
Chapter 5

Developing Democracy And Enhancing Governance

Preamble

Hong Kong people from different sectors and strata have different aspirations for democratic development. Taking forward the HKSAR's constitutional development towards the ultimate aim of attaining universal suffrage in accordance with the Basic Law is a most important constitutional responsibility for the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will strive to forge consensus among different sectors and strata of society on the models, roadmap and timetable for implementing universal suffrage in a pragmatic manner. After the close of public consultation on the Green Paper on Constitutional Development, we will summarise the views received from the community and assess whether differences of opinion have narrowed sufficiently to provide a basis for consensus on implementation of universal suffrage to be formed.

Aside from pursuing the development of democracy, we also need to undertake related reforms to enhance governance and efficiency of policy-making and governance. In respect of district administration, we will strengthen the roles of the District Councils (DCs) and District Officers. We will also expand the Political Appointment System, and

strengthen the promotion of the Basic Law and national education. In respect of governance style, government officials will continue to uphold the principle of people-based governance and reach out to the community more proactively to strengthen their interactions and communications with the public, so as to bring our policy-making more in line with public opinion.

New Initiatives

We will:

- Strengthen our relationship with the relevant Mainland authorities so that HKSAR can take early action in complementing the preparation of the National 12th Five-Year Plan under the principle of “One Country, Two Systems”. This will help ensure that we can make necessary preparations to realise Hong Kong’s development potentials. This will also facilitate our timely and effective contribution to the Mainland’s social and economic development during the 12th Five-Year Plan period.
- Implement further development of the Political Appointment System.
- Work closely with the Electoral Affairs Commission to make practical arrangements to ensure that the 2007 DC election, the 2007 Legislative Council Hong Kong Island geographical constituency by-election and the 2008 Legislative Council election will be conducted in a fair, open and honest manner in accordance with the relevant legislation.
- Strengthen the role of the DCs and involve the DCs in the management of designated district facilities in all 18 districts starting from January 2008.
- Issue a Civil Service Code, setting out the framework within which civil servants are expected to work with political appointees under an expanded Political Appointment system.

- Implement an action plan which will ensure that the Basic Law forms an integral part of training for civil servants, and is provided in a systematic and planned manner which takes into account the needs of civil servants of different levels and work nature.
- Invite the relevant advisory bodies on civil service salaries and conditions of service to conduct grade structure reviews for the directorate grades, the disciplined services, and selected civilian grades facing recruitment and retention difficulties.
- Under the Be the Smart Regulator Programme, set up on-line licence tracking facility for food licences. Subject to experience, we will consider developing similar facilities for other licences. We will develop an on-line platform for processing liquor licences end-to-end. We will also further engage the business sectors by providing a portal for consultation on new regulations, administrative measures and procedures proposed by Government that would impact business.
- Launch a pilot scheme in the Lands Department to expedite the processing of lease modification and land exchange applications through the setting up of a dedicated team.
- Facilitate the operation of the food business by introducing a composite licence/permit scheme for the manufacture and sale of various types of ready-to-eat food items.

On-going Initiatives

We are:

- Continuing to take forward constitutional development towards the ultimate aim of universal suffrage. After the close of the public consultation on the Green Paper on Constitutional Development, we will summarise the public views received. We will use this as the basis to take forward the next phase of work.
- Continuing to facilitate the implementation of “One Country, Two Systems” and to demonstrate its success; and to strengthen our efforts in promoting public awareness and understanding of the Basic Law.
- Continuing to strengthen regional co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong through our co-operation frameworks with the Pan-Pearl River Delta Region; the Guangdong Province; and the Municipalities of Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen.
- Reviewing and improving arrangements for rural elections, in the light of experience gained in 2003 and 2007, and working on the way forward for the next cycle of elections in 2011.
- Organizing an annual Chief Executive’s Summit on District Administration Scheme to enhance communication between DCs and the Administration.
- Strengthening our liaison network through District Officers.
- Continuing to consult DCs on government policies and proposals.

- Continuing to take into account public opinion gathered during policy-formulation.
- Enhancing our network at district level to facilitate the collation, assessment and analysis of community feedback.
- Continuing to foster a close working relationship between the executive authorities and the legislature in accordance with the delineation of functions set out in the Basic Law.
- Joining hands with all sectors in the community to organise and stage the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events and make the Events a resounding success to bring pride to our home and our nation. Promoting the Olympic spirit and working in partnership with different sectors to create a positive Olympic legacy to Hong Kong through cultural, educational and community involvement programmes.
- Working with the Commission on Youth, the Committee on Promotion of Civic Education and the youth uniformed groups to provide young people with appropriate non-formal education and training, enhance the promotion of youth development and civic education outside schools, particularly on the civic and social participation of young people and the promotion of national education.
- Continuing to control the size of the civil service by providing the necessary management tools to assist bureaux and departments to make more effective use of manpower resources and enhance efficiency, while at the same time giving due consideration of the need for additional manpower resources for delivering new and improved services.

- Continuing to provide civil servants with training and development opportunities. We shall also continue to enhance the variety and content of the training materials on our e-learning portal, and promote wider use of e-learning, as part of our endeavours to fortify a culture of continuous learning in the civil service.
- Continuing to maintain and enhance morale of the civil service, and encourage fuller use of various commendation schemes to recognise and motivate exemplary performance.
- Continuing to maintain a vigorous, effective and efficient disciplinary system against misconduct in the civil service. Continuing to monitor closely implementation of the streamlined procedures for removing under-performers while sustaining efforts to further improve efficiency and productivity in the civil service.
- Continuing with the development of an effective arrangement for implementing both upward and downward pay adjustments in future, as part and parcel of the improved civil service pay adjustment mechanism.
- Enriching the new government portal, GovHK, taking into account feedback from users. The portal has been officially launched since August 2007 to serve as the one-stop shop for online government information and services.
- Continuing to develop new features and applications for the Youth Portal which has been launched since August 2007 to serve as a single window for local youth aged 15 to 24 to conveniently access information and services provided by the Government and other government-funded organisations.

- Formulating measures to streamline food business licensing.
- Ensuring that the Architectural Services Department can achieve the target of outsourcing to 87% of the delivery of new projects in 2007-08 under its re-engineering programme.
- Reviewing the small house policy with a view to formulating preliminary proposals for more in-depth discussion and continuing with the implementation of a set of streamlined procedures to expedite the processing of small house applications.
- Furthering the standards of advocacy and preparation in criminal cases through the provision of comprehensive training arrangements for prosecutors.
- Enhancing the quality of criminal justice by promoting transparency in public prosecutions, liaising closely with justice partners (including the Police, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the departmental prosecutors) and reviewing the disclosure arrangements of law enforcement agencies.
- Promoting co-operation amongst prosecutors at the global level by actively participating in the work of the International Association of Prosecutors.
- Continuing to enhance the law drafting skill of law draftsmen through an in-house mentorship programme and enrich their drafting experience by organising training programmes.
- Continuing the Bilingual Law Information System with enhanced features to provide easy access to our bilingual laws of Hong Kong and improving the standard of government lawyers in respect of bilingualism in law.

- Seeking the enactment of the Domicile Bill to implement the recommendations in the Law Reform Commission's Report on the Rules for Determining Domicile.
- Reviewing the provisions of the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance.
- Putting into effect, through legislation and other means, the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering to further enhance our anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regime.
- Continuing to ensure that our legislative regime for combating terrorism is current and meets the need of changing circumstances.
- Continuing to seek long-term solutions to address the problems of overcrowding and outdated facilities in our penal institutions.
- Providing a legal basis for the existing police complaints system by making the Independent Police Complaints Council a statutory body.
- Continuing discussions with the Mainland and other jurisdictions on bilateral co-operation relating to Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Surrender of Fugitive Offenders, and Transfer of Sentenced Persons.
- Continuing to implement the Risks and Needs Assessment Protocol to identify prisoners prone to custodial and re-offending risks, and to deliver rehabilitative programmes matching their needs, with a view to more effectively reducing re-offending.