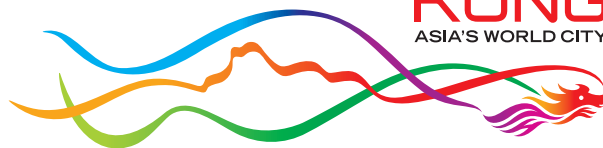


HONG KONG FILES

HONG
KONG
ASIA'S WORLD CITY



ISSUE NO. 3/2020

The Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address

The Chief Executive (CE) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Mrs Carrie Lam, delivered her annual Policy Address on November 25, 2020 with measures to support Hong Kong to strive ahead with renewed perseverance, following social unrest in 2019 and amid the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. Mrs Lam's 2020 Policy Address is aimed to restore Hong Kong's constitutional order, consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's strengths and diversify its economic development, and continue to improve people's well-being, with a view to resolving the city's immediate and long-term social problems.

The Government has rolled out relief measures totalling about HK\$310 billion under the Budget and three rounds of the Anti-epidemic Fund to support Hong Kong society during the COVID-19 pandemic. While it would be difficult to keep increasing government expenditure, Mrs Lam pledged that the Government would continue to invest in infrastructure, develop land resources and meet the economic and livelihood needs of Hong Kong residents.

In the Policy Address, a large number of wide-ranging strategies were formulated to make full use of the city's



The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, released her 2020 Policy Address at the Legislative Council.



Mrs Lam responds to questions at the press conference.

advantages under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, reboot Hong Kong's economy, and create new opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Here are some of the highlights.

New Impetus to the Economy

International Financial Centre

- Include the pre-profit biotechnology companies listed in Hong Kong and stocks listed on the Mainland Sci-Tech Innovation Board meeting certain prescribed criteria into the stock universe of the mutual market access programmes
- Expedite the implementation of the GBA cross-boundary wealth management connect scheme
- Promote real estate investment trusts (REIT) in Hong Kong, including considering a relaxation of the investment restrictions of REIT as appropriate and broadening the investor base, as well as providing tax concession for carried interest issued by private equity funds

International Aviation Hub

- The Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) to invest in Zhuhai Airport on the basis of market principles to reinforce its advantage in aviation
- To consolidate and enhance the development of the airport city, AAHK to develop innovation facilities on the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities (HKBCF) Island of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, including automated car parks, the Intermodal Transfer Terminal, the Airport City Link connecting the airport, the SKYCITY and the HKBCF Island via the autonomous transportation system and extend it to the Tung Chung Town Centre



International Innovation and Technology Hub

- Jointly develop the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone with Shenzhen, and explore with Shenzhen government the idea of allowing the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation to lease and manage certain areas of the Innovation and Technology Zone in Futian, Shenzhen, before the completion of the first batch of research and development buildings in the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park at the Lok Ma Chau Loop
- Launch a five-year Global STEM Professorship Scheme at a cost of HK\$2 billion to attract outstanding R&D talent from overseas to engage in R&D work in Hong Kong



Multi-pronged approach to boost housing and land supply

- Meeting the 10-year Public Housing Supply Target under the Long Term Housing Strategy - identified 330 hectares of land to build 316,000 public housing units; supply of land mainly comes from Tung Chung New Town Extension, Kai Tak, Anderson Road Quarry, and other parts of the New Territories, brownfield clusters with development potential, and rezoned sites
- Long-term Planning and Sustainable Land Supply - long-term housing supply options mainly rely on reclamation of the artificial islands at Kau Yi Chau, near-shore reclamation at Lung Kwu Tan and the re-planning of Tuen Mun West, involving about 1,440 hectares of land in total
- Transitional Housing - make use of dedicated funding of HK\$8.3 billion to facilitate the provision of 15,000 transitional housing units by non-government organisations (NGOs) from 2020-21 to 2022-23 and identified suitable sites for providing 13,200 units; launch a pilot scheme to subsidise NGOs to rent hotels or guesthouses for use as transitional housing



Sustainable City Development

- Environmental Protection Blueprint - strive to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050 and update Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan in mid-2021 to formulate more aggressive strategies and measures; invite tenders to develop a modern pulping facility in EcoPark, Tuen Mun to handle the recycling of waste paper
- Traffic and Transport Infrastructure - conduct comprehensive traffic and transport strategy study and the "Strategic Studies on Railway and Major Roads beyond 2030" to complement land development planning and housing supply; the MTR Corporation Limited has embarked on and will commence the planning and design of new railway networks

Quality Migrant Admission Scheme



Global talent attraction is one of the main focuses in the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address. In particular, the Chief Executive has decided to raise the annual quota of the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS), which is Hong Kong's primary entrant scheme for global talents to settle in the city, from 1,000 to 2,000.

The QMAS has attracted hundreds of thousands of applications from around 100 countries and territories since its introduction in 2006. Successful applicants are not required to have secured an offer of local employment before their entry to Hong Kong for settlement. They may bring in their spouse, as well as unmarried dependent children under the age of 18 to Hong Kong. Moreover, applicants who meet the requirements of the Talent List of Hong Kong (www.talentlist.gov.hk) may enjoy immigration facilitation under the QMAS.

As Asia's world city, Hong Kong remains open to global talents. Under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, Hong Kong is well-established as a business and financial hub in Asia connecting global talents to unique opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong Macao Greater Bay Area, Mainland China, Asia and beyond. With the rule of law, a tried and trusted common law system, an independent judiciary and robust protection of private and intellectual property, Hong Kong will continue to be one of the safest global cities for global talents to work, live and raise a family. For details about the scheme and its application, please visit the website of the Immigration Department of the Hong Kong SAR Government (www.immd.gov.hk).

TOGETHER WE FIGHT THE VIRUS

Universal Community Testing

A 14-day Universal Community Testing Programme (UCTP) was launched city-wide on September 1, 2020, with more than 140 community testing centres operating to cater for the testing needs of Hong Kong residents. Testing service was provided free for members of the public who could participate on a voluntary basis. Appropriate infection control and social distancing measures were put in place at various testing centres, ensuring that the testing was safe, convenient and quick.

A total of about 1,783,000 specimens had been collected under UCTP for COVID-19 nucleic acid test, among which 46 were tested preliminary positive and were referred to the Department of Health for confirmatory tests as well as subsequent follow-up. UCTP has identified asymptomatic patients and cut the community transmission chain as far and as early as possible and achieved the objective of early identification, early isolation and early treatment. It has helped prevent further transmission of the virus for better control of the third wave of the epidemic in the city.



Community Testing Centre at Queen Elizabeth Stadium



Photo shows a working staff taking combined nasal and throat swabs from a member of the public

TOGETHER WE FIGHT THE VIRUS



Mrs Lam with staff members of the laboratories, giving them encouragement during her visit to the air-inflated laboratories.

A few batches of the Mainland nucleic acid test support team were deployed by the Central Government to help enhance the testing capability of Hong Kong within a short period of time. The HKSAR Government was then enabled to launch the large-scale UCTP to provide voluntary virus testing for all citizens of Hong Kong. On September 9, 2020, the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam visited the temporary air-inflated laboratories to learn more about their operation, including manpower allocation and workflow, as well as application of technology to help with the rationalisation of logistics. Mrs Lam also took the opportunity to meet with members of the Mainland nucleic acid test support team working in the laboratories.

Community treatment facility expansion at AsiaWorld-Expo

With the support of the Central Government, the community treatment facility expansion at AsiaWorld-Expo (AWE) was successfully completed. A ceremony was held on October 9, 2020 during which the facility was officially handed over to the Hospital Authority. The relevant construction works commenced in mid-September and were swiftly completed within three weeks, providing an addition of nearly 1,000 beds in AWE, with some equipped with negative pressure facilities.



Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong (front row, third left), pictured with other officiating guests at the ceremony



Inspection of the negative pressure ward of the community treatment facility at AsiaWorld-Expo

Launch of “LeaveHomeSafe” COVID-19 exposure notification mobile app

The Government launched the “LeaveHomeSafe” mobile app in November 2020. Tapping technology to combat the pandemic, the app aims to encourage the public to keep a more precise record of their whereabouts, minimising the risk of further transmission of the virus and protect Hong Kong together. The mobile app can also be used directly in over 18,000 taxis.

The development of the “LeaveHomeSafe” mobile app is led by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Characterised by voluntary participation and recording visits at users’ discretion, it is a digital tool to record accurately the date and time for checking into and leaving different venues. Relevant data will then be kept in the app inside the user’s mobile phone. If a confirmed case is later discovered at a participating venue, the app will notify users who have visited the same venue as the COVID-19 confirmed case at around the same time together with health advice to enhance their vigilance. The “LeaveHomeSafe” mobile app upholds the principle of protecting personal data privacy, and user registration is not required. Venue check-in data will be encrypted and saved on users’ devices for 31 days before being erased automatically.

LeaveHomeSafe 抗疫 人人有份 掃一掃安心出行

Let's Fight the Virus! Scan with "LeaveHomeSafe"

出入場所 Access to a venue

- 1 按「進入」 Click "Enter"
- 2 掃描場所二維碼 Scan the venue QR code
- 3 離開場所按「離開」 Click "Leave" when leaving the venue

上落的士 Take a taxi

- 1 按「上車」 Click "Get on"
- 2 掃描的士牌號碼 Scan the taxi registration mark
- 3 下車時按「離開」 Click "Leave" when you get off

如曾經與確診者在相近時間到訪同一場所，會收到通知及健康建議
Receive notification and health advice if you have visited the same venue as a COVID-19 patient at around the same time.

Google Play | App Store | Huawei AppGallery | 下載應用程式 | Download the mobile app

「安心出行」流動應用程式 | "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app

政府資訊科技總監辦公室 | Office of the Government Chief Information Officer | HP 衛生防護中心

Designated Quarantine Hotel Scheme

To reduce the contact between travellers from overseas and local community, the Government has mandated returnees from high-risk places to undergo compulsory quarantine at hotels since July 2020 and extended the requirement to all returnees from countries outside China since November. To further enhance the prevention of importation of cases, the Government implemented the new measure from December 22, 2020 mandating all returnees from countries outside China to undergo compulsory quarantine at the designated quarantine hotels.

As a designated quarantine hotel, the hotel must pass the inspection conducted by the Department of Health and relevant departments for ensuring that the design, facilities and workflow of the hotel fulfill the infection control requirements. Under the new measure, the Government arranges dedicated transportation to send returnees to the designated quarantine hotels from airport and the Holding Centre for Test Result, so as to minimise their contact with the community.

HONG KONG SPOTLIGHT

Hong Kong Legal Week 2020



The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, speaks at the Opening of the Hong Kong Legal Week 2020.



The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, speaks at the opening ceremony.



The Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, Mr Geoffrey Ma Tao-li, addresses audience at the ceremony.

The Hong Kong Legal Week was successfully held in November 2020 at the former French Mission Building. On the first day of the Legal Week, the Hong Kong Legal Hub was also opened and the “Vision 2030 for Rule of Law” was launched. The event has signified an important milestone in the Department of Justice’s work on enhancing Hong Kong’s status as an international legal hub for legal, deal-making and dispute resolution services, as well as promoting and strengthening the rule of law.

The Hong Kong Legal Hub comprises the offices of the Department of Justice housed in the historical building of the former Central Government Offices, the former French Mission Building and part of Two Exchange Square.



Photos show the Chief Executive, the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, and the Secretary for Justice with other guests at the guided tour of the former French Mission Building, which is now a part of the Hong Kong Legal Hub.

The Hub has consolidated top-notch local, regional and international law-related organisations in the heart of the central business district and will attract global legal and dispute resolution talents to Hong Kong. On the other hand, “Vision 2030” is a 10-year visionary initiative which seeks to promote the proper understanding and recognition of the rule of law through professional exchanges, research and capacity building with stakeholders including youths, legal practitioners and academics.

Hong Kong FinTech Week 2020

In November 2020, another annual flagship event was held in Hong Kong. Hong Kong FinTech Week 2020 has attracted over 1.2 million views for the three-day main conference and more than 30 satellite events featuring important announcements, thought-provoking debates and panel sessions covering all aspects of financial technology.

Co-organised by Invest Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Securities and Futures Commission and the Insurance Authority, and supported by the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the FinTech Week went virtual with more than 100 hours of content, some 500 exhibitors, over 350 speakers and 29 delegations from over 130 economies participating in.

The annual event focused on the golden opportunity to humanise fintech to reignite growth, build trust and financially empower society and businesses in the post-COVID-19 world. Throughout the week, hot topics including the development of central bank digital currencies, virtual asset regulation, virtual banking and addressing algorithmic bias in artificial intelligence to enable more inclusive fintech applications were discussed.

Besides senior officials of the Hong Kong SAR Government, the event has featured other heavyweight speakers from local financial regulators and global industry players, who shared their visionary insights on topics ranging from finance and technology trends to the future of human society. Many of them explored the implications of the challenging pandemic situation.



The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, delivers the opening speech for Hong Kong FinTech Week 2020.



The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), Mr Eddie Yue, announced during the event that the HKMA is exploring a new data strategy and considering building the Commercial Data Interchange.



Heavyweight speakers such as the President of Tencent, Mr Martin Lau (right); and Founder of DST Global, Mr Yuri Milner (left); speak in a video pre-recorded for the event.

Fifth Belt and Road Summit

Jointly organised by the Hong Kong SAR Government and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the fifth Belt and Road Summit opened on November 30, 2020 with over 6,000 government officials, entrepreneurs and professionals from about 80 countries and regions signed up to participate online to explore collaboration opportunities along the Belt and Road.

The Summit was themed “A Business Vision for Sustainable and Inclusive Future”. The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, delivered an opening address, followed by special addresses from senior officials of the Central People’s Government. The President of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr Joko Widodo, graced the Summit and delivered the keynote speech.

Mrs Lam highlighted in her opening address the importance of global collaboration at this time of profound changes, which had the potential to unleash widespread innovation and create abounding opportunities, citing, as examples, the robust emergence of virtual banks and insurers in Hong Kong and the successful raising of venture funding by Hong Kong-based start-ups despite the COVID-19 epidemic. She added that Hong Kong, as an active player in the Belt and Road Initiative,

HONG KONG SPOTLIGHT



The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, delivers a video speech at the opening of the fifth Belt and Road Summit held online.



The President of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr Joko Widodo, delivers a keynote speech at the opening session.



Vice Minister of Commerce, Mr Wang Bingnan, delivers a special address at the opening session.

was keen to strengthen collaboration and partnership with other Belt and Road economies on various fronts, including the sharing of its home-grown, anti-epidemic technology to support the fight against the virus; the provision of professionals capable of meeting the wide-ranging service needs of Belt and Road projects; boosting green finance and sustainable investment along the Belt and Road; and promoting business partnerships with the Mainland's overseas Economic and Trade Co-operation Zones (ETCZs).

The Summit also staged the first-ever virtual exhibition with over 30 Hong Kong companies showcasing their businesses ranging from banking and finance, infrastructure, professional services to innovation and technology. Participants of the Summit also explored collaboration opportunities at the some 700 one-on-one business matching sessions arranged for over 240 projects.

Establishment of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Office

The Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau announced the establishment of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Office on November 23, 2020. The Office will help strengthen the promotion and co-ordination work of the Hong Kong SAR Government on the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

The development of the GBA is a key development strategy in the country's reform and opening up. It would also provide a key direction for reviving Hong Kong's economy after the pandemic. Through further deepening co-operation amongst Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, the objectives of the development of the GBA are to promote co-ordinated economic development in the region, leverage the complementary advantages of the three places, and develop an international first-class bay area for living, working and travelling.

Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong 2.0

The Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong 2.0 (Blueprint 2.0) was released on December 10, 2020, comprising more than 130 smart city initiatives. Blueprint 2.0 includes initiatives that are under implementation or of an ongoing nature such as open data and on-street parking meters supporting remote payment. In addition, over 60 new initiatives were implemented after the first Blueprint was published in the end of 2017 under the theme of Smart Mobility, Smart Living, Smart Environment, Smart People, Smart Government and Smart Economy. Some of the initiatives may sound exciting to you, such as Traffic Data Analytics System to enhance traffic management and efficiency; exploration of the use of telehealth, video-conferencing and remote consultation in Hong Kong; "smart toilet" pilot programme and exploration of the application of technologies in public toilets; Smart Regulator Programme to facilitate online application for all licences.

You can learn more from the dedicated smart city portal (www.smartcity.gov.hk), which also provides real-time city dashboards for members of the public to receive the latest information.

HONG KONG SPOTLIGHT



Hong Kong again ranked as world's freest economy by Fraser Institute

The Fraser Institute ranked Hong Kong as the world's freest economy in the Economic Freedom of the World 2020 Annual Report as announced in September 2020. Hong Kong has gained the top rank since the inception of the report. Among the five areas of assessment, Hong Kong was ranked top in "Freedom to Trade Internationally" and "Regulation". A Government spokesman welcomed the ranking, saying that it was an unambiguous recognition of Hong Kong's long-standing and steadfast commitment to building a free economy with a level playing field.

On the speculation of Hong Kong's rule of law possibly being undermined, the spokesman said, "The rule of law is a fundamental core value of Hong Kong and much cherished by the community. The Government and the community as a whole has been determined to uphold and defend the rule of law. It is with regret that Fraser Institute pre-emptively lower future scores in this area with biased comments and unfair speculations based on selective ungrounded views."

The spokesman emphasised that the right to freedom of expression and the right of peaceful assembly are well-protected in Hong Kong under the Basic Law, noting however that these rights and freedoms are not absolute and are subject to restrictions as prescribed by law and necessary in the interests of, for example, public order.

With regard to the enactment of the National Security Law and relevant enforcement actions mentioned in the Report, the Government spokesman reiterated that safeguarding national security through legislation is in line with international practice and that every country has laws and duty to safeguard its national security and sovereignty.

The spokesman added, "Free market principles have long been essential considerations of our policies and the cornerstone of the Hong Kong economy. We are fully

committed to upholding Hong Kong's institutional strengths, including the rule of law and independence of the judiciary, a free trade and investment regime, a simple and low tax system, a favourable business environment and an efficient government. These strengths have provided a consistent and conducive environment for businesses to thrive, and enabled our economy to prosper."

COMMENTS / SUGGESTIONS

The Editor, HK FILES

**Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office
in Singapore**

9 Temasek Boulevard, #34-01 Suntec Tower Two,
Singapore 038989, Singapore

Email: hketo_sin@hketosin.gov.hk

Website: www.hketosin.gov.hk

Our Social Media

LinkedIn



Facebook



Instagram



@hketosg