

WT31 – The polarization of development; regional development

Session 1

The Chinese vision

- Two major geographical trends : western, north-eastern and central regions are catching up, while coastal areas are rapidly developing on a large scale.
- Imbalanced development in western vs. eastern China and its effect on national per-capita income
- Highly dynamic 2000-2005 development in coastal regions - 11.54% GDP growth ; 10.2% growth in the other three regions.
- Analysing household income : overall growth with rural households earning less.
- Geographical differences ; three major imbalances – more economic activity and inhabitants in the west than the east; heavy (State-owned) industry in the north and light, consumer goods manufacturing in the south; resources concentrated according to the region – raw materials (iron, petroleum) in the north; 19% of total water resources for 74% of arable land
- Tomorrow's challenges : 30 million people live below the poverty level ; rural exodus and the ability of cities to absorb newcomers; 125 million rural migrants ; environmental conflict
- Finding a balance between the environment, resources and people's development across China
- Proposed solution – discussion underway on the planning of 'functional zones' to organize development around a four-point model : optimal, targeted, limited and prohibited. Criteria based on environmental and energetic capacities of these zones to absorb the population.
- Four goals to pursue : sustainable development, cohesion, international competition and strengthening the population's resources.

WT31 – The polarization of development; regional development Session 2

The European vision

- Is the European development model really equitable ?
- Reminder: the European budget is low (1%), and therefore the cohesion policy is costly
- Reminder: importance of social cohesion when looking for a harmonious development that also emphasises competitiveness (challenge of the Sapir Report and the Lisbon Strategy). A balance between the two has yet to be found.
- Is the information and communication technology economy a real vector for developing growth in Europe?
- It would seem not. In the long term, Europe must turn towards new sources of economic growth, like health, culture, the residential economy, or the creation of new sources in the future.
- Focus on the “Basque miracle” whose economic success is based on the cluster policy, but also multi-factor and new development based on its regional identity (high level of fiscal and regional autonomy, intervention capacity, mobilisation of civil society, etc.)
- Tool presented: public property establishment, operator specially created to facilitate territorial requalification with public funds.
- Great challenges for European cities: 1. demography and aging of the population. 2. environmental new deal. 3. globalisation of the economy, territorial competitiveness. 4. the importance of city politics. 5. taking the individual into account. 6. new forms of governance