

# CE's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address" to LegCo (2)

## II. Steadfastly and Successfully Implement "One Country, Two Systems" and Strengthening Our Governance Systems

### (A) Fully and Faithfully Implement the Principle of "One Country, Two Systems"

#### Optimise the Institutional Strengths of "One Country, Two Systems"

12. The institutional advantages of "One Country, Two Systems" are numerous. Whether Hong Kong was fighting against the pandemic, tackling economic challenges, or seeking development opportunities, the Central Government always stands by Hong Kong and supports Hong Kong through a multitude of facilitation measures, ensuring our long-term prosperity and stability.

13. Under the principle of "One Country, Two Systems", Hong Kong is rooted in "One Country" and enjoys the benefits of "Two Systems", enabling Hong Kong to serve the country's needs with its own strengths. Hong Kong boasts both national and international advantages, enjoying the benefits of policies, guarantees and opportunities of our country. Hong Kong is an international city fully open to the world, underpinned by a capitalist system, with free flow of capital, people and information. It adopts a common law system, maintains its own legislative and judicial systems, laws, tax regime, currency and financial system, and is a separate customs territory. Hong Kong is a global metropolis.

14. We will continue to fully, faithfully and resolutely implement the principles of "One Country, Two Systems", "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong" and a high degree of autonomy. We will continue to fully leverage the institutional strengths of "One Country, Two Systems" for sustaining the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, contributing to China's building into a great country and realising the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

#### Safeguard National Security

15. Security and development work together like the two wings of a bird. Development requires a safe social environment. In March 2024, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) fulfilled the constitutional responsibility and historic mission of enacting local legislation for Article 23 of the Basic Law. The newly enacted Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO) achieves convergence, compatibility and complementarity with the Hong Kong National Security Law (HKNSL). Together they form a comprehensive legal system and enforcement mechanism for safeguarding national security. But threats to national security may spring up any time. We must stay vigilant and put up our guard.

16. Public officers are duty bound to safeguard national security. Section 8(3)(a) of the SNSO stipulates that if the law of the HKSAR confers any function on any person, the function is to be read as including a duty to safeguard national security. Section 114 stipulates that public servants must provide assistance for the work on safeguarding national security. All bureaux and departments must review their codes, guidelines and procedures to ensure compliance with these provisions.

17. It is of utmost importance that our people safeguard national security of their own accord. Since opening in August, the National Security Exhibition Gallery has been well-received by the public. We will train up tutors at district level for promotion of national security education in the community. Thematic exhibitions will be rolled out by the gallery to dovetail with the 10th National Security Education Day next year. The Education Bureau (EDB) will also update the Curriculum Framework of National Security Education.

#### Foster Patriotic Education

18. The Working Group on Patriotic Education has formulated promotion strategies and measures for supporting the organisation of more activities such that the spirit of patriotism can take root in society. Next year marks the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance. The Government will host commemorative activities to strengthen the sense of patriotism. The EDB will organise a range of joint school and cross-sectoral activities under the "Love Our Home, Treasure Our Country 3.0" series, continue to enhance Chinese History and national geography education in primary and secondary schools, and enrich patriotism and history elements in Mainland exchange programmes.

#### Promote Chinese Culture

19. Established in April, the Chinese Culture Promotion Office earnestly promotes Chinese culture, including planning for the construction of a museum to showcase the development and achievements of our country, and a new Chinese Culture Experience Centre. It also continues to organise the Chinese Culture Festival and exhibitions of the General History of China series.

#### (B) Strengthen Our Governance Systems

20. Since taking office, the current-term Government has taken forward various reforms on cross-disciplinary co-ordination and governance culture so as to strengthen our governance systems. Apart from introducing three Deputy Secretaries of Department to strengthen leadership and cross-bureau co-ordination, I have set indicators for specified tasks and monitored their progress and outcomes, creating a government culture focusing on actions and delivery of results. Moreover, we have updated the Civil Service Code to spell out the core values and standards of conduct that civil servants should uphold, and introduced a mechanism to mobilise the Government at all levels to enhance emergency response. The Government will deepen the reforms and continue to strengthen our governance systems.

#### Enhance the Cross-bureau Co-ordination Mechanism

21. We will enhance the leadership and cross-bureau co-ordination mechanisms, and fully leverage the leading and co-ordinating functions of Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries of Department. We will establish the following committee and working groups:

(i) The Committee on Education, Technology and Talents, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration with the Secretary for Education, Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, and Secretary for Labour and Welfare, as members, will co-ordinate and promote the integrated development of education, technology and talents. It will also expand connections, attract and cultivate talents, foster the development of technologies, and promote Hong Kong as an international hub for high-calibre talents;

(ii) The Working Group on Developing Low-altitude Economy, led by the Deputy Financial Secretary, will kick-start projects with application prospects, formulate development strategies and action plans on the low-altitude economy, as well as take forward regulatory reform and plans for related infrastructural facilities;

(iii) The Working Group on Developing Tourist Hotspots, led by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, will strengthen cross-departmental co-ordination and leverage community efforts, identifying and developing tourist hotspots of high popularity and with strong appeal in various districts; and

(iv) The Working Group on Promoting Silver Economy, led by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, will formulate measures to expedite the development of the silver industry in line with the daily needs of the elderly.

Strengthen Governance Capabilities of the Civil Service

Strengthen Civil Service Management

22. Efforts in strengthening the reward and punishment system in the past two years include launching the Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance, streamlining the mechanism of directing officers with persistent sub-standard performance to retire, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of handling disciplinary cases. We will review the Public Service (Administration) Order and Public Service (Disciplinary) Regulation to enhance the civil service disciplinary mechanism, and will consult with the Public Service Commission on the preliminary proposals next year.

National Studies and International Training

23. The civil service must have a full grasp of the policy objectives and strategies of our nation. The Government will organise seminars and learning activities on the important policies, reports and so on delivered by the Central People's Government (CPG). We will also arrange for the middle, senior and directorate level officers to receive training at renowned institutions in the Mainland and overseas to help foster their sense of national identity and develop global perspectives.

24. With the support of the CPG, the HKSAR Government will continue to send

officers to work in various offices of the United Nations through a dedicated programme.

#### Civil Service Exchange Programme between Hong Kong and the Mainland

25. The Government will collaborate with the Mainland cities in the GBA, as well as Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Wuhan and Hangzhou to launch mutual civil service exchange programmes.

#### Launch the Governance Talents Development Programme

26. The Civil Service College will launch a Governance Talents Development Programme to further develop governance capabilities of officers at leadership ranks. The college will also enhance its internal research and training capability building.

#### Digital Transformation of Public Services

27. The Digital Policy Office (DPO) will endeavour to fortify information systems of the Government and public organisations. The DPO will also spearhead the pilot use of a locally developed generative artificial intelligence (AI) document processing copilot application in government departments. About 20 digital government and smart city initiatives will also be launched this year, including using blockchain technology for issuing electronic certificates for designated civil service examinations and electronic licensing by the Fire Services Department, as well as the use of AI for handling public enquiries.

#### Bolster Security of Computer Systems of Critical Infrastructure

28. The Government will require critical infrastructure operators to undertake obligations to protect their computer systems, so as to reinforce their resilience against cybersecurity challenges. A bill will be introduced later this year.

(To be continued.)