
Effective Governance

Preamble

We will work to provide a sound foundation through effective governance to maintain and further develop Hong Kong's position as a world city of Asia. We are determined to maintain the rule of law in Hong Kong and will continue to take forward our constitutional development in accordance with the Basic Law. We will restore our fiscal balance to foster an environment conducive to continued economic growth and success. We are committed to maintaining a small but responsive and accountable government, and a permanent, meritocratic, professional, politically neutral and clean civil service.

New Initiatives

We will:

- Implement measures to contain public expenditure in 2004-05 to 2008-09 to strive to achieve the target of restoring fiscal balance and keeping public expenditure to 20% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or below by 2008-09.
- Address the issue of constitutional development after 2007.
- Conduct a review on the roles, functions and composition of District Councils, and will consult the public in the process.
- Study the feasibility of integrating biometric information into the HKSAR passport for enhancing its security and facilitation standards, having regard to the specifications to be recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organisation.
- Study the feasibility of introducing a facial recognition system at control points to facilitate the verification of identity of suspect arrivals upon their entry.
- Put into effect, through legislation and other means, the revised Forty Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering to further enhance our anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regime.
- Take forward the merging of the Civil Engineering Department and the Territory Development Department.
- Make wider use of alternative approaches such as Public-Private-Partnership in the delivery of large scale projects under the Public Works Programme.

- Further examine the issues involved in the existing system of advisory and statutory bodies, and explore practical ways to streamline its structure and enhance its functions.
- Examine a Code of Conduct for expert witnesses after consultation with the relevant bodies.
- Conduct studies on the ways in which prosecutors can take practical steps to avoid miscarriages of justice.
- Formulate methods to implement the recommendations of a committee formed to advise how prosecutors can improve the quality of service provided to victims of crime and witnesses.

Ongoing Initiatives

We are:

- Continuing to implement the asset sale and securitisation programme.
- Making practical arrangements to ensure that the 2004 Legislative Council elections are conducted in a fair, open and honest manner. We are also adopting measures to support political parties, political groups and independent candidates in these elections.
- Continuing to implement ‘One Country, Two Systems’ and to demonstrate its success.
- Introducing legislative amendments to enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies to combat terrorism and transnational organised crimes.
- Continuing discussions with the Mainland and other jurisdictions on bilateral co-operation in criminal matters relating to Mutual Legal Assistance, Surrender of Fugitive Offenders, and Transfer of Sentenced Persons, and in reciprocal enforcement of judgments in civil matters.
- Acting on proposals to relieve prison over-crowding and improve prison management for both the short and long term.
- Issuing the Smart ID Card in phases starting from mid-2003 to enhance security, facilitate boundary crossing, and provide other value-added services.
- Providing a legal basis for the existing police complaints system by making the Independent Police Complaints Council a statutory body.
- Continuing to work on the implementation of Article 23 of the Basic Law.

- Developing an improved civil service pay adjustment mechanism by the second quarter of 2005 so that it will better respond to changes in the service needs of the community and the manpower situation in the market. The exercise will include the conduct of a pay level survey, improvement to the methodology of the annual pay trend survey and drafting of general enabling legislation to facilitate both upward and downward pay adjustments.
- Completing a comprehensive review of all civil service allowances by March 2004 to ensure that the continued payment of allowances is fully justified and compatible with present day circumstances.
- Facilitating the maintenance of a lean and efficient civil service and reduction of the civil service establishment to 160 000 by 2006-07 by providing the necessary staff management tools to assist bureaux/ departments to achieve staff savings.
- Continuing to provide civil servants with robust training and development opportunities. The Civil Service Training and Development Institute will be restructured to focus its resources on core areas. New elements will be introduced into our senior executive development programmes. We shall reinforce efforts to build a continuous learning culture in the civil service through various measures including the promotion of e-learning.
- Continuing to maintain and enhance the morale of the civil service through maintaining and where appropriate, improving the system of rewarding performance such as promotion and penalising under-performance or misconduct such as dismissal, and through wider consultation between management and staff at all levels.
- Encouraging greater utilisation of e-government services by engaging our customers and placing greater emphasis on the quality of services to be provided.
- Reviewing the arrangements for rural elections on the basis of the experience gained in 2003.

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- Implementing the existing gambling policy and regulating authorised gambling activities conducted by licensed operators.
 - Working closely with the Football Betting and Lotteries Commission to ensure proper regulation of authorised football betting and lotteries.
 - Promoting understanding of the rule of law in and outside Hong Kong and considering reforms to improve the legal system.
 - Enhancing the Bilingual Laws Information System to provide easy and ready access, through the Internet, to our bilingual Laws of Hong Kong.
 - Enhancing the efficiency and service quality of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund by encouraging greater use of its investment in information technology, the installation of an Enterprise Resource Planning corporate computer system, setting up of e-portals for major clients, and establishing e-document management systems and procedures.
 - Targeting the Architectural Services Department to achieve the overall outsourcing to 65% for the delivery of new projects in the coming year under its re-engineering programme.
 - Implementing a Customer Care and Billing System for some 2.5 million customers of the Water Supplies Department to improve operational efficiency and customer service.
 - Achieving effective communication with the general public and the media by publicising on the web-site of the Water Supplies Department the updated information on the Water Mains Replacement and Rehabilitation projects.