

Environmentally Responsible Development

Preamble

Environmentally responsible development is about the delivery of a better quality of life for every one of our citizens, for now and for generations to come. We will support environmental protection and promote sustainable development. We must tackle immediate problems – air pollution from power plants and vehicle emissions, and water pollution in the harbour – with renewed vigour and determination. We owe it to future generations to act now and preserve the environment through the promulgation of sound policies on nature conservation, waste reduction and recycling, total water management and greening as well as the implementation of effective programmes. The community, the business sector and the Government are stakeholders as much as they are partners in the protection and improvement of our environment. It is incumbent upon all parties to take up this responsibility to collaborate fully, working together with commitment to Hong Kong – a place where we and our children build our sustainable home.

New Initiatives

We will:

- Propose a new regulation to control the volatile organic compound content of selected products.
- Propose measures to strengthen the control of emissions from petrol and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) vehicles including the use of roadside remote sensing equipment and the use of dynamometers for emission testings.
- Tighten vehicle emission standards to Euro IV in 2006 in tandem with the European Union.
- Publish “A Road-map for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste in Hong Kong” to set out the proposed way forward to 2014. The discussion paper will focus on the core idea of using economic tools which enshrine the “Polluter-pays” Principle to induce behavioural changes to ultimately reduce waste. Initiatives in the paper will include introducing product responsibility legislation; implementing territory wide source separation of waste; making new economic activities on recycling feasible through the establishment of the EcoPark; developing long term plans for state-of-the-art large-scale waste treatment facilities; and introducing municipal solid waste charging. The public will be invited to support the Road-map and endorse their expected share of contribution under the “Polluter-pays” Principle to enable the Government to go full steam ahead with the implementation of the initiatives.

- Introduce legislation to control and regulate non-pesticide hazardous chemicals, including those covered in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.
- Prepare a legislative proposal for the introduction of a mandatory energy efficiency labelling scheme to facilitate consumers to choose energy efficient electric appliances, taking into account the views expressed by the public and the trades during the three-month public consultation period.
- Launch a public consultation exercise in 2005 on a proposed mandatory building inspection scheme and ways to enhance window safety, and the related support measures.

Ongoing Initiatives

We are:

- Enhancing the public engagement process for the Sustainable Development Strategy for Hong Kong, with the aim of encouraging greater public awareness of and participation in this process.
- Implementing a comprehensive greening policy for Hong Kong through the collaboration of different departments and with the input of experts and specialists in the field, and aiming to develop a sustainable greening programme for the urban areas. We have set up a high level Steering Committee on Greening, completed the planting of 14 million trees, shrubs and annuals in 2004-05, and will complete the planting of another 10 million in 2005-06. We have completed the greening master plans for Tsim Sha Tsui and Central in mid 2005 and will continue to produce greening master plans for Sheung Wan/Wan Chai/Causeway Bay and Mong Kok/Yau Ma Tei by end 2006. For implementation of greening enhancement measures, six pilot schemes in Tsim Sha Tsui commenced in July for completion by end 2005. We will continue to implement greening works in Tsim Sha Tsui and Central for completion by end 2006. The Community Garden Programme has been extended to cover 18 districts in 2005-06. We will continue to organise various greening and horticultural activities to promote greater public awareness and support for a green environment.
- Refining the Building Management Ordinance to improve certain provisions in the legislation for the benefit of owners' corporations and property owners.

- Continuing to closely work with the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Urban Renewal Authority to assist owners of older buildings to properly manage and maintain their buildings through the two bodies' rehabilitation programmes. We are also continuing our efforts to enhance building management and maintenance of private housing through public education, publicity and participation of professional bodies.
- Ensuring that our planning and land use objectives are geared towards our mission to protect the Victoria Harbour and enhance it for the enjoyment of our residents and visitors alike, with the participation of the community. Apart from Central, Wan Chai North and Kai Tak, the Government will not undertake any further reclamation in the Harbour. Our policy will be reflected in relevant town plans.
- Developing a land use, transport and environment strategy under the Hong Kong 2030 study to guide the long-term development of Hong Kong.
- Developing a performance-based regulatory system to facilitate modern and innovative building design.
- Finalising the proposals on a minor works control system to streamline statutory procedures for processing such works in order to improve the legislative framework for building control and building safety.
- Undertaking a review of the urban regeneration policy with a view to speeding up urban renewal, including engaging the public in the review of the Urban Renewal Strategy and examining ways to facilitate private sector participation in urban renewal.

- Consulting various stakeholders with a view to formulating preliminary proposals on small house policy for more in-depth discussion.
- Decking over 16 sections of nullahs in the next ten years to improve the living environment. The land obtained from decking of the nullahs will be used for public purposes such as greening, amenity and road widening.
- Continuing the implementation of the Total Water Management programme to promote water conservation and water resource protection through education and publicity; to collect test data and canvass public acceptance on desalination by commissioning a pilot plant; and to explore uses of reclaimed water through two pilot schemes at the Ngong Ping Sewage Treatment Plant and the Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Plant.
- Enhancing the use of energy efficient devices and promoting wider adoption of renewable energy in public works projects.
- Implementing the flood prevention programme by completing 31 major flood prevention projects since 1997, carrying out 16 and putting 16 under planning and design. We will have substantially minimised the risk of regional flooding in the northern New Territories by 2006 upon the completion of Regulation of Shenzhen River Stage III and Drainage Rehabilitation Works at Ping Yuen River.
- Continuing with the Landslip Preventive Measures Programme which has greatly improved slope safety and visual impact of the built environment. We will upgrade and landscape 250 substandard government slopes as well as conduct safety-screening for 300 private slopes in the coming year.

- Reviewing the Landslip Preventive Measures Programme to identify possible scope for improved cost-effectiveness of the slope upgrading works, managing the risk posed by natural terrain landslides on the dense population in Hong Kong, and according priority to dealing with natural slopes which are susceptible to potential landslip.
- Pursuing the phased implementation of Stage 2 of the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme with the aim of completing Stage 2A by 2013-14, and advancing the provision of disinfection at the Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works to 2008-09, subject to the acceptance by the community of the need for the full recurrent costs to be recovered through the sewage services charging scheme. The timing for Stage 2B will be subject to further review at a later date.
- Drawing up an implementation plan for meeting the obligations under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, with a view to submitting the plan to the Central Government in 2006.
- Monitoring the progress of the power companies in implementing pilot production-scale wind energy projects for public demonstration and evaluation purposes and promoting the wider application of renewable energy.
- Reviewing the existing sewage services charging scheme according to the “Polluter-pays” principle with a view to achieving an equitable sharing of the funding responsibility in respect of the provision of sewage services.

- Continuing to implement the “Polluter-pays” principle. We will implement the disposal charging scheme for construction and demolition waste in December 2005. This will provide economic incentives to reduce such waste and carry out sorting to facilitate reuse or recycling.
- Continuing to make possible the reuse of inert construction and demolition materials outside Hong Kong. We signed the “Implementation Scheme on the management of cross-boundary marine dumping” and the “Implementation Scheme on Hong Kong disposal of inert construction and demolition materials in the Mainland” with the South Sea Branch of the State Oceanic Administration which stipulates the technical details of cross-boundary marine dumping and disposal of inert construction and demolition materials of Hong Kong in mainland waters on 15 June 2005. We will continue to work closely with the relevant authorities to reuse public fill in Mainland reclamation projects with the objective of letting out tenders by the end of 2005.
- Continuing with the implementation of the Regional Air Quality Management Plan with the Guangdong Provincial Government including efforts to reduce the emission of four major air pollutants in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) to reach the agreed levels by 2010, through the retrofit programme of desulphurization plants, upgrading of vehicle standards (Euro III for Guangdong, Euro IV for HK), adoption of cleaner production technologies for industries and the introduction of a pilot emissions trading scheme among power plants in Hong Kong and Guangdong to optimise the use of resources in the reduction of air emissions under the same air shed. In 2005, we started the joint air monitoring project in PRD with the Guangdong Provincial Government, covering 16 stations.

- Imposing caps on the total emissions of power companies and requiring them to maximize the use of natural gas in power generation.
- Implementing an incentive scheme to encourage replacement of diesel light buses with LPG or electric light buses.
- Implementing the programme to retrofit pre-Euro heavy diesel vehicles with catalysts through provision of financial assistance and introducing legislation to make the installation mandatory upon completion of the retrofit programme.
- Overseeing the implementation of the pilot scheme on management agreement and Public-Private Partnership promulgated under the New Nature Conservation Policy, with the objective of enhancing conservation of ecologically important habitats on private land.
- Promoting the use of environmentally friendly buses by adding a provision in new bus franchises on the adoption of the latest commercially available and proven environmentally friendly technologies for acquiring new buses; encouraging bus companies to deploy cleaner vehicles along busy corridors; and including the provision of environmentally friendly measures as appropriate as a criterion in selecting operators for new bus route packages.