

Reshape Value Create Future

Path of Democracy - 2022 Policy Address Proposal

【26 September 2022 | Hong Kong】

Under the principle of "patriots governing Hong Kong" and the improvement of the electoral system, the new government took office smoothly. The Chief Executive determines to build a "result-oriented" work culture and expects his cabinet to do and achieve them. This aligns with our expectations in the coming policy address.

In view of this purpose, our Path of Democracy has formulated the "2022 Policy Address Proposals". The 4 core members of our think tank, including Governor Jeffrey Chan, Governor, Barrister Angel Mak Daley, Governor Allan Wong and Community Lab Policy Director Surveyor Maxine Yao proposed four major policy priorities to build an implementable policy vision for Hong Kong.

(A) Consolidating One Country Two Systems

Jeffrey Chan : Enhance image promotion, reshape international role

Large-scale unrest, coupled with the impact of the epidemic, has damaged Hong Kong's image of prosperity and stability. The government should take the lead to improve Hong Kong's image in the Mainland and internationally. We can tell a good story of Hong Kong, China on different platforms, strengthen and deepen our role in the Greater Bay Area to be a "Super international contact" point. We should strive to host large-scale international events, strengthen international publicity works, and revitalize the economy. Our government should support associations such as chambers of commerce, think tanks and other groups to come to Hong Kong to facilitate overseas publicity works and strengthen international interaction. We should support more overseas students to study and work in Hong Kong, lure more talents and enhance competitiveness for Hong Kong.

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.

Legislation for a ban of releasing false information on the internet is not aimed at the media, but false information that will cause serious harm to society, such as children being vaccinated will cause death and doctors can issue vaccine passports to anyone without needle paper, etc., should be prohibited by legislation. There is also a trend in the international community to legislate against the spread of false news without affecting free flow of information. We advocate that the community should have extensive discussions on civil or criminalization-related laws. Civil legalization can be simply get a court order to ask network service providers to prohibit the distribution of relevant false information; Criminal legalization must prove that a perpetrator has criminal intent.

(B) Youth upward mobility and employment

Angel Mak Daley : Provide diversified industries and further youth development

In view of insufficient governmental publicity on the development of the Greater Bay Area, it fails to match Hong Kong youth with suitable job opportunities there, we propose that the government should set up an independent agency to disseminate employment information in the Greater Bay Area, so that Hong Kong youth can contact an agency to get one-stop information such as employment, accommodation, tax and etc.

The current industrial structure in Hong Kong places too much emphasis on finance and real estate, which limits the career development of the youth. At present, the

government is vigorously promoting innovation and technology, and it should promote the integration of innovation and technology into traditional industries. For example, in the legal industry, the government can consider subsidizing law firms HK\$100,000 per year to employ tertiary students who are familiar with programming, artificial intelligence and other related fields in the form of internships or on full-time basis. It can attract more young people to get involved in legal technology, and they can use this experience to open legal technology start-ups.

At the same time, our government should provide industrialized innovation education and youth training programs for non-technical categories such as culture, arts and sports, so that young people with different interests can gain upward opportunities.

Some young “drifters” who have newly arrived at Hong Kong told us that after completing local courses, they hope to stay in Hong Kong for further development, but it is a pity that the rent in Hong Kong has taken up more than half of their income. We suggest the Government consider granting a housing allowance of \$5,000 to local youth and Hong Kong drifters who have legal employment contracts and leases, which can assist the local youth and Hong Kong drifters to stay in Hong Kong for further development.

(C) Create a livable city

Allan Wong : Reform environmental impact assessment system+ Implement Set up accountable KPI

Enhancing public happiness need not spend too much. The government should take initiative to beautify the city, such as strengthen green planting on the fragmented land of the community, and promote the beautified waterfront park to the public more, which can increase good impression of the public.

Hong Kong's overall recycling rate has dropped to a historical low of 28%. With comparison of South Korea's 65% recycling rate and Germany's over 70% recycling rate,

Hong Kong's recycling policy has not reached the level of "being taken seriously by the government". In 2012, the ex-Secretary of Environmental Bureau proposed to reduce waste by 40% within 10 years of his tenure. However, such a promise was not fulfilled in 2022. At present, the waste disposal volume per capita in Hong Kong has risen to 1.42 kilograms per day. The policy commitment is not up to the standard, but there is no accountability unfortunately. After the implementation of the plastic bag tax in 2015, although there was a slight drop in the volume of landfills in the first year, the use of plastic bags began to increase by year from the second year. Therefore, the current policy goal of the plastic bag tax should refer to a scientific waste reduction goals that are feasible and achievable.

We urge the government to implement waste charging and the plastic producer responsibility system as soon as possible and increase the tax on plastic bags to HK\$2. We should set the target of waste disposal volume per capita to be reduced by 40% by 2032, and the recycling rate to be doubled to 56%. We should have a medium-term target for every five years and a short-term target every year, and follow up and adjust strategies regularly for these short-term and medium-term targets.

Finally, the use of technology can make EIA more efficient. We should proactively focus on wetland conservation rather than passively letting it go. We should also formulate the United Nations sustainable development policy goals, improve the environmental impact assessment process and make more use of technology to establish a standardized process.

(D) Optimizing land development

Maxine Yao : Confirm the arrangement for land lease extension and review country parks boundaries

There are at least 30,000 land leases in Hong Kong which will expire around mid-2047. The government should take the initiative to confirm the arrangement of land lease extension to stabilize the confidence of banks and new investors for elimination of

uncertainty. According to the Sino-British Joint Declaration and other relevant laws, the lease term of some land leases can be automatically extended to June 30, 2047. In other words, the current lease term remains only 25 years. For investors, 25 years is not a long enough time. In order to cope with the large number of lease renewal cases, the government should, as in the past, deal with the land lease renewal work collectively through legislation.

The boundaries of country parks have not been clearly marked and measured for many years, leading the public to mistakenly believe that green belts are also part of country parks. While the government is studying around 16,000 hectares of green belts, we can use technology to re-measure the boundaries of country parks, which will help to release more green belts for the development of public housing.

We believe that more than 200,000 people living in subdivided housing in Hong Kong is not ideal. Therefore, we proposed to have living area per capita 215 square feet in our policy address proposal last year. We are grateful that our previous government adopted our proposal and further increased the living area per capita to 280 square feet. Development and conservation must be balanced. Even if the 32 hectares land of Hong Kong Golf Club is demolished immediately, all sub-divided units residents will not be able to move to public housing. Over the past 100 years, the Hong Kong Golf Club has successfully conserved an "Avatar" in Hong Kong without using public funds. We hope that those who have opinions on the site of the club can visit the club in person. The club is open to the public from 6-9 pm every night. The society must have sufficient knowledge and investigation of the club, so that everyone can discuss and express their opinions on the same cognitive level.

Conclusion : 4 advocacies are interlocking with each other to reshape value and create Future

Mr. Ronny Tong, SC, Convenor of Path of Democracy expressed that the common goal of 4 key advocacies of Path of Democracy is to create value for Hong Kong. It includes both economic value and spiritual value to help Hong Kong develop further . Path of

Democracy firmly believes that Hong Kong, as a cosmopolitan city, builds on the efforts of many generations of Hong Kong people by adhering to the indomitable spirit of helping each other and striving to create more value through professionalism. The future of Hong Kong requires connections between all sectors of society to reshape Hong Kong's values. We can help Hong Kong to shine and shine forever and ever.

For enquiry

For more of our policy address advocacies, please click the link:

http://pathofdemocracy.hk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/POD_2022PASub_Eng.pdf

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