
Policy Agenda

Introduction

Promoting economic development and enhancing quality of life are the common wish of Hong Kong people. They are high in the priority list of the current-term Government. The Government is actively working with various sectors to plan for our future so as to meet the challenges posed by ageing population and a shrinking workforce, as well as the need to maintain our international competitiveness. Our goal is to build an economically vibrant and highly efficient city and make Hong Kong a comfortable home for people to enjoy a balanced material and cultural life.

Over the past few years, the current-term Government has formulated long-term policies in different policy areas and progressively implemented various measures to address Hong Kong's development needs and aspirations of the public. On the economic front, we have made a number of major strides, including the official launch of the Shanghai-Hong Kong Stock Connect and the basic liberalisation of trade in services between Hong Kong and the Mainland. Apart from strengthening our traditionally competitive industries, the Government established the Innovation and Technology Bureau in November last year to promote the application of innovation and technology so as to enhance Hong Kong's overall competitiveness. This will better facilitate our move towards a knowledge-based economy and provide more diversified employment opportunities for young people.

Meanwhile, the Government will continue to take forward major infrastructure projects, including the three-runway system at the Hong Kong International Airport, to reinforce our development edge.

On people's livelihood, the poverty alleviation initiatives introduced by the current-term Government have yielded considerable results. In 2014, the size of the poor population dropped to 960 000 and the poverty rate to 14.3%, both at their lowest level in six years. The Government will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach to increase land supply, and will conduct land use reviews and take forward major new development areas in a timely manner, so as to support the continued development of our economy and society. The Government will also increase housing supply in line with the established direction of the Long Term Housing Strategy. We are also committed to promoting heritage and nature conservation, taking forward greening activities and implementing three policy blueprints on environmental protection, with a view to jazzing up the cultural aura and enhancing our living environment. To facilitate our sustainable development, the Government will press ahead with the population policy initiatives announced last year, including unleashing the potential of the labour force, raising the quality of locally-trained talent and attracting talent from outside Hong Kong.

By 2034, the percentage of our elderly population will increase to 30%. We announced in this year's Policy Address that we will further promote the building of an ageing-friendly environment for the elders to age in place, and implement various policies to cater for their needs, such as in healthcare, elderly services, transportation and community facilities. Besides, the Commission on Poverty has just embarked on a six-month public engagement exercise on the way forward for retirement protection. The Policy Address also places emphasis on

more resources being allocated to nurturing our young generations by implementing the free quality kindergarten education policy and various initiatives to enhance teaching quality. Increasing housing and land supply, providing support for the disadvantaged and promoting environmental protection will continue to be our policy focus. Details of these initiatives are set out in this Policy Agenda Booklet.

In the face of changing economic environment and social situation in Hong Kong, the Government will implement the various initiatives put forth in this Policy Agenda with resolve, and capitalise on the opportunities brought by the country's Belt and Road Initiative and the National 13th Five-Year Plan for laying a solid foundation for the future development of Hong Kong.

In the past two years, the community devoted a great deal of energy and time to discussing constitutional development and saw massive disputes over this issue. Following the universal suffrage proposals for the election of the Chief Executive being vetoed, the Government is focusing efforts to boost the economy and improve people's livelihood. These efforts call for the support and partnership of the whole community. We do hope that everyone would show more empathy, have more appreciation for our hard-earned achievements and do more to add value for Hong Kong. Let us join hands to strive for a brighter future.