



民主思路2022年施政報告建議書

2022 Policy Address Proposal by Path of Democracy



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Preface

Hong Kong unleashed a new chapter for development. Under the principle of "patriots governing Hong Kong", the election of the chief executive was successfully held, and people's hearts were reunited. People from all walks of life sent their own suggestions to the new government for improving people's livelihood and welfare. Government officials also took the initiative to reach out to the people in their districts, hoping that their policies would be closer to people's demand and expectations.

Path of Democracy expects that the new government can improve their governance in three aspects: administrative capability, political capability and analytical capability.

- (1) The administrative ability of officials is the ability of the government to communicate and coordinate with all stakeholders well on a routine basis, so as to avoid conflicts among citizens and smoothen implementation of policies for benefiting the community.
- (2) Political capacity refers to how the government conducts adequate consultation with stakeholders before formulating policies, so as to show respect for the public and grasp their needs.
- (3) Analytical capacity means that the government adopts an evidence-based attitude and scientific methods for the preliminary work of policy formulation and evaluation of the later stages of policy implementation, so as to clarify the scope or context of social problems, which can help the government in all aspects of implementation and governance in the future. Hence, these can generate a more comprehensive impact in the society.

Each Hong Kong citizen wants to improve their quality of life. However, the long-standing problems of Hong Kong society, such as the upward mobility of young people, land and housing supply etc. cannot be solved by the society alone. The government should proactively come up with plans for providing timely assistance to citizens who are facing difficulties and uncertain prospects by their own. Letting citizens to have hope and continue to contribute to our society.

1. Governance and Constitutional Issues

After the implementation of National Security Law and reform of electoral systems, the social order of Hong Kong became stable while our citizens gradually focus on social issues again. Nevertheless, the government should examine governance issues and comprehend the public opinion as soon as possible which could raise public understanding of public policies and systems. At the same time, national security should also be emphasized, while it is necessary to relieve social conflicts caused by misinformation.

1.1 Consolidation of 'One Country, Two Systems' and 'Basic Law'

1.1.1 Construct a new governance narrative

To construct a new governance discourse to tell a "New Hong Kong Story", which will be acceptable to both Hong Kong people and the Central Government. The content should include: 1. Goals/dreams, role positioning, economic and social development models; 2. Being able to have a sustainable development of One Country Two Systems and a conducive system to governance; 3. Strengthen positive publicity capabilities; 4. Formulation of governance models which are recognized by all parties and national security policies.

1.1.2 Establish a “One Country, Two Systems” committee

To establish a “One Country, Two Systems” committee which should be broadly represented and assist the government in dealing with issues related to "One Country, Two Systems". A semi-official high-level think tank should be set up, which will focus on Hong Kong's foreign relations and is responsible for promoting and coordinating foreign-related works. The government should promote, assist and encourage regular exchanges between local think tanks and foreign institutions, which can mobilize all sectors of society to strengthen Hong Kong's role in the Asia-Pacific region and international networks.

1.1.3 Set up of a full-time spokesperson

To set up a full-time spokesperson for the Chief Executive’s Office and hold daily briefings to explain the government’s news highlights of the day with local and foreign media. After the implementation of the "Hong Kong National Security Law", many international organizations based in Hong Kong are watching the changes. We need to explain and respond to questions and enquiries of the public and the international business communities about the "Hong Kong National Security Law".

1.1.4 Persist to protect national and public security

To apply the laws related to national security firmly and enhance the education and promotion to the public. The government should ensure that citizens are complying with current regulations lest being a loophole of national security for the Mainland.

1.1.5 Brand promotion in the Mainland and the world

Large-scale turmoil and violent attacks have damaged Hong Kong's long-time image of prosperity and stability. Local Economic Trade Offices should take measures to improve Hong Kong's image in the Mainland and the globe by telling a good story of Hong Kong,

China on domestic and international platforms, and facilitating the understanding of the situation in Hong Kong by mainland compatriots and the international community. These actions aim at improving the perception of Hong Kong's development. The government should strive to host high-level international conferences and forums and strengthen international communication as well.

1.1.6 Promote political reform at the right time

When national and public safety are properly safeguarded, the government should push forward for the next round of constitutional reform at the right time by adopting the "8.31" framework and achieving dual universal suffrage for the Chief Executive and the Legislative Council ultimately. After the first three elections since the improvement on the electoral system, the government should sum up its experience by conducting a review on the electoral procedures and nomination mechanism. To lower the nomination threshold, increase transparency, and encourage the participation of activists who have abilities but with weak networks for a demonstration of the principle of political inclusion.

1.1.7 Provide political training to officials

Provide professional political trainings for public officials, so that Election Committee members, Legislative Council members, District Councillors and all other public officials have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of "One Country, Two Systems". This can enrich their wisdom for overall national and political issues, so that their proposed policies can both be in line with the actual situation in Hong Kong and national development. In long term, we can fully implement "patriots governing Hong Kong" and manage Hong Kong's affairs well.

1.1.8 Legislation for a ban of releasing false information on the internet

The Internet is flooded with extremely irresponsible and highly harmful false information, and there are obvious loopholes in the laws of the HKSAR to block false information. The government should legislate to restrict false information spreading through the internet, and in accordance with the International Covenant on Human Rights, for restricting these misbehaviours that might harm the rights of others, national security, social order, health and safety, and moral standards. Some of the contents could be considered together in the legislation for Article 23 of the Basic Law.

1.2 Evidence-based Policy Innovation

1.2.1 Establish 'Future Centre' to reform consultative system

Path of Democracy proposes the setup of 'Future Centre' in Hong Kong to facilitate more effective communication between stakeholders and the government on priority issues and to recommend feasible medium- and long-term solutions together. The government should review the functions and effectiveness of advisory and statutory bodies on a regular basis, and mandate the members to meet with citizens actively, such that our consultative system can truly meet the needs of the society.

1.2.2 Restore secondment system of senior government officials

To restore the secondment system and to assign senior government officials to think tanks or NGOs for one to two years. Grounded in different communities, NGOs and thinktanks are often much more sensitive to root causes of social problems, together with their research capacity, the secondment of senior government officials could renew one's appreciation of social issues from a more grounded point of view.

1.2.3 Restore the ability of the government to gauge public opinions

The government should consider resetting institutions and systems that have played an important role in governance, such as the heart war room, political consultants, and part-time consultants of the Central Policy Unit. It can allow the government to interact appropriately with the rapidly changing society.

1.2.4 Put emphasise on studies by think tanks

The government should emphasize the value of scientific decision-making and a fully utilize thinktanks for their capacity to conduct consultative research. When tendering or funding research projects, the government could consider assessing the bidder's ability to advocate policies, so as to increase the research capacity of thinktanks as well as the impact of their research.

2. Youth and Education

In President Xi's speech for the 25th Anniversary of Handover in Hong Kong, he paid a particular attention to the youth. "If youth have the future, then Hong Kong will have the future as well." In the past, many youngsters felt disappointment, grumpy and even blaming the society for a lack of opportunity to move upwards the social ladder. Our government should focus on creating opportunities for youth to upgrade themselves and provide them with more diversified information and resources in the society. Thus, their confidence and happiness could be gained.

2.1 Social Mobility and Employment

2.1.1 Establish a youth impact assessment mechanism

Establish a youth impact assessment mechanism. When we formulate all policies, it is necessary to review the impact on youth and list the results of the assessments in the policy document.

2.1.2 Mentorship programme for youth to get a start-up

The government should join hands with NGOs for inviting retired senior managers in enterprises for matching young entrepreneurs by online platforms, which enables the youth to gain social networks and experience for running their business.

2.1.3 Expand supporting plans for non-IT industries

“Soft innovation” (i.e. Innovations in systems, systems, policies, markets, etc.) and “soft technology” (i.e. a series of industrial management techniques, decision-making techniques, planning methods, etc., how to use and maximize scientific and technological achievements) should be recognized by the government as a part of innovation technology and economic development in Hong Kong. Thus, it is necessary for the city to increase the supporting programmes for non-IT industries (e.g. education and training for industrialisation, financing process, management of IT industries) which aim at the youth to enhance their upward mobility.

2.1.4 Improve the social image and promote mutual recognition of technical jobs in Greater Bay Area

The government should encourage schools for holding more activities related to career planning. Students can understand more alternative careers in society and they can be attracted for taking various technical jobs in future. In addition, the government and local industries can promote mutual recognition of our career training in the GBA, which enables the youth to get internship or even be employed in the region.

2.1.5 Promote opportunities for youth in the Greater Bay Area

Our youth may not be familiar with the Mainland affairs and information related to the job market in Greater Bay Area so they are not interested in jobs of the region. If there are more organisations which can bridge our youth with local supporting units in terms of start-ups and promote successful cases of being employed in the GBA, this can enhance upward mobility further.

2.2 Understanding Our Country

2.2.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of exchange activities in the Mainland

To re-evaluate the effectiveness of past student exchange activities for strengthening quality and depth. We suggest having our students to stay with mainland families in winter and summer vacations. They can have deepen contact with the lives in mainland. Students can get to know each other and complete project together

2.2.2 Improve the time arrangement for exchange activities in the Mainland

EDB should coordinate the timing for 2022/23 exchange trips for schools and they should be held in summer holiday lest time clashing of students' preparation of examinations. In addition, the evaluation of reports for exchange activities should be included in the school-based assessment for DSE to encourage students' participation.

2.2.3 Provide internship in the Mainland China

To encourage local or multinational companies, who have business in mainland to provide internship to Hong Kong university students. It can be a summer internship program for about ten weeks. Each intern will be guided by a tutor/mentor to ensure that the internship process is fruitful. The living expenses and salaries are suggested to be subsidized by the government.

2.2.4 Provide training to Hong Kong teachers for understanding the development of the Mainland

To introduce professional development courses for teachers. Hong Kong teachers can be trained in the Mainland for 2-3 weeks. It can allow them to have a full spectrum understanding of contemporary national development, which can assist them to inspire students on thinking about Hong Kong's role in national development.

2.2.5 Improve educating method of Chinese

EDB can introduce simplified Chinese and Putonghua for teaching Chinese in primary and secondary schools. We can maintain our city as a bridge for the Mainland and other countries, as well as the international trading centre, if our youngsters can speak well for two languages.

2.3 Assist with Poor and Non-Chinese Students

2.3.1 Promote character education by volunteer work

The government should sponsor and encourage college graduates to spend a year serving in less-privileged communities or voluntary organizations in Hong Kong or the Mainland before entering the workplace. It can cultivate the development of good character of young people through community services.

2.3.2 Provide free online tutorials to students in poverty

The government should sponsor NGOs for providing free online tutorials to all poor students in Hong Kong. This programme should be supervised by Education Bureau. The tutors could be college students who are not yet graduated and the unemployed intellectuals, as long as they have enough knowledge and language skills for tutoring

pupils and students.

2.3.3 Modify the education policy of Chinese language for non-Chinese speaking students

Many non-Chinese-speaking students were born and raised in Hong Kong, and their Chinese proficiency is comparable to that of Chinese-speaking students. The government should gradually adjust the second language learning framework of Chinese language courses, allowing schools to be divided into classes based on Chinese proficiency rather than ethnicity.

3. Land and Housing

Every citizen is hectic for own house. However, the housing price has been much beyond one's affordable level for many years and this problem was criticized by everyone in the city. It is a long-term work to increase the land and housing supply and this involves many government departments to deal with. Compared to other social aspects, land and housing departments are more bureaucratic. Despite of an increase of land supply, the procedures for land development in the government, designation of proportions for public and private housing etc., should be streamlined and speeded up to increase housing supply in short term.

3.1 Increase Land Supply and Improve Efficiency of Land Administration

3.1.1 Continue the policies for land development

To maintain and keep up the land policies of "Lantau Tomorrow", "Northern Metropolis" and "Streamlining the development procedures" for increasing the supply of land in long term.

3.1.2 Streamline processes for land development

Development Bureau should lead and actively recommend three departments, namely Buildings Department, Planning Department and Lands Department to conduct a comprehensive review on the procedures for all planning and development of land. At present, the three departments only adopt the calculation on exemption floor area to be determined by the Buildings Department. In fact, there is still a lot of room to minimize procedures. Bureaucracy on land policy should be combatted by supervision and recommendation by the policy bureau.

3.1.3 Confirm the extension of land grants after the end of leases

The government should be proactive in confirming the extension of land grants after the end of leases to win the confidence of banks and new investors. As the Handover happened in 25 years ago, the leases of some land grants could be extended until 30th June 2047 automatically according to “Joint Sino-British Declaration” and other relevant ordinances. In other words, there are only 25 years left for these leases. For a land developer and investor, it is not long enough for them to develop within 25 years.

3.1.4 Step up inspections for being against the land use

Since some tenants on government lands have not left after the expiry of the short-term tenancies, the departments related to land matters should step up inspections to clarify problems in land utilization to release precious land resources.

3.1.5 Improve coordination with NGOs

To review the application and approval procedures on transitional housing on a regular basis to avoid lengthy and unfair bureaucracy of individual government departments

and charities. The tenancies of transitional housing are too short for citizens who are waiting for public housings. They have no choice to go back to subdivided units. As the nature of transition housing is temporary but the building cost of them are similar to those of public housing, we should build more public housing in long term after streamlining of land development procedure. The government should consider to ask Housing Authority to manage transitional housing, which organized by NGOs.

3.1.6 Review old housing policies

To review the old housing policies such as small houses, squatter houses and civil servants co-operative building society in a timely manner. The land policies experimental experience of Housing Society should be utilized to study small houses buildings. We can make reference with relocation experience of city villages redevelopment in mainland cities to have some title limitation of subsidized housing. These can safeguard rights of housing of our citizens and release more precious land resources.

3.1.7 Review the boundaries of country parks

There are no clear markings and records for boundaries of country parks so citizens misunderstand that some green belt areas are part of country parks. In the study of green belts, the government can use innovative technologies to re-measure boundaries of country parks so as to release more green belt areas which mistakenly treated as country parks. These newly released areas can be used to build more public housing as a result.

3.1.8 Lower the threshold of compulsory auctions and increase the favour on plot ratios

As buildings in urban areas are aging, the government should lower the threshold of

compulsory auctions and provide more incentives in plot ratios such as the practices in Singapore and Taiwan for private buildings which age over 50 years in order to speed up the urban redevelopment.

3.1.9 Integrate data with geographical spatial data platform

The government should encourage construction firms to deploy digitalised building plans and require all government departments to upload data to the geographical spatial data platform. This aims at promoting the development of a smart city and enriching geographical data, which enables the government to govern and approve land developments in a speedier manner.

3.2 Public Housing

3.2.1 Expediate the allocation for housing to those in need

To review the allocation system for public housing (including Home Ownership Scheme and Public Rental Housing) to expedite the allocation of flats to those in need. At the same time, the government should build transitional housing on idle land for those on the waiting list for public housing. When allocating public housing, incentives should be provided to encourage the elderly to apply for living in new developed but more remote areas, while young families can be arranged to live in urban areas if possible. This will reduce the mismatch in terms of transportation needs and quality of life between the two groups of people. It is also necessary to encourage families from the same root to live in the same district, so that the younger generation can take care of the elderly.

3.2.2 Implement the policy for minimum living area per capita

Development Bureau has set the minimum living area per capita at 280 sq. ft. To implement the policy, all government departments should not approve building and renovation plans for flats of the size less than 280 sq. ft, in order to protect Hong Kong people's right to decent housing. Meanwhile, the government should tighten the punishment penalties of sub-divided units in private estates and encourage citizens and management offices to report illegal sub-divided private flats.

3.2.3 Reserve some rooms in 'Shelter Hospital' for being used as transitional housing

The government can move some residents who are living in sub-divided units and queuing for public housing into the emptied rooms in 'Shelter Hospital', as to improve their living conditions.

3.2.4 Review the role played by Urban Renewal Authority

Urban Renewal Authority (URA) is a public statutory which should handle the land with faulty conditions in land grants, such as low plot ratios and the "one house" term. As URA enjoys preferential treatment in terms of plot ratios and free land premium, it should not build the profit-oriented private flats only, but bear with the social responsibility of building more public housings.

3.3 Support People to Own Their Houses

3.3.1 Examine the functions of public and private housing in the society

The disparity between the rich and the poor has been widened due to the enormous inflow of global funds which invested in the Hong Kong real estate. The government needs to shift the housing policy from "private-oriented and public-assisted" to "public-oriented and private-assisted". The Housing Authority needs to review the

severity of marketization of public housing and implement effective regulatory measures to prevent public housing as public assets from being abused by capitalism.

3.3.2 Review the definition of 'first-time home buyers'

The government should review the definition of 'first-time home buyers' for closing the loopholes of stamp duties. This discount on stamp duty for first-time home buyer should be offered only once in a lifetime for citizens. If one has purchased properties on behalf of a company, he/she shall not be exempted from paying stamp duties by reasons of being a 'first-time home buyer'. After closing this loophole, the government can consider to waive or lowdown the stamp duty of first-time home buyers.

3.3.3 Review methodology of the total housing supply target

To review methodology of the total housing supply target in our current "Long Term Housing Strategy" report. The figure has been unreasonably decreasing since 2014. The bureau should propose a more timely statistical method to reflect the actual housing demand in Hong Kong.

3.3.4 Review methodology of calculating housing supply target

To review the calculation method of the "Home Ownership Affordability Index" in the current government economic report,, which is calculated based on a 45-square-meter unit (approximately 480 square feet), a mortgage of 70% and a monthly payment with a payment period of 20 years, as opposed to the index derived from the median income of all households in Hong Kong (excluding public housing). This methodology is no longer in line with the reality. The government should utilize more accurate and timely data to address the issues of home ownership and housing.

3.3.5 Assist youth to buy properties

For first-time home buyers who are below 40, they can be exempted from stamp duties for the property once if they acquire the properties for public housing or properties from the Urban Renewal Authority (URA). In addition, after URA projects obtain the discount on land premium, 30% of flats for the projects should be reserved for young first-time home buyers. This aims at rejuvenating the urban area and increasing the labour efficiency in the community.

3.3.6 Introduce progressive mortgage if financial market is stable

It is anticipated that the burden of mortgage repayment on citizens will increase in the forthcoming interest rate climbing environment. Hence, the government should not relax “demand-side management measures” against the overheat of property market and to maintain the stability of the financial markets. If the economy recovers, the Government can introduce progressive payment mortgage which allows more non-home owners to have their own flats. The bank can offer a mortgage of half of the house price and the other half is guaranteed by the government so that the first time homeowners will only need to pay 5-10% down payment to have a new home.

4. Economic Development and Technological Innovation

Our motherland supported us to be an international innovation and technology centre. Since the 14th Five-year Plan and President Xi’s major speech in the celebration of Handover in Hong Kong, it was emphasized that the innovation technology industries have been rising in Hong Kong. Our government should make a good use of Innovation and Technology Bureau for reviewing the demand from all industries, training more talents, connecting with overseas and turning our economy into an innovation-led one

to diversify risks.

4.1 Formulate Industrial Policies and Systems

4.1.1 Establish an Economic Development Council

With reference to Singapore's experience, we should establish the "Economic Development Committee". The government should set up an Economic Development Council and a venture fund with reference to Singapore's experience to formulate industrial policies, set up venture capital funds, select promising companies and competitive industries, and invest in the industries of the future.

4.1.2 Reform the Innovation and Technology Bureau and set up R&D centres

The Innovation and Technology Bureau should commit to establishing an innovation system in line with Hong Kong's positioning. They should combine innovative ideas, international networks (especially Germany and other countries in European Union) and investment vitality with the development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) and the global market. Other feasible policies includes: To establish (1) a market research and development centre, (2) a smart development centre in the GBA, and (3) a smart data centre.

4.1.3 Invest in industries with competitive edges

Invest HK and Hong Kong Science and Technology Park should provide land for, or Land Fund should inject capital to, industries with competitive edges and combination of R&D, high-ended productivity and aviation logistics, such as biological technology, medical studies, pharmaceutical treatment, or chip design.

4.2 Develop Industries with Competitive Edges

4.2.1 Review regulations related to technological development

Review regulations for financial industry to align with Hong Kong's goal as a financial technology hub, set up a cross-industry working committee to formulate industry codes for promoting the sharing economy, such as studying the regulatory framework for civil and commercial autonomous vehicles.

4.2.2 Formulate a blueprint for development of legaltech

To formulate a blueprint for the development of legaltech to promote the digitalization and application of technology in the Judiciary and the legal profession. We should introduce to law firms and legal departments in corporations to adopt legaltech and relevant precaution measures. We should list out governmental policy supports in short-, medium-, and long-term, which can convince the legal sector to invest more resources in technological areas.

4.2.3 More funds for the upgrade of legal technology system

To establish a "Legal Technology Fund" under the constant Epidemic Prevention and Anti-epidemic. The Fund should be increased to assist law firms in upgrading the legal technology system regularly. The scope of funding should be more detailed to ensure that law firms can have innovative and productive legal technology products, such as document management systems, knowledge management systems, cloud customer relationship software, etc., rather than simple electronic products such as tablets or TVs.

4.2.4 Assist college students to be familiar with legal technology

To sponsor law firms to hire college students or graduates, who are familiar with

programming, artificial intelligence, blockchain, data science, etc., through internships or full-time employment to lure them working in legal technology. In the process, these technologists can provide law firms solutions for simplifying work procedures with technology. On the other hand, they can also take this opportunity to deepen their understanding of legal work and build contacts. They can rely on these experiences to set up start-ups which engaged in legal technology in the future.

4.2.5 Increase the technological element in bachelor law degree programmes

It is recommended to cooperate with colleges and universities to add scientific and technological elements in bachelor law degree programmes, such as business analysis, computer science, information systems, etc., to cultivate a group of legal talents familiar with the operation of science and technology. Hence, they can apply legal technology sophisticatedly in the future. At present, some colleges and universities have provided elective courses in legal science and technology. It is recommended that these courses should be included in the scope of compulsory courses in the future.

4.2.6 Relocate facilities for shipping hub

To relocate the Kwai Chung Container Terminal and plan a new port with modern infrastructure and automation equipment, which can link the logistics and transportation network of Hong Kong and neighbouring ports strategically and enhance the international competitiveness of Hong Kong logistic hub.

4.2.7 Develop green and sustainable finance

The Mainland aims at achieving the goal of carbon neutrality, and major cities have the goal for reducing air pollution emissions. Hong Kong should develop green finance-related industries, set up ESG standards, speed up the establishment of carbon emissions trading centres, supporting carbon asset management and financing in the

GBA for carbon reduction.

4.2.8 Establish Hong Kong International Commercial Court

We can leverage Hong Kong's unique advantage in our legal framework to create Hong Kong International Commercial Court to handle international commercial disputes. This can increase the confidence from the world for Hong Kong on the matter of independent jurisdiction and strengthen our position as the centre for dispute arbitration and international law for Asia-Pacific region.

4.2.9 Develop cultural and art industries

To set up an international cultural and art centre, increase the supply of cultural and art venues by integrating existing ones; support small and medium-sized art groups by long-term planning and development; set up an international art exchange centre, connect the art groups and innovation and technology 20 specialists together, promote international certification and assessment systems, and establish "Hong Kong standards" as an international brand.

4.3 Partner with EU to Raise Creativity and Productivity

4.3.1 Upgrade local industrial standards

We should build a closer and more pragmatic relationship with EU for fulfilling the targets in the "14th Five-year Plan". Local industries should adopt the standard as "Industry 4.0" as to increase the productivity of Hong Kong enterprises stationing in the GBA. At the same time, Hong Kong aims at being an international technology and innovation centre.

4.3.2 Promote the technological transfer between European and Hong Kong enterprises in GBA

We can promote the cooperation between the European Enterprise Network (EEN) and Hong Kong companies in the GBA, which can enhance technology transformation. It can assist in developing into a technology-intensive industry.

4.3.3 Strengthen the overseas promotions of local enterprises

To assist local enterprises to strengthen promotion in EU and ASEAN, which enables them to expand their markets and facilitate bilateral cooperation.

4.4 Train the Talents, Connect the Government with Technological and Social Innovation

4.4.1 Increase investment in research and development

To increase investment in basic research and, with the assistance of Hong Kong Science Park and Cyberport, to provide local universities with funding to commercialize research results. We should actively cooperate with universities to provide valuation training to investors on investment and technology start-ups.

4.4.2 Increase the support to start-ups

The government should fill the funding gap, explore investment opportunities and provide collaborative funding to private investors. For example, to provide HK\$50,000 to the initial "proof of concept" and HK\$500,000 to the initial "seed funding". A certain amount of funding should be provided to "Pre-Series A" stage.

4.4.3 Provide learning opportunities for young entrepreneurs

The government should encourage colleges or universities to set up a programme for entrepreneurship related to innovation technology or provide youth leadership training programmes with NGO. These courses could assist the youth who wish to get

a start-up by themselves.

5. Coordination of Local Communities

District councils which are responsible for local communities have been greatly affected by the electoral reforms. The follow-up for local issues in communities was slowed down, and it seems that there were fewer channels for citizens to speak out. Therefore, we suggest that the government should set up another channel to communicate with young people with different opinions, so as to better address community problems (such as hygiene and safety) and make them feel satisfied.

5.1 Establish 'Future Centre/s' to enhance governance capacity

In reference to its widespread success in Europe, Path of Democracy proposes the setup of 'Future Centre/s' in Hong Kong to facilitate and encourage effective communication among all stakeholders. Through participating in policy discussions, stakeholders would be empowered to develop concise, efficacious and widely recognized policy directions and details as well as to strengthen trust between the government and themselves.

5.2 Allocate regional administrative funds

To allocate regional administrative funds to support pilot schemes promoting participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting empowers citizens to vote for livelihood-improvement projects, the poll results would then be reviewed by a committee composed of professionals and local representatives and would be put into effect accordingly. This is one of the most direct ways for laymen to see the benefits of participatory policy development where resources are allocated according to the needs of the community.

5.3 Include more young voices in local communities

Despite of the existing regimes such as District Councils, District Fire Safety Committees and Fight Crime Committee, the government can set up alternative direct channel for the youth to engage in local communities, hence they could feel that they are respected and more willing to serve the society.

5.4 Engage residents to care for their own communities proactively

Government departments can encourage residents to discuss the community issues and suggest solutions by themselves , so that minor issues could be solved in time.

5.5 Expand the duties of district social welfare officers

To strengthen the coordinating role of the district social welfare officer, and encourage cooperation between the academia, business community, social welfare organizations, social enterprises and regional organizations (especially youth services and elderly services), for paying attention to the issue of intergenerational integration together.

5.6 Clean the city with better inter-departmental coordination

The government should take the initiative in coordinating with the FEHD and other departments to tackle with serious rodent infestation. There can be many solutions to deal with this trouble effectively and consistently, including cleaning streets, better food waste management etc. In addition, various departments should deal with abandoned vehicles and signboards on the streets to avoid danger.

5.7 Support community economy

Set up flea markets in 18 districts for facilitating diversified economy and growth

of small businesses in the community.

6. Healthcare and Elderly Care

Hong Kong is facing with its aging population structure. Population Census 2021 showed there was one-fifth of our population aging over 65 years old. The elderly had served our society when they were young so they demanded more healthcare and elderly care services when getting older. As our population is aging, the government should plan and implement relevant local healthcare policies for monitoring the elderly's health and managing the spending on medical services in time.

6.1 Develop Primary Healthcare

6.1.1 Develop primary healthcare

To provide additional subsidies to encourage primary healthcare doctors to conduct more screening tests supported by medical evidence. This is to identify and treat patients with chronic serious diseases at an early stage, to avoid the aggravation of the disease and complications.

6.1.2 Encourage people to make use of primary healthcare

To provide incentives for the public to receive treatment from primary healthcare doctors. For example, each citizen is encouraged to be paired with one doctor. If the patient seeks treatment from the doctor, he/she can receive a larger proportion of subsidies from the "medical voucher". If the doctor is a specialist (such as a family medicine specialist), both the doctor and the patient can receive an increased amount of subsidy. This will encourage doctors to upgrade their qualification and improve the quality of primary healthcare.

6.1.3 Expand primary healthcare services to 18 districts

To enhance the promotion of primary medical services such as "community health centres" and "district health centres", such primary medical services should be expanded across the 18 districts in Hong Kong. Such expansion can strengthen the one-stop primary medical services in Hong Kong, assist in the long-term implementation of the "home-based elderly" policy and ensure the effective use of medical resources.

6.1.4 Set up a transferal system between community health centres and elderly centres

Most of the community health centres are at the initial stage, which cannot connect to the Hospital Authority, local elderly centres etc. and become local hub service centres. Thus, the relevant government departments should coordinate and promote such a pioneering transferal system in Kawi Ching and other districts.

6.2 Improve Public Healthcare System

6.2.1 Support the demand of drugs from Hong Kong residents in the GBA

Although our residents living in the GBA can obtain drugs through the Work Plan for Regulatory Innovation and Development of Pharmaceutical and Medical Device in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area ("Work Plan"), the list of drugs is not exhaustive so some might be delayed for getting a treatment. The government should discuss the list with the Mainland departments, so that more drugs can be delivered to the Mainland.

6.2.2 Facilitate the cooperation between doctors and social workers

The government should take social welfare policies for the elderly into account when it considers the medical care policies for them. Since Hong Kong has an ageing society,

healthcare services for the elderly are just one of the policies for care of elderly in the society. Two policy bureaux for health services and social welfare should join their hands, such as setting up supervisory committees constituting two senior officials, to supervise such coordination from the top to the bottom. It is also beneficial for the coordination in the departmental level.

6.2.3 Facilitate the cooperation between Chinese medicine and doctors

The services from Chinese medicine has been increasingly recognised during COVID-19 pandemic. The Government should take this opportunity to promote Chinese medicine as one of the solutions to strengthen primary healthcare system. As the first Chinese Medicine Hospital will be in operation in 2025, Hospital Authority shall reserve more space and plan for services of Chinese and Western medicine for clinic use and take part in co-treatment for international studies.

6.2.4 Introduce smart medical facilities

The trial projects for smart medical facilities were proved to be favourable for long term development since the pandemic breakout. Hence, the government should require the Hospital Authority to introduce certain proportion of smart medical facilities in its second 10-year hospital development plan to improve operational efficiency. The internal guidelines for the Government should be updated for approving the applications on time.

6.3 Improve Elderly Care Policies

6.3.1 Retain talents in elderly services

To provide a sustainable career ladder to allow the elderly services industry to retain talents. Due to unfavourable factors such as wages, benefits and work pressure, many employees working at elderly homes eventually switch to the medical care industry. While maintaining fair employment opportunities for local workers, the Government should consider whether to increase the supply of foreign workers to relieve manpower in shortage.

6.3.2 Insert a clause for building elderly facilities in land grants

The Government should insert a clause in land grants, which requires developers to build elderly centres, rehabilitation centres etc. basing on a certain percentage of area as conditions, in order to tackle with the sharp rise for aging population in Hong Kong. In addition, it is beneficial for Hong Kong to enhance the policies of elderly services in Greater Bay Area, including Guangdong and Fujian Scheme.

6.3.3 Review of community care service vouchers for the elderly

To review the use of "community care service vouchers for the elderly". We can make reference to the use of medical voucher and consider cancelling the limit thereon and replace it in the form of reimbursement. It can make the community voucher easier to use and freeing up the service capacity of institutions.

6.3.4 Provide electronic registers for elderly medical records

With reference to the experience of "e-health system", we can carry out electronic archives works in 41 elderly district centres in Hong Kong, which can strengthen communication between medical institutions, elderly district centres and neighbourhood centres for the elderly, and between different services of the same organization, in order to promote cross-services management. We can also promote all-in services management mode.

6.3.5 Strengthen promoting the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Elderly Care Services

The government could enroll some excellent graduates in “Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services” into Enrolled Nurse Training Programme and this enables them to gain a clearer career ladder in elderly care industry. If the promotion of such a scheme (e.g. posters) could be improved, more youngsters can be attracted for the elderly care industry.

7. Social Inclusion and Welfare

Income inequality in the society widens with the development of the economy. Poor families are stretched and their jobs are at risk under the threats from inflation and forthcoming economic downturn. Even if NGOs and volunteers are willing to help, they may not be able to fully cover those in need. Therefore, the government needs to intervene, use appropriate financial tools proactively and coordinate the assistance from various stakeholders, so that all citizens and ethnic groups can share the fruits of economic growth.

7.1 Improve Welfare System

7.1.1 Review taxation system

The Government should review the current regulatory system of tax policy and propose corresponding tax reforms to make these systems be fairer and less politicized. The government's tax reform should focus on long-term economic welfare, and a progressive tax policy will help redistribute the wealth of the society and narrow the gap between the rich and the poor.

7.1.2 Make good use of taxation information for allocating subsidies

To improve the Inland Revenue Department's database of Hong Kong taxpayers to provide convenience for citizens to apply for cash assistance in future. Before implementing any cash subsidies, the Government can take the initiative to screen the tax information of registered citizens for distributing cash allowances according to their annual income. Hence, this can encourage taxpayers to have more tax rebates, which will allow more liquidity to stimulate consumption.

7.1.3 Increase the spending to social welfare organisations

To provide special funding to non-governmental organizations (such as relating to living environment, food banks, etc.) in respect of the basic needs of citizens, and appropriately provide more assistance to these organizations. For example, “matching” the funds raised by the organizations in a specific proportion to protect the needy people's basic living conditions.

7.2 Promote Social Cohesion

7.2.1 Promote family-friendly policies

To increase the supply of government-sponsored day care centres, encourage enterprises to implement family-friendly policies and provide childcare services, such as flexible working hours, protecting the rights of breastfeeding in public areas etc. While working mothers are struggling to take care of their children whether they work in offices or at home, the Government should provide convenience for them to go to work, so that female workforce can be released.

7.2.2 Recruit non-Chinese speaking talents proactively

To increase the participation and representation of non-Chinese speaking people

within the government structure, such as the civil service team, district administrative structure and advisory committees, for matching the proportions of their population in Hong Kong which will demonstrate the diversity of Hong Kong society.

7.2.3 Establish a “Social Happiness Index”

To establish a "Social Happiness Index" to allow government departments or subsidized organizations to review Hong Kong's social development in terms of food, clothing, housing, transportation, life, old age, sickness and death from a macro perspective, so that the government can formulate policies for the purpose of improving the happiness of citizens in life.

7.2.4 Increase students' understanding of religions and cultures

To cultivate the international horizon of students and for them to learn about the diversity of religions and cultures in different countries. The countries along the “Belt and Road” can be a starting point. We should develop value education as a base to deepen the universal values of tolerance and respect in the civilized society.

7.2.5 Promote education for moral virtues

The size of households in Hong Kong is small. If the only child in a family lacks the education from elderly, he/she might misbehave when grows up. The government should advocate the Chinese traditional moral virtues in schools and families for enhancing the moral standards of the society.

8. Liveable City and Sustainable Development

Our living environment is crowded without green environment. Also, building designs and other facilities may not be environmental friendly so that Hong Kong could not

reach to the international standards for sustainable development. Thus, the government can consider modifying existing standards for building designs, recycling municipal waste or increasing land for green use in order to turn our city into a more liveable one.

8.1 Sustainable Development

8.1.1 Formulate UN Sustainable Development Goals which are applicable to Hong Kong

Hong Kong is an international city, but its urban planning has not been aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Also, it has not proposed a city-wide action plan yet. The Government should design policies which are commensurate with the sustainable goals in future policy addresses, reports on emissions reduction or climate-related policies, urban planning policy guidelines, etc. so that Hong Kong could adhere to global standards.

8.1.2 Modify the process for environmental impact assessment

Modify the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance to avoid overlapping with other control measures, and shorten the time required for the EIA process. The development and assessment work can be carried out at the same time so this can protect the environment and not hinder the progress of the project. New elements have to be added to designated projects so the government can make use of smart platforms and big data to assess the environmental impact in future. A standardised EIA can allow the public to focus on issues and facilitate more effective public participation.

8.1.3 Develop the standards for green finance

As more international financial reporting organisations emphasized on the principles of green accounting, Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission issued “Agenda for Green and Sustainable Finance” in August 2022 for requesting firms to disclose operational factors related to environmental sustainability. Hence, Hong Kong should make use of this opportunity for developing carbon trading market to maintain its competitive edge as an international financial centre.

8.1.4 Reduce carbon emission by issuing greening guidelines of buildings

There are plenty high-rise buildings in Hong Kong, while industrial and commercial industries have been using most of the power in our city. If the vertical space of these buildings can be used for greening, e.g. walls, balconies, bay windows, roofs, scaffolding, etc., it can decorate the space, while relieve the heat island effect and reduce carbon emissions. Therefore, the government should encourage construction companies to apply green design in new buildings to protect the environment.

8.1.5 Increase the support for industries related to green technology

The government can make use of existing or newly established venture funds to sponsor products designed by entrepreneurs or academics for environmental protection, such as the energy conversion device once developed by the City University of Hong Kong, or the hydrogen fuel cell developed by the University of Science and Technology of Hong Kong.

8.1.6 Formulate healthcare policies related to heat waves

In recent years, the climate change has brought impacts on public health over the world, and Hong Kong is no exception. In 2019, the number of “hot nights” in Hong Kong exceeded 60. The government can invite the public to voice over this issue and

make reference to the policies of Toronto in Canada. Hence, it can cooperate with NGOs to set up a heat relief network which provide more space for the public.

8.1.7 Public organisations purchase electric vehicles

At present, there are no less than 600 special vehicles to transfer people in need to and from medical institutions and institutions/residences. Organizations that provide such services include the Hospital Authority, the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation and major social welfare Institutions, etc. Since these vehicles are purchased through government funding (as Hong Kong will promote electric vehicles as mass transportation vehicles) it is recommended that the Innovation and Technology Bureau shall use the existing network to promote a pilot project of electrification of patient transport vehicles to be used by hospitals or the Hospital Authority. It can also reduce the environmental impact of government-sponsored vehicles and promote the development of related industries (including electric vehicle research and development, in-vehicle equipment update, electric vehicle maintenance industry development, etc.).

8.1.8 Set up policy goals which can be extended

The government should have objectives for environmental policies, with follow-up evaluation and specific review timetables, so that bureau scan continue to deal with long-standing problems. Even the next government can follow up, so as not to waste time and manpower. For example, the government should regularly review the target for waste reduction or adjust the charging level of waste for every two years to ensure that the policy is effective.

8.2 Recycle municipal waste in urban areas

8.2.1 Set up a “Municipal Solid Waste Management Committee”

The Environment and Ecology Bureau should set up a "Municipal Solid Waste Management Committee" and invite people from all walks of life to discuss how to reduce solid waste produced in urban areas, reduce waste from the source, and protect the environment.

8.2.2 Make use of “green purchasing” to relieve the issue of solid waste in urban areas

The government should promote “green purchasing” in Hong Kong and enact similar ordinances to solve the municipal solid waste problem. For example, the European Union encourages public organizations to conduct "green purchasing", which stipulates that there should be clear environmental protection guidelines and more environmentally friendly products should be used in the process of public procurement of products or services. Therefore, the government can firstly revise its own internal procurement standards, which requires all departments to have local recycled plastic components when purchasing goods, or improve the score of relevant technologies significantly. Secondly, the Environmental Protection Bureau can study the plastic producer responsibility system and increase the relative plastic recycling rate, so as to improve the recycling rate of solid waste in Hong Kong.

8.2.3 Promote policy of municipal solid waste and garbage classification

At present, the cost of recycling is too high. Citizens do not need to pay for waste disposal, nor do they have to bear the social costs. The recycling rate of Hong Kong's municipal solid waste is only 29%, far below 50% in developed areas. The municipal solid waste levy should be imposed as soon as possible, and the government should

provide sufficient enforcement and adequate recycling. In addition, the government can implement "municipal solid waste levy" and "plastic container producer responsibility system" programs and make use of the revenue from garbage levy and plastic tax to subsidize the recycling industry.

8.2.4 Zero landfill in 2035

The recycling value of many wastes cannot be realised, and they end up in landfills or being thrown into the marine ecosystem. The government should provide policy incentives to recycle plastics with values, while other wastes that are too expensive to be recycled should be converted into energy. The government should build no fewer than three integrated incineration facilities with an average daily processing capacity of 2,500 to 3,000 tonnes, and strive to achieve "zero landfilling" by 2035.

8.3 Create a Liveable Environment

8.3.1 Increase the supply of recreation area

To convert the idle land with transportation connection into recreational area. For example, Ngong Ping plateau (approx. 2 sq. km. in area) which is connected with cable cars, could be convertible to meditation centres; Tung Lung Chau (approx. 2.4 sq. km in area) is suitable for being a rock-climbing centre and for other uses.

8.3.2 Concern for conservation of private wetlands

There are many private wetlands in the New Territories and South Lantau, and some of which have been damaged, which may not conform to the zoning of sites. The Government should take the initiative to follow up these issues with the public, such as to increase transparency, and ensure that the promised uses as conservation are implemented. In the long run, it should consider resuming the relevant land parcels

and setting up a conservation park.

8.3.3 Develop a comprehensive population policy

Hong Kong's population is aging and the labor force continues to decline. We should formulate long-term and sustainable population policies while importing talented and professional talents, and strengthen legislation to protect labor and occupational safety. In order to encourage employment, Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme subsidies should not be higher than the minimum wage. To further extend paid maternity leave and provide family-friendly child care and elderly services can not only free up female labor force, but also allow Hong Kong labor to feel at ease to give birth in Hong Kong and continue to work hard.

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Path of Democracy (PoD) is a mission- and action-driven think tank that strives to create maximum room for democratic development under the principles of “One Country Two Systems”, “Hong Kong People Ruling Hong Kong”, and a high degree of autonomy. We believe that communication with mutual trust, conducted with a moderate attitude, is essential for the development of democracy. To this end, we have established Path of Democracy as a platform to:

- Consolidate the majority of supporters of the democratic camp in the society;
- Promote a moderate political approach in a proactive manner, and to carve out new political horizon in the society;
- Formulate agenda and construct systematic political discourse;
- Establish new ideological dimensions in the politics, society, economics and culture of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region together with different stakeholders through research, dialogue and engagement.

- Conduct various activities and schemes, including establishing the Hong Kong Academy of Politics and Public Policy, to cultivate a new generation of political leaders and public policy makers.

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