

CE's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address" to LegCo (1)

Following is the translation of the speech made by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address" to the Legislative Council this morning (November 25):

Mr President, Honourable Members and fellow citizens,

I. Foreword: Striving Ahead

1. Today I present the fourth Policy Address in my term of office. First of all, I would like to thank the Honourable Members, participants of the 24 consultation sessions and members of the community for giving many views and suggestions for this Policy Address. This shows that you all care about Hong Kong, support the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government in enhancing its governance, and are willing to offer advice with the aim of building a better Hong Kong which is our home.

2. In preparing for this year's Policy Address, I deeply felt that I was charged with a heavy responsibility. In the past year or so, Hong Kong has experienced multiple blows which are unprecedented: the social unrest arising from the opposition to the proposed legislative amendments to the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and other anti-government acts; the shrinking economy and rising unemployment rate caused by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic; and the acts that endangered national security due to interference by external forces. All these have seriously undermined the social stability of the HKSAR, impeded its economic development and tarnished its international image, and for which our society has paid a high price. Under such circumstances, the worries and anxieties of the people and their loss of confidence in the future are entirely understandable. Naturally, they will expect the HKSAR Government to do more and to do better. As such, the primary objective of this Policy Address is to look at ways to get Hong Kong out of the impasse and to restore people's confidence as soon as possible.

3. In his keynote address delivered at the meeting celebrating the 20th Anniversary of Hong Kong's Return to the Motherland and the Inaugural Ceremony of the Fifth-term Government of the HKSAR held on 1 July 2017, President Xi Jinping pointed out that the implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" entailed an evolving process, and that Hong Kong had encountered some new circumstances and issues in the process. He mentioned that the continued successful implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" in Hong Kong hinged on "four imperatives", namely, it was imperative to have a correct understanding of the relationship between "One Country" and "Two Systems"; it was imperative to always act in accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China (the Constitution) and the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

(the Basic Law); it was imperative to always focus on development as the top priority; and it was imperative to always maintain a harmonious and stable social environment. The Policy Address that I deliver today seeks to restore Hong Kong's constitutional order, consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's strengths and diversify its economic development, and build on our past efforts to continue to improve people's well-being, with a view to resolving our immediate and long-term social problems. I wish to receive support from the Legislative Council (LegCo) and the community.

II. Full Support of the Central Government

4. Since my delivery of the 2019 Policy Address, Hong Kong has been facing severe and unprecedented challenges in the past year. The COVID-19 outbreak, coupled with the social unrest in the second half of last year, has taken a toll on our commercial activities. The local economy has experienced a rapid downturn, with a continual rise in the unemployment rate and various sectors badly hit. Although the promulgation of The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the National Security Law) on 30 June this year has restored stability in our society, the road to economic recovery is still fraught with difficulties.

5. On the other hand, we have seen a quick rebound in the economy of our country as a result of its vigorous efforts in putting the epidemic under control. Set to be the only major economy to record growth in 2020, the Mainland has put forward a new development pattern of domestic and international dual circulation. Benefiting from its proximity to the Mainland and the Central Government's long-standing support under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, Hong Kong's economic development will be given new impetus. It can continue to capitalise on its strengths to serve the country's needs with proactive participation in the domestic and international dual circulation as well as better integration into the overall national development.

6. In light of this development, I announced early last month the postponement of the delivery of this year's Policy Address to allow more time for discussion with the relevant Central authorities as well as the Guangdong Provincial Government on policy initiatives that will support Hong Kong's development and enhance the community's confidence in the future. I led a government delegation to Beijing, Guangzhou and Shenzhen from 3 to 7 November for in-depth exchanges with the relevant Mainland authorities and received very positive feedback. At our meeting with Mr Han Zheng, Vice Premier of the State Council, he remarked that "the Central Government will fully support whatever measure that is conducive to maintaining the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, improving the well-being of Hong Kong people, and promoting greater integration of Hong Kong into the overall development of the country".

7. I will now give a brief account of the results achieved during my visit to Beijing, and will explain further under the relevant policy areas later.

- On promoting the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay

Area (GBA), the Central Government supports the full implementation, by the end of this year, of the 24 policy measures that have been approved in principle by the Leading Group for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. In addition to the measures rolled out earlier such as tax concessions, facilitation of property purchase, support for young entrepreneurs, cross-boundary remittance of science and technology funding and liberalisation of legal and construction professional services, further measures to be introduced shortly include permitting the use of Hong Kong-registered drugs and common medical devices in designated Hong Kong-owned healthcare institutions in the Mainland cities of the GBA, relaxing the limitation on exporting Mainland human genetic resources to Hong Kong for research purposes, facilitating Hong Kong private cars travelling to Guangdong via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), and expediting the implementation of the cross-boundary wealth management connect scheme.

- On consolidating and enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre, the Central Government supports further deepening the mutual access between the Mainland and Hong Kong financial markets and the gradual expansion of the scope of eligible securities under the mutual market access programmes, and agrees to accelerate the pace of the inclusion of pre-profit biotechnology companies listed in Hong Kong and stocks listed on the Mainland Sci-Tech Innovation Board meeting certain prescribed criteria in the scope of eligible securities under the programmes.
- On consolidating and enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub, the Central Government supports the participation of the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) in the operation and development of the Zhuhai Airport through investment by way of share acquisition according to market principles, with a view to deepening the co-operation of the two airports in building a globally competitive world-class airport cluster.
- On the development of an international innovation and technology (I&T) hub, the Central Government supports the joint development of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong I&T Co-operation Zone, which comprises the Shenzhen I&T Zone and the Hong Kong-Shenzhen I&T Park at the Lok Ma Chau Loop, with a view to establishing "one zone, two parks" at "one river, two banks" under the auspices of "One Country, Two Systems".
- On improving the infrastructure of land boundary control points between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, the Central Government supports the deepening of co-operation between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, the enhancement of the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang control point, and the implementation of co-location arrangements at the new Huanggang control point in Shenzhen so as to release over 20 hectares of land at the Hong Kong control point for other uses. We will also explore with Shenzhen the enhancement of the Lo Wu control point in due course. Drawing on the experience of Hong Kong private cars travelling to Guangdong via the HZMB, we will explore the implementation of the same policy at other Hong Kong/Shenzhen land boundary control points.
- On facilitating Hong Kong enterprises to tap the Mainland domestic market, the Central Government supports the collaboration of the Guangdong Province with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) and relevant chambers of

commerce in providing policy advisory, training and business matching services to Hong Kong enterprises, thereby enabling them to expand their domestic sale channels and establish interface with the e-commerce platforms in the Mainland market.

- On fighting against the epidemic, the Central Government supports and requests the HKSAR Government to adopt all necessary measures to guard against the importation of cases and resurgence of domestic infections, with the aim of gradually resuming travel between Hong Kong and Guangdong in an orderly manner through mutual recognition of health codes when the epidemic situation in Hong Kong stabilises. The Central Government also supports Hong Kong in ensuring the supply of COVID-19 vaccines and will reserve a certain amount of vaccines developed or produced in the Mainland for use by Hong Kong people when necessary.

8. Such strong policy support from the Central Government is conducive to Hong Kong's putting forward and implementing concrete measures in various areas. The HKSAR Government will strengthen its communication and interface with relevant Central ministries and the Guangdong Provincial Government, and set up task forces to take forward various initiatives. However, to drive forward the development of various sectors in Hong Kong, we need to comprehensively and accurately implement the principles of "One Country, Two Systems", "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong" and a high degree of autonomy.

(To be continued.)