

Speech by CE at Passive and Low Energy Architecture Conference (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the Passive and Low Energy Architecture Conference today (December 10):

Professor Tuan (Vice-Chancellor and President, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Professor Rocky Tuan), Professor Ng (President of Passive and Low Energy Architecture (PLEA) Association and Chairman of PLEA 2018 Organising Committee, Professor Edward Ng), ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It's a great pleasure to join you today for the opening of the 34th Passive and Low Energy Architecture Conference, the very first time this prestigious global gathering has taken place here in Hong Kong.

As Chief Executive of the Hong Kong SAR (Special Administrative Region) Government, and as the former Secretary for Development responsible for city planning and buildings, I'm delighted to welcome the PLEA Conference to Hong Kong, Asia's global city.

More than laudable, your dedication to bioclimatic design and sustainable architecture has become essential to realising smart and healthy urban life, here in Hong Kong and around the world. In many ways, that commitment reflects the traditional Chinese philosophy – that human beings must exist in harmony with nature (天人合一).

Our ancestors observed the environment, understood the need to balance the use of natural resources with their surroundings. The industrial revolution deeply disturbed that harmony. And, as a guiding principle, it was largely abandoned in the unceasing rise of urbanisation.

Thankfully, there has been a growing awakening, an awareness, of the interaction between nature, science and the built environment in recent decades. It has led to a new perception of the relationship between development and the environment. More recently, we have seen a shift from individual building sustainability to a focus on the sustainable city environment.

My Government is committed to building Hong Kong into a sustainable and liveable city, which must also be a safe city. Hong Kong, I'm pleased to say, is among the safest cities in the world, and we do not have to worry too much about crime. Indeed, in 2017, the crime rate in Hong Kong was 758 cases per 100 000 population, which was the lowest since 1971 and compared favourably with many other international cities. However, we do have some bigger worries, such as climate change.

With climate change becoming a major global challenge, safety has become a relative term. Global warming is, even now, affecting the health and well-

being of human beings, undermining our ability to achieve a sustainable environment. Hong Kong this year experienced its warmest spring since 1885, breaking 10 temperature records. Our winters have been warming, too. Of course, we're hardly alone. I've read that the 20 hottest years ever recorded all occurred in the last 30 years.

And, I'm sure many of you read the Global Carbon Project's recent findings. Made up of more than 50 scientific institutions, the research team expects global carbon emissions this year to rise by about 2.7 per cent, which is a worrying sign as the world seeks to limit the increase of global temperatures to well below 2.0°C under the Paris Agreement.

We all have to work harder if we are serious about the Paris Agreement and serious about addressing climate change. My Government certainly takes them seriously. Following the Paris Agreement, we established an inter-departmental steering committee to co-ordinate our climate actions, which I used to chair in my previous capacity as the Chief Secretary for Administration. We now have in place a Climate Action Plan 2030+, with a target to reduce carbon intensity by 65 per cent to 70 per cent by 2030 compared to our 2005 levels. We also have an Energy Saving Plan, which looks to reduce our energy intensity by 40 per cent by the year 2025. We will be issuing green bonds, both in support of sustainable development and to promote the development of green finance in Hong Kong.

The major source of carbon emissions in cities is the building sector, and Hong Kong is no exception. Hong Kong's buildings account for about 90 per cent of the city's electricity usage. Over 60 per cent of our carbon emissions are attributable to generating electricity for our buildings. Thus, achieving energy saving in the buildings sector is the key for us to meet the many targets we have set in support of sustainable development.

Therefore Hong Kong supports the green building movement, and my Government has placed a policy priority in promoting a sustainable built environment. We are leading by example. The Government has adopted a comprehensive environmental framework for government buildings. We set targets for such environmental variables as energy efficiency, renewable features and waste and greenhouse gas reduction.

Alongside the design of individual building blocks, we emphasise building bulk and height, air ventilation, greening ratios and other key concerns. We have also initiated measures to promote sustainability in green building neighbourhoods and site planning. These include such considerations as building separation and air corridors, the incorporation of greenery and building setback from streets.

In infrastructure development, we are implementing a district cooling system in our Kai Tak development area. We are installing floating PV systems at suitable locations in reservoirs and other areas, and we will consider how best to regulate external lighting. These and other factors reflect our commitment to low-carbon development.

As for the private sector, we have introduced such measures as the feed-in tariff, providing incentives for individuals and non-governmental bodies to invest in renewable energy. We have been relaxing regulatory restrictions regarding the installation of renewable energy features in private buildings. They include low-rise village houses in the New Territories.

Nowadays, the use of technology should come at the forefront of many of the things we do. Accordingly, the Government has established a US\$130 million Construction Innovation and Technology Fund to promote the wider adoption of technology and innovative solutions in the industry. And our interests here certainly extend to reducing environmental impact. On the road to a sustainable built environment, we need technology and innovation. We need all the creative input we can get from the design and construction industry's wide-ranging disciplines.

Then there's our strategic plan 2030+, created to guide planning, land and infrastructure development in Hong Kong beyond 2030. Like our community, it is a living document, one that is continually evolving. But our goal is clear: to make Hong Kong a more liveable, competitive and sustainable city.

To that end, the Hong Kong Green Building Council developed a green building rating system called BEAM Plus. Its assessment covers new buildings, existing buildings, interiors and neighbourhoods.

Of our more than 42 000 buildings, over 800 have now achieved green building certification. A number of government buildings, including the Kai Tak Trade and Industry Tower and the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, have obtained BEAM Plus' Platinum Rating, the highest possible rating.

Down the road, a major challenge will come from our existing buildings – how to make them green within the context of a sustainable built environment. In that regard, I hope this year's PLEA Conference will help shed light on how we may find innovative solutions.

Ladies and gentlemen, Hong Kong has long flourished in trade, business, finance, culture and many other areas on our ability to reach out and to build connections. I'm pleased that we have now connected with the dedicated professionals participating in the PLEA Conference. Indeed, our Housing Authority and Architectural Services Department look forward to presenting their passive, low-energy projects in special sessions later in this Conference. I am sure our connections and our communication will continue long after this Conference, and we will continue to work together for a sustainable world.

My thanks to PLEA Association for choosing Hong Kong for the 2018 Conference, and to the Chinese University of Hong Kong for being the host. My thanks, and congratulations as well, to the awardees of the PLEA awards for their excellence and contribution to the advancement of passive and low energy architecture.

Finally, I wish you all a rewarding conference, a memorable stay in Hong

Kong and a fruitful, fully engaged New Year. Thank you.