

Convenor of ExCo Non-official Members speaks on Policy Address

The following is issued on behalf of the Executive Council Secretariat:

Following is a transcript of remarks by the Convenor of the Non-official Members of the Executive Council (ExCo), Mr Bernard Chan, at a media session on "The Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address" in the Legislative Council Complex today (October 6):

Reporter: Mr Chan, how satisfied are you with the plans and what do you think are the highlights of the Policy Address?

Convenor of ExCo Non-official Members: This is the last Policy Address of the current administration and it's a good recap of what we have achieved in the last four years. We are very impressed that more than 96 per cent of the policy initiatives have been either adopted or already in the process of implementing. So I think that is a very good recap. But apart from recapping what have been achieved by this current administration, the Chief Executive also highlighted some of her vision for Hong Kong in the next 10, 15, 20 years. I think the major highlight of this particular Policy Address is definitely the Northern Metropolis, which is a very new initiative that I am sure most of you, including myself, only found out for the first time. But it makes a lot of sense, it's the way how we can make best use of these resources, the border resources, especially together with our neighbour – Shenzhen, how to take advantage of Shenzhen and Hong Kong collaborating together, especially developing into an innovation and technology hub, that is I think obviously an additional future for Hong Kong apart from being an international financial centre, trade centre, aviation hub. I think innovation and technology clearly is the way forward and to make use of the resources of the northern part of Hong Kong is obviously the most ideal. We are not only just creating jobs, but we're also creating additional accommodation areas for people. On top of that, we are also going to be putting efforts to preserve the wetlands even better. So I think it's definitely a "win-win-win". But obviously, this initiative will take many years to achieve. I think it's good that the Chief Executive raised this in her final Policy Address to put forward a vision for Hong Kong in addition to all the other already existing initiatives. Especially behind the 14th Five-Year Plan, the Central Government has already clearly identified and agreed with Hong Kong the eight different initiatives, including the financial centre, aviation and, of course, most notably and very important one I think will be the innovation and technology hub, and of course, the other stuff would be the East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. All these I think are very promising.

One other initiative, a very important point that the Chief Executive mentioned in her Policy Address is talent. It's the retention of talent and also the ability to attract talent from overseas. Because in order for us –

Hong Kong – to be able to achieve, to carry forward all these new initiatives, we need to have talents. So whether it's local talent, how do you nurture local talent, how do you retain talent and bring in overseas talent to Hong Kong? It's the key. I am glad to hear that the Chief Executive paid much attention to that and I look forward to seeing that to happen.

Reporter: Mr Chan, what do you think of the Government's ambitious plan to re-organise the Government and with only a few months left for the current term, what work can be carried out before the end of the term?

Convenor of ExCo Non-official Members: I think we all agree that there are some inefficiencies within the bureaucracy. It's not easy to implement change. I think what the Chief Executive has highlighted is the area where there could be an easy solution. I mean obviously by combining culture, sports and tourism, that's the one, I think, with the least conflict. It's not so easy in other plans, but at least she highlighted the fact that these are the sort of changes that can actually improve governance, improve efficiency and better outcome.

Not every of these changes can be done in short time. It might take a few more months. It might take the next administration to able to carry them out. But I think it's a good time for her to bring it out for discussion because it takes time. In fact, she encouraged the community to speak out on this topic, so it might take time. Clearly, it will take more than just a few months to be able to achieve those things, so at least they give that head start for the next administration. You can imagine if the next administration starts next year and they have too many priorities to address, they may not have time to even have the discussion on this topic. So I think the fact that our current Chief Executive brings out this idea, we have enough and ample public discussions. So hopefully, when the next administration comes, they can actually just go forward and try to make this happen. I would say this will be a way to save time. But it won't happen just overnight, it will take some time for these changes to happen. Thank you.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)