

New Thinking on Water Governance Conference  
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# The Transition of Water Governance in China: An Overview 1999~2008

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# Outline

- **I. Water Crisis Confronted by China**
- **II. China's New Thinking on Water Governance**
- **III. The Transition of China Water Policy**
- **IV. China's Water Management System Reform**
- **V. Taking the Reform of Water rights Institution for Example**
- **VI. Conclusions**

# 中国水系图

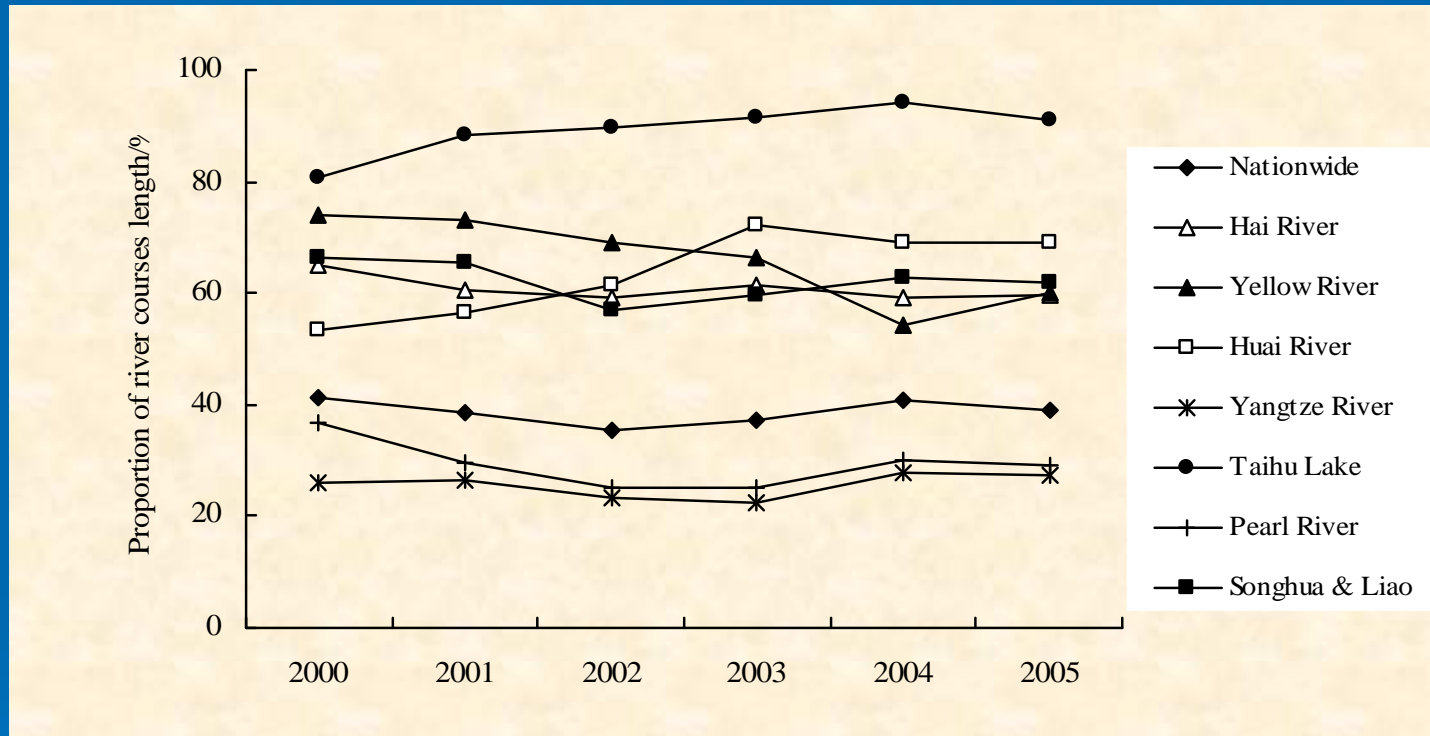


# I. China Water Crisis in the New Era

- Water pollution
- Water scarcity
- Aquatic ecosystem degradation
- Water-related hazards
- Water challenges in the context of climate change

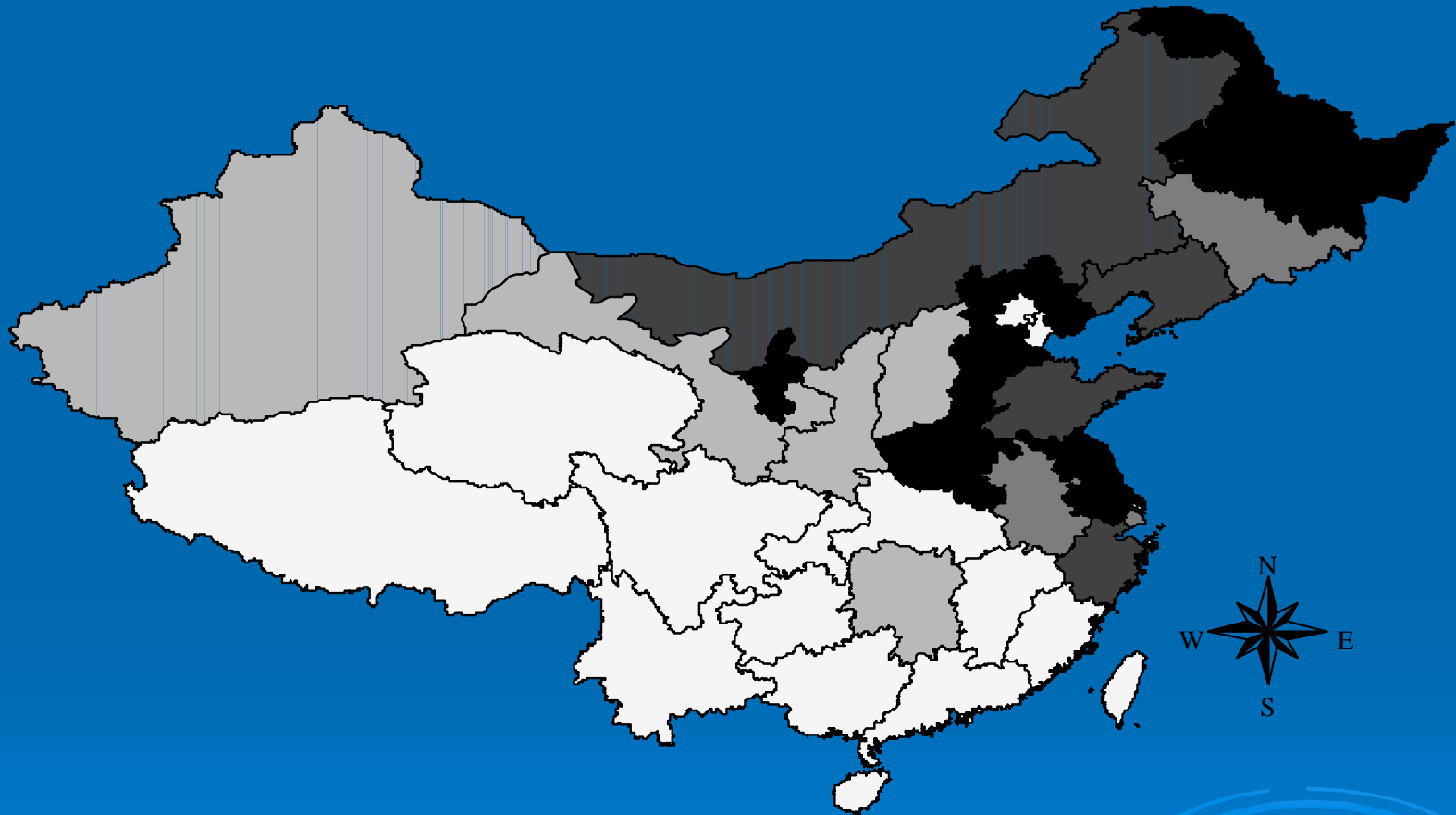


# Proportion of river courses length worse than class III in China's Seven Major River Basin



Sources: China Water Resources Quality Bulletin 2000–2005,  
<http://www.hydroinfo.gov.cn/gb/szyzlnb.asp>

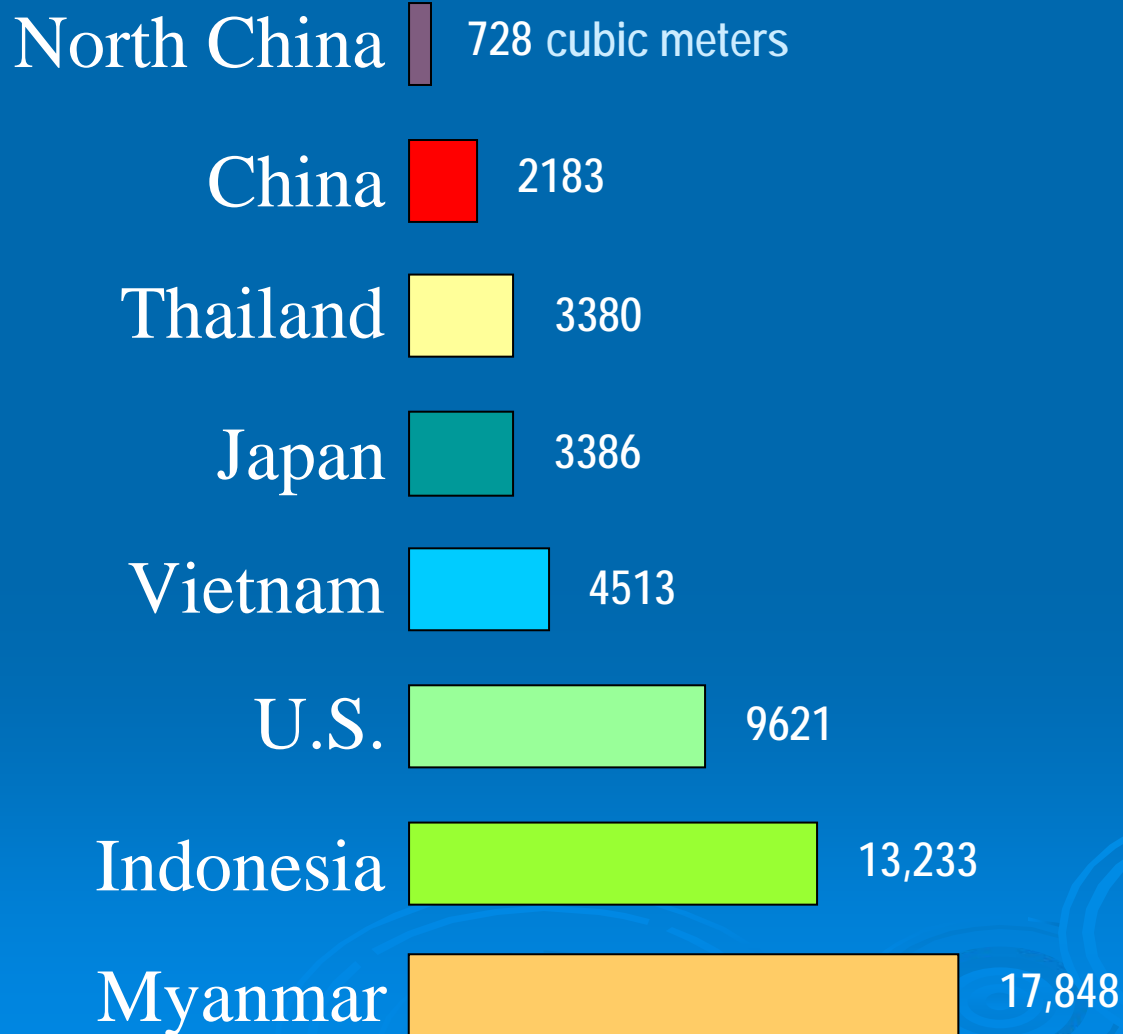
# Groundwater gets rapidly depleted and polluted



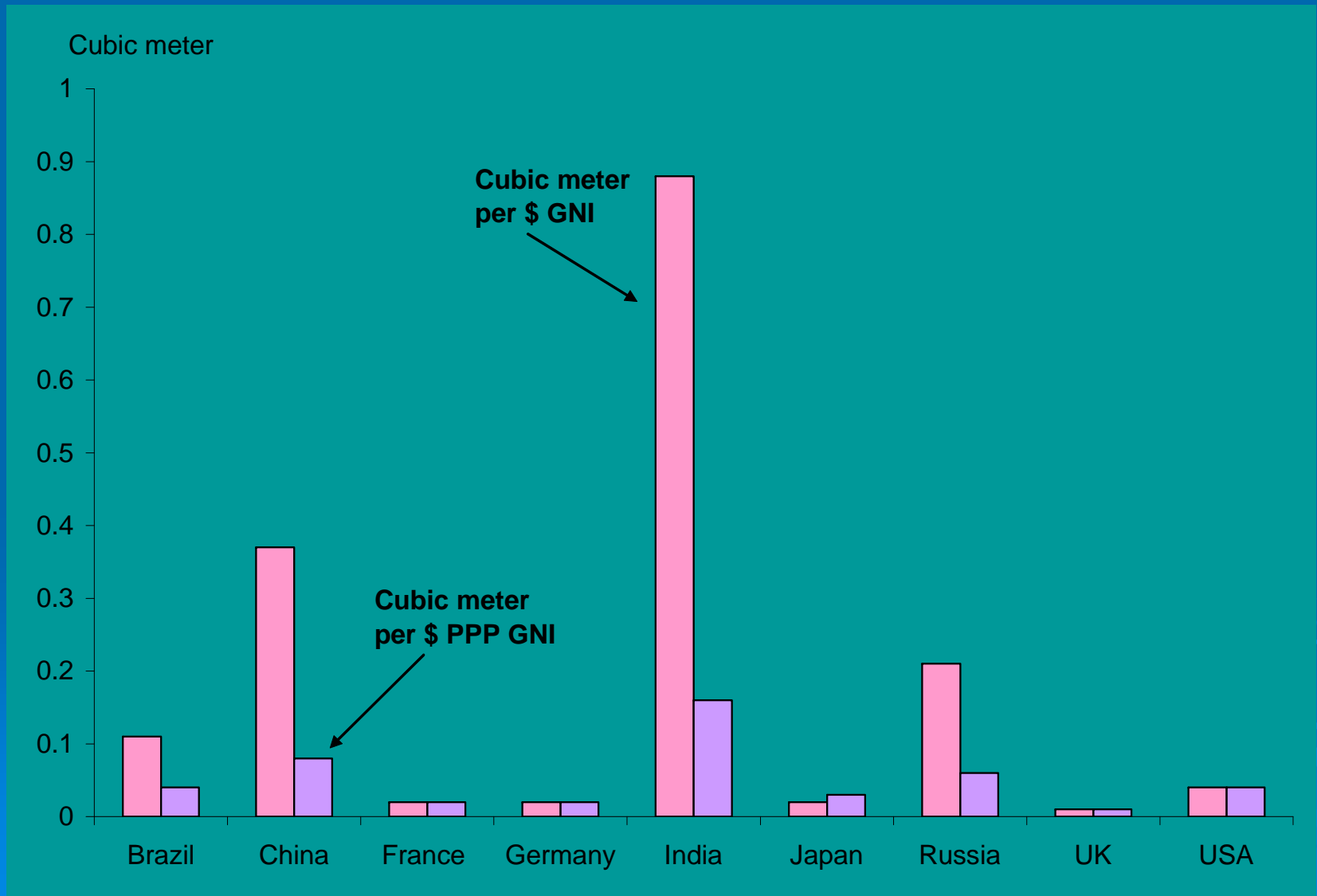
The sum of groundwater depletion and polluted water supply (in 100 million cubic meters)



# Renewable fresh water per capita

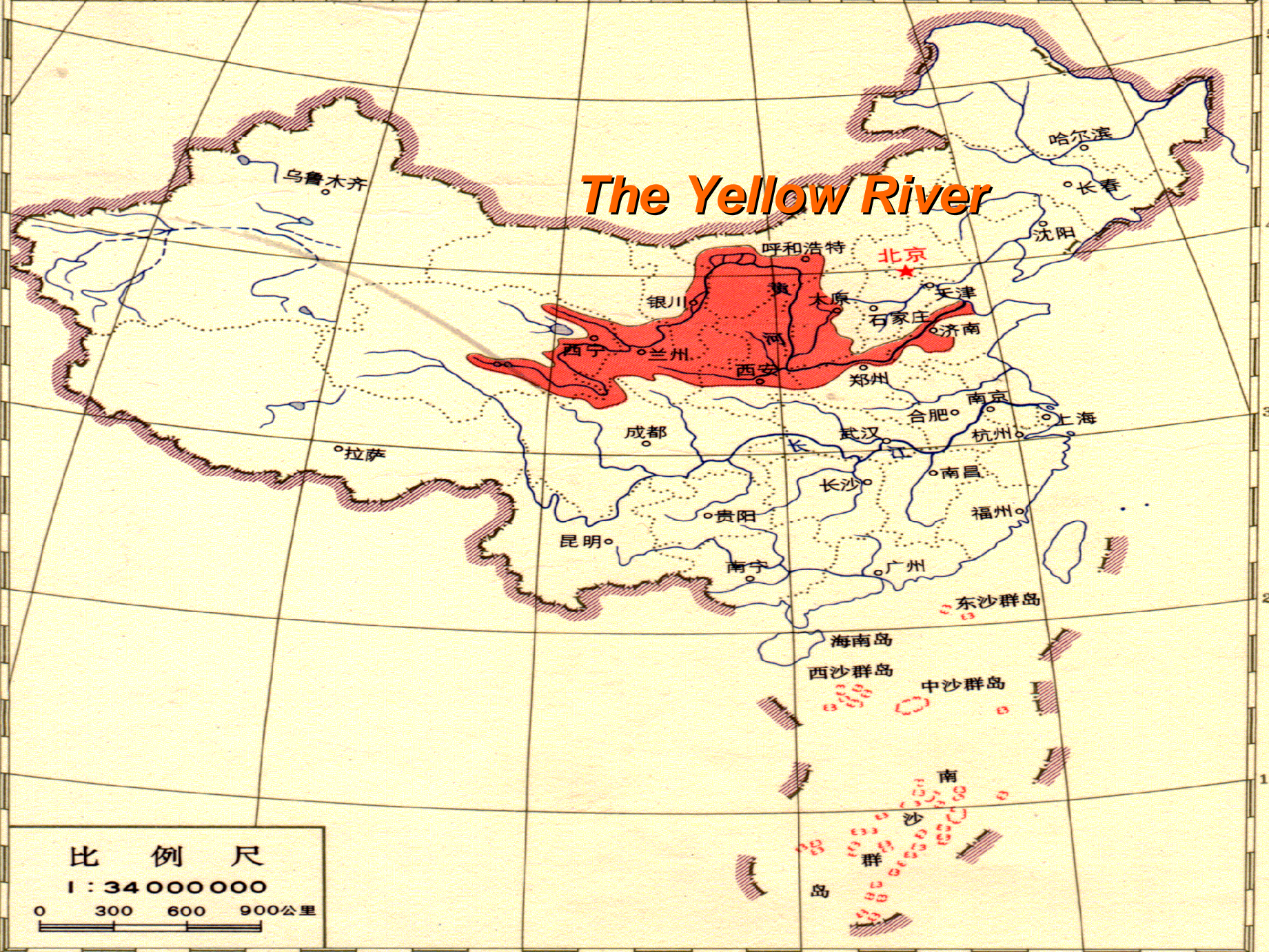


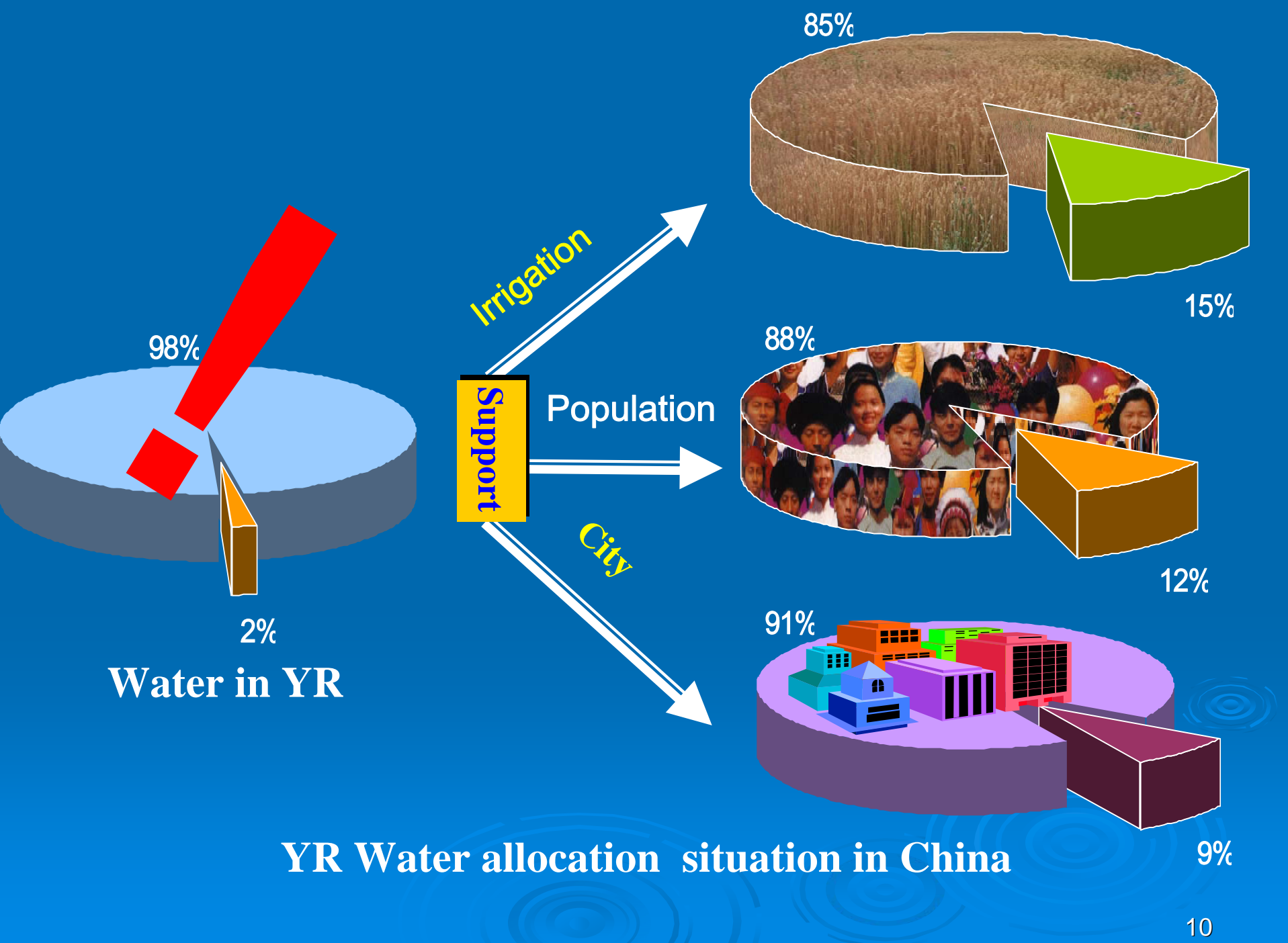
# Low efficiency of water use in China



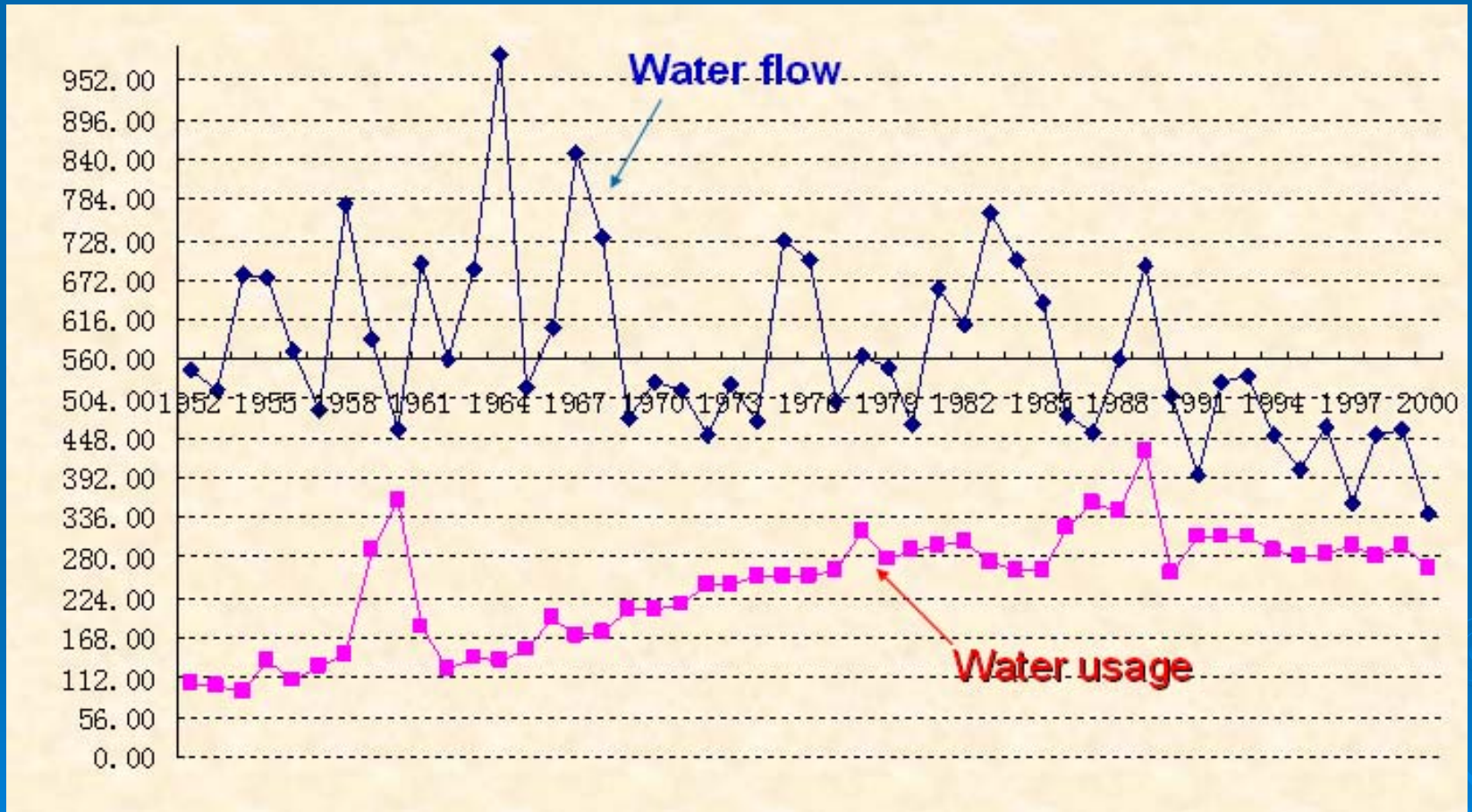


# The Yellow River





# Water Shortage in the Yellow River Basin



# A drying river



## II. China's New Thinking on Water Governance

*Wang Shucheng (1999)*: the proposal regarding the new thinking of China's water resources development in the coming 21st century.

- **Updating water governance ideas**
- **Reforming management system**
- **Advocating policy innovation**



# New Water Governance Ideas

- *Keeping a harmonious relationship between human and nature*
- *Insisting on the sustainable utilization of water resources*
- *Human-oriented water policies*

# III. The Transition of China Water Policy

- 1. Changes of flood control policy
- 2. Unified allocation and management for water resource within watershed
- 3. **Comprehensive building of a water-saving society**
- 4. Caring about the health of rivers
- 5. **Ensuring drinking water safety in countryside**
- 6. Pricing reform

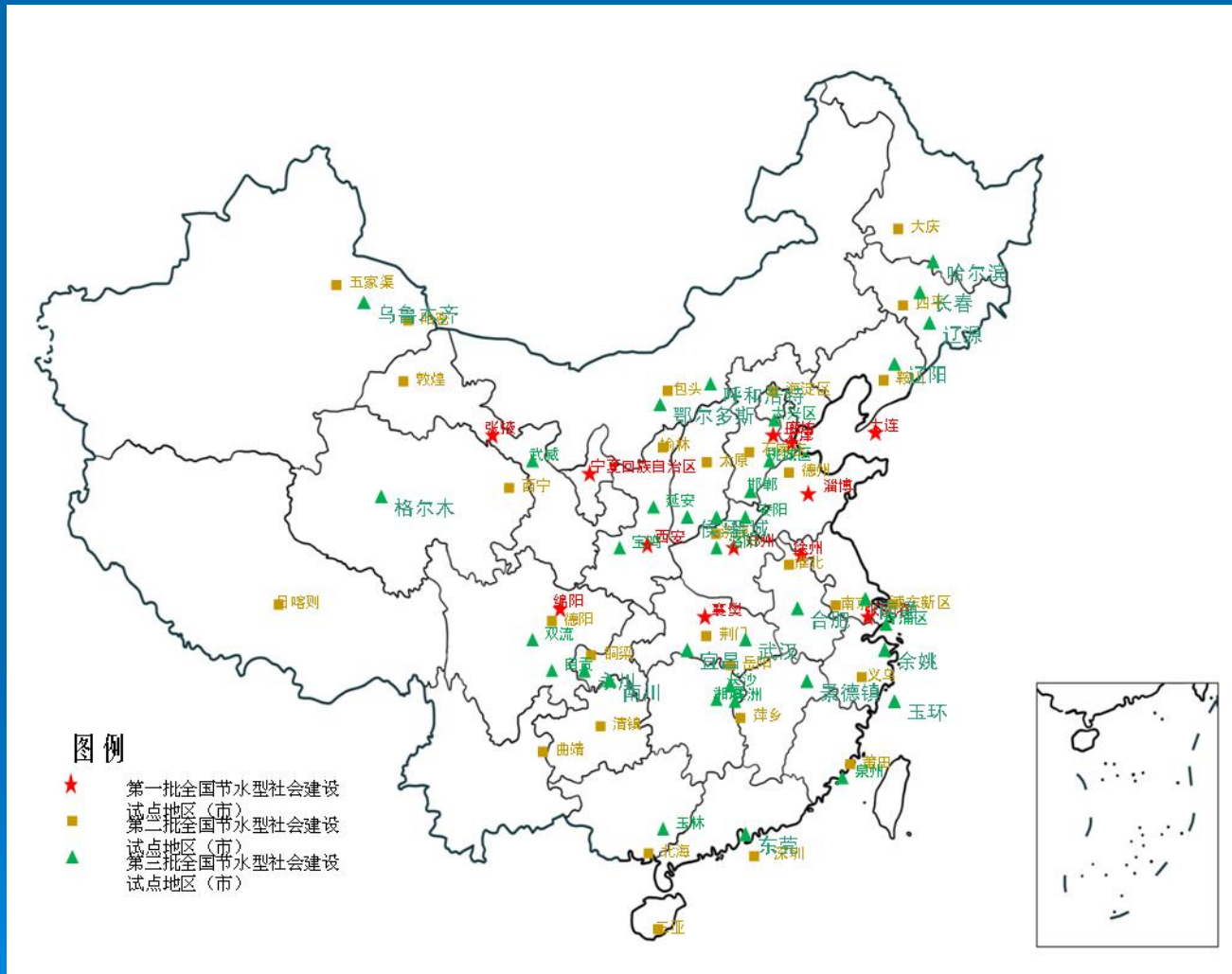
# *Building a Water-Saving Society*

- From 2002, Zhangye city is the area which firstly initiates regional comprehensive water-saving pilot program in China.



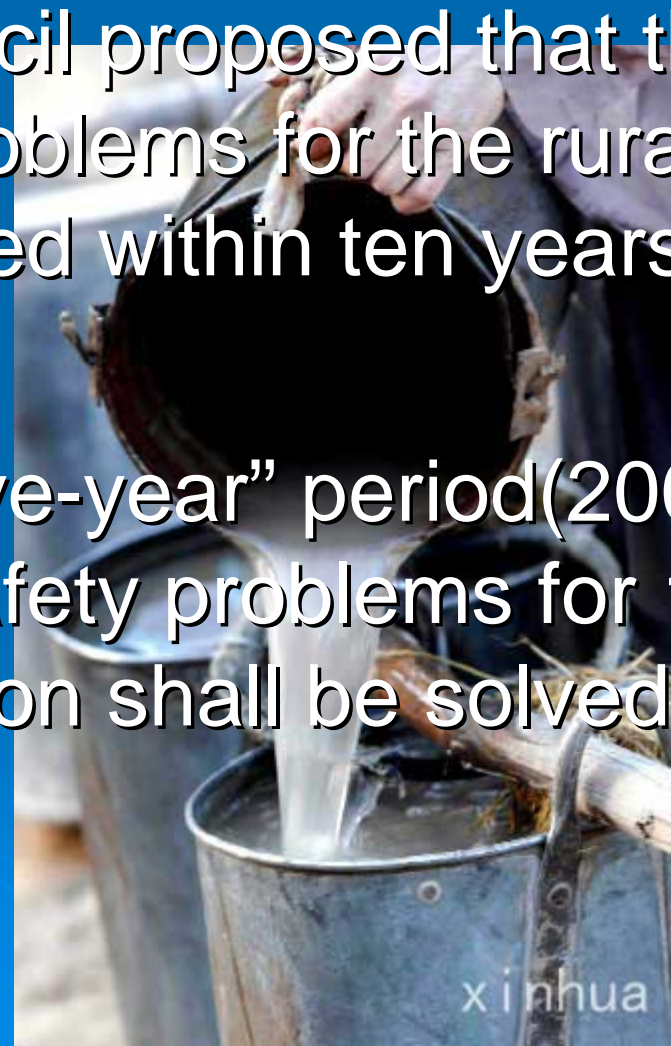


# The Development of Water Saving Pilots



# *National Rural Drinking Water Safety Project*

- In 2006, the State Council proposed that the drinking water safety problems for the rural population shall be solved within ten years.
- During the “Eleventh Five-year” period(2006-2010), drinking water safety problems for 160 millions of rural population shall be solved at first.



# IV. China's Water Management System Reform

- 1. Integrated management of water resources has been improved
- 2. Watershed management is strengthened and reinforced
- 3. Watershed planning is being regarded in practice
- 4. Regional water unified management move forward rapidly
- 5. Reform progress in water works management system
- 6. Rapid development of water user association

# *Integrated Watershed Planning*

- In 2002, the nation-wide water resources comprehensive planning was initiated, and the work has been done.
- Since 2007, a new comprehensive planning for watershed water resources was started.

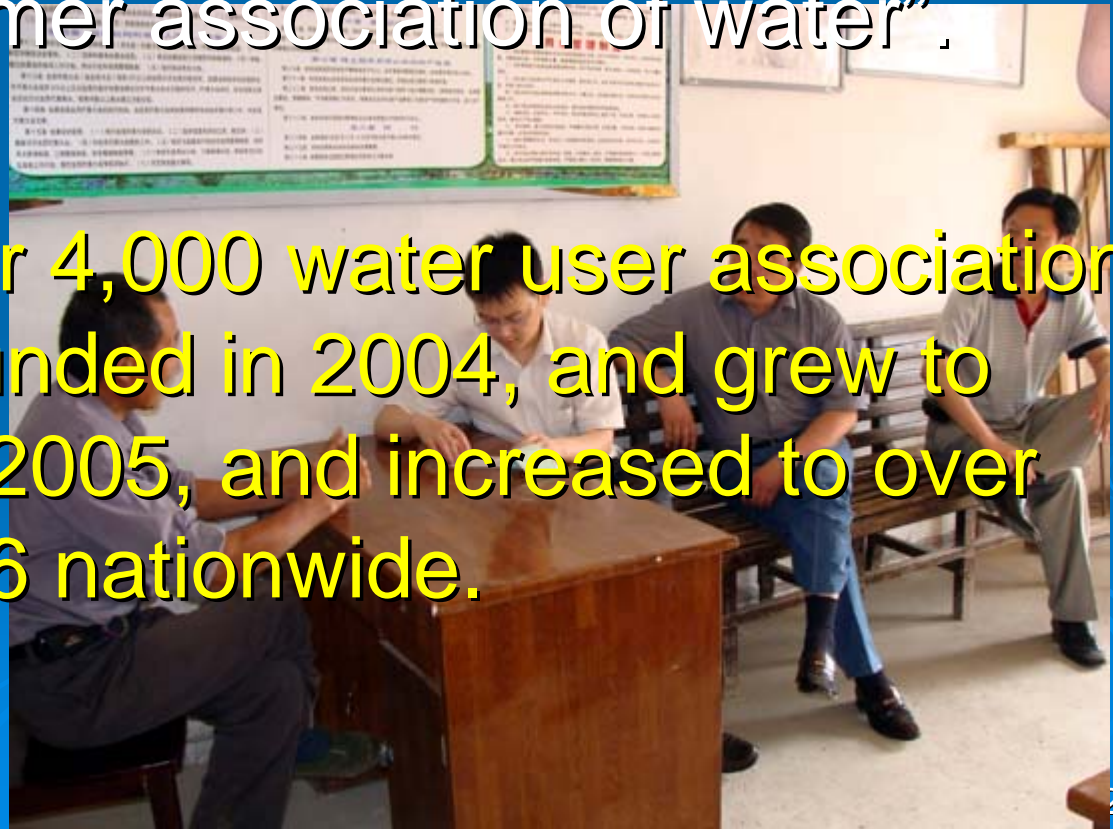
新一轮流域综合规划修编  
思路和工作要求

流域综合规划修编工作领导小组办公室  
二〇〇七年十二月

# *Development of water user association*

- In 2005, the Government issued a regulation document of “Opinions on strengthening building of farmer association of water”.

- There are over 4,000 water user associations have been founded in 2004, and grew to over 7,000 in 2005, and increased to over 20,000 in 2006 nationwide.



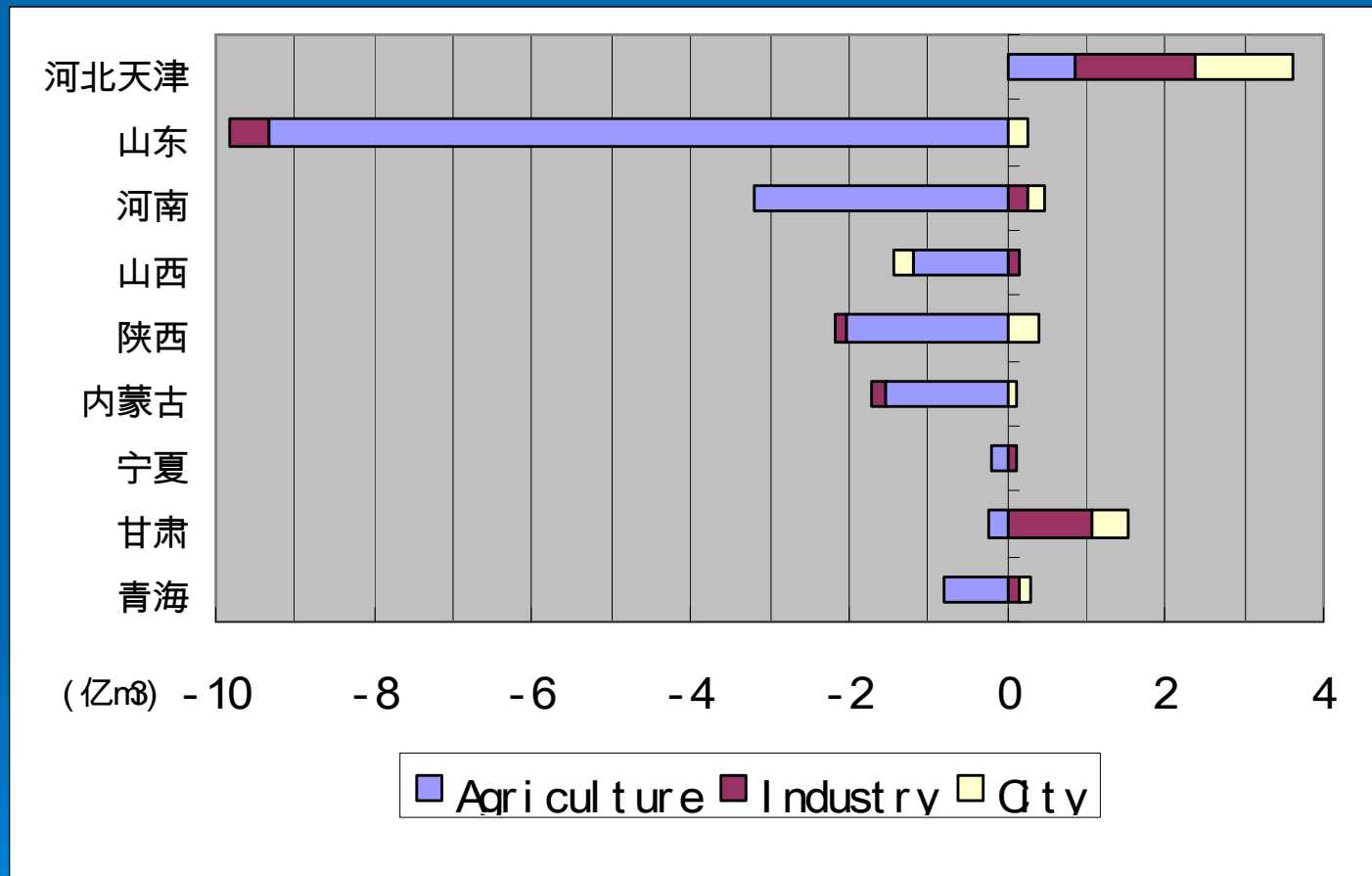
# V. Taking the Reform of Water Rights Institution for Example

- 1. Theoretical framework of water rights system
- 2. “Water Law” 2002 made progress in water rights system
- 3. More cases of water rights market appears
- 4. **Large-scale, cross-sector of water rights transfer has emerged in the upper Yellow River Basin**
- 5. Legislation building of water rights and water market speeds up
- 6. **The effects of water right institutional building are appearing gradually**

# Water Rights Reform in the YRB

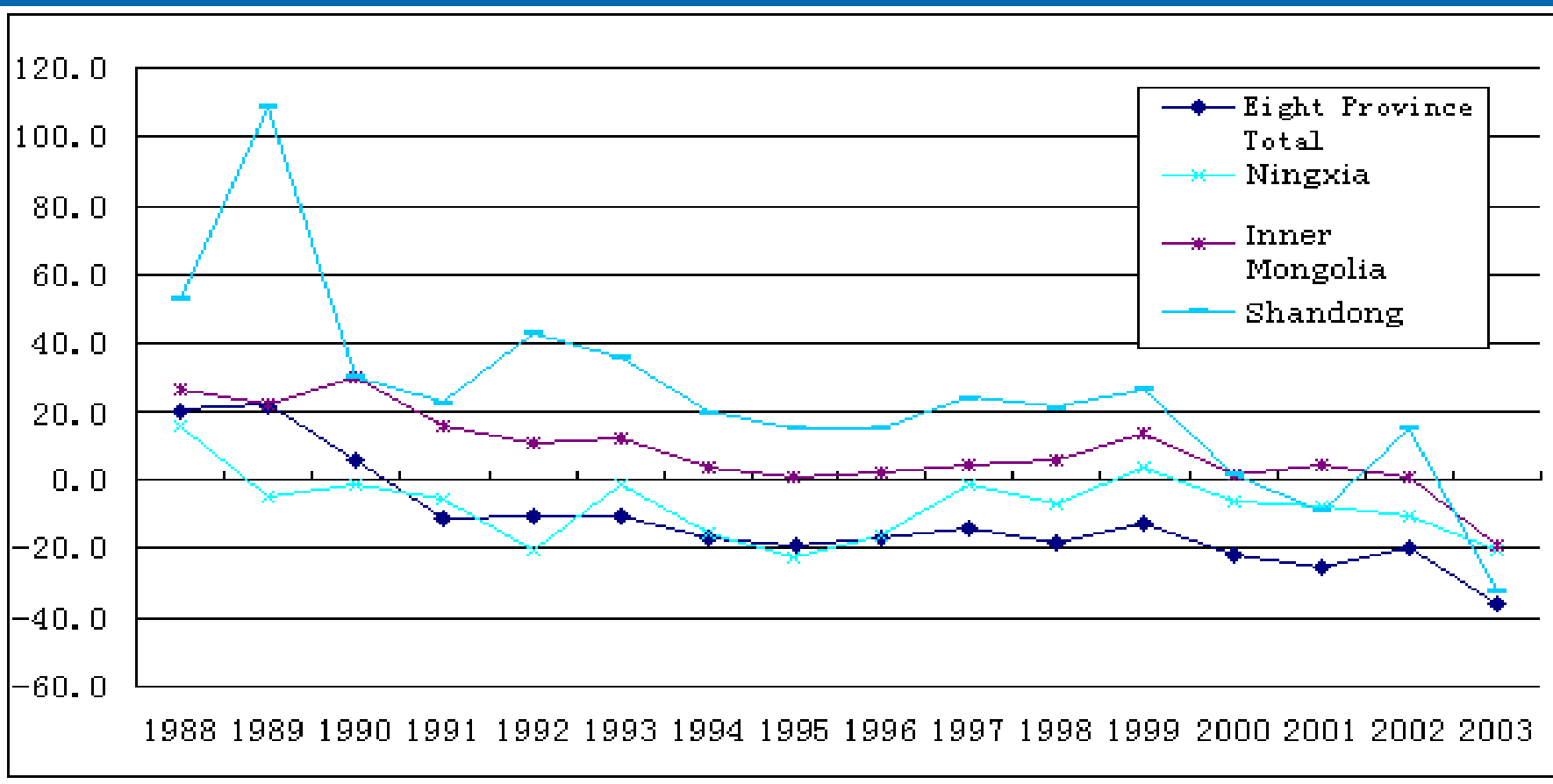
- Draw more detailed water allocation scheme
- Implement total amount control strictly
- Carry out Integrated water diversion by the YRCC
- Stimulate riparian provinces water saving activity

# Changes of water uses after institutional reform (1999-2003)

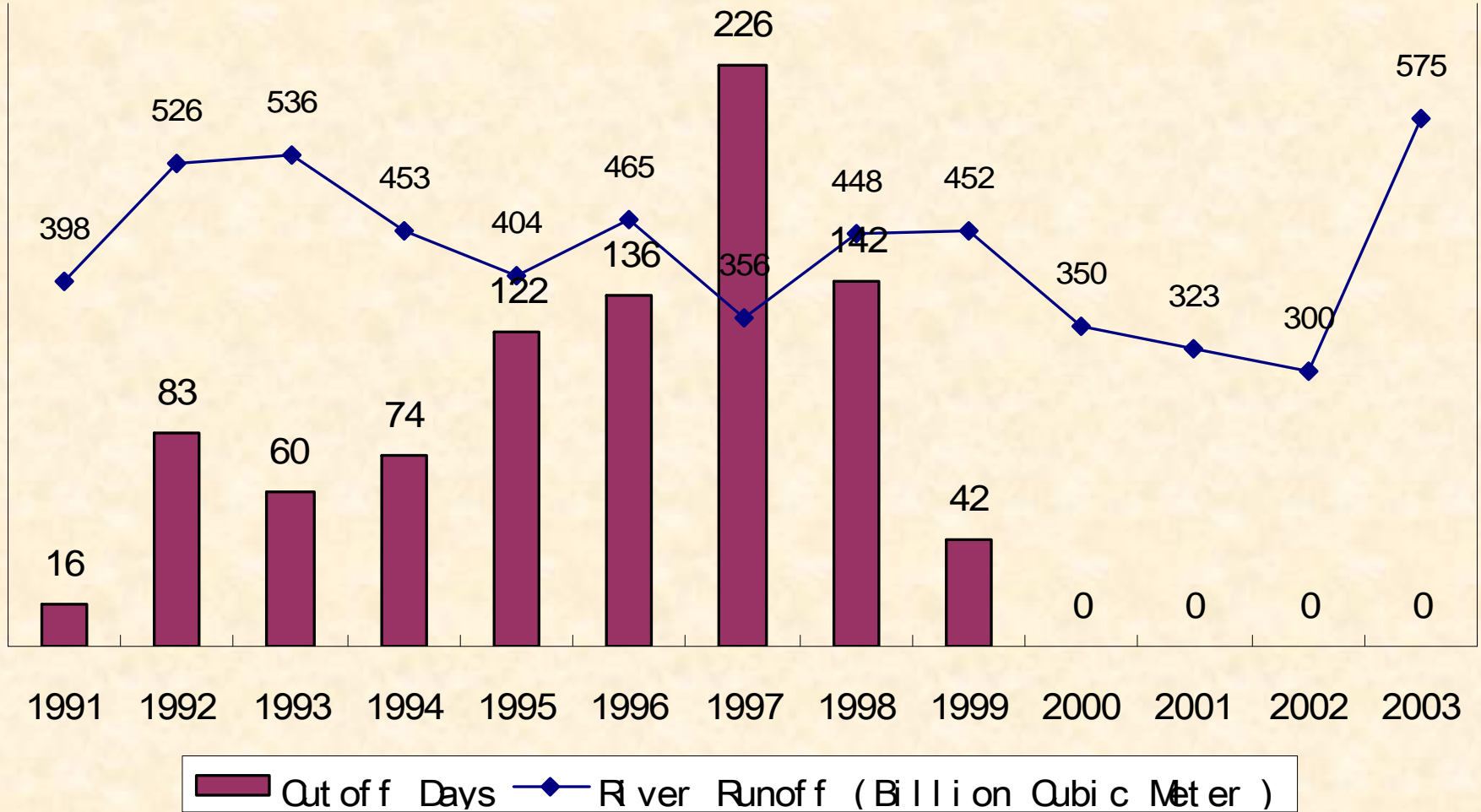




# Percentage of water overused by Yellow River riparian provinces (1988-2003)



# Contrast between Runoff and Cut-off of Yellow River (1991-2003)



# *Water Market in the YRB*

**Water market as one instrument to promote water efficiency has transformed from theory to practice.**

**In Ningxia and Inner Mongolia, water right transfer from irrigation to industry happened in the past several years.**



## VI. Conclusions

- **China is confronted with severe water crisis, which brings challenges and opportunities for water governance transition.**
- **China has made great achievements in the water governance transition, but it can only be regarded as a good start to responding to water crisis.**
- **The transition of China's water governance still has a long way to go, and there are lots of theoretical and practical issues to be resolved ahead.**



***Thanks !***