

# The Dialectical Logic, Realistic Challenges and Policy Choices of Achieving High-quality Full Employment in the High-quality Development of Chinese-style Modernization

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## Abstract

Employment is the most basic people's livelihood, given the current state of affairs in the international arena, the employment outlook in China is not promising in light of a deteriorating economic climate. In the process of China's modernization, especially into the important period of high-quality economic development, not only to achieve the effective improvement of economic quality and quantity of reasonable growth, but also to do everything possible to promote high-quality full employment, has become a key and complicated part of the national economy and people's livelihood. To complete this arduous task, China need to understand the stage of modernization development and the realistic challenges facing employment, especially under the new development pattern, it needs to adhere to the strategy of giving priority to employment, pay close attention to the central link of employment work, and make policy choices to effectively improve the quality of the labor force and improve the quality and expansion of employment, so as to lay a good institutional foundation for achieving high-quality full employment.

## Keywords

Chinese Modernization; High Quality Development; High Quality Full Employment.

## 1. Introduction

Employment stands as the bedrock of individuals' livelihoods. In the past few decades, China's economy has made remarkable strides; however, in recent years, its pace of economic development has significantly decelerated. This slowdown is particularly evident following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and amidst uncertain global economic prospects. Currently, China's economy is undergoing a phase of recovery. It is evident that the primary contradiction in the labor field reflects directly the principal social contradiction of China's current era, namely, the disparity between the escalating demand for improved employment opportunities by individuals and the unbalanced, insufficient development of employment infrastructure [1]. The World Bank emphasized in its World Development Report that employment stands as the fundamental pillar of development in developing countries, serving as the most effective safeguard against poverty and vulnerability. Furthermore, it highlighted that improved employment opportunities yield the highest dividends for overall development. [2]. The achievement of high-quality full employment is intricately linked to the overarching landscape of high-quality development and has far-reaching implications for China. Delving into strategies to attain high-quality full employment within the context of China's modernization is of immense historical and practical significance. It substantively contributes to the pivotal goal of fostering shared prosperity for all.

## 2. Literature Review: The Dialectical Logic of Achieving High-quality Full Employment in High-quality Development

Time breeds ideas, while practical experience births theories. Economic law encompasses not only the understanding of the general adaptation of production relations to the advancement of productive forces but also the comprehension of the intricate relationships between economic variables within different economic systems and stages of development. Marx's materialist view of history was rooted in his meticulous study of the history of human social and economic progress. Drawing from the extensive practice of constructing a modern socialist state in China, this paper extensively revisits and consolidates the essence and fundamental principles of building socialism with distinct Chinese characteristics. It advocates for the achievement of high-quality full employment through high-quality development, embodying the dialectical unity between noble aspirations and pragmatic objectives, historical inevitability, and developmental stages. It serves as a concentrated expression of China's developmental ideologies within a specific period amid the modernization journey.

### 2.1. The Connotation and Significance of High-quality Development and High-quality Full Employment

In contemporary labor economics, employment denotes the engagement of workers in gainful labor within legal working ages, representing a crucial avenue for individuals to realize their self-worth, transcend rigid class barriers, and elevate their social standing. Full employment signifies a scenario where all individuals willing to work can secure employment at a given wage level. Even within full employment, there exist structural, frictional, and cyclical unemployment, reflecting the process of optimal labor allocation and dynamic workforce adjustments. The unemployment rate corresponding to full employment is termed the natural unemployment rate, initially estimated at 2%-3%, signifying the achievement of full employment. However, with evolving economic and social landscapes, this rate has risen to approximately 5%. Moreover, full employment constitutes one of the fundamental aspects outlined in international labor conventions [3]. High-quality employment primarily concerns individuals at a micro level, ensuring a favorable and holistic work environment that aligns with their skills and interests. It signifies a blend of personal capabilities and interests beyond mere income, emphasizing that remuneration isn't the sole criterion [4]. The International Labor Organization contends that assessing high-quality employment requires a broader, macroscopic evaluation encompassing factors such as job stability, the quality of the work environment, achieving work-life balance, and facilitating career development. According to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security in China, high-quality employment is characterized by a continuous expansion in employment scale and an optimized employment structure. It involves the stable employment of key demographic groups, a substantial increase in income for underprivileged laborers, effective enhancement of vocational skills training, gradual improvements in the employment service and legal systems, and the effective protection of workers' rights and interests. It encompasses a multidimensional, dynamic development process spanning macro and micro levels.

The concept of high-quality full employment was initially introduced during the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. It aims to uphold a consistently low overall unemployment rate, ensuring stable employment, comprehensive social security coverage, and the continual enhancement of job satisfaction. The concept of high-quality development was initially introduced during the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. It specifically involves enhancing labor productivity, optimizing resource utilization rates, increasing the contribution of scientific and technological progress, and improving total factor productivity. The goal is to optimize industrial systems, refine production methods, and offer

more competitive goods and services, facilitating seamless production, distribution, and consumption. Meeting the personalized and diversified upgrading needs of people stands as the overarching requirement for economic and social development. High-quality development denotes a shift in the essence of progress, transitioning from mere possession to actual quality. This shift unlocks greater potential for productive forces, rationalizes the national economy's proportions and spatial layout, and enlarges and strengthens the nation's wealth cake. The proposition of achieving high-quality full employment within high-quality development holds profound contemplative significance. Presently, high-quality employment and full employment are intertwined. It's dedicated to enhancing employment efficiency within the framework of China's new economic development pattern, improving employment efficiency by balancing quality and quantity, and advancing employment benefits through a combination of macro and micro-level strategies.

## **2.2. High-quality Full Employment is the Essence and Purpose of High-quality Development**

The fruits of development ought to be collectively enjoyed by the populace. The narrative of contentment and progress on the path to shared prosperity is nurtured by the toiling masses. Employment, particularly a focal point for the people, serves as the economic bedrock for their sustenance, integration into society, and equitable participation in developmental gains, enabling comprehensive and sustainable human development. It holds a pivotal role across economic, social, and political domains. Prioritizing high-quality full employment is imperative within the context of emphasizing common prosperity, an essential tenet of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Realizing the people's aspirations for an improved life stands as both the starting point and ultimate objective of the modernization drive. To construct an exemplary modern socialist nation and attain collective prosperity, the foundation fundamentally rests upon the employment of workers in China. It's crucial to honor labor, recognize the pivotal role of the working class as the primary force behind employment, and ensure high-quality full employment for the populace. Only through such high-quality development can China withstand the scrutiny of history and practical implementation.

## **2.3. High-quality Development is the Basis and Prerequisite for High-quality Full Employment**

In accordance with Marxist political economy, the principle posits that the economic foundation shapes the superstructure. This economic foundation encompasses the collective relations of production dictated by the prevailing stage of productive forces within a society[5]. Prioritizing high-quality development stands as the paramount objective in the comprehensive construction of a modern socialist nation. Its attainment is an essential mandate, aligning with the evolving principal contradiction within Chinese society and the holistic construction of a modern socialist state. Furthermore, it serves as the economic cornerstone for the expansion of employment opportunities in China and constitutes the fundamental prerequisite for resolving the employment challenge. Throughout national development, the pace and quality of progress do not consistently align; reasons inherent to different developmental stages can lead economic growth rates and the level of economic development in opposite directions. For instance, in the sustainable economic development journey of countries like Japan and South Korea, economic growth has notably decelerated while economic fluctuations have risen significantly. Within a similar development spectrum, China's economic fluctuations didn't follow the trends witnessed in the aforementioned countries but displayed a comparatively stable trajectory. Even when confronted with crises such as the financial downturn and the COVID-19 pandemic, China's characteristic macro-control mechanisms exhibited effective crisis responses. These successes owe themselves to the stable economic development, laying a robust groundwork for achieving high-quality full employment in China. While China's

development has undeniably decelerated, the concept of high-quality development remains not just a guiding principle for China's historical economic milestones, but also a central theme for its long-term economic and social progression. Achieving high-quality development stands as the fundamental remedy to stabilize and broaden employment prospects. It infuses dynamism into society, optimizes the utilization of labor resources and human capital advantages, thereby fortifying the foundational objective of stabilizing and expanding employment.

#### **2.4. High-quality Full Employment Fuels Sustainable High-quality Development**

Labor stands as a pivotal production factor and a prime driver of development. Enhancing labor allocation efficiency continually narrow income disparities and substantially boosts productivity [6]. Consumption and production exhibit a causal relationship, with income proportional to productivity. Household consumption emerges as the primary engine propelling national wealth enhancement. Under the banner of advancing high-quality development, China must fuse the execution of strategies boosting domestic demand with profound supply-side structural reform. This integration aims to fortify the internal momentum and dependability of the domestic cycle, striving to elevate total factor productivity. Employment serves as the primary conduit and fundamental path for Chinese residents to augment income and bolster consumption. In 2022, the per capita wage income of residents amounted to CNY 20,590, representing 55.8% of disposable income, while national final consumption expenditure accounted for 54.5% of GDP. Comparatively, in developed countries, this ratio typically stands around 80%. China's population reaches 1.4 billion, with a per capita GDP surpassing \$10,000 in 2019. By 2022, the Engel coefficient among Chinese residents stands at 30.5%, marking a 34.1 percentage point decrease from 1978 (64.6%). This shift signifies meeting basic material needs and entering an era focused on pursuing a quality lifestyle. There remains significant potential for enhancing national consumption. Expanding on this, the essence of development lies in distribution, encompassing the historical context of how developmental gains are shared. The distribution of consumption means reflects the outcome of the underlying conditions of production. The neoclassical economics formulated during the Keynesian Revolution aimed to address issues of growth and distribution arising from underemployment and economic imbalances. China needs to boost the share of remuneration in primary distribution, ensuring that increased effort translates into higher rewards, fostering a culture of hard work and prosperity. Encouraging equitable opportunities and elevating the income of low-income groups while expanding the middle-income bracket is imperative. Continual elevation of wages for front-line workers is necessary. A heightened level of distribution can effectively fuel the engine of development, while increased wages among workers will significantly bolster domestic demand and propel the transformation of developmental momentum. High productivity and elevated wage rates can establish a virtuous cycle, as exemplified by the "high-wage strategy" and "manufacturing system" that underpinned the United States' ascent in the 19th century [7]. Hence, considering the historical dialectical relationship of "employment - income - development," achieving high-quality full employment in China is the fundamental assurance for a consistent rise in income. Indeed, this enduring momentum is pivotal for achieving high-quality development.

#### **2.5. High-quality Development and High-quality Full Employment Complement Each Other**

In macroeconomics, the equilibrium between the actual economic growth rate and potential economic growth rate is termed balanced growth, constituting a form of high-quality development. In labor economics, when employment expansion positively interacts with economic development, it signifies high-quality full employment. Absolutely, achieving high-quality full employment hinges on effectively merging maximum economic development with

optimal human resource utilization. It stands as a concrete manifestation of high-quality development within the labor domain, showcasing the intrinsic unity and mutual reinforcement between these ideas. Without a certain level of growth, adequate support for employment becomes challenging. To address the employment challenge, reliance on development is crucial—expanding the economic development pie concurrently enlarges the employment pie. High-quality development facilitates more opportunities for high-quality and ample employment, while high-quality and full employment, in turn, propels high-quality development. This symbiotic relationship forms a robust mechanism for a nation's comprehensive development. Since 2018, in response to intricate challenges and the pressures of a new economic growth phase, China has prioritized employment through the implementation of "six stability" and "six protection" policies, underscoring the paramount importance of employment. Over the years, China's ability to sustain positive economic growth amidst rare historical shocks owes much to its solid foundation of creating over 10 million new urban jobs annually. Development serves as the fundamental pillar for both stable and extended employment, with employment acting as the source fueling stable development, thus forming a mutually reinforcing cycle. China is presently amid a crucial strategic phase, characterized by significant opportunities for the nation. The attainment of high-quality full employment aligns closely with the tenets of new development stages, concepts, and patterns encapsulated within high-quality development. It stands in tandem and inseparably linked with economic and social progress.

### **3. Problem Analysis: Realistic Challenges Facing China in Achieving High-quality full Employment in High-quality Development**

Employment remains a monumental challenge, with securing people's livelihoods at the core of China's national development and governance. Catering to the "rice bowls" of its populace stands as the primary objective. With a population exceeding 1.4 billion and an almost 900-million-strong workforce, China holds the top spot globally in these demographics. As a whole, China's population, exceeding 1.4 billion, marks a transition toward modernity, surpassing even the combined population of developed nations. This presents an unprecedented challenge and complexity, necessitating a unique path and approach to development. Over the next five years, China aims to achieve breakthroughs in high-quality economic development while steadily fostering common prosperity. However, the primary hindrance to achieving high-quality development lies in the inadequate advancement of productive forces. This shortfall poses numerous practical difficulties and challenges in realizing high-quality full employment.

#### **3.1. Building a New Development Pattern Stands as a Strategic Deployment for High-quality Development**

In order to increase value, capital will actively innovate and change the mode of production. Governance mechanisms must adapt to the dynamic changes in the principal contradiction and undergo timely reforms. The nation's modernization journey necessitates industrialization, urbanization, extensive application of science, a reduced proportion of agriculture, and the narrowing of the income gap. To foster high-quality development, it's imperative to fully, accurately, and comprehensively implement the new development concept. This entails accelerating the establishment of a new development paradigm where the domestic cycle serves as the primary driver while the domestic and international cycles reinforce one another. This pattern aligns with the laws of economic development, facilitating the transition between economic development stages. It stands as a strategic decision to elevate China's economic development promptly and to fortify its international competitive edge. Marx emphasized that in any self-sufficient and mature economy, the internal cycle serves as the fundamental driver for economic advancement. Liszt's theory of national productivity and the national economy

theory of the American School stressed the significance of protecting the domestic market. A strong internal cycle plays a pivotal role in propelling the economic rise of significant global powers. In the 19th century, the United States productivity was significantly influenced by its robust internal cycle [8] [9]. During the 1960s, several Latin American nations encountered the "middle-income trap" due to their excessive reliance on the international market and foreign investment as part of their development strategies. This dependence hindered their transition into high-income countries. Presently, China is experiencing the gradual disappearance of its demographic dividend, signifying that solely focusing on the GDP growth rate is no longer sufficient. China faces the imperative of steering clear of the "middle-income trap" and progressively reducing the wealth gap. In 2022, China's Gini coefficient measured 0.47, surpassing figures in the United States (0.45), the United Kingdom (0.34), Canada (0.32), and South Korea (0.35), illustrating a trend of "the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer". The "twenty-eight phenomenon" in Pareto's Law serves as a cautionary signal, highlighting that an imbalanced distribution of social wealth is unsustainable [10]. Such inequality poses a serious threat to both economic development and social stability. China's development currently navigates the critical juncture of the "three overlapping phases," encompassing the transition from a shifting growth rate, a challenging period of structural adjustment, to the initial phase of stimulus policies. To effectively withstand diverse risks and accomplish high-quality full employment, economic development must align with the new developmental paradigm [11]. As China rises to prominence, it must remain vigilant and focused. While facilitating the international cycle, due attention should be given to the development, utilization, and protection of the domestic market. Genuine efforts and hard work are essential to fortify the domestic cycle. It is also crucial to recognize and address the short-term impact of the new development paradigm on employment. Between 2008 and 2022, China's exports as a percentage of GDP decreased from 37% to 19.8%. Despite this decline, the existing level of foreign trade remains significant, supporting 180 million jobs, which constitutes over 20% of the total employment in the country. Moving forward, the proportion of exports is anticipated to undergo further adjustments, potentially leading to a reduction in jobs. Moreover, the seamless operation of both the international and domestic dual cycles will generate multiple growth hubs, including central cities and urban clusters. These hubs will demonstrate enhanced capabilities in human resource allocation and create higher-quality jobs. However, this development may concurrently widen regional disparities and exacerbate structural imbalances in employment across regions.

### **3.2. Continued Stable Development is the Prerequisite for High-quality Full Employment.**

High-quality development requires the country's sustained and stable progress. Capital acts as a significant driver of modern economic and social advancement. China's reform and opening-up serve as a model showcasing the efficient utilization of capital's power for sustained and stable development. Nonetheless, the current outlook is less optimistic, signaling that the traditional model driven solely by capital is no longer sustainable. Looking at the international capital scenario, the global landscape is encountering downward risks. There's a decline in international capital flow, a surge in trade protectionism, weakened capital-driven development, and the compounding effect of various international uncertainties. Consequently, the global economic outlook appears uncertain. Based on an analysis of the domestic development scenario, China's economic growth has transitioned into a new phase. Considering the prominent contradictions and fundamental issues within China's economy, the conclusion drawn from the China Central Economic Work Conference in 2016 highlighted a significant structural imbalance. The report of the 20th National Congress further emphasized: "The economy faces prominent structural and institutional contradictions, with deep-rooted

institutional issues and solidified interest barriers becoming increasingly evident." In 2021, the contribution of China's primary, secondary, and tertiary industries to GDP stood at 7.3%, 39.4%, and 53.3%, respectively, while employment in the tertiary sector accounted for 22.9%, 29.1%, and 48% of total employment. In a horizontal comparison, the value added of the primary industry in developed nations typically represents less than 5%, while the value added of the tertiary industry exceeds 60%. The structure of industrial value added parallels the employment structure in these countries. However, China displays an imbalance in this regard [12]. In a vertical comparison, between 2015 and 2021, the share of tertiary industry employment in total employment surged by 4.2 percentage points. However, the proportion of added value from the tertiary industry in GDP only rose by 3.2 percentage points during the same period. This disparity highlights that the adjustment in industrial structure has notably lagged behind the pace of adjusting the employment structure. China's industrial structure requires further transformation and upgrading, leading to a significant adjustment in the employment structure. This transition involves an influx of workers into the tertiary industry, consequently causing "recruitment difficulties" in the secondary industry and "employment congestion" in the tertiary industry. As the economic situation declines, the available workforce diminishes noticeably with a year-on-year decline in the working-age population and increased mobility, resulting in a very challenging employment scenario in China. China's developmental trajectory shouldn't rely solely on the stability of the external environment. Given the volatile global landscape, China's self-reliant internal circular development has gained paramount significance. China views sustained and stable development as not only a necessary condition but also a vital guarantee for achieving high-quality full employment. It aims to effectively mitigate short-term fluctuations across cycles. Balancing employment needs with sustainable and stable development stands as a pivotal goal for China [13].

### **3.3. Scientific and Technological Innovation Stands as the Primary Driver for High-quality Full Employment.**

Technological progress and innovation stand as pivotal drivers for fostering economic reform and development. Growth and innovation represent intrinsic advancements, originating from within, rather than being externally imposed. In essence, economic development and innovation arise organically, not as a result of external pressures or mandates [14]. Scientific and technological innovation driving industrial upgrading serves as the primary force propelling less developed countries toward sustained economic growth. The potency of science and technology is poised to surpass the impact of solely expanding labor forces, signifying a shift in the pivotal driving force behind economic progress [15]. China's advancement necessitates an enhanced framework for scientific and technological innovation, underscoring innovation's central role in the nation's overarching modernization endeavor. Generally, national economic development unfolds across three stages: maturation promotion, high mass consumption, and quality-of-life pursuit. The maturation promotion phase denotes the effective integration of science and technology in the economic sphere. Presently, China resides within the transitional phase among these stages, witnessing a burgeoning prowess in scientific and technological innovation. Notably, it holds a competitive edge in high-speed rail, 5G communication, digitalization, and artificial intelligence. Between 2012 and 2022, China remarkably ascended in the Global Innovation Index rankings, surging from 34th to an impressive 11th place. This notable advancement positioned China as the sole middle-income economy within the top 30 ranks. In the era of Industry 4.0, achieving high-quality economic development requires groundbreaking strides, with a heightened emphasis on enhancing self-reliance in scientific and technological capabilities. China must engage in decisive battles for key core technologies, accelerate the resolution of technological bottlenecks in critical areas, and firmly secure control over the sustenance of its people. Presently, China's scientific and

technological progress contributes over 60%, yet its reliance on foreign technology exceeds 50%. In comparison, developed countries typically exhibit a contribution rate of over 70% in scientific and technological progress, coupled with a dependency on foreign technology below 30%. It underscores the imperative for China to fortify its technological self-sufficiency for sustainable development in this transformative industrial landscape. When it comes to cutting-edge technology, it's crucial not to merely follow trends. Relying on foreign leadership in certain technologies is not a sustainable status quo. Securing an absolute advantage in high-end industries can serve as a robust guarantee for China's ascent. [16]. Simultaneously, scientific and technological innovation will propel employment and infuse unprecedented vitality into the job market, yet it will also significantly impact employment trends. In 2021, China dominated global industrial robot installations, comprising 50% of the world's total, surpassing 243,000 units. However, the integration of robots into production lines in China trails behind manufacturing powerhouses like the United States, Japan, Germany, and South Korea. There remains ample room for China to catch up in this regard. From an employment displacement standpoint, following a calculation where 1 robot substitutes for 3 workers, the adoption of industrial robots solely in the manufacturing sector could potentially displace tens of millions of workers [17]. The introduction and utilization of high-tech advancements like artificial intelligence, big data, and the metaverse will usher in a novel employment landscape in China. This transition will exert a dual impact on both physical and mental laborers, particularly affecting middle-skilled workers. It presents fresh challenges for achieving high-quality, full employment, such as the swift onset of job automation and intelligence. Additionally, it necessitates the avoidance of hazardous tasks through technological means to prevent the emergence of "employment polarization.

### **3.4. Higher Labor Quality is the Fundamental Pillar of High-quality Development**

At the beginning of the Wealth of Nations, Adam Smith pointed out that the enhancement of labor productivity and the refinement of workers' skills are the inevitable outcomes of the division of labor system within the context of social production [18]. Human capital refers to the added value possessed by workers, serving as the driving force behind sustained economic growth [19]. High-quality talents serve as the foundational elements for initiating high-quality development, constituting one of the fundamental and strategic pillars for the comprehensive construction of a modern socialist nation. Genuine consolidation of high-quality development can only be achieved by elevating people's incomes and augmenting the worth of human capital. Despite China's vast population and abundant human resources, the overall quality of the labor force falls short of ideal standards. A majority belong to the low-end unskilled labor segment, while the proportion of medium and high-skilled personnel remains relatively low, leading to a significant shortage of highly skilled individuals. The data from 2020 reveals that China's working-age population between 16 and 59 years old had an average of 10.8 years of education. Projections indicate an increase to 11.3 years by 2025, surpassing the equivalent of the second year of high school. Forecasts suggest that in the short term, China's labor force will continue to predominantly possess secondary education, notably the nearly 300 million migrant workers. Over 70 percent of the population has received education at middle and high school levels, yet there remains a pressing need to enhance the overall quality of education. China faces not only an overall shortage of high-end talents but also an imbalance in its internal talent structure. Specifically, there's a notable scarcity of managerial and academic talents. The deficit in highly skilled individuals is substantial, highlighting a need for a more balanced and diverse pool of expertise at the upper echelons. In 2021, China boasted a skilled personnel pool exceeding 200 million, with over 60 million classified as highly skilled individuals, constituting approximately 26% of the total employed population. It's noteworthy that this percentage falls

behind the levels in developed nations, where the proportion of skilled personnel typically ranges from 40% to 50%. Manufacturing powerhouses like Germany and Japan have even higher proportions, reaching 70% to 80%. The scarcity of high-quality talents poses a significant challenge in adequately sustaining the demands of high-quality development. The persistent and prolonged "recruitment difficulties" and "labor shortages" largely stem from this inadequacy. In essence, some highly skilled talents crucially required by enterprises remain exceedingly scarce, reaching a point where finding even a single suitable candidate becomes an arduous task. China's digital talent gap is further exacerbating, witnessing an expanding disparity. There's a notable influx of low-skilled individuals gravitating towards digital employment, effectively assuming the role of "new manual workers" within the digital economy. This trend contributes to the crystallization of employment polarization, signifying a distinct divide within the labor force. In the key stage of industrial transformation, implementing the optimization of the labor market structure, striving to improve the quality of the labor force, focusing on the training of skilled talents, and implementing the high-end talent strategy are necessary actions for high-quality development.

### **3.5. Green and Low-carbon Development is a Key Pillar of High-quality Development**

The notion of the circular economy contends that increasing productivity doesn't inherently clash with reducing environmental harm. It posits that through the strategic use of scientific and technological advancements, it's plausible to boost productivity while concurrently mitigating ecological impact. This concept revolves around establishing an efficient system where resources are utilized optimally, and waste generation is minimized through innovative and sustainable approaches. Precise environmental regulations can act as a catalyst for technological innovation, fostering heightened productivity. This symbiotic relationship enables concurrent progress in environmental protection and economic development [20]. China's pursuit of high-quality development elevates the importance of green and low-carbon strategies, acknowledging that "advancing green and low-carbon economic and social progress is pivotal for achieving high-quality development." Environmental challenges have positioned China at a critical juncture, reaching the peak of its ecological carrying capacity and environmental thresholds. In committing to global sustainability, China has pledged the "dual carbon goals," aiming to achieve carbon peak before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060. However, as of 2021, China's final total carbon dioxide emissions reached 10,523 billion tons, constituting approximately 31.1% of the world's total emissions. The ambitious nature of these goals necessitates urgent action, requiring immediate integration of green and low-carbon development as the primary focus of both economic growth and employment strategies. The implementation of the "dual carbon" strategy is poised to significantly impact various regions and industries. Sectors such as coal, steel, and oil will experience accelerated transitions towards low-carbon practices. These industries also tend to employ a substantial portion of low-skilled labor, making these areas focal points for labor force restructuring amidst the transformation. Despite the immediate challenges, the long-term trajectory of green and low-carbon development promises to create a multitude of high-quality green jobs, providing robust and sustained impetus to high-quality development. In 2020, global employment in the renewable energy sector surged to 12 million, with China alone contributing 4.68 million jobs, representing an impressive 39% of the global share. This shift toward renewable energy industries not only aligns with environmental sustainability but also plays a pivotal role in fostering quality employment opportunities [21]. The contrast between the renewable energy sector's employment growth and the decline in China's coal industry employment is stark. Over the period from 2013 to 2021, employment in China's coal industry plummeted by 44.3%, dropping from 6.1 million to 3.4 million. This substantial reduction in coal-related employment

underscores the shifting landscape of job opportunities as the nation increasingly emphasizes green and low-carbon sectors. Anticipated projections indicate that by 2030, the output value of China's low-carbon industries is forecasted to reach 23 trillion yuan, contributing over 16% to the nation's GDP[22]. This growth trajectory is expected to generate 63 million jobs, underscoring a robust capacity for green employment absorption within these sectors. The array of benefits and the pressing urgency to meet these goals will compel all regions to expedite the advancement of green and low-carbon development. This involves stringent adherence to ecological and environmental protection systems while strictly following the "triple bottom line" principle encompassing the economy, environment, and society. However, the transition towards green economies may pose challenges for localities and enterprises, signifying a potentially challenging process. To mitigate these challenges, it becomes imperative to vigorously promote and efficiently utilize low-carbon and clean energy sources. Prioritizing green and low-carbon projects can significantly contribute to the creation of more green jobs. This proactive approach aims to shorten and minimize the duration and intensity of transitional challenges, facilitating a smoother shift towards sustainability.

#### **4. Conclusion and Discussion: Policy Options for Achieving High-quality Full Employment in High-quality Development**

China's employment goals have evolved, progressing from "relatively full employment" and "more full employment" to recently emphasizing "higher quality employment" and introducing "high-quality full employment". This reflects a step-by-step recognition and assessment of employment challenges across different periods in China, refining and enhancing employment objectives gradually. For China's high-quality development, it's vital to steer clear of dogmatism and extremism, prioritizing a reality-oriented approach. Addressing practical challenges in achieving high-quality full employment should be a gradual, step-by-step process rather than seeking immediate success.

##### **4.1. Upholding the Strategic Focus on Reinforcing Employment Priority Policies**

Employment stands as the bedrock of development and the source of prosperity. China must persist in prioritizing employment as a strategic linchpin for stable progress and the enhancement of citizens' welfare. This commitment has long been echoed in the global arena. The 1995 Copenhagen Declaration from the World Summit underscored that achieving full employment was a fundamental economic and social priority. In 2001, the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasized in the Global Employment Agenda that employment is pivotal for robust and sustained economic growth. It stressed that attaining full and productive employment stands as a fundamental objective within economic and social macro policies. China has consistently placed immense importance on employment. The 17th National Congress of the CPC highlighted the imperative of "expanding employment" in its report. China has consistently prioritized employment, evident in the 17th National Congress of the CPC, which underscored the necessity of "expanding employment" in its report. The subsequent National Congresses further emphasized this commitment with strategies like the "employment priority strategy," "priority to employment and a more active employment policy," and the formalization of the "employment first policy," demonstrating the continual evolution and emphasis on enhancing employment strategies and mechanisms. Sticking to the strategic focus of reinforcing the priority given to employment, establishing a robust institutional groundwork for high-quality and full employment is crucial for fostering effective high-quality development and a prerequisite for advancing common prosperity. On a macro scale, it's imperative to firmly establish the economic development's bottom line to ensure stable employment. This involves devising practical and effective employment priority policies

while rigorously averting widespread unemployment risks. At a micro-level, aligning the employment priority policy with specific economic strategies is essential. It entails bolstering policy support across fiscal, financial, investment, trade, consumption, industrial, and regional sectors, all in resonance with the employment priority objective. Encouraging an economy conducive to employment, supporting employment-friendly enterprises, and constructing a robust labor supply and demand platform, alongside effective employment services, are paramount steps.

#### **4.2. China's Imperative: Tackling Employment Challenges in High-quality Development**

Employment stands at the crossroads of livelihood and development, forming an integral nexus crucial for governing and revitalizing our nation. As China strives to construct a robust modern socialist country, the bedrock lies in establishing a sturdy material and technological foundation. Upholding the welfare of our people remains paramount, necessitating our diligent attention to resolving their employment challenges. Throughout our economic progression, it's imperative to eliminate adverse elements impeding the enhancement of employment quality, notably steering clear of the predicament of "growth without employment". Unlocking the twin forces of employment hinges on fostering robust innovation, entrepreneurship, and bolstering the tangible economy. Elevating the business landscape, cultivating a welcoming environment, and fostering a diverse market are imperative to amplify employment opportunities. China's surge in mass entrepreneurship and innovation stands as a testament, with a notable upsurge, witnessing 29.076 million new market entities nationwide in 2022, reflecting a substantial 16.2% rise from 2020. The simultaneous increase in market players and job opportunities underscores a crucial correlation. Driving employment significantly relies on the advancement of the private economy, which encompasses over 90% of market entities and contributes more than 80% to urban employment, signifying its paramount importance. Encouraging and expediting the growth of the private economy is pivotal, creating additional job opportunities and aiding in eradicating "zero employment families". Amidst the recent economic downturn and escalating raw material costs, private enterprises confront mounting challenges in their production and operations. To counter these hurdles, implementing impactful tax and fee reduction policies becomes imperative. This effort aims to stabilize market expectations and bolster confidence in the private economy. It's crucial to harness the potential of the private economy as the primary conduit for job expansion and a steadfast driver for stable employment. Pay attention to the rapid development of the digital economy, build internationally competitive digital industrial clusters, and drive digital employment. From 2012 to 2021, the scale of China's digital economy has increased from 11 trillion yuan to more than 45 trillion yuan, and the proportion of GDP has increased from 21.6% to 39.8%, ranking second in the world for several years. Compared with the 65% proportion of the US digital economy, China's digital economy still has broad prospects for development. The number of jobs driven by the digital economy will reach 379 million. The focus should be on advancing digital industrialization and industrial digitalization, creating digital economic hubs and employment centers, particularly in central, western, and northeast China. It's crucial to strategically distribute digital employment opportunities, ensuring that workers across regions can access and benefit from digital employment.

#### **4.3. Enhancing the Labor Force's Quality to Adapt to Economic Development Shifts**

Talent is the decisive factor of economic and social development, talent environment represents the development environment, and the fundamental of all competition is talent competition. In all realms of competition, the pivotal aspect remains the competition for talent. The dividends derived from prioritizing talent strengthening strategies are monumental in the

context of national progress. Throughout the 20th century, the quest for talent initiated the battle for supremacy: the United States catching up with the United Kingdom, Japan endeavoring to match the US, and South Korea striving to reach Western Europe's stature. Their advancements were propelled by prioritizing the development and accumulation of human capital, enabling these nations to sustain enduring competitive edges in pioneering science and technology. To enact the strategy of fortifying China with talents, increased investment and accumulation of human capital are essential to invigorate the labor market's vitality. This approach effectively addresses the impact of economic development and facilitates the transition towards high-quality development. The primary focus should be on establishing a comprehensive and high-quality education system to enhance the overall proficiency of the workforce. While market demands for employment have diversified across sectors, the job preferences of Chinese graduates remain concentrated in popular industries like finance, real estate, and communications. This has led to a growing disparity between graduates' skills and employers' requirements, with approximately a quarter of college graduates securing jobs unrelated to their major. Aligning higher education with market demands requires optimizing the disciplinary structure of colleges and universities. Urgent efforts are needed to expedite the training of professionals in underserved fields like science, agriculture, and medicine to mitigate the prevalence of 'irrelevant learning' and 'mismatched specialties'. Vocational education should emphasize a blend of skill development and quality enhancement, dispelling the bias toward academic education over vocational training. It's crucial to accentuate talent-focused training, enhancing capital investment, optimizing faculty resources, and bolstering the appeal of vocational education. Further, reinforcing enterprise responsibilities in training, refining the strategic framework for middle and high-end talent development, and drawing insights from global practices are crucial steps. Broadening the scope of human capital services, leveraging international experiences, and fostering robust international collaborations will be instrumental in this regard.

#### **4.4. Attentively Focusing on the Core Aspect of Employment Initiatives to Enhance Employment Quality**

Adhering to the overarching policy and directives in employment, advocating for independent worker employment, market-regulated employment, government-facilitated employment, and entrepreneurship encouragement, demands a deepened and refined government public service structure. It involves pinpointing the strengths of employment initiatives and dedicated efforts in special plans, standardized systems, coordinated strategies, digital empowerment, supervision, and evaluation within employment services to elevate employment standards. Formulating a unified, transparent, and orderly human resources market, advancing labor factor allocation reforms in alignment with market orientation, and synchronizing reforms across household registration, employment systems, and archive services are imperative. Removing barriers to labor and talent mobility, constructing pathways for both horizontal and vertical career mobility, and fostering a fair, efficient, and systematic social mobility structure are essential goals. China must institute a wage increment mechanism linked to economic growth and corporate performance, consistently enhancing workers' wages, refining transfer payment systems and methods, broadening employment supply, and safeguarding workers' rights and interests. Expanding the social security net, especially widening the coverage of unemployment insurance, is critical for spreading labor market risks. Previously, the unemployment insurance program covered only around 47% of regular urban workers. Starting in 2022, the program expanded to include unemployed college graduates. The gradual expansion of unemployment insurance coverage warrants coordinated efforts between central and local governments in managing these funds. Upholding social protection for workers necessitates eliminating unjust employment restrictions and discrimination, ensuring equal

employment opportunities for all, allowing each individual the chance for personal development through hard work.

#### 4.5. Precision and Comprehensive Planning in Supporting Key Employment Groups

The consideration for various key groups finds its roots in Confucian culture, a dominant aspect of traditional values. This culture espouses the idea of a harmonious society by prioritizing care for the young, support for the elderly, encouragement for the poor, compassion for the weak, aid for the sick, and rectifying wealth discrepancies, all in pursuit of fairness and justice. China should enhance the quality of life for its citizens by prioritizing employment through an active employment policy. A focused effort is required to facilitate job placement for key groups, including college graduates, retired military personnel, rural migrant workers, and urban residents facing difficulties. Strengthening the employment public service system and refining support mechanisms for key groups are imperative. Attention must be directed towards the growing heterogeneity and diversification within labor groups, particularly flexible workers, migrant workers, college graduates, older workers, and individuals with disabilities. Vulnerable groups engaged in informal employment are particularly affected by market structural and frictional factors, intensifying their employment challenges. The goal of employment initiatives for key groups is to construct a comprehensive support system, utilizing multiple policies to promote high-quality full employment for these segments of the population.

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