
Chapter 2

Reinforcing Our Strengths, Enhancing Governance

Preamble

Hong Kong has been rated the world's freest economy and one of the most competitive economies for many years. Apart from practising a simple, low tax regime, we also maintain a favourable business environment. Hong Kong's international reputation is also built on our core values, including an independent judicial system, adherence to the rule of law, a highly efficient and clean government, pluralism and inclusiveness, freedom of expression and of the press, and a high respect for human rights and liberty. We are committed to relentlessly reinforcing these advantages to strengthen public confidence in the integrity and good governance of the Government.

Judicial independence is the cornerstone of Hong Kong's success. We will continue to provide all necessary support for the Judiciary, including addressing the Judiciary's long-term accommodation needs in respect of courts and offices, and supporting its proposals to extend the statutory retirement ages for Judges and Judicial Officers with a view to maintaining sufficient judicial manpower and ensuring an effective, efficient and equitable administration of justice in Hong Kong. The rule of law is vital for safeguarding rights and freedoms. It is also instrumental in promoting Hong Kong's development as an international financial and business centre. We will further refine our legal system and related infrastructure to ensure that the rule of law and justice will continue to be upheld.

Respecting the constitutional role of the Legislative Council in exercising checks and balances and monitoring the Government, we spare no effort in enhancing the relationship between the executive and the legislature. In planning and implementing government policies and programmes, we will engage the public in a timely manner, including working closely with the Legislative Council and District Councils (DCs), so as to meet the sentiments and needs of the public. We will also strive to enhance communication with all parties, promote rational discussion and restore mutual trust in the community so as to create a favourable atmosphere conducive to addressing deep-rooted social issues.

The Government will continue to implement the concept of “resolving district issues at the local level and capitalising on local opportunities” in strengthening district administration. We will give stronger support to DCs for playing their enhanced roles in resolving district issues, participating in the management of certain district facilities, and implementing District Minor Works Programme and community involvement activities.

A professional and efficient civil service is vital to the implementation of the new style of governance and the new roles of the current-term Government. In the face of diverse public aspirations, the civil service will continue to strive for excellence and adhere to the “people-oriented” principle in order to provide quality services to the public. The Government, as an employer, fully understands the work pressure on civil servants and will provide necessary manpower support and training.

Law and order is the cornerstone of a stable society. Our disciplined services are firmly committed to maintaining Hong Kong as one of the safest cities in the world. We also provide reliable emergency rescue services to protect the lives and properties of the public.

Policy Initiatives

Prevention of Bribery Ordinance

- Resolve as soon as possible those constitutional and legal issues pertinent to amending the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance to extend the scope of Sections 3 and 8 to cover the Chief Executive. (CSO)

Political Reform

- Do the best to create a social climate conducive to taking forward political reform. (CMAB)

Judicial Independence

- Amend the relevant legislation to implement the Judiciary's proposals to extend the retirement ages for Judges and Judicial Officers to help attract the best legal talent and retain experienced serving Judges and Judicial Officers. (CSO) [\(New Initiative\)](#)
- Fully support and accommodate the resource requirements of the Judiciary. The Government continues to work with the Judiciary on the planned construction of a new High Court at the new Central harbourfront, as well as a new District Court at Caroline Hill Road to house the District Court, the Family Court and the Lands Tribunal. This aims to address the long-term accommodation needs in respect of courts and offices at the High Court and District Court levels. (CSO/DEVB)

Executive-Legislative Relationship

- Proactively improve the executive-legislative relationship by maintaining the Chief Executive's monthly attendance at the Legislative Council meetings to answer Members' questions; and strengthening interaction and communication between politically appointed officials and Legislative Council Members of all political groups. (All bureaux)
- Continue to work closely with the Legislative Council in the formulation of government policies and programmes. (All bureaux)
- Continue to draw up the Government's legislative programme and monitor its progress. (CSO)

District Administration

- Propose to enhance the remuneration package for District Council (DC) members starting from the new DC term in 2020 to keep abreast of the times. (HAB) [\(New Initiative\)](#)
- In order to have a better grasp on district affairs and public opinion, each Secretary of Department and Director of Bureau will visit all 18 districts within two years of their assumption of office to meet with people in the local communities and understand district needs. (HAB)
- Continue to facilitate communication between DCs and the Government through participation of relevant Heads of Departments in DC meetings and in government policy briefings for DC members. (HAB)
- Continue to work with the 18 DCs in implementing signature projects. (HAB)

- Progressively increase the provisions for the District Minor Works Programme to \$400 million per annum over the current term of DCs. The increased resources will cover the capital expenditures as well as recurrent expenditures for the management and maintenance of the completed facilities. (HAB)
- Co-ordinate with relevant departments through the Steering Committee on District Administration to follow up on the progress of measures for improving public cleanliness. (HAB)
- Continue to provide an annual funding of \$63 million for the 18 districts to implement the District-led Actions Scheme. The 18 District Offices, in collaboration with DCs, local communities and related government departments, are forging ahead with some 40 projects for improving environmental hygiene and addressing community needs under the scheme. (HAB)

Public Elections

- Review the arrangements for voter registration, as well as polling arrangements and counting procedures in public elections, including studying advance polling, electronic counting, streamlining of counting procedures, and eligibility of voter registration for permanent residents residing outside Hong Kong. (CMAB) [\(New Initiative\)](#)
- Introduce legislative amendments into the Legislative Council to make necessary amendments to the detailed arrangements for the 2020 Legislative Council Election. (CMAB) [\(New Initiative\)](#)

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- Work closely with the Electoral Affairs Commission to make practical arrangements to ensure that the 2019 District Council (DC) Election will be conducted in a fair, open and honest manner in accordance with the relevant legislation. (CMAB) ([New Initiative](#))
 - Follow up with legislative amendments in light of the Electoral Affairs Commission's recommendations on the boundaries of DC constituency areas for the 2019 DC ordinary election. (CMAB) ([New Initiative](#))
 - Facilitate the Legislative Council's scrutiny of the Electoral Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2018, which was submitted by the Government in July 2018, with a view to implementing the proposals to improve the objection mechanism and raise the penalties for the offence of making false statements in voter registration as recommended in the Consultation Report on Enhancement of Voter Registration System published in January 2016. (CMAB)

Restructuring the Government

- Consider, after carefully listening to the views of different sectors, if the Government's structure should be adjusted to enhance administrative efficiency and to meet the demands on the Government's roles in light of new circumstances and the new economy. (All bureaux)

Government Information

- Hold a positive attitude towards the enactment of an archives law. The Government will actively follow up on this after receiving the report to be compiled by the Law Reform Commission following extensive consultation. It is expected that the public consultation will commence before end-2018. At the present stage, the Government will continue to enhance the records management work, including formulating a more comprehensive training plan for bureaux/departments, providing more professional training programmes to staff of the Government Records Service, reviewing the implementation progress of electronic recordkeeping systems, etc. (CSO)
- Increase the transparency of government information and data and implement more comprehensive measures to open up more government data, including publication of annual open data plans by bureaux/departments by end-2018. (All bureaux)

e-Government

- Enhance the Government's overall cyber security capabilities through the following measures: updating the Government's information security policies and practices; developing a strong information security culture; promoting awareness of the cyber threats of emerging technologies such as Internet of Things among the Government, the industry and the general public; and facilitating the sharing of information on cyber threats within the Government and with professional organisations. (ITB)
- Construct a government data centre complex to meet the demands of bureaux and departments for long-term information technology development and data centre services. (ITB)

Civil Servants

- Conduct a grade structure review for all disciplined services to ensure that their grade structure and remuneration are effective in attracting and retaining talents. (CSB) (New Initiative)
- Extend the maternity leave for all female employees of the Government to 14 weeks. (CSB) (New Initiative)
- Enhance the provision of medical and dental benefits to civil service eligible persons, including exploring an appropriate arrangement to provide defined Chinese medicine services as part of the benefits and setting up the sixth Families Clinic. (CSB) (New Initiative)
- Relax the award arrangements under the Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme to allow awardees to flexibly nominate a travelling companion. (CSB) (New Initiative)
- Expedite the departmental quarters construction projects for six disciplined forces. (SB)
- Plan for the setting up of a brand new civil service college on a site zoned for “Government, Institution and Community” use in Kwun Tong to enhance training for civil servants. (CSB)

Promoting the Constitution and the Basic Law

- Actively promote the Constitution and the Basic Law through the working groups under the Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee and relevant bureaux to enable the public to have a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the Constitution, the Basic Law, and the “one country, two systems” principle. (CMAB)

National Anthem Legislation

- Enact local legislation to implement the Law of the People's Republic of China on the National Anthem. (CMAB) ([New Initiative](#))

Improving the Legal System and Enhancing the Legal Infrastructure

- Prepare for publication on the website of the Department of Justice (DoJ) a combined DoJ English-Chinese Glossary of Legal Terms and a combined DoJ Chinese-English Glossary of Legal Terms, each consisting of glossaries compiled by the five legal divisions of the DoJ. (DoJ) ([New Initiative](#))
- Actively consider expanding the existing Understudy Arrangement for less-experienced barristers to act as junior counsel in prosecution cases, and to promulgate a similar programme for less-experienced barristers to undertake suitable civil work, so as to provide more opportunities for them to gain precious experience and skills in case handling. (DoJ) ([New Initiative](#))
- Enhance the quality and effectiveness of criminal prosecution work, including the provision of training programmes and better use of resources, thereby raising the professionalism (including the standard of advocacy) of our prosecutors. (DoJ)
- Promote co-operation and exchanges among prosecutors at international and regional levels through active participation in international and regional prosecuting organisations. (DoJ)

Law Reform Proposals

- Continue to press ahead with the implementation or study of the Law Reform Commission (LRC)'s recommendations in its reports on various legal topics, including enduring powers of attorney with regard to personal care, class actions, criteria for service as jurors and double jeopardy. (DoJ)
- Render assistance to the Legislative Council in the scrutiny of the Evidence (Amendment) Bill 2018 for early implementation of the LRC's recommendations in the report on Hearsay in Criminal Proceedings. (DoJ)
- Assist the Inter-departmental Working Group on Gender Recognition, chaired by the Secretary for Justice, in undertaking a detailed study on possible legislation and administrative measures to deal with various aspects of gender recognition in light of the observations made in the judgment of the Court of Final Appeal in the W Case (FACV 4/2012), and in completing a public consultation on the first part of the study on gender recognition issues by collating and analysing the public responses (a total of over 17 500 submissions were received during the consultation period starting on 23 June 2017 and ending on 31 December 2017). Upon completion of the first part of the study, the working group will report on the results of the public consultation. (DoJ)

Human Rights

- The Government, on the basis of safeguarding the current institution of heterosexual and monogamous marriage, is committed to promoting equal opportunities for people of different sexual orientation and transgender persons, with a view to fostering in the community the culture and values of inclusiveness, mutual respect and non-discrimination. Efforts will include following up on the strategies and measures listed below:
 - providing training resources for personnel in specific fields to enhance their knowledge of and sensitivity towards sexual minorities. The training resources for medical and health care professionals are expected to be launched in 2018;
 - drawing up a charter on non-discrimination of sexual minorities covering various domains for voluntary adoption by service providers with a view to enhancing acceptance towards sexual minorities;
 - enhancing public education and publicity to promote the message of anti-discrimination, including introducing to the employers the Code of Practice against Discrimination in Employment on the Ground of Sexual Orientation;
 - reviewing and reinforcing the relevant support services, subsidising the 24-hour hotline for supporting sexual minorities operated by the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals; and

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- conducting further study on the experience of other jurisdictions in implementing anti-discrimination measures, with a view to providing society with more information to consider whether there should be legislation to protect people of different sexual orientation and transgender persons from discrimination. (CMAB)
 - Submit the legislative amendment proposals for implementing eight prioritised recommendations under the Discrimination Law Review as proposed by the Equal Opportunities Commission in the form of a composite bill to the Legislative Council by end-2018. (CMAB)
 - Continue to promote children’s rights through the Children’s Rights Education Funding Scheme, the Children’s Rights Forum, etc. (CMAB)

Legal Aid and Legal Advice Services

- Enhance free legal advice services by implementing a series of measures, including an increase in duty lawyer fees and opening of an additional office for the Legal Advice Scheme for Unrepresented Litigants on Civil Procedures. (CSO) ([New Initiative](#))
- Strive to enhance legal aid services to benefit more people who cannot afford private legal fees. (CSO)

Security

- Launch a territory-wide smart identity card replacement exercise to upgrade identity card security features and enhance efficiency of boundary-crossing. (SB) ([New Initiative](#))

- Take forward the “Action Plan to Tackle Trafficking in Persons and to Enhance Protection of Foreign Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong”, strengthening efforts in victim identification, investigation, enforcement, prosecution, victim protection and support, prevention and partnership with different stakeholders. (SB/LWB) (New Initiative)
- Continue with the comprehensive review of the strategy of handling non-refoulement claims: sustaining efforts in combating the smuggling of non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants to Hong Kong and implementing other pre-arrival control measures; expediting the screening of claims and appeals, as well as the removal of rejected claimants; studying detention measures; stepping up enforcement targeting unlawful employment and other criminal offences; and introducing a bill to amend the Immigration Ordinance to improve the screening procedures for non-refoulement claims and related matters. (SB)
- Continue with the anti-drug efforts through a five-pronged strategy of preventive education and publicity, treatment and rehabilitation, legislation and enforcement, external co-operation and research. (SB)
- Provide rehabilitation programmes which match the needs of persons in custody to help them rehabilitate and re-integrate into the community. (SB)
- Seek short-term and long-term solutions to improve ageing penal facilities. (SB)

Strengthening Anti-corruption Efforts

- Further step up efforts of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in collaborating with and assisting the anti-corruption agencies of the Belt and Road countries, particularly the Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states, to build up anti-corruption capacity and continue with the existing arrangement of providing training to graft fighters of other countries upon request, thereby fulfilling Hong Kong's obligations under the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. The ICAC will also strengthen co-operation with counterparts in the Greater Bay Area in fighting against corruption. Such efforts will benefit Hong Kong's different sectors and enterprises in venturing into business in these countries and places, further expand the ICAC's global anti-corruption network and demonstrate to the international community Hong Kong's unwavering commitment to the combat against corruption. (ICAC)
- Continue to enhance integrity training, which includes the production of a new web learning package, for government officers and public officials to heighten their vigilance on corruption pitfalls and the offence of misconduct in public office. (ICAC)
- Continue to promote Hong Kong's corruption-free environment and integrity system as our competitive advantage to the international community through wider engagement of international anti-corruption ranking institutions in the ICAC's exchange and visit programmes, and through the enhanced international publicity efforts on the International Perspective online platform of the ICAC's corporate website. (ICAC)

- Launch the Support Clean Elections Programme comprising a series of education and publicity activities, and assist the authorities concerned in the review of electoral legislation and guidelines so as to uphold integrity and fairness in the 2019 Rural Representative Election and District Council Election. (ICAC)

Emergency Support

- Introduce new elements into the public education on fire prevention and the ambulance service to enhance public awareness of emergency preparedness and strengthen the self-help capability and survival skills of the public in case of emergencies. (SB) [\(New Initiative\)](#)