Strive to foster the urban industrial corridor of Zhengzhou - Kaifeng - Luoyang, the industrial development zone of Xinxiang - Zhengzhou - Luohe, Xinxiang - Jiaozuo - Jiyuan and Luoyang - Pingdingshan - Luohe, actively promote the superior industry to the direction of bases, clustering, and park development, and speed up industrial integration of urban agglomeration.

3. Problems in the integrated development of central Henan urban agglomeration

3.1 The lack of close horizontal contact between cities
The development of bilateral and multilateral cooperative relationship within central Henan urban agglomeration is not enough, and it is lack of economic integration. But the urban agglomeration in the United States and Japan has a high degree of integration in their urban functions, infrastructure and the market system and becomes a huge economy. The urban agglomeration in Yangtze River Delta and Pearl River Delta is carrying out a all-round, multi-field, deep-rooted cooperation and integration, such as the Yangtze River Delta region, it has started a series of integrated cooperation in the investment access, market order, human resource development, credit information and tourism; Based on the integration of Guangdong, Shenzhen, Foshan and Zhuhai, the Pearl River Delta region seizes the opportunity of "Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement between Mainland and Hong Kong" (CEPA) to actively carry out the cooperative relationship among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, and then broaden the advantages of the Pearl River Delta.

3.2 The indefinite function allocation between cities
As a long-term emphasis on the economic development of administrative region, the economy in central Henan urban agglomeration is relatively self-contained, and the complementary of industry between cities is weak, so the convergence phenomena and repeated construction in industrial structure, related industries and similar plant are rather serious; Urban features are not outstanding, so it is difficult to provide services and radiation effects to other cities. While in the Yangtze River Delta region, the overall framework of urban agglomerations which takes Shanghai as the center and Nanjing, Hangzhou as the sub-center has formed. Around this layout, other cities have a clear position in cluster systems and actively develop their own features; In the PRD region, Hong Kong and Guangdong have made it clear in the relationship of labor division and cooperation. Hong Kong will continue to take advantages in international trade, finance, management and talents, and Guangdong will vigorously develop the manufacturing industry, and strive to become the world's manufacturing bases to realize the complementary advantages and integration of two places.

3.3 Export-oriented economic development lags behind
The export-oriented economy in central Henan urban agglomeration develops slowly, so their opening up needs to be further enhanced. In 2007, the actual utilization of foreign capital, total imports and exports and total exports in central Henan urban agglomeration were respectively 1.33 billion U.S. dollars, 75.4 billion dollars and 5.12 billion U.S. dollars, while these three indicators over the same period in Yangtze River Delta were 31.56 billion U.S. dollars, 625.73 billion U.S. dollars and 355.37 billion U.S. dollars, and the difference was very obvious; Zhengzhou City, the actual utilization of foreign investment was only 610 million U.S. dollars, total imports and exports was 25.2 billion U.S. dollars, and exports was 1.81 billion U.S. dollars, lagging behind that in Guangzhou, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Wuhan during the same period; The performance of these three indicators of other cities in urban agglomeration were far from perfect.

3.4 Central cities remain to be bigger and stronger
The overall economic strength of each central city in central Henan urban agglomeration is weak, and the influence of regional economy remains to be improved. Zhengzhou, the "leading" of central Henan urban agglomeration, its urban primacy index is low, so it is urgent to enhance its competitiveness. In 2007, the total output value of Zhengzhou only accounted for 15.6% of that of Henan Province, while over the same period, Guangzhou accounted for 25.4% of Guangdong, Wuhan accounted for 30.8% of Hubei Province, and Hangzhou accounted for 22.3% of Zhejiang Province; According to "Urban Competitiveness Blue Book" published by Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 2007, the index ranking of overall competitiveness of Zhengzhou City was only 32, down from central provincial capitals, such as Wuhan (13), Changsha (30) and Hefei (31). The indicators of economic strength and competitiveness of Luoyang had a better ranking, while the ranking of the remaining cities is down on the list.

4. The comprehensive countermeasures of integrated development in central
Henan urban agglomeration

4.1 Playing the dual role of market mechanism and government leading
In the region of central Henan urban agglomeration, on the one hand, the industrial development and the degree of marketization are lower, on the other hand the phenomenon of government's offside and vacancy is still outstanding. This makes the integration of central Henan urban agglomeration face a more difficult task in two areas. On the one hand, the effort point of integration is to fully play the main role of enterprises and improve the market mechanism, improve the resource allocation mechanism which is based on the production factor market, and optimize the environment for entrepreneurial development; On the other hand, to play the role of government, optimize the government action and strengthen the coordination, guidance and promotion of integration. The government should take initiative measures to make industries assemble in dominant region and enhance the competitiveness of industries, the focus of the integration, with particular emphasis on improving the industrial environment of dominant region, strengthening the interaction of market and industry, and establishing specialized service system.

4.2 Attaching great importance to the construction of central cities' function
The primary task of constructing central Henan urban agglomeration is to enhance the functions and status of the core city of Zhengzhou. Take the construction of new district east of Zhengzhou as an opportunity, use the establishment of large regional central city as the goal, and vigorously expand the population and economic scale of Zhengzhou, so as to make the urban population gradually increase to 5 million. To transform and upgrade traditional industries actively, make the high-tech industry bigger and stronger, vigorously develop modern service industries, including modern logistics, exhibition, finance, information and so on. To enhance the economic strength and radiation and driving function, fully upgrade the comprehensive service functions as a core city, give full play to the role of regional center in economy, information, science and technology, education and cultural, and make it be a national regional central city which has a greater influence in central China and lay a solid foundation for the formation of economic rising zone of central Henan urban agglomeration.

4.3 Forming a urban system for functional complementary among various cities
The complementary of various cities in central Henan urban agglomeration is the important support for the formation of urban agglomerations. Conclusively, the difference of the pillar industries in central Henan urban agglomeration is relatively large, and the issue of industry isomorphism is not prominent. The heterogeneity of industry is favorable to establish rational industrial division, form a complementary relationship and thus facilitate to generate resultant force of groups in cooperation. In the process of coordination and integration of central Henan urban agglomeration, the municipalities must restudy and adjust their development orientation, especially the industry positioning based on the relationship with the regional core city and eventually find their own appropriate location. And through further integration, eventually make central Henan urban agglomeration form a development pattern with a variety of key industries and distinctive characteristics of mutual coordinated industries.

4.4 Promoting the quality and level of opening-up comprehensively
To further expand preferential policies of opening-up, encourage foreign investment to participate in the reformation, reorganization and transformation of state-owned enterprises and invest in modern agriculture, equipment manufacturing, modern service industry and other key developing industries to promote industrial upgrading and technological innovation. Actively construct industrial cooperative zones with the domestic coastal developed areas as well as relative countries and areas, and introduce a number of major projects with strong industry relevance degree, high technical content and strong radiation driving ability. Further change the growth mode of foreign trade, optimize the foreign trade structure, and improve the quality and efficiency of foreign trade. Further improve the policies and service systems of foreign investment, encourage powerful enterprises to invest overseas, set up branches and carry out mergence and reorganization, and eventually form a bi-directional opening
pattern for the organic combination of "bringing in" and "going out".

5. Conclusion

The key of the integrated development of central Henan urban agglomeration is clear division and close link among the cities. There are many ways to realize the goals, such as establish and improve the coordination mechanism and benefits compensation mechanism, plays the leading role of central cities, forms the urban system for functional complementation, and fully improves the quality and level of opening-up.

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