

《Anti-graft campaign targets poverty relief》

Five-year drive will ensure that those who are in need benefit

China's anti-corruption campaign will include a new focus this year cracking down on the misuse and embezzlement of poverty relief funds, according to the top prosecutor.

The five-year drive is aimed at ensuring the poverty alleviation policy and special funding will benefit poor people in poverty-stricken areas, Cao Jianming, prosecutor-general at the Supreme People's Procuratorate, told China Daily in an exclusive interview.

This campaign has been launched by the SPP and the Poverty Relief Office under the State Council.

Prosecuting departments will focus on investigating graft issues that involve exporting labor services, ecological protection, education and medical insurance, as well as minimum rural living allowances, Cao said.

They will also become "more aggressive" in going after officials at grassroots levels, such as those in charge of handling traffic in rural areas, hydropower, electric power infrastructure construction, and renovation of rural homes, Cao said.

The campaign comes after a keynote speech by President Xi Jinping at an anti-graft meeting in January, during which he promised to maintain the momentum at grassroots level to benefit everyone.

In recent years, a large amount in poverty alleviation funding has been embezzled or misused, seriously harming the public interest and people's legitimate rights. It has also led to a series of petition cases, which has affected social harmony and stability.

"We will try our utmost to punish those who abuse their power to embezzle, hold back, falsely claim or squander poverty alleviation funds," Cao said.

Since November 2012, China's leadership has conducted a sweeping nationwide campaign to pursue both "tigers", or high-ranking officials, and "flies", or lower-ranked officials at the grassroots level.

According to the SPP, duty-related crimes involving poverty alleviation funds have occurred at all levels but most of the corrupt officials involved have been at county level or below.

"We will step up efforts to combat such crimes to let more people at the grassroots level share the fruits of the anti-graft campaign," Cao said.

He also said the number of corrupt officials involved in the misuse and embezzlement of poverty relief funds has risen sharply due to "loopholes in the supervision mechanism, and the high number of anti-poverty projects and the

huge funds involved".

According to the SPP, 933 corrupt officials in charge of poverty alleviation were investigated by prosecutors last year, a year-on-year increase of 19.2 percent.

In October, China set a goal of building a well-off society and lifting all poverty-stricken people in rural areas out of poverty by 2020.

"By targeting corrupt officials in the poverty relief sector, we will ensure that the targeted poverty relief strategy will really benefit poor people," Cao said.

He added that prosecutors will work closely with poverty relief departments and set up a system to share information, such as the number of poor people, funding distribution, and how poverty relief programs are run.

China still has 200 million people living in poverty, based on the World Bank standard, which means they each live on less than \$1.90 a day. In 2014, the central government allocated 43.3 billion yuan (\$6.67 billion) for poverty relief, double the amount in 2010.

